



Voting Information News

April 2008 vs Vol. 18, No. 4

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

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“To Do” This Month:

Prepare for these upcoming events:
“Overseas Citizens Voters Week”, June 28-July 7 (July 4th Holiday)
“Armed Forces Voters Week”, August 31-September 7 (Labor Day Holiday)
“Absentee Voting Week”, October 12-18 (Columbus Day Holiday).
Check your continuity folder for what’s been done in the past and the good ideas in this issue and on the FVAP website.

Participate in one of the training workshops conducted by the FVAP in or near your area. The workshop schedule is available from your Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on page 3).

Update your 2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide by selecting CHANGES to the Voting Assistance Guide from the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov.

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Sharing Absentee Voting Good Ideas

The FVAP supports and encourages developing, collecting, sharing and implementing good ideas and lessons learned regarding the absentee voting process. The objectives are to:

- Enhance lines of communication among VAOs at all levels
- Facilitate global sharing of good ideas and lessons learned from successes and mistakes
- Enable local voting assistance programs to tailor and implement the good ideas and lessons learned.

An absentee voting Good Idea is an idea that has proven to be helpful to the citizens for whom you are responsible for providing assistance, and helpful to you in the performance of your duties. Good ideas are also processes and procedures that have produced excellent results within an organization and have contributed significantly to the mission of your voting assistance program.

During the performance of your duties as Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) or voting assistance volunteer there are activities and processes that you have done that have proven to be successful. Please share these with other VAOs. Overseas citizen organization VAOs and voting assistance volunteers may submit their good ideas directly to the FVAP via email at vote@fvap.ncr.gov. Embassy and consulate VAOs may submit their good ideas to FVAP through the Department of State Chief Voting Action Officer via email at votinginfo@state.gov. Uniformed services VAOs may submit their good ideas through their Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on page 3).

After each Federal election year the Services submit an after-action report that includes their good ideas. FVAP encourages VAOs to replicate these practices in their voting assistance plan

for implementation during this election year.

This issue includes some good ideas submitted by U.S. Embassy and Consulate VAOs in 2006. For additional embassy/consulate absentee voting good ideas, refer to the August, 2007 issue of this newsletter and the FVAP website.

Uniformed Services VAOs are also encouraged to review the good ideas submitted by each of the Services. Refer to the July, 2007 issue of this newsletter and to the FVAP website.

FVAP encourages the use of these ideas where possible during this election year. Refer to the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov and select Resources for Voting Assistance Officers (See image on page 3).

U.S. Embassy/Consulate VAO Good Ideas

Following are some of the absentee voting assistance good ideas submitted by U.S. Embassy and Consulate VAOs:

Frankfurt, Germany - We arranged (with Regional Security Officer assistance) for our greeters to take completed FVAP forms at the front gate so American citizens did not have to come all the way into the section in order to drop them off for mailing. We have a voter registration table at all of our American Citizen Information Nights (three in the past year). We staffed a non-partisan voter registration table at a debate co-sponsored by the Democrats and Republicans Abroad.

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“To Do” This Month: (Continued)

☑ Visit and become familiar with the FVAP website. In addition to the online forms and [State by State Instructions](#), note that [State Election Sites](#) can provide email addresses and phone numbers for local election officials. State election sites generally provide candidate information about 30 days before the election. Know the resources and tools available to you by selecting [Resources for Voting Assistance Officers](#). Encourage others to visit the site often.

☑ Feel free to copy, redistribute and use the information provided on the website, the *Voting Assistance Guide* and other FVAP absentee voting materials for your program activities. Example: you want to write an article/email on the importance of primaries, copy and use the information in the FAQs in Appendix C or D of the *Guide on this* topic.

☑ One of the best ways to distribute voting materials is to conduct local voting information sessions or training workshops. Make sure you include family members. Customize the FVAP workshop presentation (available on CD) to your local needs. Request a CD by emailing: vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

Embassy/Consulate Good Ideas (continued)

LaPaz, Bolivia - Our consular agents contacted each warden organization and went individually to their locations to facilitate voter registration by visiting and communicating with schools, churches, and businesses. In the capital, consular officers did the same. For the wardens who are able to reach larger numbers of American citizens, we sent them hard copies of the VAG, plus FWABs and FPCAs, to create "do it yourself" registration packets.

The monthly American Citizens Services (ACS) newsletter includes voting information so that American citizens who are not within reach of the Embassy still have easy access to the information they need.

Luxembourg – Consular employees staffed a booth at the American Women’s Club first brunch meeting last September, responding to questions about voting and assisting in completing registration forms. We reminded Americans at other events (AMCHAM lunches, 4th of July picnic) of procedures for registration and ballot submission, and we supplied the Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad with copies of the *Voting Assistance Guide* and forms. On 2 weekdays not normally designated for ACS services, we opened the office specifically for submission of absentee ballots, which we sent via APO if there was still time. For 2008, we are exploring options for fee-reduction or fee-waiver programs through courier services.

Melbourne, Australia - Melbourne got the message across and assisted our American citizen community through sending warden messages, posting voting information and a link to FVAP on the Embassy website, and displaying voting posters in the public area of the consular section. We created a “how to” flyer on various steps of the voting process and passed them out from the ACS window. We also maintained an easily accessible paper file in the waiting room with FVAP news for various states, engaged in regular email correspondence

with Democrats Abroad and Republicans Abroad, mailed registration and ballot forms at consular section expense, and provided guidance on all voting issues including how to use courier services for sending voting materials.

Ottawa, Canada - In addition to the info we put on our websites and in the e-mailed newsletter we send to registered American citizens, Ottawa set up a dedicated phone line during both the '04 and '06 elections with detailed information on registration. This allowed people with more complicated questions to leave a message and get a response very quickly. The voting information and number of the dedicated line was at the top of Ottawa’s phone tree, which meant people didn’t have to wade through the whole phone tree to get to voting information and assistance.

Harare, Zimbabwe - The biggest draw card to Harare’s voting program was having the Consul host a Town Hall meeting at the Ambassador’s residence, regional Town Hall meetings at local hotels in the main cities, and a voters’ drive at the Marine house. We maintain a standard operating procedure in the office for the voting program so that in the event the VAO is out of the office, any of the consular staff can answer questions. We maintain a “Voter’s Packet” to distribute to American citizens. It contains a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot, a copy of the On-Line Version of the Federal Write -In Absentee Ballot, a sample of an actual ballot, a list of the Primary and Election Deadlines for Overseas Citizens, a list of the General Election Deadlines for Overseas Citizens, and a copy of the Requirements for Voting and Establishing Voting Residence.

(Continued on page 3)

Share your good ideas!

Send your good ideas and lessons learned to your Department of State or Service Voting Action Officer.
(Contact information on page 3)

Embassy/Consulate Good Ideas (continued)

Taipei, Taiwan - We created a self-service "Voter's Corner" in the ACS waiting room, including a large instructional sign in Chinese and English explaining exactly how to complete the FVAP, step-by-step with graphics, and a locked mailbox to deposit the completed form. We also had a large inspirational "Vote" poster printed with text in Chinese and English, which delivers the message and adds color to our waiting room.

Adding the information in Chinese (especially the instructions) reduced the number of people asking our staff for assistance and also encouraged people to register to vote while waiting for other services. Because we have a very large dual-national American citizen population, providing information in Chinese really made a difference.

Munich, Germany – We inserted a 4" x 6" flyer in every passport renewal from May through September 2006.

Auckland, New Zealand - Every passport that leaves our office has a note encouraging the American citizen to register to vote online or to call us to obtain an FPCA card if they do not have access to the Internet.

More Good Ideas! – In addition to the above, other posts such as Embassy London, UK, are placing inserts with absentee voting information in passports that are being delivered to American citizens. Following are some items posts may want to include:

- "Register and Vote!"
- "Visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at www.fvap.gov. Select the Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Form and State by State

Instructions to complete the form using your state *Absentee Voting Guide.*"

- Embassy/Consulate VAO contact information, phone, address and embassy/consulate email address (e.g. votepostname@state.gov).
- Democrats Abroad, Republicans Abroad contact information and websites.
- Other local helpful information

LINKS

- [U.S. Federal Sites](#)
- [State Election Sites](#)
- [State Legislatures](#)
- [Overseas Citizens Groups](#)
- [Election Organizations](#)
- [Political Parties](#)
- [Miscellaneous Election-related Organizations](#)
- [U.S. Army](#)
- [U.S. Navy](#)
- [U. S. Air Force](#)
- [U.S. Marine Corps](#)
- [U.S. Coast Guard](#)

[Resources for Voting Assistance Officers](#)

[Resources for Election Officials](#)

For VAO good ideas, select **Resources for Voting Assistance Officers** from www.fvap.gov.
(As seen on the current FVAP Website)

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. Elizabeth Gracon, **tel:** (202) 647-6129, **fax:** (202) 647-6201
http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2964.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: Mr. Dave Stevens **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu), **fax:** (901) 874-6844, **DSN fax:** 882-6844, **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:** afpc/dpffofvotefund@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:** mra.voting.officer@usmc.mil, https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/url/page/m_ra_home/MR/Personnel/Voting

U.S. Coast Guard: LTJG Frank Marcheski **tel:** (202) 475-5375, **fax:** (202) 475-5927, **Email:** Frank.A.Marcheski@uscg.mil
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

Links to the above Services websites are available from the FVAP Website.

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

TOLL FREE:
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 Assistance Guide Updates

Voting Assistance Officer (and volunteers), remember to check for **CHANGES** to the *Voting Assistance Guide* at www.fvap.gov (see image below) and keep your *Guide* and applicable files updated. Remember to update your Election Dates Poster from this site as well. The following updates are current as of printing of this newsletter.

American Samoa now accepts the online Federal Post Card Application (OFPCA).

Delete "American Samoa" from the following sections of the *Guide* (page numbers refer to the July 2007 printed copy of the *2008-09 Voting Assistance Guide*):

- Chapter Two, page 15, 2nd column, last sentence
- Appendix C, page 436, 1st column, 3rd paragraph
- Appendix D, page 439, 2nd column, last paragraph
- Appendix F, page 448, 2nd column, 5th paragraph

Department of State New Deputy Voting Action Officer and website address:

Change Inside front cover and page 457

(Appendix H) Department of State, Deputy Voting Action Officer contact information to: Ms. Elizabeth Gracon, Phone: (202) 647-6129.

Change Department of State website to: http://travel.state.gov/law/info/info_2964.h tml.

North Carolina, Davie County Board of Elections new address is:

Davie County Board of Elections
161 Poplar Street, Suite 102
Mocksville, NC 27028-2148

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

Please remember to read your state's instructions before completing these forms!

- [State by State Instructions](#)
- [CHANGES](#) to the Voting Assistance Guide
- [Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Form](#)
- [Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot](#)

Select **CHANGES** to the **Voting Assistance Guide** from www.fvap.gov.
(As seen on the current FVAP Website)

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*.

Federal Voting Assistance Program
Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155



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