

State Constitutional amendment will be on the ballot

Upcoming election holds a few changes

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This election will see a change for the few individuals who take to the polls without identification.

After a new state law went into effect this year, voters will have to show some type of identification before casting their ballots.

Beginning in mid-September, the State Board of Elections mailed out voter identification cards to every registered voter in Virginia, along with a list of other acceptable forms of identification that can be used at polling locations.

In prior elections, voters without ID could visit a polling location, sign a statement swearing to their identity, and then cast a vote.

In May, Governor Bob McDonnell signed into law bills designed to combat voter fraud, while also increasing the types of documents accepted as ID. Newly allowed forms of identification include bank statements, government checks and utility bills with current name and address, as well as valid student IDs from Virginia col-

leges or universities. These are recent additions to the existing list of acceptable voter ID that includes state driver's licenses, social security cards (note: If you are a first-time voter this may not be acceptable), valid employee ID containing photo, and voter registration cards.

Next Tuesday, area residents will choose whom they want to serve as the U.S. President for the next four years in a tight race between incumbent President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney. Former Senator George Allen and former Governor Tim Kaine are bidding for the Virginia Senate seat that Senator Jim Webb will leave at the end of the year, and 4th District voters will have a choice between incumbent Congressman J. Randy Forbes and Ellen Ward who won the democratic nod.

Also two constitutional amendments will appear on this election ballot. Question 1 deals with emi-

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nent domain.

If it passes, the Constitution of Virginia will be amended to require that eminent domain only be exercised where the property taken or damaged is for public use and, except for utilities or the elimination of a public nuisance, not where the primary use is for private gain, private benefit, private enterprise, increasing jobs, increasing tax revenue, or economic development, and prohibits the taking or damaging of more private property than is necessary for the public use.

Farm Bureau President Bill Kreider urges voters to check "Yes" on their ballots.

"If a majority of Virginia voters approve the proposed amendment, then the state constitution will be changed to incorporate the new language and rein in eminent domain abuse. The changes would go into effect Jan. 1, 2013," he said. "By voting 'Yes,' you will be making sure that private property may be taken for a true 'public use' only, and not taken and then given to another private landowner; in unfortunate circumstances where your property is taken using eminent domain, you will be correctly paid for the loss of value to your property; and no more of your property may be taken than is absolutely necessary.

Kreider says this issue impacts all land owners not just farmers.

Question 2 impacts the General Assembly "veto" session.

If passed, Section 6 of Article IV (Legislature) of the Constitution of Virginia concerning legislative sessions will be amended to allow the General Assembly to delay by no more than one week the fixed starting date for the reconvened or "veto" session when the General Assembly meets after a session to consider the bills returned to it by the Governor with vetoes or amendments.

According to the State Board of Elections information pamphlet, after the end of every legislative session, the General Assembly is required by the Constitution to meet again or reconvene in a "veto" session. The only bills that the General Assembly can consider in a veto session are bills that it had passed during the legislative session and that the Governor has sent back to it with his vetoes or suggested amendments.

The Constitution now requires that the veto session begin on the sixth Wednesday following the end of each session. The veto session usually lasts for only one day and cannot last more than 10 days.

The only change to Section 6 of Article IV, proposed by this amendment will allow the General Assembly to delay the start of the veto session for up to one week. The General Assembly will be able to avoid the possible scheduling of the veto session

on a religious holiday such as Passover. The proposed amendment does not change the present limits on the business that can be considered in a veto session or on the length of the veto session.

Local Voter Registrars' offices have information about the constitutional amendments for voters to view and take and study if necessary. However, the staff can't offer opinions or discuss the issues in detail.

As in all elections, the precincts provide curbside voting. In that case, two election officials will take the ballot to the voter and once it is complete they file it in a secrecy sleeve and then put it in the machine once inside.

For more information, visit the State Board of Election website at <http://www.sbe.virginia.gov/>, on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VirginiaStateBoardOfElections>, or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/VirginiaSBE> or call 1-800-552-9745.