



## From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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### **Applications can soon be submitted for early ballots by mail**

LINCOLN – Those who wish to get a jump on voting in the 2018 primary will soon be able to request an early ballot by mail. Secretary of State John Gale says January 14 is the first day that applications will be accepted at county offices. The first round of ballots will be mailed out on April 9.

“Counties receiving early voting requests will start to accumulate a list,” Gale explained. “Those ballots will be among the first out the door come April.”

Gale noted that a few counties also maintain what is known as a permanent absentee list, which allows them to reach out to voters who have indicated a preference to vote by mail. “For example, in the case of Lancaster County, each voter on the list is mailed a postcard, which can be returned by the voter, indicating that he or she would like to receive a ballot by mail.”

Only in precincts that are designated as all-mail will voters automatically receive a ballot by mail for the primary. To date, there are 83 all-mail precincts in 15 counties. That includes ten new mail-only precincts approved ahead of the primary in Boone, Dawes, Harlan, Knox, Phelps and Stanton counties. By law, by mail precincts are located in counties that have a population of less than 10,000.

“The county election official must make an application to my office explaining the reasons for having a precinct converted from a polling place to mail,” said Gale. “Some are approved and others are not. Precincts that have made the switch are those that are located in rural areas, not easily accessible by paved roads, may have limited access for people with disabilities and are not within a convenient travel distance for voters.”

Gale noted that voter registration is again on a steady climb leading up to the primary election. "It is not at the level reached in last year's presidential election, but we have received more than 8,000 new registrations since March 2017."

Currently, voter registration is at 1,195,069.

Anyone wishing to complete an early ballot application can find one on the Secretary of State's website: [www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov). They are available in English and Spanish. Applications must be returned to the county election office in which the voter is registered, either by mail or in person. In addition to voting early by mail, voters will be able to vote early, in person at their county election office starting April 16.

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