County Clerk - Recorder
and Registrar of Voters
200 West 4th Street, Madera CA 93637
Clerk (559) 675-7721; Recorder (559) 675-7724; Elections (559) 675-7720; or Toll Free 1-800-435-0509; Fax (559) 675-7870
Rebecca Martinez, County Clerk-Recorder & Registrar of Voters

Election Observer Panel Plan

I. County and System Information

1. Name of county: Madera
2. Contact: Rebecca Martinez, County Clerk-Recorder
3. Telephone: 559-675-7721
4. Vendor/Voting System: DFM Associates – EIMS/BC-Win; Mark-a-Vote
5. Date: September 25, 2008

II. Purpose

In Madera County, the Election Observer Panel also serves as the Logic and Accuracy Board. The purpose of the Panel/Board is to provide an avenue for public observation of all procedures of ballot counting, which helps to ensure the integrity of the election process. In addition, the panel/board verifies that the tallying program accurately tallies the logic and accuracy test cards.

III. Invite

Approximately a month prior to the election, invitations are extended (by letter, e-mail or phone call) to a diverse cross-section of the community, including grand jurors, members of county central committees, elected officials in city and county government, law enforcement officers, retirees, and the like, to join the panel. Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing election day activities may also be included in the observer panel.

IV. General Duties/Rules for Observer Panel

Duties may include all or a portion of the following:

1. Observing the performance of required tests (logic and accuracy).
2. Verifying that ballot counting program accurately tallies the logic and accuracy test ballot cards by reviewing printed reports.
3. Certify to the performance of each of the above duties.

4. View all activities at the central counting site.
5. Serve on a ballot inspection board in the central counting site, if needed.
6. View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
7. View absentee and provisional ballot processing.
8. Pose questions to supervisors at the central counting site.

Panelists may not interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.

V. Pre-Election, Pre-Tabulation, Post-Election Test Observation and Verification

The Panel meets at the office of the County Clerk approximately ten days prior to the election for a brief orientation, and to observe and verify the pre-election logic and accuracy tests. The Panel is presented with an overview of the election process, including ballot tabulation.

The Panel reconvenes on election day at approximately 4:00 p.m. to observe and verify the pre-tabulation logic and accuracy tests – required prior to processing absentee ballots. Panelists may remain in the office through the evening, or leave the office and return at 8:00 p.m. to observe all aspects of the vote tallying process. At the conclusion of ballot tabulating on election night, the panel observes and verifies the post-election logic and accuracy tests, which are performed after all ballots have been tabulated on election night.

The Panel is required to return to observe and verify the logic and accuracy tests before and after ballots are processed during canvass. Panelists may observe any processes during the Official Canvass. To the extent possible, the Panel is comprised of the same members at all testing opportunities.

VI. Mechanism for Feedback

Panelists are asked to complete a feedback form concerning the ballot testing and tabulation processes, and have the opportunity to evaluate any other aspects of the administration of the election.

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General Rules for Observers

Observers may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch all procedures.
- View all activities at the central counting site on election day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View absentee and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of staff or voters at the polls.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site.

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections process.

Observers may not:

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.
- Touch any voting materials or equipment or sit at the official worktables.
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place) regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Touch election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place.

SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION

Date (E-60 to E-30)

Dear XXX:

The Department of Elections will convene an Election Observer Panel to observe activities associated with the *XXX* Election, which will be held on *XXX* date. Representatives of the county central committees, advocacy groups, the League of Women Voters, and the County Grand Jury, as well as media representatives, will be invited to participate.

Typically, members of the Panel visit one or more polling places on Election Day and then visit the ballot counting center to observe the tabulation of ballots on election night. Panel members are also invited to observe staff at the Department of Elections as they process absentee ballots. Members of the Panel will be provided with the information they need to participate in these activities.

If your organization would like to be represented on the Election Observer Panel, please notify *XXX* by mail, by phone at xxx-xxxx or by email at *XXX*. Please respond by *XXX* date, with the name of your representative. *XXX* will be available to meet with Panel members to explain their role in greater detail and to provide them with the information they will need.

Thank you for your interest in protecting our electoral system.

Sincerely,

XXX
Registrar of Voters/County Clerk

SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Date (no later than E-5)

TO: Precinct Inspectors

FROM: *XXX*
Registrar of Voters/County Clerk

SUBJECT: ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL

This letter introduces *XXX,* whom I have appointed to the Election Observer Panel for the *XXX* election. Members of the Election Observer Panel are invited to observe activities related to the administration of an election, including visiting polling places.

No person, including a member of the Election Observer Panel, may interfere with the operation of polling places. *XXX* and other members of the Election Observer Panel may ask you to explain certain operations and procedures. Please extend every courtesy to *XXX*.

If you have any questions, please call me at xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your cooperation and your service to our county's voters.