

# Weld County Clerk and Recorder's Office introduces new equipment for security, efficiency

August 9, 2017

Carly Koppes geeks out over elections. That's partially by design. She's the Weld County Clerk and Recorder, after all. But she'll freely admit that she considers election time to be the most wonderful time of the year. It's getting close to that time, as the clerk's office just finished doing the statewide mock election, a test run counties do to ensure everything is working properly for the upcoming election. And this year, Koppes has even more to be excited about. The Weld County commissioners brought Koppes and crew \$500,000 in new election equipment. That's why this year's mock election was a the most important one she's run. When voters go to vote this November, they'll see new stuff everywhere — from the touch screen displays to the keypad compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act to the very booth in which voters cast their ballots. All of it, Koppes said, is designed to ensure a secure and efficient process. And it should be a lot more efficient. Koppes' staff say the technological advancements this year, which include a hyper-fast ballot counting machine, mark the biggest steps toward efficiency in more than a decade. There are two reasons why. First, previously, elections staff had to hand-feed ballots, one at a time, into the ballot counting machine. Now the new machine counts 100 ballots at a time. And because the computer makes things simpler, it cuts a team of four judges into two to gauge voter intent using state guidelines if a ballot is rejected. That's significant because last year there were 3,000-plus questionable ballots. Ballots can be flagged for a variety of reasons, including an errant pen mark on the "no" while the "yes" is filled in fully, or somebody scratching out one selection and filling in another. Thanks to the mock election, Koppes and her staff say they're completely confident in the run-up to the November 2017 election. As for voter confidence, the clerk and recorder's office will host a few open houses for voters to play around with the new equipment. Just remember, they still want you to vote in November.

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Weld County Clerk and Recorder Carly Koppes will host open houses for voters to see the new voting equipment the elections department will use for the November election.

They are:

- » 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday at 1401 N. 17th Ave.
- » 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 18 at 1401 N. 17th Ave.
- » 5:30-7 p.m. Aug. 17 at the Southwest Weld Complex, 4209 Weld County Road 24.5.