

By Jan Rahn

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Come the next election in Perkins County, some voters may see themselves in a new voting district. After discussions between the Perkins County Clerk and Perkins County Commissioners, a redistricting map was presented.

The boundaries of the three commissioner districts have been shifted so that the number of voters in each district is more evenly distributed.

According to Perkins County Clerk Rita Long, it was a long and complicated process but she was able to present a map to the commissioners that was acceptable to them.

At their regular meeting on Monday, Oct. 3, Perkins County Commissioners adopted redistricting that meets Nebraska State Statute that mandates each district in the county be "substantially equal" by population, for election boundaries.

This means that people in Grant have been divided into three districts. Prior to redrawing the district boundaries, voters were split pretty much in half between District 2 (served by Commissioner Leon Pankonin) and District 3 (served by Commissioner James Deaver).

The new boundaries will correspond more evenly with the road maintenance boundaries. The commissioners' boundaries can't be changed again until a new census is out, which is 10 years from now.

After the 2010 Census the boundaries were unequal. The numbers were as follows: District 1 represented by Colson had 879 residents, Pankonin's District 2 had 978 residents, and District 3 represented by Deaver had 1113 residents.

Following redistricting and passing of the new resolution, the more equal population in the districts includes: District 1, 962 residents; District 2, 1008 residents, and District 3, 1000 residents.

Long said new voter cards will be sent to all voters in Districts 1 and 2, and to those that changed in District 3.

Because the work was done in-house rather than outsourcing, the county saved approximately \$5,500, said Long.

When discussion first began, Dave Hoffert was seated as District 2 Commissioner. Upon his resignation eight months into office, Pankonin was selected by county officials to complete the term.

On Oct. 3 the Commissioners voted on the resolution on the boundary changes. The vote was two ayes and one nay, resolution passed.

During discussions, Commissioners Colson and Hoffert asked that two things be considered in redistricting: 1) the election boundaries run as close to the road maintenance lines as possible, and 2) District 1 boundary be extended into the City of Grant to add population numbers.

Long said other counties in the state have had to do some redistricting also, citing Garden and Deuel counties as examples in this end of the state.

The adjacent map shows how the lines were redrawn to equalize the numbers for the three districts.

The solid black vertical line is the old boundary line between District 1 and 2. The boundary of District 2 has been extended to the east six miles.

Because this new boundary subtracts numbers from District 1, an area to include Grant's population was added. This spur comes into Grant from the east.

District 3 also has a similar spur into Grant from the west.

The dashed line is the new boundary for District 1.

Those interested in looking at the official maps may stop by the clerk's office during regular business hours.