



**A Message from
Broward County Mayor
Lois Wexler**

Broward County voters will soon be using a new method to cast a ballot. Beginning with the August 26th primary election, followed by the November 4th general election this year we will use optical scan paper ballots.

The electronic touch screen voting machines that have been used since 2004 will be replaced with optical scan paper ballots. That means that instead of touching a screen to choose a candidate or vote on an issue, you will instead fill in a small oval on a paper ballot using a black pen. Once you have filled in the ovals reflecting how you want to vote, you will then enter your paper ballot into an optical scanning machine. It is here where your votes will be copied and, if there is no problem, your paper ballot will automatically dropped into a lock box below. The optical scan paper ballot provides a paper record of your vote should a recount be necessary.

It is a relatively easy process, but since this is the first time that it will be used in Broward County it may result in some delays and a bit of confusion at your precinct.

Each precinct will have one scanning machine. The ballot in the 2008 general election may have up to five *double-sided* pages all of which will have to be scanned. If the optical scanning machine senses a problem with your ballot, an alarm will sound and a computer screen will tell you what the problem is. You will then be prompted to either “reject” or “accept.” If you press “reject” your ballot will be returned and you can fix it or get a new ballot from a poll worker. If you press “accept” your ballot will be scanned and dropped into the box. (One electronic, touch-screen machine will also be in each precinct to allow visually impaired voters to use an audio device to cast a ballot.)

Here are a few tips to make sure your vote counts and your experience at your precinct is a good one:

Bring your driver's license. It will be swiped through a machine that will quickly display your voting information. If you don't have a driver's license, a poll worker will manually look up the information.

Fill out both sides of the paper ballot.

Completely fill in the oval on the paper ballot using a black pen that will be provided at your precinct. Check your ballot before it is scanned.

Expect some delays since scanning every ballot will take some time and there is the possibility of a paper jam.

If you have any problems or questions don't hesitate to ask a poll worker for help.

You can still take advantage of early voting, which begins fifteen days prior to the primary and general election. You can also request an absentee ballot from the Supervisor of Elections office and return it by mail. For more information on optical scan paper ballots, early voting locations or to request an absentee ballot please call the Supervisor of Elections (SOE) office at 954-357-7050 or visit their web site at www.browardsoe.org. You might consider asking the SOE's office to provide a demonstration of the new voting equipment at one of your HOA meetings.

The more familiar you are with this new method of voting the better off you will be on Election Day.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns feel free to contact my office at (954) 357-7005 or can e-mail me at lwexler@broward.org

Sincerely,
Lois Wexler
Broward County Mayor
Commissioner, District 5