

Try **BLOCKBUSTER** Total Access™ **FREE!**

- Over 85,000 titles
- No due dates or late fees for online rentals
- Exchange in-store for FREE rentals

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN YOUR **FREE TRIAL!**

Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#)

Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classifieds](#)



SEARCH ALL

SPONSORED BY:
Need a NEWS FILL-UP?

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [OPINION](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [WEATHER](#) [COMMUNITIES](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [OBITUARIES](#) [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#)

[Local news](#) [Nation/World](#) [Business](#) [Features](#) [Columnists](#) [HealthScene](#) [Data Mississippi](#)

Comment, blog & share photos
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)

POWERED BY YOU AND **The Clarion-Ledger**

Madison supes drop support of mailout to purge voter rolls

ELIZABETH CRISP • ELIZABETH.CRISP@CLARIONLEDGER.COM • JULY 22, 2008

[Read Comments\(1\)](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#)

SHARE THIS ARTICLE: [Del.icio.us](#) [Facebook](#) [Digg](#) [Reddit](#) [Newsvine](#) [What's this?](#)

CANTON -Though the project has been in the works for some time, Madison County officials have decided not to back a countywide mailout planned to clean the voter rolls.



District 4 Supervisor
Karl Banks



District 1 Supervisor
Tim Johnson

ADVERTISEMENT

Featured Video

Sort by: Industry (Default)

careerbuilder
Top Job Videos

- Health Care Madison Co Jail Medical Unit
- Health Care Confidential
- Health Care Willow Creek
- Health Care MS Band of
- Health Care Region 8 Mental Health

[View more details](#)

Playing

Find More Videos!

During a meeting Monday, county supervisors rescinded their earlier votes in support of a mailout and told elections commissioners to instead focus on other ways to purge what many think to be an inflated list of registered voters.

The move comes as some have questioned whether the plan to mail cards to every registered voter in the county as the first step in a two-year purging process would violate the National Voting Rights Act.

"Any kind of mass mailout, in my opinion, is illegal," District 4 Supervisor Karl Banks said.

District 1 Supervisor and Board President Tim Johnson said he wants to see the voter rolls purged but agreed that the mailout may not be the most appropriate action at this time.

"The DOJ (Department of Justice) has said they don't want to see a mass mailout," District 1 Supervisor and Board President Tim Johnson said. "We need to look for the most efficient and most effective way to deal with this."

About 40,300 people voted in the 2004 presidential election in Madison County, and more than 72,000 people are registered.

The circuit clerk's office has estimated that there should be about 50,000 legitimate voters, based on 2007 census estimates. The county has 89,387 residents, according to the census.

In recent weeks, county supervisors have agreed that something should be done to purge the county rolls.

They had voted to spend more than \$59,000 on the mailout program. No money was spent before officials changed plans.

FILE DOWNLOADS
[Proposed mailing for Madison County voters](#)

RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB
[US News](#)
Powered by Topix.net

ADVERTISEMENT

Elections Commission chairwoman Kakey Chaney, who has pushed for a mailout, was at the board meeting to present a finalized plan that included mailing the cards, paying for radio and newspaper advertisements and hiring temporary workers.

According to her plan, every voter who did not respond to the voter cards would be contacted.

"No one wants to say we have a problem, but we do," Chaney said. "This has been urgent since 2005."

Eventually those who could not be reached after multiple attempts and who did not vote in at least two federal elections would have been purged from the voter rolls. If at some point they came back to vote, they could vote by affidavit ballots.

The effort would have been the first of its kind in Mississippi, and Madison County had been considered a pilot project for the state, Chaney said.

Banks, who has voted against the project each time it has come up, argued that the efforts were not legal. He said his understanding of the law was that commissioners needed a reason to believe that a voter's information may not be accurate.

Estelle Rogers, a voting rights lawyer who works with the Washington-based nonprofit Project Vote organization, said she, too, was concerned about Madison County's proposal.

Rogers sent a letter to the elections commission last week, out of concern that the mailout, as planned, violated the Voting Rights Act, she said. She said she also tried to contact the elections commissioners by phone but no one returned her calls.

"They are doing something that is understandable when you have a voter roll that appears to be out of proportion," Rogers said. "But there are a lot of Ps and Qs that must be followed."

County supervisors, expressing some concern over the ramifications that such a process could have with respect to the Department of Justice, have instead instructed the commission to first clear the rolls with databases from the secretary of state's office and the state Department of Health.

"If we use those first, then we could possibly come back to the mailout," county administrator Donnie Caughman said. "We could end up eliminating 10,000 to 15,000 of those mailouts."

Banks argued that especially during a presidential election year, the commission should focus on making sure that the election goes smoothly.

He said there are enough problems with people not knowing their appropriate precinct and other issues.

"The mildest things confuse people and can ultimately disenfranchise people during elections," Banks said. "Here we are wanting to disenfranchise people because they don't send a card back?"

Chaney argued that the commission had carefully worded the cards so that they would not be "intimidating."

The proposed cards read: "You can do your part to help Madison County clean up the voter rolls and save tax dollars by filling out this postage paid card today" and the card is marked "Voter Registration Update."

To comment on this story, call Elizabeth Crisp at (601) 961-7303.

In Your Voice

[READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY](#)

[Postcard Marketing](#)

Postcards Generate Hot Leads We Design, Print, Address & Mail

www.PostcardMania.com

[Enclosure Purge](#)

Enclosure Purge and Pressurization in all Types and Classes at ISC

www.iscenclosurecooling.com/

[Bulk Mail Services](#)

Free Quotes from Multiple Providers Compare Options - Save Time & Money

www.BuyerZone.com/Direct_Mail

[Print Mailing Labels](#)

Brother® Label Printers - The Easy Way to Print Crisp Mailing Labels.

www.Brother-USA.com





Haggai wrote:

I smell a rat in this town!!!!!! Ohio & Florida remember what happen there and who won ! Different face same results, just WATCH & SEE !!
7/22/2008 6:53:05 PM

[Recommend](#)

[New post](#)

[Reply to this Post](#)

[Report Abuse](#)

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

1000 characters left



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#)

[MississippiMoms.com](#) | [VIP Jackson](#) | [Outdoors](#)

[Clinton News](#) | [Madison County Herald](#) | [Rankin Ledger](#) | [Northeast Jackson](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Weather](#) | [Communities](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Customer service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2008 ...

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2007.