DE WITT COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE
CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PLAN
MAY 3, 2025
GENERAL ELECTION
CITY, SCHOOLS & HOSPITAL

PURPOSE

In accordance with Section 127.007 of the Texas Election Code, DeWitt County Elections Office has established and implemented a written plan for the orderly operation of the Central Counting Station. On election night, the Central Count Station ("CCS") is the place where the results of Verity Scan voting equipment are accumulated and the unofficial election results are generated.

LOCATION

The DeWitt County Central Counting Station will be located at DeWitt County Elections Office, 115 North Gonzales Street Suite A, Cuero, DeWitt County, Texas 77954.

CENTRAL COUNTING STATION PERSONNEL

In accordance with Sections 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code, the roles and responsibilities of the CCS personnel are as follows:

- **CCS - Manager –** Deidra McCollum, Elections Administrator
  Serve as the Central Counting Station Manager to manage the overall administration of the station and supervision of personnel.
- **CCS - Tabulation Supervisor –** Deidra McCollum, Elections Administrator
  Serve as the Tabulation Supervisor to operate automatic tabulating equipment and the accumulation of vote totals.
- **CCS - Assistant Tabulation Supervisor** – Natalie Carson, County Clerk
  Assist the Tabulation Supervisor.
- **CCS - Presiding Judge –** Robert Egg
  Serve to maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and resolve questions on voter intent.
- **CCS - Alternate Judge –** n/a
  Serve to assist Presiding Judge.

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

A clerk appointed will perform duties that are assigned by the authority that appointed the clerk (the Manager, Presiding Judge or Alternate Judge as applicable) pursuant to Texas Election Code 127.006)

PROCEDURES FOR CONVENING THE CENTRAL COUNTING 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 Judge.

The Central Counting Station will be available and assist in the conducting of the Public Test (LAT Test 1).

The Central Counting Station will convene on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. until all election reports are complete and distributed accordingly. The 2nd Public Test (LAT Test 2) will be performed prior to processing the Early Voting ballot records.

The personnel of the Central Counting Station will reconvene for the counting of provisional ballots and late ballots, if necessary.

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 counting station.

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

For use in Primary Elections, General Elections for State and County Officers and 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."

For use in all Other Elections that do not contain Party Affiliation:
- "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. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

No electronic or recording devices are permitted in the Central Counting Station. (Texas Election Code 127.002, 127.007, 61.007)

Devices that are capable of recording sound or images may not be used in the Central Counting Station unless they are being used by the Central Counting Manager, Tabulation Supervisor, Central Counting Station Presiding Judge, State Inspector, or voting system technician in the performance of their duties under the Texas Election Code.

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.

- All judges at Early Voting and Election Day shall sign the chain of custody documents to document the inventory control of equipment and votes. All verification must be performed with two or more individuals.
- Election Presiding Judge, Alternate Judge and/or election worker brings the voted paper ballots (in sealed Ballot Transfer Tote), locked & sealed, Verity Scanner, along with other designated equipment supplies and paperwork to the DeWitt County Elections Office.
- Intake personnel will verify location tags, serial number or county identification number on equipment and verify the seals on the bags and totes are the same as the seal numbers on the seal log. Intake personnel and Election Judge will sign, date and time the chain of custody document.
- The Central Counting Station Judge, DeWitt County Elections Staff, or designee, will break seal and remove the vDrive from the Scan, remove the tabulation tape from the Scan and place in the vDrive Transfer Envelope.
- The vDrive Transfer Envelopes will be delivered to the CCS Tabulation Supervisor.

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

RESOLVING VOTER INTENT

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

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

TABULATION PROCEDURES

ELECTION DAY – MAY 3, 2025
- The Presiding Judge of Central Counting Station, Manager and the Tabulation Supervisor will complete the 2nd Testing of the Tabulation Equipment (LAT Test 2).
- Before any data from the vDrives are loaded, a Zero Report will be printed from the Verity Count Computer and will be signed by the Presiding Judge, Alternate Judge, Manager and Tabulation Supervisor. The Zero Report illustrates that no pre-existing votes exist on the official database.
- After all Early Voting ballots by mail have been scanned, results will be saved to the vDrive, and locked and stored until read into Verity Central Count on Election Day.
- The Presiding Judge, Alternate Judge or designee will verify seals and Serial Numbers or County Identification numbers on all controllers and scanners and will be checked against the Seal Log for the Early Voting tabulation.
- On Election Day, Early Voting ballots, including ballots by mail received up to 7:00 p.m. will be tabulated, **but in NO case will results reports be created before 7:00 p.m.**
- All Early Voting and Election Day vDrives will be read into the tabulation Verity Count Station to tally the totals.
- The Central Counting Station Tabulation Supervisor will remove one vDrive at a time and place it in the Verity Count Computer.
    - o Once read, the Tabulation Supervisor will place the vDrive back in the envelope with the Tally Report Tape from Verity Scan.
    - o Mark on the envelope that the vDrive was read and tabulated.
    - o Initial the transfer envelope and tape verifying the vDrive reading matches the total on the Tally Report Tape.
    - o Central Counting Station Manager and Presiding Judge shall also verify that the vote totals on the vDrive matches the vote totals on the Tally Report tape.
- Early Voting results will be released when the polls close at 7:00 p.m. or upon the last voter casting a ballot at the polls. Election Day results will be released after all of the polling locations have come into the Central Counting Station. If possible, results will be released throughout the night as Election Day polling locations come into the Central Counting Station.
- 3rd Testing of the Tabulation Equipment will be conducted by the Tabulation Supervisor at the end of the night on the Verity Count Station.

RECONCILIATION

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

- Early Voting in Person – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from KNOWINK Poll Pad, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast. This information **shall** be provided on the reconciliation/balance out paperwork completed on the last day of early voting.
- 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)
- Election Day – Compare the number of voter check-ins from KNOWINK Poll Pad, plus the spoiled ballot log, to the number of ballots cast. (127.007(b)). This information **shall** be provided on the reconciliation/balance out paperwork completed on the last day of early voting.

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 Judge of the Central Counting Station is responsible for preparing the precinct election returns.

The precinct election returns reports will be generate from the Verity Count Station by the Tabulation Supervisor and/or Tabulation Assistant. The Presiding Judge is 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 Judge of the Central Counting Station, in cooperation with the County Clerk, may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted. (Section 127.1311, Texas Election Code)

Unofficial election results will be released and posted at the DeWitt County Elections Office and on the DeWitt County Elections Office webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. Election Day results will be posted after the last voting polling location has returned. In some cases, results may incrementally be posted as processed through acceptance and tabulation (Section 121.1311, Texas Election Code).

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.

POLL WATCHERS

Poll Watchers are entitled to be present during the time the Central Counting Station 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 of completion of the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training and their certificate of appointment to the appropriate Presiding Judge of the Central Counting Station 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 Count 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 the Tabulation Room.

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

The poll watcher must disable all recording devices upon entering the Central Counting Station.

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 DeWitt County Elections office, who is the general custodian of election records, through the appropriate retention period.

SECURITY PROCEDURES

A Licensed Peace Officer will be posted at the Central Counting Station as required at any time that the CCS is convened to ensure security of ballot transfer boxes containing voted ballots throughout the period of tabulation.