SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS COLLIER COUNTY

MELISSA R. BLAZIER

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES & DEADLINES

2023 City of Everglades City Election
Voter Registration Deadline: October 30
Election Day: November 28

2024 Presidential Preference Primary
Voter Registration Deadline: February 20
Early Voting: March 9-16
Election Day: March 19

2024 Primary Election
Voter Registration Deadline: July 22
Early Voting: August 10-17
Election Day: August 20

2024 General Election
Voter Registration Deadline: October 7
Early Voting: October 21-November 2
Election Day: November 5

Early voting dates subject to change.

Melissa R. Blazier
Supervisor of Elections

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Since 2004, October has been declared Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a dedicated time for both the public and private sectors to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity.

By designating elections as critical infrastructure in 2017, election officials are provided with access to resources that help harden their networks and train staff to identify malicious cyber activity and prevent the risk of penetration to our systems.

There are a few things to remember when it comes to the cybersecurity as it relates to elections:

1. Elections are decentralized. Each state maintains control over elections and in Florida, each county is responsible for voting and elections within their jurisdiction.

2. Network hubs are not connected. The voter registration network, voting system, central tabulation, website and office networks are all separate. This makes it hard for adversaries to cause harm to the elections process.

3. We make significant investments in cybersecurity to protect the integrity of our elections. Our office has undergone penetration testing to identify and correct any vulnerabilities and we continue to maintain partnerships with other agencies such as DHS, the FBI and the Department of State who keep us abreast of the latest trends in cybersecurity so we can remain vigilant.

By keeping our elections secure, we are building confidence in the electoral process and that is our number one priority.

It was great to be among my peers for a round table discussion with Florida's CFO, Jimmy Patronis.

OUT & ABOUT

Transparency Tours

Since 2022, our office has conducted numerous transparency tours for local organizations and the general public. These tours offer a setting where participants can learn more about how elections are conducted in Collier County.

Our goal for these tours is to build confidence about our elections and we encourage those who participate to be ambassadors for our office while in the community.

Visit our website: www.CollierVotes.gov/TOUR to set up a tour with our staff. We can't wait to meet you!

Q&A on Cybersecurity

In the spirit of Cybersecurity Awareness Month, we have enrolled Network Security Administrator, Joseph Hudak, to discuss some of the security efforts our office takes all year to ensure that the Supervisor of Elections networks are secure and your votes are safe.

Joseph, you have been with our organization for over six years now. Can you tell us a little about your background prior to joining the Supervisor of Elections office?

I served in the U.S. Army for 7 ½ years working in an IT position and as a recruiter. I moved to SWFL in 2016 and saw an opening at the SOE. I thought it would be a good opportunity to continue my career in public service.

You have some impressive credentials after your name; can you briefly describe what these credentials mean?

The CompTIA Security+ validates the skills needed to perform core security functions and GIAC Security Essentials Certification demonstrates qualifications for IT system roles with respect to security tasks.

I'm also in the process of earning my Florida Certified Elections Professional designation from the Florida Supervisors of Elections Association and the Certified Elections/Registration Administrator designation from the National Association of Election Officials.

What are a few measures the IT Department and the Supervisor of Elections office as a whole are taking in order to keep our cybersecurity robust and effective?

We do a lot, but to name a few things, we conduct annual and quarterly training, yearly check-ups with the state to ensure we are in compliance with regulations, and we also routinely conduct audits of permissions and access.

Can you advise what voters can do to ensure that their vote is secure and that their ballot has been counted?

Our office offers several services to assure voters that their votes are safe including BallotTrax, which tracks your vote-by-mail ballot from the time we mail it to the voter to when it's been delivered back to our office for tabulation.

I also encourage voters to go on one of our transparency tours. I think it provides an in-depth look at how we secure our systems and conduct elections here in Collier County.

MYTH BUSTER

MYTH — Election Results are transmitted via public Wi-Fi on election night.

BUSTED — The preliminary results from ballots cast on Election Day are encrypted and then transmitted to the Supervisor of Elections office via a secure virtual private network. The Supervisor of Elections staff has several controls in place including a series of audits to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Get more Myth Busters - follow us on social media!

@CollierVotes | #ElectionReady

Spotlight

We have a winner!

Golden Gate High School is the champion of the 2023 High School Voter Registration Challenge! In total, this year's contest collected 1,184 voter registrations and pre-registrations – the highest in the history of the challenge. In fact, 309 of those registrations and pre-registrations were from students at Golden Gate High School. As the winner of the challenge, Supervisor of Elections, Melissa R. Blazier will meet with teachers, staff and students to present them with a plaque recognizing their accomplishment this year.

The High School Voter Registration Challenge is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year. The schools that participated this year were Aubrey Rogers High School, First Baptist Academy, Gulf Coast High School, Golden Gate High School, Immokalee High School, Lely High School, Lorenzo Walker Technical High School, Marco Island Academy, Naples High School and Palmetto Ridge High School.

We would like to give a special thank you to all the participating schools and especially to the dedicated teachers and staff who worked with us to ensure this year's challenge was a success!