



From the Office of Secretary of State

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For Release

July 17, 2014

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Nebraska counties to receive funds for voting equipment costs

LINCOLN – Forty-two county election offices in Nebraska will receive funds from the Secretary of State’s office totaling nearly \$41,000 to help cover the costs associated with providing disability voting equipment as required under federal election law.

“The funds are made available through grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002,” explained Sec. John Gale. “That law ensures that all physically disabled and visually impaired individuals have access to equipment that allows them to cast a private, unassisted ballot at their polling site.”

AutoMARK machines are utilized by all Nebraska county election offices for this purpose, although the machines are also available to any voters who wish to use them.

“They must be properly programmed for each election, including local special elections,” said Gale. “Those costs can run into the thousands of dollars.”

The federal grant money is managed and distributed through the Secretary of State’s office. Seventeen counties received \$750 each. Thirteen counties received checks in the amount of \$1,000. Twelve counties received checks in excess of \$1,000 in various amounts.

"It's been a commitment of my office since the passage of HAVA, to assist the counties with the costs of this federally mandated equipment, to the best of our ability."

In 2012, county election offices were awarded federal funds totaling \$36,677 and in 2010, counties received \$39,032 to cover costs related to use of the AutoMARK machines.

"It's essential to maintain the quality, accuracy, reliability and accessibility of our state elections," added Gale. "We're pleased that this funding helps ensure that equipment is available to assist disabled voters in a very important way."

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