



December 1, 2008

Pend Oreille County Canvassing Board  
C/o The Honorable Marianne Nichols, County Auditor  
P.O. Box 5015  
Newport, WA 99156-5015

Dear Canvassing Board Members:

In accordance with RCW 29A.04.570, the State Election Certification and Training Program conducted a comprehensive review of election procedures in Pend Oreille County during the 2007 General Election.

The RCW also requires a follow-up visit prior to the next Primary or General Election to verify the County Auditor's Office has taken the steps necessary to correct the changes recommended in the review report.

The reviewer visited the Pend Oreille County Elections Department on October 27, 2008 and found that the Pend Oreille County Elections Department has changed their procedures to comply with the recommendations in the review report.

The lack of adequate space remains an issue. County election staff was able to secure the use of one of the meeting rooms on the third floor of their building for processing ballots for this election, but securing a larger, permanent space for future elections, should be a priority.

### **Ballot Boxes**

**Recommendation:** Numbered seals must be used on both ballot deposit boxes, and a log must be kept to document access.

**Follow up:** Numbered seals are used on both ballot deposit boxes and all access is documented on a log.

### **Unsigned Ballot Oaths and Mismatched Signatures**

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must adhere to the deadline stated in law and accept signatures only through the day before certification.

The letter for mismatched signatures needed to be reworded to include the additional requirements listed in the WAC. After discussing this with elections staff, the letter has already been revised and is in compliance.

**Follow up:** The letter for mismatched signatures has been updated. The procedures for accepting signatures has been updated to state that signatures will be accepted through the day before certification only.

### **Ballot Duplication**

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County elections staff must tabulate overvotes as overvotes and not duplicate them to be read differently by the tabulation equipment. This will allow their results to accurately report the overvotes and undervotes as is required. They will then be able to thoroughly inspect the results for anomalies.

**Follow up:** Procedures have been changed and ballots with overvotes and undervotes will no longer be duplicated. The overvotes will be tabulated as overvotes and undervotes as undervotes.

### **Provisional Ballots**

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County Elections Department must print provisional ballot envelopes that contain all of the required information. Procedures must be developed for issuing, receiving, and processing provisional ballots; and they must include a free access system for the voter to find out if the ballot was counted.

**Follow up:** Procedures are now in place for issuing, receiving, and processing provisional ballots. Envelopes have been printed and include the required information for voters.

Information is included with each provisional ballot that is issued that informs the voter of a free access system for the voter to find out if the ballot was counted.

### **Published Notices**

**Recommendation:** The Notice of Election must be revised to include all required information.

Because of the late registration procedure for electors new to the state of Washington, the statement that the registration files will be “closed against original registrations” is no longer accurate. The Pend Oreille Elections Department must reword the Notice of Closing of Registration to reflect the actual procedure. Additionally, the notice must include information for elderly and disabled persons, unless a separate notice with this information will be published.

**Follow up:** The Pend Oreille Elections Department has reworded the Notice of Closing of Registration to include all required information. Additionally, the notice includes information for elderly and disabled persons.

### **Questionnaire to Cities, Towns, and Districts**

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille elections staff must send the local jurisdictions a questionnaire every year and disseminate the returned information to the public as detailed above.

**Follow up:** The questionnaire was sent to the jurisdictions prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> in 2008, however it did not ask for salary information. The questionnaire that will be sent in 2009 does include the request for salary information.

### **Voters Requiring Verification of Identification**

**Recommendation:** The Pend Oreille County Elections Department must create a notice as prescribed and develop procedures for handling voters needing verification of identity prior to voting.

**Follow up:** A notice and the procedures for handling voters needing verification of identity prior to voting are being developed and should be completed before the next county election. The Pend Oreille County Elections staff have not had any voters needing verification of identity prior to voting, but must have proper notice and procedures in place should the occasion arise.

### **Ballot Applications**

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must create the appropriate applications, and develop procedures for issuing and processing both special and health care facility ballots.

**Follow up:** The applications and the procedures for issuing and processing both special and health care facility ballots have been developed and are available when needed.

### **Certification of the Election**

**Recommendation:** The elections staff must send the documents to the Secretary of State's Office no later than one day after certification. The staff should create a reminder in order to ensure compliance with this in the future.

**Follow up:** A reminder has been added to the election calendar and documents are sent within the required time frame.

## Disability Advisory Committee

**Recommendation:** The elections department must create a Disability Advisory Committee that includes persons with disabilities or experts at accommodations for persons who are disabled. This committee must then develop a plan to improve the accessibility of Pend Oreille County's elections.

**Follow up:** The Auditor and her staff have contacted individuals and organizations in their community and have been unsuccessful in finding members for an advisory committee. The elections department will work with Spokane County and other surrounding counties to meet this requirement.

## Precinct Boundaries

**Recommendation:** Precinct lines must be redrawn to ensure that all precincts are compact and contiguous. Whenever precinct lines are changed, visible physical features such as streets, rivers, or ridge lines must be followed.

**Follow up:** The Pend Oreille County Auditor's staff worked very hard to redraw precinct lines. A logical plan to redraw these lines was developed and presented to the County Commissioners at a public hearing for comment. The Commissioners voted against this plan and precinct boundaries remain as they were at the time of the original review and do not comply with RCW 29A.16.050.

The Auditors staff in Pend Oreille County has worked very hard to improve the efficiency and the accuracy of all elections in their county. They continue to make many necessary changes to policies and procedures also improving the accuracy and efficiency of their election processes.

I commend the elections department for their obvious dedication to the election process and their desire to improve an already good operation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 360.725.5785 or [kramsay@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:kramsay@secstate.wa.gov).

Sincerely;



Kay Ramsay  
Elections Program Specialist