

## **SAN PATRICIO COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

### **CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PLAN**

**November 8, 2022**

#### **A PURPOSE:**

Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code requires the Manager of the central counting station (“CCS”) to “establish and implement a written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station.” This plan be made available to the public on request no later than 4p.m. on the fifth day before the date of the election.

Section 127.007(b) provides that a CCS plan “must address the process for comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form with the number of votes cast for an entire election.”

#### **B LOCATION:**

The San Patricio County Central Counting Station will be located at San Patricio County Elections Administration, 410 W Market St., Sinton, Tx 78387. The Central Counting Station will convene at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

#### **C CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PERSONNEL:**

The following are the roles and responsibilities inside the Central Counting Station, as contained in Section 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code.

- The Elections Administrator (Pamela Hill) will serve as the Central Counting Station Manager to manage the overall administration of the station and supervision of personnel.
- The Voting Systems Analyst (David Wendel) will serve as the Tabulation Supervisor to operate automatic tabulating equipment.
- The following personnel will serve as the Assistant Tabulation Supervisors to assist the Tabulation Supervisor: Pamela Hill
- The Presiding Judges will serve to maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and receive ballots to be counted.
- Pamela Brewer will serve as the Election Judge to oversee all Election Judges.  
Rita Evans - will serve as the Republican Presiding Judge. Republican Alternate Presiding Judge is Nancy Carter.  
Tina Harris - will serve as the Democratic Presiding Judge. Democratic Alternate Presiding Judge is Theresa Strain.

- Central Counting Station Clerks may be appointed as needed by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judges as outlined Section 127.006 of the Election Code.

Note: To be eligible to serve as a clerk a person must be a qualified voter of the county in which the central counting station is located. The general custodian of election records, an employee of the custodian or any other employee of a political subdivision is ineligible to serve as a clerk under this section because the person is a qualified voter of a county other than the county in which the central counting station is located or because of the custodian's status as a candidate or officeholder. (127.006c Texas Election Code)

A clerk appointed by the Manager serves under the Manger and shall perform the functions directed by the Manager. A clerk appointed by the Presiding Judge serves under the Presiding Judge and shall perform the functions directed by the Presiding Judge. (127.006c Texas Election Code)

#### **D PROCEDURES FOR CONVENING THE CENTRAL COUNTY STATION:**

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity is permitted to count ballots.

The Central Counting Station will convene based on the size and type of election as determined by the Central Counting Station Manager and the Presiding Judges.

The Signature Verification Committee/Early Voting Ballot Board will begin the process to verify mail in ballots on Saturday, November 5, 2022 at 9:00a.m. and reconvene on Election Day, November 8, 2022 at 10:00a.m.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count of ballots by mail and early voting in-person ballots on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at 7:00p.m. and continue with the process of counting ballots voted on Election Day until the last box has been returned to the Election Administration Office.

The Central Counting Station will begin the process to count accepted provisional ballots and accepted late ballots by mail on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 10:00a.m.

#### **E ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS:**

Section 127.0015 of the Texas Election Code prescribes a required oath for all CCS personnel. The administration of oaths must take place prior to those individuals commencing any of their duties at the central county station.

This oath should be administered verbally to all members of the early voting ballot board and all personnel at the central counting station prior to the performance of any duties by the board or the central counting station.

For use in November 8, 2022 election:

For use in Primary Elections, General Election for State and County Officers, Elections ordered by the Governor: "I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present and will work only in the presence of a member of a political party different from my own. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

#### **F INTAKE OF BALLOTS, ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND SUPPLIES:**

Sections 129.051 and 129.052 of the Texas Election Code require the general custodian of the election records to develop certain procedures related to inventory control and chain of custody of voting system equipment and electronic media associated with this equipment, providing for verification of equipment identifiers, verification of seals, and verification of chain of custody.

1. Election Judge, or their designee, brings paper ballots (in sealed ballot bin), locked & sealed Verity Duo Controller and Scanner to San Patricio County Election Administration Office.
2. Intake personnel will verify location tags and verify the seals on the bags and bins are the same as the seal numbers on the seal log.
3. Intake personnel will deliver the equipment to Room 2 that will be received by David Gonzales, IT/Central County Station Clerk. Seals will be verified and V-drive removed from controller and scanner and placed into carrier envelopes.

V-Drive envelopes will be delivered to the Tabulation Supervisor (David Wendel) in the Tabulation Room 4 to be ran through Verity Count.

#### **G DUPLICATION OF BALLOTS:**

Certain ballots that are counted with automatic tabulating equipment may have to be duplicated if the ballot is damaged or cannot be read with the equipment.

The Presiding Judge of each party, with any assistants they deemed necessary, will duplicate any damaged ballots in accordance with Section 127.126 of the Texas Election Code.

## **H RESOLVING VOTER INTENT**

At the direction of the Presiding Judge of each party, CCS clerks will resolve any voter intent questions on the ballots as they are duplicated or manually counted, as applicable.

1. The Presiding Judge and Resolution Board will make a determination of voter intent prior to duplication of a ballot.
2. The duplicate ballot will then be created by the Presiding Judge and CCS clerks in the manner in which the voter intent was deciphered.

## **I TABULATION PROCEDURES:**

### **Saturday EVBB After Early Voting – November 5, 2022**

- Beginning at 10:00a.m. EVBB will convene to verify any ballots that were returned to the election office and process as required.
- After Ballot Board completes their review of the Early Voting ballots by mail, approved ballots will be scanned on Central Scanner. Any ballots needing to be reviewed will be resolved by the resolution board under the direction of the CCS Presiding Judges on Election Day.
- After all Early Voting ballots by mail have been scanned, results will be saved to a V-Drive, and stored in the Election Vault to be read into Central Count on Election Day, November 8, 2022 at 7:00p.m.
- Ballots by mail will be placed in a ballot box which will be sealed by the EVBB Presiding Judges and stored in the Election Vault.

### **ELECTION DAY – November 8, 2022**

- Beginning at 10:00a.m. EVBB will reconvene to verify any ballots that have been returned to the election office and process as required.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Testing of the Tabulation Equipment will be conducted by the Tabulation Supervisor at 6:00p.m.
- Ballot by mail and Early voting in person V-Drives will be delivered to the Tabulation Supervisor and Assistant Tabulation Clerk to be ran through Central Count.
- On Election Day, Early Voting ballots, including ballots by mail received up to that point, will be tabulated before 7p.m., but in **NO** case will results reports be created before 7:00p.m.
- After polls close at 7:00p.m. Election Manager will release the reports for Early Voting Results and again after all Election Day Polls have returned and Tabulation Supervisor has processed all reports.

## **J RECONCILIATION:**

The process for comparing the number of voters listed as having voted and the number of ballots cast is done in three ways:

1. Early Voting in Person – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from KNOWiNK pollpads, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast.
2. Early Voting by Mail – Compare the number of ballots entered on the “Ballot Transmittal Form” from the early voting ballot board to the number of ballots counted. (87.021, 87.1221)
3. Election Day – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from KNOWiNK pollpads, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast. (127.007 b)

## **K PRINTING OF PRECINCT RETURNS AND ELECTION TOTALS:**

Under Section 127.127, the Tabulation supervisor and the Tabulation Assistants are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle ballots that are automatically counted. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Presiding Judges of the CCS are responsible for preparing the precinct election returns. The Presiding Judges are required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy.

The printed “precinct by precinct” report will be adjusted to include any hand-counted ballots (if necessary) and constitutes our certified precinct returns. (Section 127.127 e), Texas Election Code.

The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judges of the CCS, in cooperation with the Elections Administrator may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code)

Unofficial election results will be released via San Patricio County’s Elections Department webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00p.m. on election Day. Election Day results will be posted after the last voting polling location has returned.

## **L. REPORTING RESULTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE:**

For certain elections, including primary elections, the general election for state and county officers, and constitutional amendment elections, the SOS is required to tabulate the unofficial results statewide. (68.001 Texas Election Code). For this election, this information will be reported to the SOS through an online portal established by the SOS.

## **M POLL WATCHERS:**

Poll Watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the “purpose of processing or preparing to process election results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station.” (Section 33.055, Texas Election Code)

The poll watcher must deliver their certificate completion of the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training and their certificate of appointment to the appropriate Presiding Judge of the CCS and the Presiding Judge must countersign their certificate of appointment.

Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand or sit to observe the counting activities. The Presiding Judges may dictate where the poll watchers may stand and/or sit in order to prevent interference with the duties of the Central County Station personnel while still being able to observe all activities. There will be a maximum limit of four (4) poll watchers at any time in Room 4 Tabulation Room.

All activities of poll watchers shall be in compliance with the current Poll Watchers Guide issued by the Secretary of state.

**N GENERAL CUSTODIAN OF ELECTION RECORDS:**

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on election day and after election day, if necessary, voted ballots, electronic media, election records, and election equipment will be retained by this office, who is the general custodian of election records, through the appropriate retention period.