

Minutes for December 2001 Meeting  
of the Aiken County Republican Party  
by Vicki L. Simons, edited by Chairman David Nix

The regular monthly meeting of the Aiken County Republican Party was held on Thursday, December 13, 2001, at the Aiken County Council Chambers. The Chairman, David Nix, Vice Chairman, Rachael Meehan, Treasurer, Jan Carpenter, and Secretary, Vicki Simons, were present. The invocation was given by and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mike Simons. Joel Williams made a motion to approve the November 2001 meeting minutes, which had been mailed to Executive Committeemen in unread, unapproved format. Since the motion was seconded and the Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes, the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.

Chairman David Nix:

\* Encouraged members to remember needy persons such as children during the holiday season.

\* Recognized former County Councilman Russ Ferrara.

\* Reported that the Treasurer's report shows a balance ending November 30, 2001, of \$3,213.11.

There was no old business.

Our guest speaker, Stuart Bedenbaugh, Executive Director of Aiken County Registration and Elections Commission, spoke about the following items:

1. Nine new precincts have been formed in Aiken County, pending approval by the Justice Department. Boundaries of the new precincts were pointed out on maps shown via overhead projector. Voters whose precincts have changed will be receiving new voter registration cards.

2. Motor Voter cannot unilaterally remove voters from the registration list. The current set-up sends postcards to voters who have not voted in the last 2 elections, in order to confirm that they still live at that location. Voters who do not confirm their addresses have their names purged from the list. There are currently 79,600 registered voters in Aiken County.

3. Under the new state-wide voter registration system, those who move or request a new card will receive a new card that is pre-signed by the Election Commission. Now, when a South Carolina resident moves from one county to another within the state, he or she keeps the same voter registration ID number. Aiken County has the block of voter registration numbers ranging from 405000 to 419999. Jim Sutherland raised what he considers a serious issue: potential counterfeiting of voter cards. He suggested using the currently-unused stripe on drivers licenses. Stuart said that cooperation between agencies [such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and the State Election Commission] is not good and that enabling legislation has not been written to address that issue.

4. Poll lists will change to include bar codes that can be scanned to give voters credit for voting. Poll managers will no longer have to shade the "voted" block. The new system, which they hope to have in place by November 2002, will do away with the red, blue or black sheet.

5. Electronic voting has become a big deal since the presidential election debacle in Florida. Since their purchase in 1972, Aiken County's Vote-a-matic machines have served us well and the County has gotten its money's worth from them. There are 7 electronic voting systems certified for use in South Carolina, but no decision will be made on which system to use until the Board has seen them all. Users who have voted on electronic voting machines have commented that they have been well received. Stuart estimates that it will take \$1.5 million to purchase electronic voting machines for Aiken County and that the machines may be in place by the 2004 presidential election. One of the benefits of converting to electronic voting is that the results can be finalized and broadcast on the 11:00 p.m. news the night of the election.

6. It is possible that 16- and 17-year-old volunteers may help run polls in the future, with one teen per two poll managers. Finding workers to man the polls is harder in some parts of Aiken County than others. Stuart will be conducting poll training early next year. Jane Vaughters said she knows many people who would be willing to become poll managers. Voters in the city portion of Congressional District 2 have had the opportunity to vote in 13 elections during the 27 month period between August 1999 and December 18, 2001. Depending on who wins which elections in the future, there may be a whole new slate of special elections possible in the months to come.

Chairman Nix asked for a motion to adjourn, which was provided, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

on: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_