

our heads cut off if we speak against another person's choice of worship, our politicians or the way our government is being run.

I was thrilled the first time the Voice of Golden arrived in my mailbox. This is what America is about. As citizens of the United States of America we all have the right to express ourselves on a soapbox on the corner, in groups of as many as so choose to assemble together and in a little newspaper if we have the time and the energy to gather information and take that information to press.

There are issues about which citizens of Golden are deeply concerned. Yet, perhaps for fear of losing a job or offending an associate or jeopardizing efforts to obtain an education - any reason really - our mouths remain shut and we assume the attitude of apathy. Fear and apathy are not nice. Fear and apathy are actually enemies of our social freedoms.

If you have an opinion to express and you wish to express that opinion in the Golden Transcript you must put your name to that opinion. For that reason I do not enjoy the Transcript as much as I do the Voice of Golden. Should I wish to express myself yet wish to remain anonymous where can I do that? In Golden I can do that in the Voice of Golden - and you can, too.

For those who do not appreciate the efforts of Marian Olson and her friends, I suggest that they think again. You and I may not like everything that is printed on these papers, fine! We don't have to read these pages. However, I myself would like to say "BRAVO !!!" To accomplish the monthly or bi-monthly publication of a little paper from your dining room table is what social and political freedom is all about and I appreciate the effort very much.

Sincerely, .....

Thank you, ....., for knowing what this country is all about and taking time to write.

## **Unfunded Mandates Affect Clerk and Recorder's Budget**

### **Federal Election Mandates**

Help America Vote Act (2002):

Voting system: The cost (\$5.9 million) was only 25% funded – new equipment if required will not be funded in any amount (may be as much as \$8 million).

CBI Checks- Mandated by HAVA to do CBI Checks on our employees. These cost \$6.95 each and we have 122 employees. We run the check on other employees in the county who may be involved in the election process. This costs us about \$850 in an election year.

HAVA Training Costs – There is a required certification for the federal law.

Increase in Postage – We send trouble letters to HAVA non-compliant voters trying to get correct identification.

### **State Election Mandates**

2006: Security equipment to comply with SOS Security Plans – cameras, seals, hand-held scanner to track barcode security seals on equipment, new security fence installed in warehouse to separate equipment from rest of warehouse and prevent access without security card. No funding available.

VVPAT Implementation: State law will require a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail either as a retrofit to our current voting system, or as part of a new system implementation. Estimated cost for retrofit: \$1.3 million. We are currently in the process of acceptance of additional HAVA reimbursement of just over 50%. Note: This requirement will likely be included in a federal HAVA update currently being considered in U.S. Congress.

### **Potential Unfunded Election Mandates**

State of Colorado

- SB 07-234: Potential postage increase with reference to “tear-off” portion of the VIC that would allow the voter to apply for “permanent mail-in voter” status

We send about 300,000 VIC's before the Primary Election. These are sent in a pamphlet that has a request for absentee ballot, cancellation card and a sign up card if the voter wishes to serve as an election judge. We get a high response from this mailing because it contains so much good information.

30-40,000 will come back undeliverable. These will have to be scanned into the registration system and the files made “inactive.” (\$12,000-\$16,000)

Maybe we could get back 1/3 of them completed, which we will have to enter into the system so that the voters would get a mail-in ballot for the Primary Election. These will come back to us as business reply mail, which will cost us. It is at least twice as much to send a letter BRM. The cards will cost about 80 cents to return. (estimated after talking to Post Office) (\$80,000) Our present pamphlets have an application for a mail-in ballot and serve the same purpose. The only difference is that the burden of the extra postage is not placed on the county, but on the voter. Response is high and fiscal obligation is not added to our costs.

**Additional Labor Cost:** There will be a considerable amount of duplication because the mail-in ballot question is going to be on several documents and letters. Voters will complete it several times (at least at first) and thus, there will be a lot of duplication. The volume of work will be heavy and the amount of time to complete it will be short. This may require the addition of several employees, computers, and work space to get this done. If a fourth to a half of the deliverable VIC's are completed and come back, it could mean the addition of as many as 10 employees with work areas if the entry time is short. Temporary employees make \$11.00 an hour. It will be \$4400.00 if the employees work a week and that is probably a conservative estimate of time. Finding the workspace and equipment is even more costly.

**Ballot boxes at each polling places to collect mail-in ballots:** There will be an initial cost for the boxes of about \$100 each. We have 324 precincts and use the city halls and MV Offices for collection of the ballots. We'll have to have extras on hand because we will have to trade out the boxes all day long, as they get full. We need to plan for 3 per precinct, city hall, and MV Branch. This would be a little over \$10,000 in costs. We would need addition staff to drive around all day and help collect these full ballot boxes. It would take about 35 employees working 14 hours on election day. The employees make \$12.00 an hour plus mileage = \$5880.00. The reimbursement for mileage currently is 48.5 cents per mile and the drivers would drive about 75 miles each. Total employee cost would be \$1300.00 for mileage and almost \$6000 for time.

### **Pending Federal Legislation**

- HR811: HAVA Update:

There will be a cost for outside auditors to do our post election test. There is no way to estimate the cost of this at this time. If the voted ballots need to leave the office for the “outside audit,” there will be a cost to maintain the security and chain of custody. A Jefferson County employee(s) may need to stay with the ballots to maintain correct procedures.

Emergency paper ballots would have to be on hand for the polling place voters to use if there is a malfunction of the voting machines. We would have to make certain that each precinct has an ample supply of these. This would be a separate printing of ballots (as the title would be different than the provisional, absentee, test, and duplication ballots.) The printing and cost of the ballots is approximately 50 cents each and we would need about 50 of each appropriate ballot style at each precinct. This would cost about \$11,250 as we will have a lot of ballot styles now that we count the ballots by precinct.

### **Other Departmental Mandates**

#### **Motor Vehicles**

As the agent for the Colorado Department of Revenue, we absorb administrative costs. However we collect a Clerk Hire Fee as agents. There is currently pending state legislation that will increase that fee from \$2.00 to \$4.00 that will help to offset increased personnel costs (salaries and benefits). This fee has not been increased since 1998. If this legislation fails, we will continue to be under-funded in this area.

Equipment and technology is supplied by the state, and there has been an on-going computer system implementation (CSTARS). The existing system is out-dated and does cause labor inefficiencies, but maintenance and upkeep of the equipment is funded.

Capital Costs are unfunded by the state. As agents and state subdivision, we are responsible for Motor Vehicle locations and the accompanying lease/property security costs.

#### **Recording**

There are not significant under-funded costs in Recording largely due to document and recording fees and an existing technology surcharge that is a dedicated revenue source. However, that surcharge is due to expire in 2012, and the County will then be required to take over maintenance and upgrades to the electronic recording system if the funding is not re-authorized. Also, recording volume is declining, and we are seeing new state legislation reducing our ability to assess document fees, which will impact future revenues significantly. This trend will result in an under-funding of the Recording Department personnel costs.

**The last day to register to vote is October 9, 2007. This election is a mail ballot election. The County Clerk will start mailing ballots on October 12.**