

PRIMARY

FROM PAGE 1A

ty Clerk's Office at 606-298-2810.

Under state law, candidates, one representative of each political party with candidates on the ballot and members of the news media may be present when the county board examines voting equipment.

The public test comes as Martin County voters prepare to choose nominees in several contested races. Republican voters will see local races for sheriff, jailer, magistrate and constable, along with primaries for U.S. Senate and U.S. representative in Kentucky's 5th Congressional District. Democratic voters in Martin County will vote only in the U.S. Senate primary.

On the Republican ballot, the sheriff's race includes Austin Harless, Tony Preece, William "Bill" Preece, John Herman Kirk and Kristopher Lang.

The jailer's race includes Billy Patrick, Darrell Spence, Buddy Stacy, Oscar Jude and Nick Marcum.

Republican magistrate races include Cody Slone and Matthew Baisden in District 1; Jason Booger Jude, Amanda Jude and Kermit Howell in District 2; Chris Blackburn, Derrick Stepp, Tracy Spence and Craig Haney in District 3; and Eric Jude and Junior Hunt in District 4. No District 5 magistrate race appears on the sample ballot.

Republican constable races include Homer Pickle Mills and Bobby Gene Maynard in District 1; Randy Lafferty and Ryan May in District 2; and Charles Fettle Spear and Bradford Preece in District 4. No District 3 or District 5 constable race appears on the sample ballot.

Republican voters also will choose nominees for U.S. Senate and U.S. representative in Kentucky's 5th Congressional District. The Republican U.S. Senate ballot lists Daniel

Cameron, Jonathan M. Holliday, Andy Barr, Nate Morris, Valerie "Dr. Val" Frederick, A. Nick Shelley, James D. Duncan, Michael James Faris, Anissa O. Cahill, other Donald Wenzell, Jimmy L. Leon and George Washington.

The Republican 5th District congressional ballot lists Kevin Smith, Benjamin Hurley, Hal Rogers, Jerry Lee Shelton and Brandon R. Monhollen.

The Democratic ballot in Martin County includes only the U.S. Senate primary, with Vincent Anthony Thompson, Amy McGrath, Dale Lewis Romans, Charles Booker, Pamela Stevenson, Joshua Blanton Sr. and Logan Forsythe listed.

The deadline to request a mail-in absentee ballot is 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, May 5. Voters who know they will vote absentee are encouraged to request a ballot well before the deadline.

The drop box for mail ballots is located at the Martin County Government Center, 42 Main St., Inez.

All mail-in absentee ballots must be received by the county clerk by 6 p.m. Election Day, May 19, to be counted. Election officials urge voters not to wait until Election Day to return absentee ballots.

Excused in-person absentee voting will be available May 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Martin County Clerk's Office, 42 E. Main St., Inez.

No-excuse early voting will be available May 14, 15 and 16 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Martin County Clerk's Office.

On Election Day, Tuesday, May 19, polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. local time.

Election Day polling locations are Martin County Middle School in Warfield, Pigeon Roost Community Center in Lovely, Inez Elementary School, Eden Elementary School and the Martin County Government Center in

Inez. Martin County Board of Elections members James Ayers and Susie Skyles recently reminded voters that Kentucky's voter identification law will be strictly enforced this year.

"The big one is the voter ID requirement," Ayers said. "This is the first year that it will be very strictly enforced."

Ayers said voters generally must present identification showing their name and photograph, such as a Kentucky driver's license or state-issued ID. Expired IDs may be accepted if they still include the voter's name and photo. Student IDs and military IDs with photographs also may qualify.

Limited exemptions exist for voters who cannot obtain a photo ID. However, Ayers said voters still must present some form of identification.

"They still have to have something," Ayers said. "They can't just show up and say, 'I'm John Doe,' without some kind of identifying document."

Skyles said she is especially concerned about elderly residents who do not drive and may not yet have a photo ID.

Ayers also noted that this year's U.S. Senate race is unusual because the seat is open with Sen. Mitch McConnell's retirement.

"The last time that happened was 2010 when Senator Bunning retired," Ayers said. "The time before that was 1998, when Wendell Ford retired, and Bunning ran for his spot. This specific Senate seat hasn't been open since the 1960s. They don't move out of those very often."

He urged voters not to sit out the primary, noting Martin County has seen strong turnout in some county election years and extremely low turnout in others.

"We've shown that we can get out and vote," Ayers said.

Voters may verify registration, polling locations

and election information at govote.ky.gov.

Key dates

May 3: Public voting equipment test, 2-3 p.m., Martin County Clerk's Office

May 5: Last day to request mail-in absentee ballot, 11:59 p.m.

May 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13: Excused in-person absentee voting, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., clerk's office

May 14, 15, 16: No-excuse early voting, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., clerk's office

May 19: Primary Election Day, polls open 6 a.m.-6 p.m.; mail-in absentee ballots must be received by 6 p.m.



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