



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **St. Louis County Launches Education Program on New Voting Machines**

### ***Board of Election Commissioners says "Goodbye to Chad," replacing old punch-card system with new and improved voting technology***

St. Louis – St. Louis County voters got their first look at the future of voting today as county officials and community leaders joined together to kick off a countywide voter education program in preparation for the August primary and November elections. County Board of Election Commissioners Chairman John Diehl joined County Executive Charlie Dooley to showcase the county's new voting systems and begin the important voter education effort.

"There is nothing more important than every citizen's right to vote and we've thoroughly researched and chosen a voting system that is easy to use, fully accessible, extremely secure, and built on the very latest in voting technology," said Diehl. "In addition, our voter education program will help make sure that, when our voters come to the polls, they already know how to use these great machines."

"The act of voting goes beyond simply making a choice; it is about the entire process from casting to counting. Through this investment, St. Louis County will be using the most advanced voting technology," said County Executive Charlie Dooley. "Additionally, through the voter education effort, we will ensure that St. Louis County voters have a chance to experience this technology before they go to the polls on Election Day. I applaud the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners for proactively reaching out to St. Louis County voters as we introduce this new system."

St. Louis County purchased two new voting systems from Election Systems & Software (ES&S) this spring during a landmark voting year in which the nation began implementation of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002. The law was enacted to increase access to voting and modernize voting systems nationwide.

The purpose of the voter education program is to inform St. Louis County residents about using the new voting systems, leading to a smooth running election process, beginning in August. The voter education program is designed to reach every single St. Louis County voter through mailings, demonstrations, town hall meetings, material distribution, and many other communications vehicles.

Also joining Diehl at the launch was John Nations, mayor of Chesterfield and president of the St. Louis County Municipal League; Max Starkloff, founder and president of the Starkloff Disability Institute, and chairman of the St. Louis County Commission on Disability; Esther Clark, voter registration chairperson, League of Women Voters St. Louis; and George Durnell, Interim Co-Director, St. Louis County Library System.

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## County Launches Voter Education Program Add one

"We are happy to lend our full support to an education initiative that encourages citizen participation in government and empowers all those who wish to vote," said Clark.

"We are very proud of the Library's role as a source of information throughout our community, and we are pleased to be partnering with the County Executive and the Board of Election Commissioners in this important effort," said Durnell. "Our collective goal is to reach out to as many voters as possible and, in that way, increase participation in the democratic process."

As part of the voter education program, St. Louis County has developed a Web site, <http://vote.stlouisco.com>, which provides voters with easy access to information about the new voting technology. The Web site includes the following, easy-to-download materials:

- An interactive, hands-on opportunity for voters to "virtually" use the new voting machines.
- Important facts about the new voting machines.
- A sample article about the new technology that groups and businesses may use in newsletters.
- A camera-ready advertisement for possible use in organizational newsletters.
- Information about becoming a St. Louis County election judge.

One of the new voting systems is the ES&S iVotronic™ touch screen voting system. This easy-to-use, ADA-accessible machine easily records and securely tabulates votes in record time. The second voting system is the ES&S Model 100, which offers the latest in optical scan voting technology. Voters can simply mark their ballot, insert it into the machine, and the vote is recorded.

"Implementation of these new voting systems is a monumental step forward in the efforts to provide voting accessibility to all citizens," said Starkloff. "I commend the Board of Election Commissioners for helping create an inclusive process that helps to meet the needs of all St. Louis County Voters."

### ***About the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners***

*As the largest election authority in Missouri, the St. Louis County Election Board represents a diverse population of more than one million residents. Represented by a four-member, bi-partisan board appointed by the governor, it is responsible for all federal, state, and local elections within the County, including all or parts of three congressional, seven county council, seven state senate, and 32 representative districts.*

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