Voting Information News

July 2007 ☙ Vol. 17, No. 7

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

Issue Highlights:

Transmit Election Materials Electronically 1

Colorado News 3

VIN Subscription Request Form 4

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

☑ Redistribute a copy of this issue to each of your voting assistants so that they may submit their request to be included in the *Voting Information News and News Release* distribution. Have them complete the "Subscription Request Form" on page 4 and email their contact information to **vote@fvap.ncr.gov.** (Enter "VIN Subscription" in the Subject line.) The *newsletter* is available by email, regular mail, or both. *News Releases* are distributed only by email because of their perishable nature.

☑ Visit the FVAP Website for current and back issues of this newsletter, *News Releases*, other information and resources as well as links to other sites of interest in carrying out your VAO duties. Encourage others to visit the site often.

Transmit Election Materials Electronically

Background

Many states allow the transmission of election materials electronically either by facsimile (fax) or electronic mail (email). The state may allow the citizen to:

1. Send the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) for registration and/or absentee ballot request by fax or email.

2. Receive the blank absentee ballot by fax or email.

3. Return the voted absentee ballot by fax or email.

4. Perform any combination of 1, 2 and 3 above.

To check on your state, see the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) website at www.fvap.gov under Miscellaneous Information (on the left), Voting Assistance Tools, **Chart of State and Territory Policies Concerning Electronic Transmission of Election Materials**. Then refer to the *Voting Assistance Guide (VAG)*, Chapter 3, Sections II. or III. E. for more specific information on your state's electronic transmission of official election materials before faxing or emailing.

Sending the FPCA by Fax

Where allowed by state law, the FPCA may be faxed to the local election official. The citizen should:

1. Complete and sign the FPCA legibly using **dark ink** according to each state's requirements as indicated in Chapter 3 (in the presence of a witness or notary if required by the state). A fillable Portable Document Format (PDF) of the FPCA is available online (OFPCA) at www.fvap.gov.

2. Complete the Electronic Transmission Sheet included in the *VAG*, Appendix B (online at www.fvap.gov) (or alternative cover sheet containing similar information). Include the number of pages being transmitted for each FPCA. There should be one transmittal sheet for each FPCA.

3. **Fax both sides of the FPCA**. Use a separate transmittal cover sheet for each FPCA. Do not bundle FPCAs for faxing under one cover sheet unless they are addressed to the same voting jurisdiction. If they have the same final destination, more than one FPCA with one cover sheet may be faxed in a single transmission. Ensure all pages are transmitted successfully and in proper order.

4. After faxing, **mail the completed FPCA** to the local election official's address as listed in the state section in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, even if it may not arrive by the state's registration/ballot request deadline.

Receiving the Blank Absentee Ballot by Fax

Where allowed by state law, the blank absentee ballot will be faxed from the local election official to the fax number provided by the citizen on the FPCA or other absentee ballot request. The citizen should follow all instructions provided by the local election official in marking, executing and returning the ballot.

Returning the Voted Absentee Ballot by Fax

If the citizen determines that there is not sufficient time to return the ballot by mail and the state allows receipt of a voted ballot by fax, the voted ballot may be transmitted by fax. The citizen should follow the instructions provided by the local election official in marking and executing the ballot.

The citizen should vote in private and fax the voted ballot (as allowed by the state) in private. **The voter must understand that by faxing the voted ballot, he/she is waiving the right to secrecy of the ballot.** The voter must sign a statement on the transmittal cover sheet (see 2. above) indicating, "I understand that by faxing my voted ballot I am voluntarily waiving my right to a secret ballot." This must be followed by the signature of voter and the date.

Continued on page 2.....

Help Spread the News! Copy, print and distribute the *Voting Information News* and *News Release* Subscription Request Form available in this issue.

Transmit Election Materials Electronically (continued)

The voter is advised to obtain and retain a facsimile receipt of the date and time the voted ballot was faxed successfully. Ensure all information is entered, especially the complete destination address for the ballot (as found under the respective state headings in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, Section IV, Where to Send It), and the signed statement referenced above.

After faxing, mail the voted ballot to the local election official's address provided or as listed in the state section in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, even if it may not arrive by the state's ballot return deadline. **See page 3 for further mailing information.** When transmitting election materials by fax the citizen may use the following toll-free numbers:

DSN 223-5527
(703) 693-5527
1-800-368-8683
(from U.S., Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands only)
International toll-free fax numbers
(See inside back cover of the VAG or www.fvap.gov)

By using the above numbers to electronically transmit any election materials, an audit trail is maintained.

Sending the FPCA by Email

Some states and localities allow submission of the FPCA by email. Voters must be sure their jurisdiction accepts emailed FPCAs before sending. A fillable Portable Document Format (PDF) of the FPCA is available online (OFPCA) at www.fvap.gov. In addition to the following instructions, the state or county election website often provides emailing instructions. The citizen may find these websites under "State Election Sites" at www.fvap.gov. The citizen should:

1. Complete the OFPCA from a personal computer or complete the cardstock FPCA according to the state's requirements in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, using **dark ink**. The citizen should then print out the completed OFPCA and sign and date it (in the presence of a witness or notary if required by the state).

2. **Scan both sides of the FPCA** to a PDF file. Email the file as an attachment along with a scanned completed copy of the transmittal cover sheet (see 2. on page 1), or alternative cover sheet containing similar information.

3. Use a separate transmittal cover sheet and include the number of pages being transmitted for each FPCA. More than one FPCA with one cover sheet may be attached to the email in a single transmission if they are going to the same local election office. **Email the FPCA directly to the local election official**. The local election official's email address may be obtained by linking to the State Election Site from the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

If the citizen prefers to email the application through FVAP or is unable to obtain the local election official's email address, it will be forwarded to the local election official as a fax. The citizen should send the transmittal cover sheet (also available online under "Electronic Transmission" at www.fvap.gov) as a scanned attachment along with the FPCA to: ets@fvap.ncr.gov.

After emailing, mail the completed FPCA to the local election official's address as listed in the state section of the *VAG*, Chapter 3, even if it may not arrive by the state's registration/ballot request deadline.

Receiving the Blank Absentee Ballot by Email

Where allowed by state law, the blank absentee ballot will be emailed from the local election official to the individual's email address as indicated on the absentee ballot request (FPCA). The citizen should follow all instructions provided by the local election official in marking, executing and returning the ballot.

Returning the Voted Absentee Ballot by Email

If the citizen determines there is not sufficient time to return the ballot by mail and the state allows receipt of a voted ballot by email, the voted ballot may be transmitted via email. The State or local election official cannot accept an emailed voted ballot unless allowed by state law. The citizen should follow the instructions provided by the local election official in marking and executing the ballot.

FVAP recommends that the voter email the voted ballot directly to the local election official. If unable to access the local election official's email address, the voter should send the transmittal cover sheet (available online at www.fvap.gov) as a scanned attachment along with the voted ballot to: ets@fvap.ncr.gov. The voting materials will then be forwarded as a fax to the local election official.

The voter must understand that by emailing the voted ballot, he/she is waiving the right to secrecy of the ballot. The voter must sign a statement on the transmittal cover sheet indicating, "I understand that by emailing my voted ballot I am voluntarily waiving my right to a secret ballot." This must be followed by the signature of voter and the date.

The voter should retain a copy of the transmitted email as a receipt. Use a copy of the transmittal cover sheet found at www.fvap.gov or other cover sheet containing similar information. Ensure all information is entered, especially the complete destination address for the ballot (as found under "Where to Sent It" of the respective state headings in the *VAG* Chapter 3), and the signed statement referenced above.

After emailing the ballot, mail the completed ballot to the local election official's address as listed in the state section in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, even if it may not arrive by the state's ballot return deadline.

Received by Fax or Email — Returned by Mail

Official election materials that are faxed or emailed back to the local election official should also be mailed. After faxing or emailing the FPCA, mail the completed FPCA to the local election official's address as listed in the state section in the *VAG*, Chapter 3, even if it may not arrive by the state's registration deadline.

Continued on Page 3....

Transmit Election Materials Electronically (continued)

To return by mail a voted ballot that has been sent by fax or email, use the Security Envelope and ballot transmittal envelope from the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) Standard Form 186. See Figure 1. Detach the envelopes from the rest of the form. (Also see FWAB Illustration and Mailing Instructions in the *VAG*, Chapter 2 online at www.fvap.gov). The voter should vote in private, place only the ballot in the security envelope and seal it without any assistance whenever possible. The voter should not write on the security envelope.

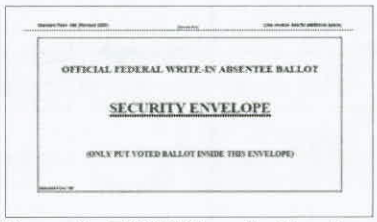

Figure 1. FWAB Security Envelope

If SF-186 forms are not readily available, use two plain envelopes. Mark one as the security envelope and the other as the transmittal envelope for mailing. The voter may use the prepaid (in U.S. Mails including APO and FPO addresses) envelope template as the transmittal envelope (found online at www.fvap.gov). See Figure 2. Follow the instructions provided with the ballot. See also Mailing Instructions for the FPCA and the FWAB in the *VAG*, Chapter 2.

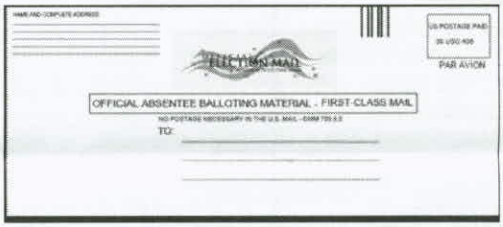

Figure 2. Postage Paid Envelope Template

Colorado allows citizens who have never resided in the U.S. to register and vote

Colorado now allows citizens who have never resided in the U.S. to register and vote. Colorado law defines these citizens as persons who are citizens of the United States, will be eighteen years of age or older on the date of the next election, and have never been a resident of any state but whose parent is eligible to register and vote in Colorado. These citizens may submit a Federal Post Card Application or Colorado voter registration form to register and request an absentee ballot which will allow them to vote for Federal offices (President/Vice President, U.S. Senator, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives).

You may submit the completed FPCA by fax using the following toll-free fax numbers for the U.S. and Canada: 1-800-368-8683, (703) 693-5527 or DSN 223-5527 (military). At www.fvap.gov/services/faxing.html, there is a list of additional toll-free fax numbers from overseas countries for use by U.S. citizens. You may elect to receive your blank absentee ballot via fax. Be sure to include your commercial fax number, including necessary country codes, in order to receive a ballot via fax. After faxing, submit the FPCA by mail.

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** votinginfo@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Stefanie Eye, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201
http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/elections.html

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. Alton Perry **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532
DSN fax: 221-4532, **Email:**alton.c.perry@conus.army.mil,
https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/pssd/psb/votingindex.htm

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LT David Truman **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu),
fax: (901) 874-6825, **DSN fax:** 882-6825, **Email:**vote@navy.mil,
http://www.cni.navy.mil/cnic_hq_site/BaseSupport/CommandStaff/NavyVotingProgram/index.htm

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Mr. Gilbert D. Harrison, Jr. **tel:** (210) 565-5000, **toll free:** 1-800 616-3775 (Select options 1, then 1, then 2 from menu), DSN 665-5000; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;
Email: DPSOOF.VOTINGFUND@Randolph.af.mil;
http://www.afcrossroads.com/VoteFund/Vote/default.htm

U.S. Marine Corps: Mr. David E. James **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511; **fax:** (703) 784-9823,
DSN fax: 278-9823; **Email:** david.e.james@usmc.mil
https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/url/page/m_ra_home/MR/Personnel/Voting

U.S. Coast Guard: LTJG Dave Solorzano **tel:** (202) 475-5375, **fax:** (202) 475-5375;
Email: Dave.N.Solorzano@uscg.mil
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

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Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

PHONE:
(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

FAX
(703) 696-1352
DSN 426-1352

VOTING INFORMATION CENTER (VIC):
(703) 588-1343
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE (VIC and FVAP staff member):
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for international toll-free phone and fax numbers.

EMAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Comments or suggestions on this newsletter are welcome.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

Voting Information News and News Release Subscription

Instructions: Email, fax or mail the information below to the FVAP. No cover sheet is necessary.
Please Note: Email is proving to be one of the most effective and efficient avenues of communication with the FVAP.

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

☐ I would like to receive the VIN and News Releases by Email at the above address.

☐ I would like to receive the VIN by mail at the above address.

☐ I no longer wish to receive the VIN or News Releases. Please remove my name from your list.

In order to change or remove your name from our mailing list, please provide the exact address as it appears on the mailing label of this newsletter (or attach mailing label).

_____

Comments _____

Note: If you do not wish to change your delivery option at this time, no reply is necessary to continue receiving these publications.

Moving? Send an FPCA to notify your local election official. Also, send us an email so that you and your replacement can continue receiving this *newsletter.*

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