

River Falls Votes!

JAN. 18, 2008—On Tuesday, Feb. 19th 2008 Wisconsin will hold primary elections for the U.S. presidency, city, town, school board, county board and judicial offices.

“The primaries will be a great time to vote for who represents you the most. Even if that person does not succeed in the primaries there will be a good chance it will affect policy decisions,” Ben Plunkett a leading member of River Falls Votes.

University of Wisconsin-River Falls has a growing tradition of civic involvement. In the 2004 and 2006 elections UWRF has had record student voter turnout. The UWRF campus received support from national organizations such as the New Voter Project and the American Democracy Project as well as the local organization River Falls Votes. River Falls Votes is now solely working with the Legislative Affairs Committee of the Student Senate to head up a drive to get as many students registered to vote for the primaries as possible.

Chancellor Betz relates to student voting in this way: "Increasing voter participation relates to the core mission of the university directly, in that we are pledged to graduate engaged citizens and leaders. Part of this responsibility is to prepare undergraduates for responsible political and civic engagement."

Voter pre-registration helps everyone by reducing waiting lines and increasing voter turnout. One will benefit from pre-registration if they are a new voter, a new River Falls resident or if they have had an address change since the last time they registered to vote. Once one is pre-registered to vote they will not need to bring anything with them as far as ID is concerned but will be required to state their name and address so the poll workers may locate them on the polling list and then they will be given a ballot and may proceed to vote. If one is not registered they will need to bring proof of residency, a form of identification, fill out the registration form and wait in a longer, slower line when they go to the election polls come election day.

The City Clerk of River Falls and also a leading member of River Falls Votes Lu Ann Hecht said, “Please participate in the Voter Registration Drive that is being conducted on campus. Being registered before you go to the polls helps everyone on election day.”

For many UWRF students this will be the first opportunity to participate in the electoral process. To be an eligible voter in Wisconsin a person must be 18 years of age on or before election day, and have resided in the district or ward for 10 days before the election. Dorm rooms are legal residencies for voting purposes, and voting in Wisconsin does not affect tuition reciprocity for students who pay out of state tuition. In addition to the registration being done by River Falls Votes, voters can register at the city clerks office up to the day of the election. Voting pre-registration will be especially important this year as the campus polling location will be in the Falls room on the lower floor of the University Center, a much smaller location than in past years.

There is a new aspect of the River Falls Votes for students who live on campus. Resident Assistant's and any interested students will be able to receive the training to become special registration deputies, River Falls Votes will hold two one hour training sessions for people interested in becoming special registration deputies on Friday, Jan. 25 at 11:15 a.m. and Monday, Jan. 28 at 9 a.m. People that are interested in participating should contact the Student Senate Legislative affairs director Craig Witte.

Registration deputies will be in the UC on Jan. 28 and 29 from 7am - 7pm and Jan. 30 from 7 am - 4pm. there will be a residence hall program in every dorm on Jan. 28 and 29.

"Voter participation is integral in a functioning democracy" Craig Witte, student senate legislative affairs director and head of the River Falls Votes.

Questions can be addressed to:

Lu Ann Hecht

Phone: 715-425-0900 ext. 107

Fax: 715-425-0072

lhecht@rfcity.org

Craig Witte

Phone: 763-742-4927

craig.witte@uwrf.edu

Ben Plunkett

Home: 715-426-5838

Cell: 651-269-1274

benjamin.j.plunkett@uwrf.edu

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"River Falls Votes"