

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN



Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Communique for Chief Official Agents Issue One: January 27, 2017

With a by-election to be held by May 29, Elections Saskatchewan is very much “gearing up” to administer the coming electoral event. Today, I’m sending along the first issue of our *Saskatoon By-Election Communiques for Chief Official Agents*. As in the past, I encourage you to share any applicable information with your teams.

Voter Registration

Last week, I mentioned that we were preparing to open our online Voter Registration Portal in the near future. The portal is now active and accepting new registrations or updates to existing ones. The address, again, is <http://www.elections.sk.ca/VoterRegistration/>.

We are also sending voter registration letters to just under 1,500 addresses within the constituency for which we either have no registered voters or which have a high rate of turnover. These letters were finalized earlier this week and should be in the mail stream. I have attached a template letter for your information.

Innovation in Electoral Management

For an election management body, a by-election is a great (and in some cases, the only) opportunity to test new ways of serving our stakeholders more effectively. With this in mind, Elections Saskatchewan intends to either “pilot” or introduce in “parallel” certain processes during the upcoming by-election. In circumstances where we are able to introduce new procedures under existing legislation, we will conduct pilot projects. A parallel process means we will be testing new procedures, which cannot be run as pilot projects under current legislation, alongside existing ones to evaluate effectiveness and efficiency. I will briefly outline our plans below.

- **Test a Parallel Process for e-poll books at advance polls** – At each advance poll in the constituency, we will have an additional worker acting as an “electronic poll clerk” (EPC). The EPC will have a computer and perform the same duties as the traditional poll clerk but do so electronically. The end result after the election will be an electronic poll book that we can compare to the official poll book and test for accuracy and completeness. This parallel process should have little to no

impact on the administration of voting as the traditional system will be used to ensure the integrity of the process. The purpose of the parallel process is to provide valuable data on the feasibility of such a system. During this by-election, we will not be sharing electronic data with registered political parties. Candidate representatives will be able to access information on who has voted at advance polls in the same manner as during the general election – by consulting the deputy returning officer and asking to view the poll book. For more information, you can consult the *GE28 Communique for Chief Official Agents* dated March 22, 2016: <http://www.elections.sk.ca/candidates-political-parties/communiques/>.

I will offer a reminder on this closer to the beginning of advance voting.

- **Pilot electronic registration at Personal Care Homes** – In past elections and by-elections we registered voters at personal care homes using traditional paper forms which would then be entered into a computer with Voter Information Cards produced and mailed to the facility for delivery. In this by-election, we will be using technology at Personal Care Homes to confirm, move or remove voters and print a Voter Information Card on-site for residents in those personal care homes that will be designated as mobile polls.
- **Pilot technology to confirm residency at the hospital poll** – Our current process requires our workers to consult a paper-based Urban Street Index and Poll Key to determine residency for potential voters who are in the hospital on election day. For the by-election, we will be equipping our hospital poll workers with a tablet computer which can be used to quickly look up a voter's address to determine whether they are eligible to vote in the by-election. The workers administering this process would carry the traditional paper-tools as well for back-up purposes.
- **Pilot fabric ballot boxes for mobile polls** – As you know, a mobile poll team must visit multiple locations throughout the day, transferring a physical ballot box to each location. Security and integrity is traditionally maintained through seals on the ballot box. Under this new system, a fabric ballot box that is easier to carry will be tested – in place of seals, tamper proof zip tags with serial numbers would be used. There will be no end difference in terms of election materials found within the ballot boxes.
- **Pilot e-transfer to pay election workers** – My staff are continuing to work with the Ministry of Finance on this process but we are hopeful that we will be able to offer election workers the option to receive their pay by e-transfer as opposed to a physical cheque. Depending on when the by-election is called, it may not be possible to fully test the interface and implement, but we are working towards this goal.
- **Pilot a “common auditor”** – We are exploring whether our team in Corporate Services and Electoral Finance could work with an audit firm in advance to help ensure the audits of candidate election expense returns satisfy more of Elections Saskatchewan's requirements. This would be completely optional for candidates but we believe there would be benefits for candidates and business managers as well as internal time savings.

There are of course a number of other activities that we are doing in efforts to refine and improve the services we offer to our stakeholders. These include making the end of the day closing procedures easier for our workers and shifting our media placement dollars to better reach the general public.

I hope you see that we are committed to testing items that will be of benefit to all stakeholders in the electoral process while also introducing changes that will increase integrity in the system and potentially offer future cost savings. I would note that given that these are all new processes it is possible that some will need to be changed or eliminated if time does not allow for successful implementation. If substantial changes are made to any of these plans, I will let you know through a By-Election Communique.

Saskatoon Meewasin Constituency Maps

The constituency map for Saskatoon Meewasin is the same that was used during the recent general election – all polling divisions are unchanged. Given this, Elections Saskatchewan will not be printing constituency maps for political parties or candidates for the pending by-election. Should you need to print large-scale maps, we have a list of printers who offer this service on our website at <http://www.elections.sk.ca/voters/maps/list-of-saskatchewan-printers.pdf>. Please contact our office if you run into any issues.

As always, if you have questions or comments, please be in touch. All of us at Elections Saskatchewan are looking forward to serving you throughout the next few months.



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