VOTING BY MAIL STRONGLY ENCOURAGED FOR OGLE COUNTY RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

OGLE COUNTY – Laura J. Cook, Ogle County Clerk and Recorder, announces the COVID-19 pandemic is a continuing concern as the 2020 General Election approaches. Cook encourages voters to consider Vote by Mail as a safe, secure and convenient option to cast a ballot. The Illinois General Assembly this year passed an election bill that provides many safeguards against the spread of coronavirus in the voting process for the November 3rd General Election. Chief among them are provisions to increase Voting by Mail throughout the state.

As of August 1, 2020, all registered voters in Ogle County will receive a “Vote by Mail” application from the County Clerk’s Office in the mail. The application will contain information on how to obtain a “Vote by Mail” ballot.

Cook states, “Voting by Mail in the safety of your home is a great option for those concerned with the COVID-19 pandemic. When you choose to Vote by Mail you are reducing the risk of exposure. Voting by Mail has been an option in the State of Illinois for voters, overseas citizens and military personnel for years and is secure.”

Ballots will be mailed to applicants beginning September 24, 2020, which is also the first day of Early Voting. The deadline for applying for a Vote by Mail ballot is October 29th. Ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day, November 3rd to be accepted, and properly postmarked ballots will be accepted through November 17th.

There are security procedures in place that upon the return of the “Vote by Mail” application, the signature will be verified by the Election Staff of the County Clerk’s Office. If the signature matches, the ballot will be mailed. But if there is a discrepancy, it will be taken care of immediately before the ballot is mailed to the voter. Once the ballot has been returned to the Election Authority, there will be three Election Judges who will verify the signature on the “Ballot Certification Envelope” to the signature on the application. A ballot may be rejected for an invalid signature only by unanimous decision of the judges.

The ballot may be rejected based on a signature or lack of signature or because the ballot envelope was delivered opened. If this shall happen, the voter will be notified within two days or within one day if the rejection occurs after Election Day. The new law contains provisions for the voter to address these problems.

We are needing Election Judges, if you would like to be a part of the Election process contact the Ogle County Clerk’s Office at 815-732-1110 for more information.