



1675 BROADWAY, SUITE 1850
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

(303) 534-5409 VOICE
(303) 534-3322 FAX

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For More Information Contact:

Drew Kramer

Office Phone: (303) 534-5409 ext. 113

Cell Phone: (720) 530-5899

Email: dkramer@intermountainca.com

ABSENTEE BALLOT MACHINES TESTED FOR FEB. 24TH ELECTION

LITTLETON, CO (Feb. 18, 2004) – Preparation for the Feb. 24 recall election in Arapahoe County moved forward today with the successful testing of optical scanning machines that will be used to count absentee ballots. The public test was witnessed by Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder Tracy Baker – the subject of the recall effort – as well as most of the candidates seeking to replace him.

According to County Assessor and designated recall election officer Ed Bosier, more than 13,000 absentee ballots have been requested, and approximately 8,000 have been returned as of today. Though state statutes allow election officials to begin counting absentee ballots as early as 10 days prior to the election, Bosier said no ballots will be run through the machine before Monday. No results will be known until after the regular polls close at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday.

Wednesday's testing procedure allowed Baker and fellow witnesses to fill out sample ballots and run them through the scanners to see how closely the results matched the voters' intent. Though some participants attempted to fool the machines by marking ballots lightly, erasing and rewriting marks or using other tricks, the scanners proved reliable. During the actual election any ballots rejected by the machines will be reviewed by a Resolution Board made up of election judges and counted accordingly.

All participating witnesses – including replacement candidates Travis Nicks, Bennett Rutledge and Kathleen Conway and other representatives of the Republican, Democrat and Libertarian parties – were asked to sign off on the test results. All but Baker did so.

Sample ballots and other information about the special recall election can be found online at <http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/AS/RecallElection.asp>.

About the Arapahoe County Assessor's Office

The Assessor's Office discovers, lists, classifies and values all real and personal property in Arapahoe County. The Office is also responsible for maintaining public records, including ownership and parcel maps; submitting the Abstract of Assessment to the Colorado Division of Property Taxation; certifying values to taxing entities; and producing the warrant roll. The Arapahoe County Assessor, Ed Bosier, began working for the Office in 1987 as a certified appraiser/supervisor in Land Development. Voters first elected him to the Office of the Assessor in 1995. He is currently serving his third term, which expires January of 2007.

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