

City of Litchfield Park

Office of the City Clerk

July 30, 2008

The Honorable Timothy S. Bee
President of the Senate
1700 W. Washington, Senate Wing
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

The Honorable James P. Weiers
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1700 W. Washington, House Wing
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RECEIVED
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

RE: CITY OF LITCHFIELD PARK ALL-MAIL-BALLOT PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD MARCH 11 AND MAY 20, 2008

Dear President Bee and Speaker Weiers:

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 16-409.B, the City of Litchfield Park hereby submits its All-Mail-Ballot Election Report. The report reflects information from the 2008 Primary and General Elections.

1. CHANGES IN VOTER TURNOUT

The Litchfield Park elections conducted by all-mail ballot have continued to have greater voter participation than elections held at the polls (on ground). The Mayor/City Council elections have been held by all-mail ballot since 2000. The 2008 Primary and General Elections showed a slight decrease from the 2006 elections; however, there was still significant participation by our voters. Following are statistics:

<u>ELECTION DATE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS</u>	<u>VOTER TURNOUT %</u>
1997 Referendum	2389	* 24
1998 Primary	2494	* 44
1998 General	2508	* 34+
1999 Recall	2508	* 48
2000 Primary	2214	62+
2000 General	2236	66+
2002 Primary	2363	64+
2004 Primary	2325	56+
2006 Primary	2691	60+
2006 General	2664	53+
2008 Primary	2832	52+
2008 General	2892	50+

* On-ground elections

2. COST OF ALL-MAIL-BALLOT ELECTION COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL ELECTION

Litchfield Park has conducted their regularly-scheduled Mayor/City Council elections by All-Mail Ballot since 2000. In 2008, Maricopa County charged \$1.72 per registered voter for the All-Mail-Ballot election. Because of a ballot question in the Primary Election, a publicity pamphlet was required to be mailed to each household, adding another expense. The publicity pamphlet expense would have been incurred whether the election was on-ground or by all-mail ballot. In addition to the above expenses, the City's legal advertising costs increased, and the City did extra advertising via temporary signage. Our costs for 2008 were larger than previous years, averaging \$2.40 per registered voter.

Without any adjustment for cost of living or present value fractioning, the average cost for the previous four on-ground elections was \$1.55 per registered voter.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR REFINEMENTS IN THE All-MAIL-BALLOT PROGRAM

Overall, the election went smoothly. Our candidates, however, find it unsettling to wait several days after the election before we receive final results. This has been especially true when unofficial early results show close races. There appears to be no easy solution, since the count verification process takes several days to complete.

It helps to alert the local postal employees about the upcoming election procedure to ensure the ballots are treated with appropriate importance.

4. FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF MAIL BALLOT IRREGULARITIES

The Maricopa County Elections Department and the Litchfield Park Staff did everything possible to assure the electors their right to vote. I would not classify the following as "irregularities," per se. One resident was temporarily living in another country; that voter was mailed a ballot, and the ballot was voted and submitted. One married couple signed each other's affidavit envelopes; they brought their ballots and envelopes to City Hall, and were issued new envelopes. Two voters did not receive ballots, and came to City Hall to vote. Two other voters received notification that their signatures were questioned, and they came to City Hall with that notification. City Staff contacted Maricopa County Elections personnel, and the matter was successfully cleared up.

5. VOTER SATISFACTION WITH THE PROCESS

Judging from the high level of voter participation and the one complaint received (see Cons - third bullet), I believe voter satisfaction was excellent.

Cons:

- If residents move out of the city and fail to notify the County Recorder of their change of address, a ballot is mailed to them at the address on file. The County charges the City on a per-registered-voter basis, so that is an extra expense for the City.
- If residents move within the jurisdiction and fail to notify the County Recorder of their change of address, a ballot is mailed to an incorrect address. The resident must then call for another ballot to be mailed, or come to City Hall to vote.

- One resident delivered and deposited her ballot at City Hall because she does not trust the security of a ballot going through the mail.

Pros:

- Mail ballots were much easier for those voting, especially the infirm and those out of town on Election Day.
- The time span between receiving the ballots and Election Day allowed voters time to learn more about the candidates and a ballot measure.
- There was a ballot box available at City Hall from the day the ballots were available through Election Day for those who wanted to deposit their ballots in person.
- Replacement ballots were available at City Hall.
- High level of voter participation.
- The intensity of an "Election Day experience" for City Staff was less stressful; i.e., setting up, opening, and closing the polling place; hiring, training and providing meals for poll workers.
- The Maricopa County Elections Department Staff were readily available to answer questions.
- The Maricopa County Elections Department Staff made multiple trips to City Hall to pick up voted ballots, including Election Day after the polls closed.

6. NUMBER OF NON-DELIVERABLE BALLOTS

There were 116 ballots returned to the County Elections Department. Maricopa County sent a form letter to each of those voters, requesting updated mailing information, and it was determined that 57 of those voters still resided within the city limits. Ballots were re-mailed to those 57, and their information was updated in the voter records.

Maricopa County bases their contract charge on the total of registered voters in the municipality. If City Staff are aware of undeliverable and returned ballots, we can help research those names and addresses for the County. Therefore, the All-Mail-Ballot Election provides an opportunity for this City to assist the County in updating their voter registration rolls and purging names of voters no longer living in our jurisdiction.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at 623-935-5033 (phone) or 623-935-5427 (fax).

Sincerely,



Mary Rose Evans, MMC
City Clerk

cc: Mayor Schoaf and the City Council
Darryl H. Crossman, City Manager
Yvonne Reed, Exec. Asst. to the County Recorder
Susan Goodwin, City Attorney