

## Security of Jasper County Elections

Due to recurrent media coverage of election security, I want to provide a clear and transparent explanation of what the Jasper County Clerk's office is doing to keep our elections secure. While I am not a computer expert, it is the responsibility of my office to do everything we can to guarantee the integrity of the Jasper County Elections process. As Sheriff Newman always tells me "You don't know what you don't know about", so I feel it is imperative to be proactive about these threats to our voting process and to prepare in advance as much as possible.

For starters, the entire staff of the County Clerk's office, myself included, has attended cybersecurity training and had independent, third party audits on our systems to ensure we are aligned with the State of Texas's security requirements.

Another important detail is that Jasper County still relies on paper ballots to record your votes. And while those ballots are counted by a machine, the equipment is not connected to the internet in any form, so it would be impossible to hack remotely. Since our election equipment is locked in a secure building that is only accessible to the public during voting hours, the only way it could be compromised would be someone coming into the voting center during the election with a toolkit in plain view – and let's be honest, anyone who tries such a stunt will promptly get a ruler cracked across their knuckles by an 80 year old election worker.

To prevent any issues on election day, my staff goes through a triple check process to make sure the machine is working properly. The scanner is tested with sample data a week before the election, on election day before we start counting ballots and at the end of the night after the ballots are counted, plus the staff does randomly selected hand counts of some voting boxes to ensure that the scanner's readings are accurate. In the event of a machine error, all paper ballots are retained and could be counted by hand if needed.

I hope these details ease any fears that the public may have about interference with the Jasper County elections process. While we cannot anticipate every scenario, we take our role of protecting the foundation of our democracy very seriously and will do everything in our power to ensure that your vote in the upcoming elections is accurately reported.

Debbie Newman

Jasper County Clerk