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Arapahoe County adds two questions to November ballot

One question would extend commissioner term limits, other restores ALEA in Watkins

LITTLETON, CO --- On Tuesday, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners approved the addition of two questions – one extending Commissioner term limits, and the other restoring the Arapahoe Law Enforcement Authority for the Watkins area - to be placed on the November 2007 Coordinated Election ballot.

The first ballot question, which was requested by Commissioner Jim Dyer, asks voters to lengthen commissioner term limits by one additional four-year term in order to be consistent with the extended term limits previously approved by Arapahoe County voters in 2001 for the offices of the Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Sheriff and Treasurer.

The Commissioners voted 3-2, with Commissioners Rod Bockenfeld and Pat Noonan voting no, to ask voters to consider lengthening commissioner terms of office by one additional term for a total of three, four-year terms, or a maximum 12 years.

The second ballot question, which only will be considered by voters living in the former Town of Watkins, asks Watkins residents to restore the Arapahoe Law Enforcement Authority.

Prior to the Town of Watkins incorporation in 2004, Watkins property owners were part of the Arapahoe Law Enforcement Authority, or ALEA. The ALEA is a taxing authority that pays for law enforcement patrol services in unincorporated areas of Arapahoe County.

ALEA funds the salaries, benefits, equipment and support services for patrol officers in the Sheriff's Office assigned to cover unincorporated Arapahoe County. The tax is only applied to taxable properties in unincorporated Arapahoe County. Property owners within any city or town do not pay the ALEA levy.

Because there is no statutory provision to restore the ALEA property tax after the discontinuance of an incorporation, Watkins property owners currently are not paying for law enforcement patrol services in their community.

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