

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANNE TITUS HILBY
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200
ANNE.HILBY@AZAG.GOV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General's Office to Oversee Count of Tucson Election Ballots

(Phoenix, Ariz. – April 2, 2009) The Arizona Attorney General's Office today announced that it will supervise a hand count next week of the May 2006 Pima County Special Election ballots. The count will be undertaken as part of the Office's ongoing criminal investigation into the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) election of 2006. The media and the public will be able to view this examination of the ballots.

The count will begin at 8 a.m. on Monday, April 6. It will take place at the Maricopa County Recorder's Operations Center at 510 South 3rd Avenue (at the corner of Lincoln and Third Avenue) in Phoenix.

Investigators estimate it will take approximately five days to examine and count all of the election ballots and poll sheets. Work will take place during the county's normal business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The count will be conducted by Elections Division employees of the Maricopa County Recorder's Office under the supervision of Attorney General's Office investigators, who are sworn peace officers. The procedure for examining and counting the ballots will be typical of a hand count of election ballots with additional protocols necessary for handling criminal evidence. A copy of the auditors' guidelines for the count is attached.

To ensure transparency in the counting process, each of Pima County's political parties was invited to send one official observer to witness the examination of the ballots. These observers, who were required to pass criminal background checks, will be allowed inside the examination room along with the County Recorder's staff and Attorney General's investigators.

In February, the Attorney General's Office took possession of 105 boxes of RTA election materials held by the Pima County Elections Department. Since then, the boxes have been stored in an Attorney General's secure evidence facility. They will continue to be kept in a secure facility throughout the examination.

To protect the integrity of the ballots and the examination, the boxes have not nor will they be opened or unsealed until the public examination begins. At no time during the examination will the boxes be opened or ballots examined outside of the view of the official observers or the public.

Procedure for viewing the examination

The Attorney General's Office recognizes that this matter is of considerable public interest. To protect the integrity of the investigation, only Recorder's Office elections employees engaged in the examination, Attorney General's investigators and the official political party observers are allowed inside the room where the examination takes place.

Members of the public and the media who wish to view the examination will be able to do so in person at the County Recorder's Office through large windows into the examination room.

The examination can also be observed live via the Internet at http://recorder.maricopa.gov/elections/Live_Feeds/south_view.aspx. This will provide a live feed from multiple security cameras filming the activity in the examination room. It will be available throughout the examination.

Those who wish to attend should enter the Recorder's Office through the main entrance facing 3rd Avenue. Upon entering, visitors must go through the office's standard check-in with a receptionist, providing your name and purpose for the visit and be screened with a metal detection wand. While visitors may bring laptop computers with them to take notes, the Recorder's Office strictly prohibits wireless access to the Internet from inside the building.

Members of the media who wish to view the count are asked to bring their media credentials. Photographs and video recording are allowed inside the building, and media will be provided adequate space for cameras and other equipment. However, no live broadcasts or interviews are allowed inside the building. Those wishing to conduct interviews or broadcast live must do so outside.

For more information, please contact Anne Hilby at (602) 542-8019.

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