



NEWS RELEASE

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CARY WILL MAKE HISTORY WITH STATE'S FIRST INSTANT RUNOFF ELECTION

Council also supports public education efforts about new election method

CARY, NC – Last night the Cary Town Council voted to support the Wake County Board of Elections' (BOE) request to become the first municipality in North Carolina to use the Instant Runoff form of voting as part of a joint pilot program with the BOE. Beginning with the 2007 municipal elections on October 9, Cary voters will use the Instant Runoff form of voting – a system of runoff election that happens simultaneously to the regular municipal election. Instant runoff voting guarantees that the winner receives support from a majority of voters in just one election.

In Instant Runoff elections, voters complete only one ballot. Instead of voting for a single candidate for each office, voters rank all of the candidates running for an office in order of preference. If no candidate receives a majority of first preference votes, then the two candidates with the most first preference votes enter the instant runoff. The ballots of the eliminated candidates are reviewed, and the second preference votes are tallied. All second preference votes for the two candidates in the runoff are added to their existing first preference votes. The candidate with the highest number of votes (first preference and second preference) is declared the winner. ~~candidates with fewest votes are eliminated one by one, and their votes are transferred according to their second and third preference. All votes are recounted until one candidate achieves a majority.~~

Approved by the US Department of Justice and recognized by Robert's Rules of Order, Instant Runoff voting is used in many states including Louisiana, Arkansas, and South Carolina, and it has been used for Australia's national elections since 1918.

Instant Runoff voting increases convenience to voters; preserves majority rule by ensuring winners receive more than 50 percent of the votes; and saves taxpayers and candidates money by holding only one election. For Cary 2007, Instant Runoff voting should save more than \$62,000 by eliminating the need for a traditional runoff election in November.

The Wake County BOE decided to pursue the pilot program with the Town of Cary after the N.C. General Assembly approved House Bill 1024 in the 2006 legislative session. The bill authorized the State Board of Elections to select up to 10 municipalities to conduct a pilot program using the Instant Runoff method in local elections.

"Cary has always been on the forefront of innovative projects like this, and this is an opportunity to work with the Board of Elections in a pilot program," said Cary Mayor Ernie McAlister. "As we move forward, our staff will work diligently with the Board of Elections to comprehensively educate our citizens on this new initiative."

TOWN of CARY

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The Town of Cary has continuously worked with the Wake County Board of Elections to improve election methods. Prior to 2001, the Town used the plurality form of election in which the candidate with the most votes wins. In 2000, the Town Council approved the election and runoff method, and the Town began runoff elections with the Town Council elections in 2001. With the runoff method, municipal elections were held in October and if there was no clear winner, the runoff was held with the general elections in November.

Cary's October 9th municipal election will ask Cary voters to select their Mayor as well as Town Council members for districts "B", "D" and one of two At-Large seats.

To watch the Wake County BOE's presentation to the Town Council at last night's meeting, watch the meeting video that will online later today in the Cary TV section of www.townofcary.org. For more on Instant Runoff voting, contact the Wake County Board of Elections or call (919) 856-6240.

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