

Ballot

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The deadline to register to vote for the primary election on March 1 is Feb. 12.

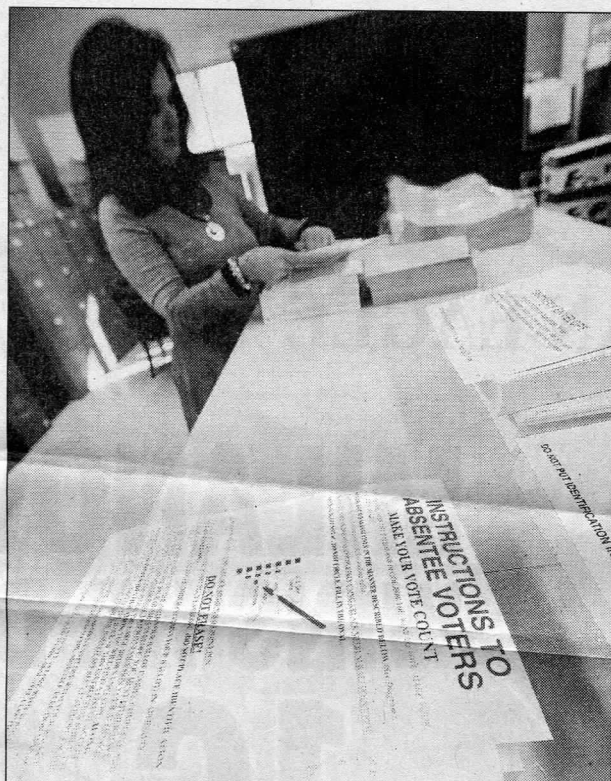
Houston County Circuit Clerk Carla Woodall said an absentee ballot application must be returned to the circuit clerk's office by the actual voter who is making application, or sent by U.S. mail to the circuit clerk's office. She said only one application per envelope is accepted.

Once an application is received and verified, Woodall said the circuit clerk's office sends the residents a ballot and an affidavit to be signed and returned to the office by the deadline for a particular election. She said a copy of photo identification is also required for the absentee ballot process to be complete.

Woodall said the office started accepting absentee ballot applications Jan. 6. She said it is important for residents to file the application early so they are notified in time for the election if there are any errors on the application.

"One thing very important to note is to ensure you have your party preference notated," she said.

"If you don't, we're not going to know if we need to send a Republican ballot or a Democratic ballot. If you send the ballot back by mail, it's very important to complete the affidavit, note and to sign it and



DANNY TINDELL / DOTHAN EAGLE

Houston County Circuit Clerk and Absentee Election Manager Carla Woodall arranges files at the Houston County Courthouse Wednesday afternoon.

have it notarized or two witnesses."

Dale County Circuit Clerk Delores Woodham said some misconceptions could lead to the inaccurate filing of an absentee ballot.

"A lot of people think absentee ballots are for early voting, but it's not," she said.

"It's supposed to be used if a person is handicapped, or a student, or in the military. It is also only to be used by a registered voter, and once we enter them into the computer as an absentee vote, they will not be able to vote the day

of the election at an actual polling place."

While Woodham said it is not illegal for residents to have help completing an absentee ballot application, she said it is important an absentee ballot reflects the true opinion of the voter who is voting by the absentee ballot.

"There's no fraud in helping someone fill out an application, but it has to be signed by the voter themselves," she said.

In Houston County, three people were convicted last year and another this year related to absentee voter fraud in the 2013

Important 2016 Election Dates

- » City of Dothan District 6 Commission Election – Feb. 9
- » Feb. 4 Last day for voter to make application for an absentee ballot with the city clerk
- » President Preference Primary Election – March 1
- » Feb. 12 Voter registration hand-delivery deadline (due to Monday holiday)
- » Feb. 13 Last day for voter to postmark a voter registration form
- » Feb. 25 Last day for voter to make application for an absentee ballot
- » Feb. 29 Last day for voter to hand-deliver or postmark an absentee ballot*
- » Primary Runoff Election (if necessary) – April 12
- » March 28 Voter registration deadline
- » April 7 Last day for voter to make application for an absentee ballot
- » April 11 Last day for voter to hand-deliver or postmark an absentee ballot*
- » General Election – Nov. 8
- » October 24 Voter registration deadline
- » November 3 Last day for voter to make application for an absentee ballot
- » November 7 Last day for voter to hand-deliver or postmark an absentee ballot

Source: alabamavotes.gov

More information on voting:

Visit www.alabamavotes.gov

Dothan District 2 election between Commissioner Amos Newsome and candidate Lamesa Danzey.

The convictions stemmed from suspicion over the substantial number of absentee votes in Newsome's favor (119-5) that led to his win by just 14 votes in the election.

Dale County District Attorney Kirke Adams said absentee votes that don't reflect the general vote usually cause some concern, as well as multiple absentee ballot applications that are returned with similar handwriting.

Absentee voter fraud in Alabama is a Class C felony, which is punishable by between one and 10 years' confinement.

"Voting is a freedom that many, many people fought for us to have," Adams said.

"We don't want that right tampered with or an election tainted because of improper voting."

Adams said it is crucial that residents who are able to vote in person do so on Election Day.

"If you can go to church or the grocery store, then you can go vote," he said.