

Secretary of State funds new voter information technology

Local News

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OLYMPIA...Under a grant from Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed, counties in Washington have teamed with local colleges to launch a new 21st century voter information tool. Beginning July 20, voters in Kitsap County and four other counties will have the ability to access a video version of their local Voters' Pamphlet. Grant, Pacific, Pend Oreille and Walla Walla counties also are participating. Voters in the participating counties can go to their County Elections Web site to access an interactive version of their sample ballot. A voter can then click on any of the candidates appearing on his or her ballot to watch, listen and read a statement directly from the participating candidates. To assist candidates in filming their video statement, each participating county has teamed with its local college's media department.

"We are excited about the launch of the video voter guide," State Elections Director Nick Handy said. "It continues the Secretary of State's vision of making voter information accessible and compelling. This new voter tool embraces the future by providing voters the ability to easily watch and listen to every participating candidate appearing on their ballot who chooses to submit a video." The video voter guide is funded in part through a grant from the Office of Secretary of State. To date, nine counties in the state have applied for the grant funding. The OSOS grant program is designed to assist all voters with disabilities gain equal access to voting and elections-related information. "The Democracy Live Video Voter Guide is a marvelous example of universal design," said Deborah Cook, director of the Washington Assistive Technology Program. "It provides a valuable resource on voter information for all citizens, including those with disabilities who often lack access to this critical information about candidates and issues."