



Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Why are we changing the way we vote? What's wrong with our old system?

A1: The Sequoia Eagle System used in Fremont County for several years is not fully compliant with the Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed on October 29, 2002. The Act mandates that all counties must provide at least one voting system that is accessible to persons with disabilities, including those who are blind, in each polling place by January 1, 2006. The eSlate with Verifiable Ballot Option was selected in order to bring the Fremont County voting system into compliance with HAVA. On election day, voters will have the choice of voting on paper ballots to be scanned into the legacy Eagle system, or voting electronically on the eSlate with Verifiable Ballot Option. Voters who vote absentee will vote on paper ballots to be scanned into the Hart eScan voting system.

Q2: Why did Fremont County choose the eSlate with VBO System?

A2: Fremont County's new voting system is certified, meets the requirements of the HAVA law and has several qualities that are essential in a voting system. It is easy to use, accurate, secure, verifiable and very accessible to all voters, including those who are blind, visually impaired or who have limited or no mobility. The new system features the accessible eSlate[®] with Verifiable Ballot Option (VBO), a direct record electronic voting device, that captures votes electronically and on an auditable paper trail.

Q3: How was the new system chosen?

A3: Over several months, the Fremont County Clerk and Recorder's office examined and reviewed the two systems that are federally and state certified in Colorado. The Clerk and Recorder's office selected the best system to serve Fremont County and to meet the federal HAVA requirements.

Q4: How much did the new system cost?

A4: Fremont County signed a contract for \$162,755 K and received \$166,200 K in Federal and State funds to help defray the cost of the new system. This price includes all voting equipment and software for in-person voting. Hart InterCivic will assist with implementation, long-term support, maintenance services, and with voter outreach, training and education.

Q5: Will voters have a chance to try out the new system before they vote on it?

A5: Yes. Demonstrations will be conducted countywide leading up to the August Primary Election and then again prior to the November General Election. Additionally, groups may contact the County Clerk and Recorders office to request a presentation of the system at a meeting.

Q6: Is the new eSlate system based on a touch screen, like some ATMs?

A6: The voter uses a rotary **SELECT** wheel to navigate through the ballot and presses the **ENTER** button to make a selection. This interface was chosen because it is more



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accurate and durable than touch screen systems, and voters who are blind or have other impairments find the differently shaped buttons and the rotary **SELECT** wheel easy to identify and use. It costs less to store and maintain the eSlate system than a touch screen as the eSlate screen does not need to be recalibrated daily.

Q7: What is the eSlate ACCESS CODE for?

A7: ACCESS CODES enable qualified voters to get the correct ballot style for their precinct. The only purpose of the ACCESS CODE is to display the correct ballot when four digits are entered. The ACCESS CODE is not tied to the cast ballot in any way, and the ACCESS CODE cannot be used to retrieve the voter's ballot. Also, the ACCESS CODE remains anonymous because no voter information is entered into the electronic voting system.

Q8: How can we be sure this system is working as it should be? OR Has the voting equipment been tested by our local elections office before the elections?

A8: Yes. Before any vote is cast, election officials go through a process of testing the machines in the presence of witnesses to be sure the machines are working as expected. This public test, known as functionality, logic and accuracy testing, allows election officials to be sure votes are counted as they are cast.

Q9: How do I know that the eSlate electronic voting system records my votes correctly?

A9: There are three opportunities to verify and confirm your ballot choices. First, each time you make a choice and press the **ENTER** button, the box next to your choice turns red, indicating that your selection has been marked. Second, when you finish voting, the voting machine will display a summary of the selections you made. A review of the **BALLOT SUMMARY** page enables you to double-check your selections before pressing the **CAST BALLOT** button. Third, after pressing the **CAST BALLOT** button a paper verification page displays on the eSlate screen and prints within the VBO unit. You can view the paper record under the clear plastic to ensure your selections are correct. Finally, when you are sure that all of your choices are correct, press the **CAST BALLOT** button a second time to record your vote. Your vote has been recorded when you see the waving American flag.

Q10: Does the eSlate electronic voting system have a voter verified paper audit trail?

A10: Yes. The eSlate has a Verifiable Ballot Option or paper trail that is contained in a lightweight sealed ballot box called the VBO unit. The printer unit is replaced in its entirety in the case of a paper jam or when the unit runs out of paper. The units have been used in live elections in Illinois and Massachusetts. Additionally, following each election, election officials can print all cast vote records to paper should they choose to do so.

Q11: What if a recount is necessary?



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- A11: If necessary, the voting system provides Elections Officials with Cast Vote Records of voting selections. These Cast Vote Records provide an accurate means of recounting ballots recorded for each specific contest in an election. Election officials can compare the vote totals in the four separate vote storage locations on the eSlate - the unit itself, the JBC, the mobile ballot box card and the VBO unit to ensure they match.
- Q12: How do I know my votes are private and that there is not a database in the computer somewhere that records how I have voted?**
- A12: There is no way for the system to tie your vote to you. When you vote, there is no identifying information recorded with your vote. You will be given a randomly generated four-digit access code tied that tells the eSlate which ballot you should receive based on your precinct number. But the access code is not associated with your name. It is, therefore, impossible to trace your vote.
- Q13: I have never been able to vote without someone helping me. Will someone be there to help me with this new system?**
- A13: Yes. Someone will be there to help you, but the system is designed to help you vote without assistance. There is an audio ballot reader that can help if you have problems with your eyesight or difficulties reading the ballot for other reasons, and a special **HELP** button is available if you have a question.
- Q13: What if I change my mind or make a mistake after I press the ENTER button?**
- A13: A voter can change any vote at any time until the **CAST BALLOT** button is pressed a second time and you see the American flag waving on the screen. To change a vote, just use the wheel to highlight the candidate you want to vote for and then press the **ENTER** button. The earlier vote is erased, and the new vote is recorded.
- Q14: What if I want to skip a contest?**
- A14: Then you may do so. It is your decision and right to choose not to vote in any race. Just use the wheel to scroll past the race you want to skip. After you have voted in the last contest on the ballot, a ballot summary screen will appear listing all the choices you have made and will let you know if you missed voting in any race. You will see a list of the votes you have cast, and any skipped races will be noted with *No Selection* highlighted in red. You can either go back and vote in the skipped race, or press the **CAST BALLOT** button to submit your ballot with no votes for the races in which you intend no vote.
- Q15: What if I accidentally vote twice in a race? Will my vote be discarded?**
- A15: The system will not let you vote twice unless the contest is a "vote for two." It is programmed to prevent "over voting," the term for when someone accidentally selects more than the permitted number of choices in a race. If you change your mind and select a different choice, the system automatically removes your former selection and



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marks your new one. If you want to erase your vote and make no other selection, just highlight your current selection and press **ENTER** to de-select that choice.

Q16: How do I know that my vote has been cast and counted?

A16: Whenever a voter presses the **CAST BALLOT** button a second time and the waving American flag appears, the vote is cast and counted.

Q17: If the power fails or if there is some other computer failure will my vote be lost?

A17: No. Your vote cannot be lost once you have pressed **CAST BALLOT** a second time and you see the waving American flag. Your votes are stored in three separate places with non-volatile memory, and all data is protected and cannot be lost in the unlikely event that the system fails. The system also has a battery back-up that immediately engages if an electrical failure should occur. The batteries last for 18 hours of continuous use.

Q18: What is a voter verified paper audit trail?

A18: A voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) is synonymous with a verifiable ballot option (VBO). Both options refer to a peripheral unit that attaches to a DRE. The unit contains a paper record of a voter's choices under glass or plastic and out of reach of the voter to avoid manipulation. The voter is allowed to simultaneously view their ballot on paper and electronically providing the voter with a second opportunity to confirm or deny the choices displayed are how they intended to vote.

Q19. How are write-in votes recorded?

A19. Write-in votes are recorded as options the voter has selected. The local jurisdiction matches those choices with qualified write-in candidate names and allocates one vote per valid write-in choice on the ballot. Depending on state and local guidelines, a write-in vote consists of both a completed option box indicating a write-in choice AND the written candidate name associated with that option box.

Q20. How do I know my voting choices are private and that my selections will not be revealed?

A20. After you sign in and are qualified to vote you will be given an anonymous, randomly generated four-digit Access Code that enables the electronic machine to display the correct ballot for your precinct. The only purpose of the Access Code is to enable the correct ballot style; it is not associated with you, or with your ballot selections. With no information about you in the electronic voting system, there is no way to trace or tamper with your private voting selections.