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2010 Professional Practices Program

On-line Democracy: It's Complete!

Polk County, FL

Submitted by:

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An important goal in the election business is to provide convenient, easy ways for voters to participate in the democratic process. In Polk County, Florida, offering on-line voter registration through our website is one of the ways we make our office more accessible to our constituents.

Our state requires an original signature on an official paper registration form. These forms have been available on our website for many years in portable document format (PDF). The user completed the form on the screen, then printed, signed, and mailed it to our office. Upon receipt, the document was checked for completeness, the data was entered into our voter registration database, and the document was scanned and stored. The data entry process was completed a second time for automatic verification, then the verified data and image was transmitted to our state voter registration system. Two to three weeks later, the voter received their first indication that their application had been received in the form of their voter information card.

In comparison to typical handwritten forms, this process provided a more convenient method of registering for many prospective voters. But many times, forms were incomplete, and had to be returned to the voter with a letter of explanation. Some commonly missed items:

- To be registered in Florida, an applicant must affirm that they are an American citizen, not a convicted felon, and have not been declared mentally incompetent. This information is gathered from check boxes on the form, and is often overlooked by applicants.
- Florida law requires a driver license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number. Some applicants either do not know, or do not feel comfortable releasing this information, and would leave the information blank.
- Florida law prohibits the use of post office box numbers as an address of residence.
 Although the form requests a "residence" address, many applicants still completed the form using a post office box.

Our new on-line voter registration service eliminates the possibility of oversights and reduces mistakes. It's interactive, and for some, less intimidating, as the applicant is only asked for a few pieces of information at a time. They also receive instant feedback if they have a problem. For example:

- If they do not respond in the affirmative regarding their citizenship, lack of felony conviction or mental competence, they cannot proceed. Error messages explain the requirements.
- If they are unable to provide their drivers license number or last four digits of their Social Security number, they cannot proceed, and again receive instructions on how to resolve the problem.
- Because a current *residence* address is required, post office box addresses are not accepted. Applicants must enter a *residence* address to continue.
- Age is validated, which not only notifies underage applicants they must wait until age 16 to pre-register, but helps identify "typos" made when filling in the date of birth.

At the end of the process, the applicant has the opportunity to review the data they have entered, and can return to any section to make changes. When the applicant clicks "SUBMIT," the data is displayed on a PDF version of the official voter registration form, and clear instructions are provided to print and sign the application, and mail it to our office. An e-mail is also sent to their inbox reminding them to do so.

Next, the benefit for the efficiency of our operation begins. The completed electronic version of the on-line application is sent to a holding queue in our voter registration database. When the signed application is received, the application number printed on the document is used to retrieve the electronic record. The data entry operator only has to check for a signature, since the on-line application enforces completion of all other required information. To process, the operator simply clicks the "UPDATE" button to transmit the record to the statewide voter registration system, then scans the paper form and "clips" the signature for electronic storage. No data entry is required. At this time, an e-mail is sent advising the voter their application has been processed and their new voter information card will be arriving soon.

The processed record then flows into our electronic queue from the state registration system, where it awaits "validation," a process which electronically compares the residence address against our countywide street index. If errors are found, an operator will take the appropriate steps to resolve them.

This new service was launched with no introduction or advertising, and the response was immediate and extremely positive. Thirty percent of applications received by mail in April are from this new process. Sixty-two percent were from people over forty years old. The number of on-line applications grows daily, and we anticipate a significant increase as we move closer to our fall elections. The benefits to both applicants and the efficiency of our operation are clear:

- More and more of our citizens are used to conducting business over the internet. We've created a simple, seamless process that increases voter convenience while complying with statutory voter registration requirements.
- Fewer steps are needed to process applications. The prospective voters are essentially completing the data entry.
- Fewer applications require follow up mailings, since on-line applications are complete when received, and minimal discrepancies are generally found during the validation process.
- We're saving on postage. Instead of mailing blank forms to citizens, we verify that they
 have internet access. Then staff refers them to our web page if they need to register or
 change their name or party affiliation transactions for which Florida law requires an official
 application form.
- The on-line application is also easy to find when a voter makes their own way to our web page there are several links from our home page that refer customers to the application.
- Newly registered voters and voters making changes to their record receive instant (and automated!) feedback. They immediately receive an e-mail message thanking them for registering and reminding them to print and mail-in the form, reminder messages if they haven't submitted the printed form within a specified time, and finally, confirmation that their application has been processed and their voter information card is on the way. These are communications that were not previously available unless the voter asked.
- We also provide a link to join us on Facebook. Our Facebook page is one way our outreach department provides timely and informative election updates to our voters.

The cost of creating this service was minimal, and will quickly be surpassed by the cost-savings resulting from more efficient processing.

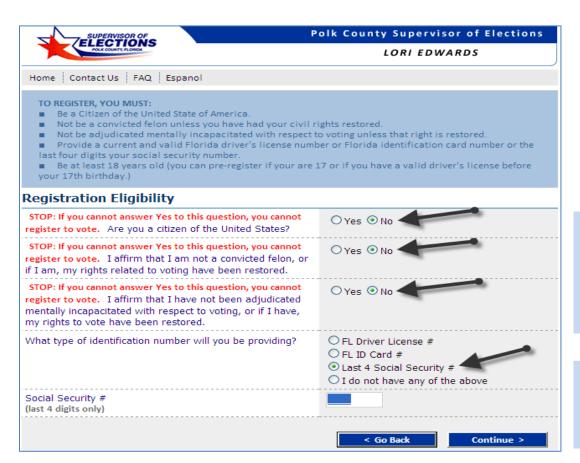


Several access points are provided to the on-line registration application on our home page.

SUPERVISOR OF	Polk County Supervisor of Elections
ADLX COUNTY, FLORICA	LORI EDWARDS
Home Contact Us FAQ I	Espanol
Register with a political Update your signature Once you have complete	ate of Florida
What would you like t	to do?
I need to?	Register as a new voter in Florida Output Request a replacement voter information Request a replacement voter information card
I will be changing my? (check all that apply)	☐ Address ☐ Party Affiliation ☐ Name ☐ Signature
	Continue >

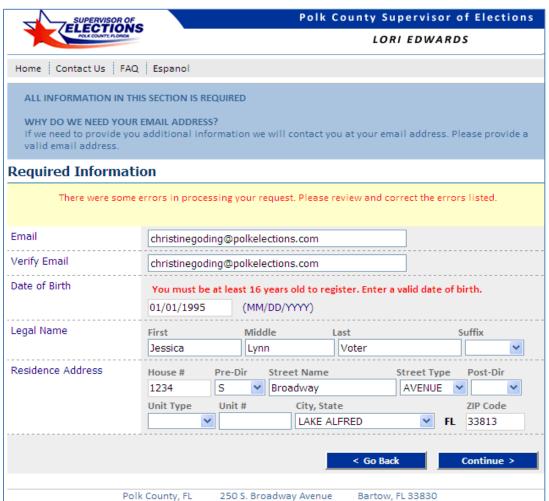
All home page links direct the user to this page.

If the voter selects 'Update my Florida voter registration', they are prompted to enter the type of change.

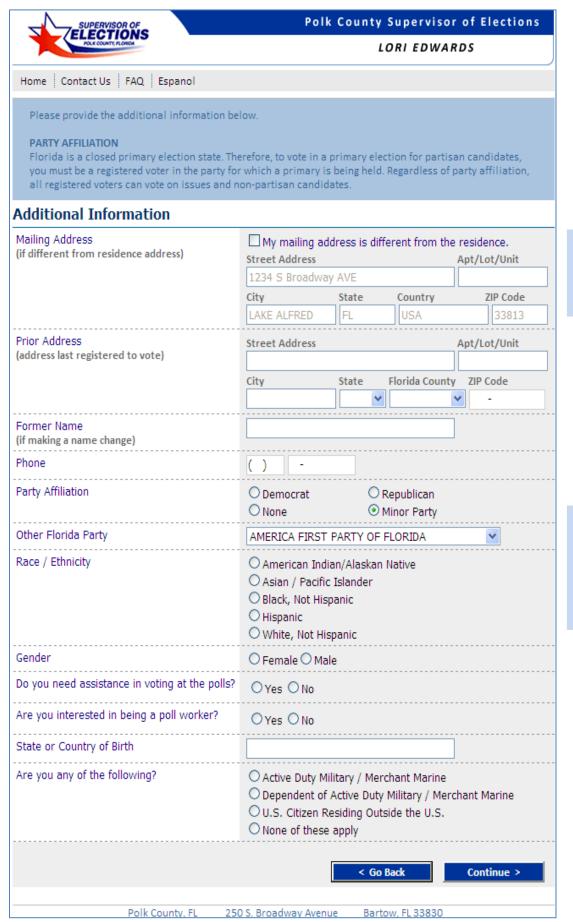


The voter must be able to answer yes to the first three questions to continue and to become a Florida voter.

The input 'mask' changes depending on the type of ID number that will be provided.



- E-mail address is verified so that we can contact the voter and report on the progress of their application.
- Validation of date of birth ensures the user is old enough to register.
- Address is not validated against the street index during this process, but the city drop-down provides only cities inside Polk County.
- The zip code is a required field.



Information on this screen is not required for voter registration and is not validated.

If Minor Party is selected, all of the approved minor parties in Florida appear in the dropdown list.

ELECTIONS

Polk County Supervisor of Elections

LORI FDWARDS

Home Contact Us FAQ Espanol

VERIFY ALL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED BELOW

Incorrect information can cause delays in your voter registration process.

Please make sure all information you provided below is accurate.

To modify any information, select the Make Changes link next to the information you need to change

If everything looks good, confirm that at the bottom of the page and select Submit Application.

Verify Your Information

What would you like to do?

Update my Florida voter registration information

Registration Eligibility

Make Changes

Are you a citizen of the United States?

YES

I affirm that I am not a convicted felon, or if I am, my rights related to voting have been restored.

YES

I affirm that I have not been adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to

voting, or if I have, my rights to vote have been restored. What type of identification number will you be providing?

Last 4 Social Security #

0119

Required Information

Make Changes

christinegoding@polkelections.com Email

Date of Birth

01/01/1990

Legal Name

Jessica Lynn Voter

Residence Address

1234 S Broadway AVE LAKE ALFRED FL 33813

Additional Information

Make Changes

Mailing Address

1234 S Broadway AVE LAKE ALFRED FL

USA 33813

Prior Address

Former Name

Phone

Party Affiliation AMERICA FIRST PARTY OF FLORIDA

Race / Ethnicity

Do you need assistance in voting at the polls?

Are you interested in being a poll worker?

State or Country of Birth Are you any of the following?

Is all the information you provided above correct? OYes ONo

Submit Application

Polk County, FL 250 S. Broadway Avenue Bartow, FL 33830



Polk County Supervisor of Elections

LORI EDWARDS

Dear Jessica,

Thanks! We've received your online voter registration application.

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to print your completed form and mail it to our office. Florida Law requires that we have a signed copy of your application.

To reprint your application, click the Print Application button on the right and enter application number 587 along with your email address. Then, sign the application and mail it to our office.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 534-5888, or email us at info@polkelections.com

Regards, Lori Edwards Print Application

facebook

When the user clicks 'Submit Application', an e-mail is sent to the address they provided. It lets them know that they must print, sign and mail the application to the elections office.

Voters are able to

application and make

review their

changes.

Dear Jessica Here is your completed voter registration application form. Your registration is not yet complete. Please print and sign this application form and mail it to the address below. Mail to: P.O. Box 1460 Bartow, FL 33831 Email: info@PolkElections.com Florida Voter Registration Application | Check boxes that apply: OFFICIAL USI
| New Registration | Address Change | Party Change | Name Change | Card Replacement | Signature Update | Web #: 587 4/26/2010 1:03:23 PM Are you a citizen of the United State of America?

☑ Yes □ No (If NO, you cannot register to vote) ☑ I affirm that I am not a convicted felon, or if I am, my rights relating to voting have been restored ☑ I affirm that I have not been adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting, or if I have, my right to vote has been restored IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO QUESTION 2. OR IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO AFFIRM THE STATEMENTS IN BYOU ARE INELIGIBLE TO REGISTER TO VOTE. DO NOT COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION. Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY) 01/01/1990 5 If you have a current and valid FL DL# or FL ID card#, you must provide the number in this box. If you do not have either, provide the last 4 digits of your SSN. If you have not been issued a FL DL#, FL ID card#, or SSN, write "NONE": 6 Suffix First Name Voter Jessica Lynn County of Legal Residence ddress Where You Live (Legal Residence) 1234 S Broadway AVE LAKE ALFRED Polk FL 33813 Mailing Address if Different from Above ZIP Code Apt/Lot/Unit City State 9 LAKE ALFRED USA 1234 S Broadway AVE FL 33813 Address Last Registered to Vote 10 Former Name if Making Name Change 11 Party Affiliation 🗆 Democratic Party 🖂 Republican Party 💆 minor party AMERICA FIRST PARTY OF FLORIDA 12 ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ Black, not Hispanic ☐ Hispanic 13 U.S. Citizen Currently Residing Outside the U.S. SIGNATURE: OATH:

I do solennly swear (or affirm) that I will protect and defend the
Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Stat
of Florida, that I am qualified to register as an elector under the
Constitution and the laws of the State of Florida, and that all
information provided in this application is true. Sign or mark on line in box below. (Invalid without signature or mark of applicant) X Date:

The voter is instructed to print this page, sign it and send it to our office.

Registration	# 587	Find A	pplication	
Registration 4/26/2010 State Voter			Update FVRS Received	Applied Cancelled Processed Applied
				☐ ID Replacement ☐ Signature Update
Legal Name	Jessica	Lynn	Voter	
Date of Birth	1/1/1990		ID	0119
Email	christinegoding@polke	lections.com	Phone	
Race	christinegoding@polke	elections.com	Phone Gender	
		lections.com		
Race Party			Gender Birth Place	1234 S Broadway AVE
Race Party Residence	AFP	AVE	Gender Birth Place	1234 S Broadway AVE LAKE ALFRED FL 33813 USA
Race Party Residence	AFP 1234 S Broadway A	AVE	Gender Birth Place	LAKE ALFRED FL
Race Party Residence Address	AFP 1234 S Broadway / LAKE ALFRED 33813	AVE	Gender Birth Place Mailing Address	LAKE ALFRED FL

When the application is received at the office:

- 1. The application number is typed in to the program at left and 'found'.
- User clicks 'Update FVRS'.
 The e-mail notification below is sent to the voter.
- 3. The user scans the image.
- The data flows into the process queue where HSMV records and transfers from other counties are received.

The voter is notified by e-mail that their application has been received and a voter ID card will be mailed to them. We also invite them to join us on Facebook, where we'll keep them updated with timely election information.

SUPERVISOR OF	Polk County Supervisor of Electio	
ANY COMPTITIONS	LORI EDWARDS	
Dear Jessica,	Join us on facebook.	
Your voter registration is complete! You'll receive a vinformation card in the mail within 3 weeks. If you hav questions, give us a call at 534-5888, or email us at info@polkelections.com .		
Please remember that our website has lots of helpful i voters (<u>www.polkelections.com</u>), including precinct loc ballots, early voting information and more!		
Regards, Lori Edwards		