

Kane County, IL  
County Clerk

*"Comprehensive Approach to  
Election Administration"*

**Beverly Kaufman  
Harris County Clerk  
1001 Preston, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002**

**RE: NACRE Nomination**

**Dear Ms. Kaufman:**

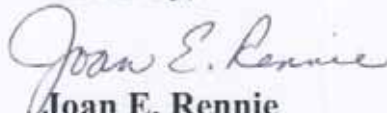
**I enclose, in triplicate, the nomination of John A. "Jack" Cunningham, the elected Kane County (Illinois) Clerk for a BEST PRACTICE Award to be considered by the Election Interest Group for presentation at the Annual Conference in Hawaii.**


**We both appreciate the opportunity to suggest Jack for recognition that he richly deserves.**

**Will he be advised of his nomination prior to the conference?**

**Please call either of us if further information as to Jack is needed, such as biographical notes.**

**Sincerely,**

  
**Joan E. Rennie  
Chief Deputy Clerk**

  
**David Bruun  
Director of Elections**

**719 S. Batavia Avenue, Geneva, Illinois 60134 630-232-5990**

TO: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY RECORDERS, ELECTION  
OFFICIALS AND CLERKS

Attention: Beverly Kaufman  
Harris County Clerk  
1001 Preston, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

May 25 2005

The undersigned submit the name of **JOHN A. CUNNINGHAM**, County Clerk of Kane County, Illinois for consideration for a BEST PRACTICE honor in the field of Election Administration. The submission that follows is necessarily divided among 5 items of protocol/procedures that have been established in the Office of the County Clerk, Kane County, Illinois. (It is the function of the County Clerk to administer elections within the county boundaries).

**DEMOGRAPHICS OF KANE COUNTY, ILLINOIS:**

The County Seat is in Geneva, about 40 miles West of Chicago. The population of Kane County is approaching 500,000 and currently has approximately 201,000 registered voters. In the November 2004 election, some 144,000 votes were cast in the local, State and Federal contests representing almost 72% voter turnout.

The County Clerk is an elected position; Mr. Cunningham was elected in November 2002.

1. **ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS** from the various polling locations to the election administration offices during Election Day:

Mr. Cunningham's office established a core of Deputy Clerks who are sworn in on Election Day as representatives of the Clerk's office. These persons are assigned 6 precincts each as their area of responsibility on Election Day. Each is equipped with a cellular telephone for communication to the Clerk's office. Each Deputy has the responsibility to determine any procedural problems that may exist in a polling location as well as to become aware of any equipment needs or shortage of supplies. They are directed to telephone the **Election Call Center** (detailed in sub head 2) to report any such needs before leaving any polling place. In addition, they are to obtain a vote count at each visit, including provisional ballots cast, and transmit that information to Election Call Center. The Deputies also carry additional supplies, such as batteries, in the event that a polling location has need. Each Deputy is provided a "check list" of items upon which they are to report to **Election Call Center**. Each Deputy Clerk is to visit all of their assigned

precincts as many times as they can during Election Day. On average, each precinct is visited 4 times.

The direct benefit of telephoning the number of votes cast to Election Central is in two areas:

- a. the percentage of votes cast during the day allowed the Clerk's office to predict by 6:00 P.M. (the polls close at 7:00 P.M. in this jurisdiction) the total number of votes cast within 2% of the actual votes cast. This allows staff, for the actual tabulation of votes, to prepare for a "heavy" or "light" turnout as the case may be.
- b. the number of Provisional votes cast is also determined from these calls to the **Election Call Center**. This allows the election department office to pre-determine the staff necessary to tabulate these votes in a prompt and timely fashion on election eve. This assists in the accuracy of the unofficial election results.

2. The establishment of the **Election Call Center**:

In the November 2004 Presidential Election, the election department received over 5,000 telephone inquiries on the day before the election and over 8,000 calls on Election Day. The staff could not effectively deal with so many calls.

Mr. Cunningham's office created a "call center" designed to deal with telephone calls related to election matters. A separate facility was established (on site, but apart from the other functions of the Clerk's office) that has different dedicated telephone numbers given to the aforementioned Deputy Clerks, Election Judges in the various precincts, media, elected officials and the general public. The Call Center was staffed by 12 persons to take all calls with the exception of calls from the field Deputy Clerks. Four persons were assigned to take calls from these field Deputy Clerks so as to allow the entering of voting information into a central database. This is the vehicle by which the vote total and percentages referred to above was calculated. This designation also allowed the field Deputy Clerks direct access to the Clerk's office for any special issues/needs that may arise.

Additionally, each of the operators have access to direct resolution of issues that the individual operator is directed not to answer. This type of question, whether it be from the public, media or others, is directed to what is termed a Level 2 or Tier 2 staff member, i.e. Director of Elections, Chief Deputy Clerk or to County Clerk Cunningham himself.

The questions that the operators are allowed to answer are listed in Exhibit A, attached.

While Federal regulations only require that Kane County have ballots and related voting material in English and Spanish, Mr. Cunningham's office instituted a "Spanish Hot Line" with a dedicated telephone number for two weeks prior to the election that was staffed by a bi-lingual person on election day as well as the days preceding the election.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH HAVA:**

Clerk Cunningham's office has accomplished the following with reference to the Help America Vote Act:

Prior to the presidential election of 2004, an outside vendor was retained to complete a physical inspection of 185 separate polling locations in the election jurisdiction. After this survey, the office provided the following equipment/services to the polling locations:

- a. 45 devices that allow a handicapped person to audibly signal for assistance from the election judges. This audible device consisted of a stanchion that allowed the voter to depress a "call button" which notifies the election judges that assistance is needed. These devices were placed outside of the polling location so as to allow the voter to make a request for assistance without the necessity of actually gaining access to the polling location.
- b. Mr. Cunningham's office also placed wheelchair accessible ramps at 12 locations as well as ramp-style thresholds at 14 locations to facilitate entry, whether it is by wheelchair or voters with "walkers" or similar devices.
- c. the office is in the process of obtaining proposals from vendors to provide alternate voting systems that will be in compliance with HAVA. It is anticipated that selection of a voting system will be made by the end of June 2005 and fully operational for the next election scheduled in this jurisdiction, March 21<sup>st</sup> 2006.

### **4. ELECTION JUDGE'S SURVEY:**

The office employed 985 election judges for the April 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 election. When the payroll checks were mailed to the Judges, a single page, 11-question survey was enclosed with a return envelope. The survey did not require any identification from the responder.

The purpose of the survey is to allow the election department direct information from the persons who recognize the problems that may arise on Election Day and to identify areas in which improvement in the administration of an election may be made.

The resulting response was almost 85% return of the surveys and approximately 10% of those returned having additional comments/suggestions contained therein. These responses provided insight into issues confronting the office, ranging from facilities to substantive issues of campaigning in or near polling locations. If the responses included a name and telephone number, a process was initiated to have a staff member personally call those judges to gain further insight and opinions. Not only does this action provide valuable information to the election department, it provides contact with the judges so that they recognize their important role in the process. This also assists in the retention of elections judges, recognized as one of the preeminent issues facing election officials in any jurisdiction.

#### **5. ELECTION STAFF MANAGEMENT:**

Mr. Cunningham instituted a program wherein his entire election staff is cross-trained in the various areas of responsibility in his office. This includes a calendar schedule of instruction among his office staff, where set hours are established on a daily basis for instructional purposes. Not only does this provide "backup" in the event of illness or personnel changes, it demonstrates to the individual employee the role that their particular function has in the election process. This protocol has been met with enthusiasm by his staff.

Sincerely and enthusiastically submitted by:



Joan E. Rennie, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Kane County Clerk's Office



David Bruun, Director of Elections  
Kane County Clerk's Office

719 S. Batavia Avenue, Geneva, Illinois 60134 630-232-5990

## Call Center Operators Scope Consolidated Election – April 5, 2005

The following issues will be the Call Center Operator's scope for the April 5<sup>th</sup> election:

- What hours are the polls are open? (6:00 am until 7:00 pm)
- Is the voter registered? (*iVoter instructions, pages 4-7 in Guidelines*)
- Where is the voter's polling place located? (*iVoter instructions, pages 4-7 in Guidelines*)
- Electioneering Guidelines – i.e. where signs may be posted (campaign free zones) (*see Electioneering section*)
- Referenda and questions on the ballots and what townships are applicable. (*see Referenda section*)
- When does registration re-open? (Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>)
- When is the next election? (General Primary is March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 and the General Election is November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006)
- Who is on my ballot? A person can view sample ballots at the polls before they vote, or they can go online ([www.kanecountyelections.org](http://www.kanecountyelections.org)) and find their registration file, which will have their sample ballot.
- Where is ... in our supply cases? (This question is asked by election judges on Election Day because they can't find something like applications or absentee ballots in their cases) – They usually haven't looked through all of their cases (*see Election Precinct Supplies Checklist*)

EXHIBIT "A"