

**BILINGUAL ELECTIONS PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING**

Wednesday, December 16 & Thursday, December 17, 2009

Members present:

12/16/2009 in Yakima: Jesse Garza & Lupe Camacho

12/17/2009 in Sunnyside: None

Lupe Camacho, Bilingual Program Coordinator, called the meeting to order; beginning the meeting with a review of statistical graphs of voter participation in the 2009 General Election. In addition, Lupe provided a graph showing voter registration trends countywide, for Hispanic surname voters and for Non-Hispanic surname voters; pointing out that there are locations within the county in which the Hispanic surname voters exceed the amount of Non-Hispanic surname voters. Such is the case in Toppenish, Sunnyside, Mabton, Granger and Grandview. This information could be helpful to candidates for office, campaign managers and organizations who focus on voter registration. Lupe commented on the fact that she felt a need for a better understanding of how elections work in México. Jesse offered to contact a person who he works with, and who used to work with the Mexican government, to see if she might be willing to answer some questions for the elections division.

The meeting continued with discussion of the upcoming Special Election to take place on 2/9/2010. Lupe indicated that many school district levies will expire in 2010, however, only a few schools have presented their levies to appear on the February election ballot: East Valley, Highland and West Valley. Lupe also indicated that many school districts have indicated they will present a resolution for a school levy to appear in the February election prior to the 12/24/2009 deadline: Granger, Mt. Adams, Selah, Wapato and Zillah. Both Grandview and Union Gap have a levy that will expire in 2010 as well, but have not indicated whether or not they will present a resolution to be included in the February election.

The members were then reminded that the Disability Access Sites located in the Sunnyside WorkSource and the Toppenish High School will both be available as drop off locations on 02/09/2010 for the February election. Lupe also commented to those present that the need for bilingual Disability Access Site workers continues.

With regard to the Voter Outreach Program, Lupe provided the members with a copy of the 2009 Program Plan and asked that the members review and make suggestions with regard to changes and/or additions to be reflected in the 2010 Program Plan. The members were also reminded that Yakima County provides online registration and the web address was provided (www.vote.wa.gov). Lupe continued with a presentation of the new Voter Registration Form currently released in Washington State. Lupe also notified the members that she had an opportunity to review the translation for the Spanish Voter Registration Form and it has been completed. The members were then provided with information regarding Hispanic Surnames. They were informed that the Department of Justice determines which names are to be coded Hispanic Surname. They have provided a list of Hispanic Surnames, made up of 12,498 names, that is compared to the database of registered voters. It was shared that the people with these last names are not always Hispanic but rather have a Hispanic last name. Lastly, with regard to the Voter Outreach Program, Lupe shared the 10/20/2009 Yakima Herald article which, she indicated, pointed out that the Hispanic Surname registered voters have increased in the last 5

years. Jesse indicated that he could provide assistance to the Elections division by checking with the school districts to determine whether it would be possible to add something to the school newsletter that would help get out information about voter registration and/or voter participation.

The meeting then continued with a conversation about Whitman College, their political research and how Yakima County Elections has assisted this year and in past years. Lupe also shared that the students requesting assistance this year have indicated they have found much of the information available online and congratulated the Elections staff on the Spanish language website.

On the subject of the website Lupe reminded the members that the Elections Division is currently working on updates for the website.

The members were also reminded that in 2009 Sunnyside went through a redistricting of their council districts. The re-districting came about mainly because of a report that came from Whitman College that indicated the current districts did not allow for many Hispanics to run for office. Lupe indicated that the re-districting did not change the amount of Hispanics actually running for office in those districts and that she hopes to see that change in the future.

The members did not have any other items or suggestions to add to the agenda.

The meeting closed at 1:30 p.m. and the members were informed that the next meeting will be communicated by mail or e-mail.

Submitted by:

Lupe Camacho
Bilingual Program Coordinator