

PUBLIC OUTREACH: CITIZENS' ACADEMY 2007

The Clerk & Recorder's Office implemented a new program in the fall of 2007 to give residents of El Paso County an insider's view of its operations – the Citizens' Academy. The nine-week program included sessions on each of the four statutory departments with comprehensive information provided and opportunities to personally engage in discussions with C&R department managers and staff members.

Bob Balink, Clerk & Recorder, said, "For several years, as part of our community outreach programs, we have offered in-depth seminars and task forces to share the complexities of conducting elections. Our Citizens' Academy is designed to provide details of all major areas of our office that affect the citizens of El Paso County including the Election, Motor Vehicle, Recording and Clerk to the Board departmental operations. We believe there is widespread interest in expanding our outreach programs and we feel our office also will benefit from this new dialogue with the citizens we serve. We expect the Citizens' Academy will appeal to community-minded citizens and those who may be considering a career in government service."



Observing the system of counting ballots during the Mail Ballot Election on November 6, 2007 at Centennial Hall.

The Motor Vehicle, Election, Clerk to the Board and Recording departments each gave presentations and interacted with participants. The Mail Ballot Election in November afforded the group hands-on experience with elections. One session was held at the Distribution Center, with touch screens and Accu-Vote equipment available for the attendees to test and use. On Election Night, November 6, the participants were able to see firsthand the functions of a Mail Ballot Election – signature verification, pre-processing, duplication and counting.

The group was impressed with the level of knowledge required to serve the public, and the efficient, thorough and professional processes and procedures under which each department operates. The Clerk & Recorder's Office staff benefited from establishing relationships with the attendees and addressing their questions to help them better understand the functions behind the scenes. Graduation on December 4 recognized the participants for their involvement in the Citizens' Academy. Four County Commissioners, Chair

Dennis Hisey, Vice-Chair Jim Bensberg, Commissioner Sallie Clark and Commissioner Wayne Williams, and Clerk & Recorder Bob Balink, addressed the group. The graduates received a certificate, letter of appreciation and commemorative Honorary Deputy Clerk coin.

Citizens of El Paso County are invited to apply to participate in the second Clerk & Recorder's Office – Citizens' Academy in the summer, 2008. Please visit the website, <http://car.elpasoco.com/>, to obtain more information.



Clerk & Recorder Bob Balink apprises the class of recent developments within the County.



Commissioners Sallie Clark, Wayne Williams, Vice-Chair Jim Bensberg and Chair Dennis Hisey congratulated Citizens' Academy graduates.