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Press Release

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GROUNDBREAKING PARTNERSHIP PAVES THE WAY FOR FUNDING A NEW VOTING SYSTEM

Following weeks of intense negotiations, the Florida Department of State has agreed to release funds obtained under the Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to purchase a new state-of-the art voting tabulation system for a 12 county consortium that includes Hendry County.

In an article published in late 2014, Secretary of State Ken Detzner expressed concerns with aging voting equipment being utilized in many Florida counties. His remarks mirrored conclusions found in a non-partisan Presidential Commission on the voting experience that was released last year. When emerging technology and “mileage” are factored, experts generally estimate the useful shelf life of tabulation hardware and software to be about 10 years. Hendry County is utilizing tabulation equipment that while proven to be reliable to date, was purchased nearly 15 years ago.

With this information, a group of 12 small counties formed a consortium and invited representatives from the State and their existing tabulation vendor (Election Systems and Software) to begin discussions at a meeting held in late April in Jackson County.

The State agreed to release funding from their Federal HAVA pool for the purpose of purchasing everything needed for the base platform operation of a new tabulation system for each of the twelve counties. As a result, Hendry County will convert from using M-100 model optical scanners to the new DS-200 models and AutoMark, an ADA Compliant marking device. While voters will experience a similar interface at the polls, the new DS-200 tabulators will provide advancements on many fronts, to include speed, capacity and reliability.

“To my knowledge this is a historic and groundbreaking approach” said Supervisor Hoots. “We were in a position to have an expensive purchase necessitated in the near future and I am thrilled that we will be able to save our taxpayers this expense”, with only the cost of financing.

Hendry County will receive a total of \$101,715 in HAVA funds in a pass-through grant from the State, to be paid in installments over the next five years to cover the cost for the system. Collectively, the 12 counties will receive about 1.5 million dollars in grant funding as part of the deal.