

Official Benton County Voters' Pamphlet [May 19, 2009](#)

BENTON COUNTY VOTERS' PAMPHLET



SPECIAL ELECTION
MAY 19, 2009

PUBLISHED BY
BENTON COUNTY

Please RECYCLE this pamphlet with your newspapers



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

408 SW Monroe Ave., Suite 111

P.O. Box 3020

Corvallis, OR 97339-3020

(541) 766-6800

FAX (541) 766-6893

Dear Fellow Benton County Voter:

On May 19, 2009, a Special District Election will be held in Benton County.

This voters' pamphlet was produced by Benton County at the request of the City of Corvallis. The Board of Commissioners offered all special districts and cities the opportunity to participate in this voters' pamphlet. Only the City of Corvallis chose to do so. As a result, you will find information regarding the proposed Downtown Corvallis Urban Renewal Plan measure within this pamphlet.

Information regarding special district candidates and measures can be found at the elections office website and should receive some coverage by the local media.

The pamphlet will be mailed to Corvallis voters with their ballot and will be made available online at www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections, in the elections office, and at local libraries.

Please remember that all ballots, whether mailed or delivered in-person, **must be received at an official ballot drop site in Oregon no later than 8:00 PM on May 19, 2009.** You can drop your ballot at one of the ballot receptacle locations listed on our website and in this pamphlet. The Elections Office is located in the basement of the Benton County Courthouse, 120 NW 4th Street in Corvallis, Oregon.

You will also find instructions for completing your ballot and obtaining a replacement ballot within the pamphlet. We hope this information will help inform you about the issues and voting process as you prepare to make your decisions.

Sincerely,

Jay Dixon
Commissioner

Annabelle Jaramillo
Commissioner

Linda Modrell
Commissioner

VOTE

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CITY OF CORVALLIS

Measure 02-68

BALLOT TITLE

CAPTION:
CITY OF CORVALLIS DOWNTOWN CORVALLIS URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

QUESTION:
Shall the Downtown Corvallis Urban Renewal Plan, including the use and collection of tax increment funds, be approved?

SUMMARY:
This measure approves the ordinance authorizing the Downtown Corvallis Urban Renewal Plan and Report, establishes an Urban Renewal District, and approves the use and collection of tax increment funds to finance projects undertaken as part of the plan. The cap for the funds that could be used or collected for projects is \$35,559,157.

The plan includes the following project categories and estimated debt service, percentage of total funding that is devoted to that category, and estimated costs, anticipating inflation:

Public Improvements (61%) \$21,645,000

Assist Public and Private Development (14%) \$4,995,500

Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation (9.3%) \$3,330,000

Plan Administration (9.3%) \$3,330,000

Estimated Debt Service (6.4%) \$2,258,657

Approval of the use and collection of tax increment funds by the urban renewal agency would allocate future increases in property tax revenues within the district to the agency. Use of tax increment funds would not directly increase property taxes in the City. Substantial amendments to the plan require approval by a majority of the voters. The City Council would be the Urban Renewal Agency.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The City Council is referring an ordinance to implement a Downtown Urban Renewal Plan. The proposed Plan includes tax increment financing. For passage, the City Charter requires approval of the proposed Plan by a majority vote at a City election.

The proposed Plan would establish an Urban Renewal District within boundaries that extend from Fillmore Avenue, south to the north end of Crystal Lake Drive, and from 6th Street east to the Willamette River. The primary zoning within the district boundary is Central Business, Central Business Fringe, and Mixed Use transitional, but also includes smaller areas composed of other commercial, industrial, and residential zones.

The proposed district would contain 3.3% of the City's current total area and 4.3% of the City's current total assessed value. The City Council found that the area includes vacant buildings, undeveloped and underdeveloped property, and low improvement to land value ratios when compared to similar downtown areas.

The Downtown Corvallis Urban Renewal Plan proposes the use and collection of tax increment funds, in an amount not to exceed \$35.6 million. Property owners within the district would continue to pay property taxes at the same rate as all other property in the City. During the life of the plan, the Urban Renewal District would receive the increment of taxes due that is greater than the amount of taxes due in 2009. The City and other taxing jurisdictions would receive the same amount of property taxes from the district as was due in 2009.

Tax increment funds would be dedicated to the district for use on projects and programs authorized by the Plan. The Plan proposes the following types of expenditures: Public Improvements; Public and Private Development; Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation; Debt Service; and Plan Administration. The Plan estimates collection of approximately \$2 million in the first five years, and proposes allocating those funds to the following specific projects within the first five years: structural improvements and rehabilitation of buildings, assistance for historic preservation and renovation, riverfront path improvements, parking, and destination signage in the downtown area. The Plan would require approval by a majority in a City election before any increase or decrease of more than 20% spending in any category. Increasing the total tax increment revenue received by the Urban Renewal District would also require voter approval.

The Plan proposes that the City Council would serve as the Urban Renewal Agency, responsible for implementing the Urban Renewal Plan, project planning, budgeting, and authorizing funding for projects and programs within the district. The Plan proposes the Downtown Commission would act as the citizen advisory body to the Urban Renewal Agency. Any changes to the governance of the Urban Renewal District would require approval by the voters of Corvallis.

(Submitted by the City of Corvallis)

CITY OF CORVALLIS

Measure 02-68

ARGUMENT FOR

The Evanite property

Why include the Evanite property in the Urban Renewal District? By doing so, we can be sure that Corvallis citizens' interests are represented as this property is re-developed. Furthermore, its redevelopment can increase the funding available for public amenities, such as the multi-use path connection from the Downtown to South Corvallis.

Environmental Issues at Evanite

The existence of the District has no relevance to environmental remediation requirements on the Evanite property. Environmental remediation is the responsibility of the property owner. Environmental clean-up is regulated by existing Corvallis land-use and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulations. It is in the best interest of Corvallis and its citizens – current and future – to see the Evanite property cleaned up. Having this property within the Urban Renewal District strengthens the likelihood of this positive step happening for Corvallis.

Public Process

Any project undertaken by the District must be approved by the City Council, in open public meeting, with full opportunity for citizen input. The existence of the District would not alter any existing zoning, permitting or land use regulations or processes. The District is strictly a financing mechanism; it has no other jurisdictional authority. Strict control with full citizen input would always be maintained.

The Economy

Positive steps for our Downtown are always appropriate, in good or bad economic times. The District strengthens our community and prepares us for the better times ahead.

Non-Downtown Commercial Areas

What about other Corvallis commercial areas? Can we help these places and merchants? YES. Business people operating in commercial areas, such as south 3rd Street, 9th Street, Circle Boulevard or Kings Boulevard, can form merchant associations and request funding through our Economic Allocation process. Let these merchants take the positive step by organizing and approaching the Council for assistance; I support this initiative and look forward to working with them.

Please join me in voting YES on Measure 02-68!

Charles Tomlinson, Mayor

(This information furnished by Charles Tomlinson)

The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by Benton County, nor does the county warrant the accuracy or truth of any statement made in the argument.

ARGUMENT FOR

We (and Oregon) Love our Downtown

When I travel around Oregon, people tell me how much they love Corvallis, and that our wonderful Downtown is the major area they find especially attractive about our community. The special character of our Downtown is one of the things that make Corvallis the wonderful place that it is. Much of the focus of our community is on Downtown: That's where our festivals and cultural activities are centered. That's where the Riverfront Commemorative Park and Farmers' Markets are and where our transit system is oriented. Downtown is the vibrant heart of our community. Let's support this unique treasure through the Urban Renewal District.

Prevent Sprawl

Measure 02-68 is recognition that the special character of our Downtown doesn't just "happen" - it needs to be supported. An economically viable Downtown prevents sprawl. The District will be the "preventative maintenance" needed to preserve and enhance Downtown's uniqueness. Let's concentrate on re-development, not Greenfield Development.

How does it end?

Some have questioned when and how the District ends. It will end when the maximum tax increment revenue of \$35.6 million is generated. The District can end earlier, by a majority vote of the people. District loan obligations must be paid by the District before termination is effective.

Design Guidelines

If the District lends money to property owners for building rehabilitation, can we develop and require design guidelines for the building changes? YES. Albany uses design guidelines today. The District can require redevelopers accept all conditions and agreements required by the District.

Property Tax Impact

Some citizens are concerned about future property tax increases if a District is approved. We all know that property tax increases are subject to voter approval; voters retain the same future taxing decisions with or without an Urban Renewal District.

Let's support our Downtown; join me in voting YES on Measure 02-68!

The time to act is NOW!

Charles Tomlinson, Mayor

(This information furnished by Charles Tomlinson)

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CITY OF CORVALLIS

Measure 02-68

ARGUMENT FOR

Corvallis has a wonderful downtown. It reflects our community values. People like you have patronized its stores and services; dined in its restaurants; enjoyed its events and activities; and supported our beautiful Riverfront Park. But downtown is at risk. In times like these, if not given needed attention, even our downtown could fail, becoming little more than an empty shell like downtowns in other cities.

NO NEW TAXES for you! Downtown pays its own way under this plan. You won't have to pay a dime more in taxes! As downtown properties add value, more tax revenues will be generated and reinvested downtown. When the plan ends, this increased tax base will help pay for more of the government services and amenities that enhance the quality of life we cherish.

Sustain the heart of Corvallis! The plan will help maintain buildings, restore historic structures, improve public facilities, encourage affordable housing, promote sustainable design, and support entertainment, arts, and cultural opportunities.

You have a voice in all projects! Nothing is pre-approved. All decisions will be made in open public meetings under existing codes and regulations.

Schools are NOT hurt! All taxing agencies gain long-term. The state reimburses school districts for renewal funds. When the plan ends, tax revenues are fully restored to all taxing agencies, at expectedly higher levels, given the increased values the plan makes possible.

Invest in the enduring health of Corvallis! Now is the time to put our best economic development efforts forward! In challenging times like these, we must focus on our community's long-term vision. Acting now will bring us the greatest rewards.

Let's not lose what we love. Let's make downtown Corvallis even more wonderful.

Vote YES on 02-68!

Michele Adams	Barbara Ross
Barbara Bull	Anne Schuster
Mike Corwin	Cary Stephens
Patricia Daniels	Charles C. Tomlinson
Becki Goslow	Biff Traber
Jonathan Hayes	Curtis Wright
Jim Moorefield	

www.heartofcorvallis.org

(This information furnished by Sustaining the Heart of Corvallis committee)

The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by Benton County, nor does the county warrant the accuracy or truth of any statement made in the argument.

ARGUMENT FOR

We've been working on our downtown for 150 years. We have met the challenge of changing conditions, and managed to adapt. How will we serve our citizens' commercial needs, protect the character we love, avoid a hollow core, and maintain a heart to our city in the future?

Urban Renewal is a financing mechanism that has proven itself in over 85 districts in Oregon. Our district will provide certainty to private investors that we are committed to our downtown. By dedicating a small percentage of future tax from the district, we can leverage public resources to attract private investment, help to increase the tax base, and allow downtown to compete with undeveloped sites. Revitalizing the area we have already dedicated for business, housing, office and entertainment is a better choice than discarding it in favor of building new space on the edge of our city. We can choose a different outcome than we see in many other towns.

It is a certainty that these times will test us, we need the best tools available to navigate them and leave a central feature of our city in at least as good a shape as we inherited it. Money spent will undergo the full process of open public decision-making. No land use rules will be changed. No new taxes will be created.

As a community, we need to be able to say yes to those things that have proven to make a difference.

Vote YES on 02-68!

Nicole Dodson	Mark O'Brien
Commissioner Jay Dixon	Mario Pastega
Bruce Hecht	Kathleen Petrucela
Richard Hervey	Blake Rodman
Helen Higgins	John Turman
Tony Howell	Tony Van Vliet
Pat Lampton	Jack Wolcott
Julie Manning	Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo

www.heartofcorvallis.org

(This information furnished by Sustaining the Heart of Corvallis committee)

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CITY OF CORVALLIS

Measure 02-68

ARGUMENT AGAINST

There are many important questions to ask about the proposed urban renewal district. You won't like the answers!

First: do we need urban renewal? The Web site maintained by its proponents asks this question in its FAQ section. (<http://www.heartofcorvallis.org/faq.html>) Even urban renewal proponents are forced to admit: "Downtown looks pretty good right now." In fact, they say, it is "doing well" and "thriving."

But, proponents suggest, maybe someday downtown will need renovation. And so, to solve a problem that doesn't exist now, they propose creating a district that will siphon \$35 million from local government tax revenues.

How much is \$35 million? It is more than twice as costly as the \$13 million riverfront project built less than 10 years ago. It is more than twice as costly as the \$13 million Senior Center project, which voters rejected last November.

What will we get for \$35 million? Proponents admit they have planned only a few small projects worth about \$1 million. They will figure out how to spend the other \$34 million once they get it. Basically, the proponents have no plan! That is because, as they have already told us, no problem exists that needs fixing!

Where does the \$35 million come from? It gets taken from local taxes that would otherwise fund basic public services. Police, fire, ambulance, the library, parks, public health services, and road maintenance would all suffer in order to fund downtown urban renewal.

Local government services are already at risk in the current economy. Urban renewal diverts \$35 million from local government services to solve a nonexistent problem. Sure, downtown may someday look more spiffy with urban renewal. But other essential community needs will suffer. That's a bad trade-off. It's a bad idea. We don't need it. Please vote NO on urban renewal.

(This information furnished by David Grappo)

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ARGUMENT AGAINST

1. THE PLAN IS FINANCIALLY UNSOUND WITH OR WITHOUT EVANITE

The \$36 million district's financial success is contingent upon Evanite being cleaned up and developed – because the largest proposed source of revenue would be based on an assessed value of \$55 million+ from new condominiums and retail space.

Due to toxic cleanup problems, these may not be built for a long time, therefore jeopardizing urban renewal funding. No other large downtown building projects have been identified to replace development at Evanite.

VOTE NO on a plan that contains a toxic waste site.

People cannot safely live on top of toxic trichloroethylene (TCE) in soil and groundwater.

According to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), new housing at Evanite may not be feasible. DEQ is concerned about TCE vapor escaping into the air and occupied buildings. DEQ will restrict Evanite to industrial use if the site cannot be cleaned.

TCE Cleanup timeframe too long

The most costly ground water and soil cleanup lies ahead. Evanite groundwater still contains about 500,000 times more TCE than the Oregon drinking water standard allows.

The extent of the cleanup problem will not be known until after September 2009, when DEQ does more testing. If new DEQ methods of cleanup cannot be used, cleanup time will be far into the future and the cost will be into the millions.

Fiberglass factories and housing on the same property do not mix

The two operating Evanite micro-fiberglass factories legally emit 20 tons of microscopic glass particles per year into the air. Evanite has not announced any plans to move or close its factories. Fiberglass business is growing, according to Evanite's parent company, Hollingsworth and Vose.

2. THE PLAN WILL NOT IMPROVE SOUTH CORVALLIS

Passing the Plan will not help clean up Evanite

Evanite is legally bound to pay cleanup costs – regardless of any urban renewal plan. Under active DEQ enforcement orders, Evanite cannot use Oregon Brownfields Development Funds for cleanup.

VOTE NO

(This information furnished by Marilyn Koenitzer)

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CITY OF CORVALLIS

Measure 02-68

ARGUMENT AGAINST

Do not create a \$35.6 million Downtown Urban Renewal Plan District (URD)

Hurts our City and County

It diverts funding from city and county services, including fire, police, library, and health departments for an unknown length of time.

Given our current economic conditions, now is not the time to incur new debt.

Our State budget just cut \$880 million. An additional \$3 billion in cuts is anticipated for the next biennium.

No end in sight. The new Urban Renewal District may not end for decades

Once the district is created, it must legally remain in existence until the \$35.6 million plan, interest and any accrued indebtedness is paid off. This may take more than the 20 years projected.

How Repayment of Downtown Urban Plan (District) does or does not work

New construction projects, improvements or increased assessments **must** occur. If new construction projects are not built and total assessed values do not increase, then any debts created by the district must be financed through other sources.

Breakdown of \$35.6 million plan

61% of plan will go to public improvements, such as sidewalks and signage. An additional 9% is for administration of the plan. These do not increase assessed value, do not help retire the debt, nor bring increased property taxes to the taxing bodies which will lose revenue during the lifetime of the district.

Lacks specificity. Lacks public participation.

No defined projects are listed on the ballot. A small group of individuals on the Downtown Commission will select projects to be approved by the city council.

We don't know what we're getting.

Vote NO on Measure 02-68

(This information furnished by Louise Marquering, Ed P. Epley, John H. Detweiler)

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VOTER REGISTRATION, BALLOT INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

VOTER REGISTRATION AND BALLOT INFORMATION

Who is qualified to vote: In order to receive a ballot, voters must be registered to vote in their county of residence no later than 21 days prior to the election. However, if a registered voter moves within the State of Oregon, that voter can update his/her voter registration information and receive a ballot up until **8:00 PM on Election Day, which is May 19, 2009**

Absentee Ballots: It is against the law to have anyone forward a ballot to you. Even the United States Postal Service will not forward a ballot. If you will be out of the area during the election period and would like to receive a ballot, contact our office and request that an "Absentee Ballot" be sent directly to you.

If you lose your ballot or make a mistake while voting it: If your ballot is lost, destroyed, damaged, or you made a mistake in marking your ballot, you may contact the Benton County Elections Office to request a replacement ballot. The replacement ballot will be mailed to you, as long as your request is received no later than the 5th day before Election Day. After the 5th day before the election, you may pick up a ballot by coming to the Benton County Elections Office.

If you have already mailed your original ballot before you realize you made a mistake, your ballot has been cast, and you are not eligible for a replacement ballot.

In order for your ballot to be counted it must be returned to any elections office or official ballot dropsite in the State of Oregon, **no later than 8:00 PM Election Day, May 19, 2009.**

Postmarks DO NOT count!

Ballots must be returned enclosed in the official ballot return envelope and **signed by the voter** in order to be counted. Even people with Power of Attorney do not have authority to sign another person's ballot.

Use a **PEN OR PENCIL** to vote your ballot.

If you have other questions about voter registration, your ballot, or voting in Benton County you are encouraged to call 541 766-6756.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Benton County Elections Website

The website is an excellent source of information concerning voter registration, absentee voting, frequently asked questions, and links to other local, state, and federal election officials. You will also find election specific information such as election filings, results, voter turnout and this voters' pamphlet on our website www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections.

Voters with Disabilities

If you need help voting because of a disability, contact the Benton County Elections Office. Deputized elections staff is available to assist you in casting a ballot; or ask about alternate voting formats.

Benton County Elections Office

Phone: 541 766-6756
TTY: 541 766-6080
Fax: 541 766-6757
Website: www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections
Email: bcelections@co.benton.or.us

State of Oregon

Phone: 1 866 673-8683
Website: www.oregonvotes.org
Se Habla Español

Información en Español

Para mas información sobre las elecciones en el condado de Benton

llame al: 541 766-6756
TTY: 541 766-6080
limitaciones auditivas
o al numero gratis: 1 866 673-8683

Condado: www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections
Estado: www.oregonvotes.org

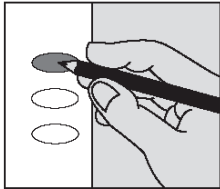
Se Habla Español

CHECK YOUR BALLOT AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW TO CAST YOUR BALLOT

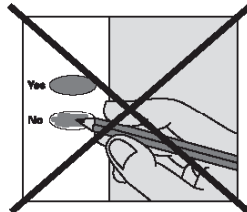
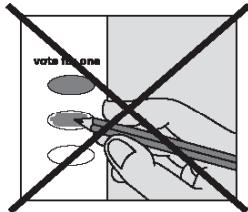
check your ballot!

Use a pen or pencil to fill in the ovals next to your choices.



If you vote for more candidates than allowed, or if you vote **both Yes and No** on a measure, it is called an overvote.

Your vote **will not count** for that candidate or measure.



You do not have to vote on all contests. Those you do vote on will still count.

Contact Benton County Elections to request a replacement ballot if:

- you make a mistake
- your ballot is damaged or spoiled
- you lose your ballot

Benton County Elections

Phone: (541) 766-6756
Fax: (541) 766-6757
TTY: (541) 766-6080
Email: bcelections@co.benton.or.us

1 866 ORE VOTE / 673 8683
Se Habla Español
www.oregonvotes.org

rev 9/04

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What do I do when a ballot for someone else is delivered to my home?

A. It is important that you **DO NOT THROW THE BALLOT AWAY**. Write on the envelope that the person is no longer at that address and **PUT IT BACK INTO THE MAIL**. Postage is not needed. Once our office has received the undeliverable ballot you will stop receiving them.

Q. I forgot to put my ballot in the secrecy envelope. Will you count my ballot?

A. Yes. We recommend that voters use the secrecy envelope. You can open the ballot return envelope, place your ballot in the secrecy envelope and reseal it. Write "Opened By Voter" along the portion that you opened and sign your full name there as well. That way we will know that the voter was the one who opened the ballot and can count it. However, if your ballot comes back without a secrecy envelope, it will still be counted.

Q. How do you know I am the one who voted my ballot?

A. The signature on EACH ballot return envelope is verified. Elections staff compares the signature on your ballot return envelope with the signature on your Voter Registration Card. If the signatures do not match we will contact you to help us resolve the issue. **Remember:** Even a person with a Power of Attorney cannot sign your ballot. Only you can.

Q. When do election results become available and how can I find out what they are?

A. Election results are available on the Benton County Elections website at: www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections. First results become available between 8:20 PM and 9:00 PM on Election Night. Further results will be added as ballots are received and tallied. All ballots cast within Benton County will be counted and the results posted before the election staff leaves Election Night. However, ballots returned in other counties must be sent to Benton County for later tally and the election cannot be certified until all voters whose ballots were challenged have had an opportunity to respond to those challenges.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS EXPLAINED

Your ballot includes Board positions for most of the special districts in Benton County. The special districts on your ballot are the entities from which you receive services. The contests printed on each ballot will vary in each area of the county based on the district service boundaries and the location of your residence.

In an effort to save tax dollars each city and district was asked if they wished to take part in this Voters' Pamphlet. Only the City of Corvallis accepted the cost associated with printing this pamphlet. If you would like more information about the candidates appearing on your ballot you can find their filing forms by going to the Benton County Elections Office website at www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections.

What types of special districts serve Benton County residents? Education Service, Community College, K-12 Schools, Rural Fire, Park and Recreation, Water Control, Soil & Water, and Cemetery districts.

Who is in charge of Special Districts? Special districts are directed by a governing body of five to seven board members, elected by voters living within the district. They meet monthly for district business and serve without pay. Terms of office are four years, and are staggered so board members are not all replaced at the same time.

What do the elected special district board members do? They formulate and interpret policy, establish and approve budgets, set goals and evaluate progress toward those goals, review the district's performance and expenditures and develop plans for the future, request approval of bond and local option levy measures for facilities and operations, and interview and hire a manager, president, or chief for the district, if applicable.

Where does funding for special districts come from? These districts are financed through property taxes, or fees for services, or some combination of both.

How do I know what special districts I am in? Many special districts are located in rural areas only. You are a part of and will be able to vote for the board members of any special district that serves the area where you live. Property tax statements list the districts that serve you. Contact the Benton County Assessor or Elections Office if you have questions about the special districts that serve you.

Am I qualified to run for office in my special districts? Generally the only qualifications to run for office are that you have lived in the district for a year at the time of the election, are at least 21 years old, and are a registered voter in the district. Some special districts have additional requirements, so it is important to check with the district office or the Benton County Elections Office before filing as a candidate.

How would I file for a special district office? Check to see when the next election for board members will appear on the ballot. Make sure you meet all the requirements to file, and determine which board position or zone you wish to file for. Complete the filing forms and pay the fee (usually \$10.00) by the deadline to file. Filing forms can be found at www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections/districtboard.php on our website.

Election Questions?

Benton County Elections Office

Phone: (541) 766-6756

TTY: (541) 766-6080

Fax: (541) 766-6757

Website: www.co.benton.or.us/admin/elections

Email: bcelections@co.benton.or.us

Elections Office Open

7:00 AM to 8:00 PM Election Day

Cities and districts taking part in this election were given the opportunity to be included in this County Voters' Pamphlet. Only the City of Corvallis agreed to participate.