

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, OCTOBER 1, 2015

FRANKLIN COUNTY WILL VOTE ON PAPER BALLOTS IN NOVEMBER

Franklin County voters will not see familiar touch screen machines when they go to the polls on November 3. While voters will see some familiar procedures, other processes will be different.

The Franklin County Electoral Board decided to make the change to optical scan machines last spring after studying various machines that ELECT (the Virginia Department of Elections) had certified. The machines will scan the front and back of each ballot, will advise the voter if any contests have not been voted, if any part of the ballot has more choices marked than that contest allows, and will count all contests on the ballot.

The check in process will not change. The voter will provide the Officer of Election with a photo ID, will state his or her name and address, and will receive a voting pass.

At this point, the process will be different from the past. Voters will exchange the passes with the Officer of Elections who is distributing ballots. All voters will receive paper ballots and privacy sleeves and will go either to a standing privacy booth or to a table voting booth to mark the ballot. Each private space will have a ballot marker.

After marking the selections, voters will place their ballots in the privacy sleeves, take them to a new optical scan machine, and feed the ballot into the machine.

If the voter mismarks the ballot, the voter may request a new ballot from an Officer of Elections. The election officials will retain the old ballot so that they can account for all the blank ballots that the Registrar provides each precinct.

The new system will provide additional evidence in the event of an official re-count. All cast ballots will be retained in the Clerk of the Court's office. If any contest results in such a re-count, all the paper ballots will be available for examination.

Voters who want to learn more about the new technology and see a demonstration of exactly how it works are invited to attend any of three "drop-in" open houses that the Electoral Board will sponsor. Each demonstration session will be held in the Franklin County Board of Supervisors' Room at the Franklin County Government Center (1255 Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, VA 24151). The sessions are Saturday, October 17, 10:00 – 12:00 am; Wednesday, October 21, 3:30 – 5:00 pm; or Thursday, October 22, 5:00 – 7:00 pm.

Voters will see a voting booth, a sample ballot, the privacy sleeve, an optical scan machine and will hear more about this new system. The Board anticipates that most questions will be answered in 10 minutes or less. If voters cannot attend one of these sessions, they may stop by the Registrar's Office (Suite 106 in the Franklin County Government Center) during regular office hours to try out the process.

This new system will be causing several precincts to arrange their equipment differently. Voters should be alert to signage as they enter their precincts as some entrance and exit doors or patterns of movement may have changed.

The Electoral Board believes the new processes will make voting easier and faster for voters. The Board encourages everyone to take advantage of one of the three information sessions and to vote on November 3 for the people who will lead Franklin County and Virginia. The polls open at 6:00 am and close at 7:00 pm.

Several options exist to apply for and cast absentee ballots. Voters with legitimate reasons for voting absentee may do so by contacting the Registrar's Office (1255 Franklin Street, Suite 106, Rocky Mount, VA 24151, Phone: 540.483.3025, FAX: 540.483.6619).

All requests for reasonable accommodations due to a disability should be made to the Registrar with at least 48 hours' notice.

For questions regarding this release, please contact
Kay W. Chitwood, General Registrar
540.483.3025