

Election Connection Vol 5 2026

With just a little over a month left to go the Primary Election we cannot stress enough how important it is to have accurate and updated information on file. To check your status, call the Elections Office at 406-635-5575 or by visit <https://app.mt.gov/voterinfo/>.

- ★ **Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 13-1-111** Identifies eligibility requirements to become a qualified elector in Montana. To register to vote, a person must be 18 years of age or older on or before the next election; a resident for at least 30 days of the state of Montana and the county in which the person intends to vote; and a citizen of the United States.
- ★ Election Administrators are required to coordinate with the Social Security Administration, the state's Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Justice, and any other appropriate agency to verify voter registration information. A single, official, centralized statewide voter registration system is maintained by the SOS/ This meets federal requirements and tracks voter registrations preventing people from registering multiple times in the state of Montana. (MCA 13-2-108 and ARM 44.3.1102)
- ★ To ensure accurate addresses for electors the Election Administrators must follow procedures annually (MCA 13-2-220). Mailed ballots are **non-forwardable**. A ballot will only be re-sent if a completed confirmation notice is returned to the election office. The voter is placed on the inactive list if a confirmation notice is returned undeliverable and can **ONLY** be reactivated by Voter Registration submitting an application to the election office.
- ★ **MCA 13-13-201:** Voting absentee means voting away from the polling place. To do this, a qualified elector must apply or make a written request to vote absentee. **Active Voters** are the **only** ones that will be mailed a ballot. The ballot is returned to the election office in a secured secrecy envelope that is within the signature envelope (affirmation). Signatures and birth year are verified once received back in the election office (**MCA 13-13-241**). If there is a question, the elector is notified (MCA 13-13-245). The SOS maintains a website called "My Voter Page", where you can check the status of your absentee ballot in a federal election. Absentee ballots will go out May 8,2026. If a ballot is not received by mid-May, please contact our office.
- ★ Voting in person means voting at a designated polling place. Qualified voters under **MCA 13-1-111** must show the voter's identification as required in **MCA 13-13-114** and sign the precinct register next to the voter's name at the designated polling place. Once the ballot is completed, the voter places the voted ballot into a secrecy sleeve and then deposits the ballot into the polling place ballot box. Unvoted ballots will be placed in an unvoted ballot box.
- ★ **Article IV, Section 1 of the Montana Constitution** provides that "All elections by the people shall be by secret ballot." **MCA 13-1-102** echoes that requirement. Montana has

mandatory procedures for the handling of ballots by election administrators, election judges, and other election workers.

- ★ Local elections offices have numerous protocols in place to ensure the validity of Montana's elections: **MCA 13-13-115, MCA 13-12-202**. County election offices adhere to a chain of custody protocols to ensure that every ballot submitted is accounted for at every stage in the process.
- ★ Prairie County is one of the nine Montana counties that hand count ballots. Ballot processing and vote counting must occur in a public area under the care of trained election officials who have sworn an oath. **MCA 13-35-207** identifies deceptive election practices and their punishments. **MCA 13-35-205** prohibits tampering with election records and information, including causing a vote to be incorrectly recorded or changing any ballot after it has been completed by an elector. **MCA 45-7-202, 45-7-203 and 45-7-208** outline the punishment which will occur including a fine, imprisonment, or both. Prairie County has a central location for counting ballots, the Prairie County Courthouse.

****Remember to always use a trusted source for information ****

- ★ Prairie County Election Administrator's Office at 406-635-5575 or by email at clerksoffice@prairiecountymt.org.
- ★ Website: www.prairiecounty.org/election
- ★ State Resources: <https://voterportal.mt.gov>, <https://sosmt.gov/elections/>

There are three ballots for the Primary: Democrat, Libertarian, and Republican.
ONLY VOTE ONE!

The only Local position appearing on the ballot for the Primary Election is
County Commissioner District 1.

Other races on the ballot at the Federal and State level for Prairie County include US Senator, United States Representative 2nd Congressional District, Public Service Commissioner District 1, State Representative District 34, Supreme Court Justice #4, District Judge District 7, Dept 2.

Ballot samples are available at the Courthouse as well as on the website at
www.prairiecounty.org/elections.

As always, please feel free to contact our office at any time with any questions or concerns.

Shari Robertson
Prairie County Election Administrator