

County discusses designated polling locations, voting convenience centers

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 28 August 2020 05:42



County discusses designated polling locations, voting convenience centers

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 28 August 2020 05:42

The McKinley County Board of Commissioners discussed a resolution about the locations of Election Day polling places for all upcoming statewide elections during their Aug. 18 meeting.

McKinley County Bureau of Elections Manager Marlene Custer spoke about the item.

“This resolution makes it so the [voting center at] Thoreau Fire Station will be moving to the Thoreau Public Safety Building,” Custer said. “And then all the rural precincts will be designated a voting convenience center.”

The next step is to ensure these voting locations have the capability to allow people to securely vote on Election Day.

“We are testing all of the sites now, like the Navajo Nation chapters and all the rural precincts within McKinley County for internet capability, and most of them are checking out good,” Custer said. “But if they don’t check out [for internet access] in one of these precincts, they are going to stay traditional with a regular ballot.”

Commissioner Tommy Nelson said he thinks the Navajo Nation may have problems, including technical errors, with the general election and the various chapters, and asked Custer to look into the issue.

Custer said the Bureau of Elections has been meeting with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, the Navajo Nation Election Office, and the Navajo Nation Office of Community Development to make sure complications don’t crop up. The county is having weekly meetings with the Navajo Nation.

“We know they’re going to have an election and they’re working with us on these locations,” Custer said. “So far, everything is looking good. We are making progress right now with the Navajo Nation.”

County discusses designated polling locations, voting convenience centers

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 28 August 2020 05:42

County Attorney Doug Decker reiterated since each voting location is going to act as a voter convenience center, that means those buildings have to have internet connectivity because of Senate Bill 4 in the June special session.

“The Bureau of Elections is testing in each site for internet access, and if they don’t have that capability, the Senate Bill mandates they don’t close or consolidate any precinct on any reservation or pueblo unless we have a written agreement with the nation that says we can close it and they want us to close it,” Decker said.

Decker said if it turns out there is no connectivity at any of the voting locations, the commission will be presented with another resolution before the election to change it to a regular voting precinct instead of a voting convenience center.

“We are going to continue with the weekly meetings with the Navajo Nation as mentioned before, and we are working well to get this thing accomplished,” Decker said.

The county approved the resolution to designate the Thoreau Public Safety Building to be the new voting precinct location instead of Thoreau Fire Station, and for the voting locations in rural precincts to be changed into Voting Convenience Centers with a 3-0 vote.

By Cody Begaye
Sun Correspondent