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Chairman

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DANIEL W. WHITE
Executive Director

ELECTION NEWS

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100 W. Randolph Street
Suite 14-100
Chicago, Illinois 60601
312/814-6440
312/814-6431 (TTY)

1020 S. Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
217/782-4141
217/782-1518 (TTY)
www.elections.il.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: DANIEL W. WHITE
(312) 814-6440

EARLY VOTING BEGINS MONDAY

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Jan, 10, 2008 – Early voting centers across Illinois open Monday morning as voters begin casting ballots in the state’s earliest-ever primary election.

The early voting centers are open until Jan. 31, and voters do not have to provide a reason or an excuse for wanting to vote early. Early voting must be done by personal appearance, and the votes are not counted until Election Day, Feb. 5.

Election authorities across the state have announced locations for early voting centers and the hours the early voting centers will be open. Most early voting centers are located in libraries, courthouses or town halls, but some are located in shopping malls.

For example, Chicago has an early voting center in each ward (50); suburban Cook County has 44 locations; Lake County, 19; Will County, eight; and DuPage County, six. In smaller counties, the early voting centers are often located only at the office of the county clerk or other election authority.

Information on locations and hours of operation are available at the state’s 110 election authorities, and often on their web sites.

Registered voters desiring to vote at an early voting center must display a current driver’s license, a state-issued identification card or another government-issued ID with a photograph.

People who register to vote during the grace period, Jan. 9-22, are not eligible to cast a ballot at an early voting center.

Approximately nine percent of the vote cast in the 2006 general election was cast at an early voting center, by absentee ballot or during a grace period registration.

Absentee voting laws remain in place for the primary election. For example, persons who are physically incapacitated and persons out of the county on Election Day can still cast an absentee vote by mail or in person by providing a reason as required under law.

In addition to the Presidential contest, candidates for U.S. Senate, Representatives in Congress, State Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly, judges and certain county officials will be nominated in the primary.

Elections are administered locally by the State's 110 election authorities. These are county clerks in 101 counties, one county election commission and eight municipal election commissions.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state constitutional agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the state.

For more information, contact election authorities or visit the Board's website www.elections.il.gov.