

Jefferson County Democratic Party Party Organization and Terms



2007/2008 Edition

Jefferson County Democratic Party

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|--------|
| Expressing Your Political Voice..... | Page 1 |
| Benefits of Party Affiliation..... | Page 1 |
| Precinct Caucuses: Timing and Purpose..... | Page 2 |
| Organization of Jefferson County Democratic Party..... | Page 2 |
| Committee People..... | Page 2 |
| House Districts and Captaincies..... | Page 3 |
| Captaincy Districts..... | Page 3 |
| Senate Districts..... | Page 4 |
| County Central Committee..... | Page 4 |
| County Executive Committee..... | Page 4 |
| County Party Officers..... | Page 5 |
| Organization of the State Democratic Party..... | Page 5 |
| State Party Officers..... | Page 5 |
| Multi-County Districts..... | Page 6 |
| Judicial District Central Committee..... | Page 7 |
| County Party At-a-Glance..... | Page 7 |
| Understanding Precinct Numbers..... | Page 8 |
| Glossary..... | Page 9 |

Expressing Your Political Voice

Voter Registration

The first, most basic step in expressing your political voice is voting. If you're not registered to vote, you may do so up to 29 days before an election at:

- County clerks office
- Motor vehicle offices
- Driver's license offices
- By mail with an application you download from the Jefferson County web site at <http://www.jeffco.us>

You may only register for yourself. No one else may register on your behalf. Be sure to bring a photo idea when you register. Proof of identity is required.

You may also make changes to your name, address or party affiliation at any registration site or by sending a signed, written request to:

Elections Department
Jefferson County Government Center
Golden, CO 80419

Fax: 303.271.8197

Benefits of Party Affiliation

Approximately one-third of registered voters in Jefferson County register as "unaffiliated" voters. In doing so, they are throwing away opportunities to help political parties select the best candidates and determine priorities of party platforms. Only voters registered with a political party may vote in primary elections or participate in precinct caucuses where candidate selection and platform discussions take place.

If you are an unaffiliated voter and, on primary election day you want to vote in the primary, you may do so by going to your polling place and declaring a party affiliation.

Precinct Caucuses: Timing and Purpose

Colorado is one of 15 U.S. states to begin the election cycle through precinct caucuses. Essentially, caucuses are neighborhood meetings for voters registered within a political party. Held on the first Tuesday in February of Presidential years and third Tuesday in March of non-presidential even numbered years, caucuses exist to:

- Elect precinct committee people, who are the volunteers that lead party activities in a precinct
- Conduct preference polls for candidates
- Elect delegates and alternates to party functions such as county and state-level assemblies or conventions
- Consider resolutions and issues to be considered for inclusion in the party platform
- Recruit election judges

Attendance at a caucus is open to all interested people, but to vote or to be a delegate to an assembly or convention, you must be a registered Democrat for two months prior to the caucus and reside in the precinct for 30 days before the caucus occurs.

Organization of the Jefferson County Democratic Party

When you volunteer with Jefferson County Democrats, you may wind up in several roles. For instance, a volunteer who takes on a leadership role in a precinct as a “Committee Person” will also be a member of the party organization’s “Central Committee.” Following is a look at the organizational groups that make up the party and the volunteers who belong to them.

Committee People

Volunteers who lead party activities within a precinct are called Committee People. Elected at caucus, these people hold office under state statute for a two-year term. That is, Committee People are elected officials.

Each precinct is permitted two Committee People per party. If you are elected to the role of committee person and can’t serve, you should officially resign your post in writing via a hard-copy letter. That way, your House District Captain or

Chair, the volunteers who supervise Committee People, can replace you and keep party activities moving along. This is very important because Committee People are the liaison between the party and the Democrats in their precinct. Their role involves:

- Notifying Democrats of upcoming caucuses
- Recruiting and supervising precinct volunteers
- Representing precincts at meetings of the county Central Committee
- Distributing party literature
- Supporting nominees of the party (financial support not required)
- Helping with voter registration
- Participating in countywide “get out the vote” – GOTV – efforts

House Districts and Captaincies

The House District is our organizational unit, and a House District is composed of the precincts represented by one member of the House in Colorado’s General Assembly, our state’s legislative body. Each House District elects officers, which include a Chair, a Vice Chair and one or two other people to fulfill the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. These officers recruit and supervise precinct-level volunteers.

House District volunteers:

- Recruit a candidate for the State House
- Conduct House District meetings
- Maintain records
- Organize caucuses
- Coordinate campaign activities
- Recruit volunteers

There is a House District Central Committee, and it is made up of Committee People, Captains, House District officers and, if there is one, the House District’s Democratic member of the State House. House District officers also serve on the County’s Executive Committee.

Captaincy Districts: House District Chairs may split up their House Districts into Captaincy Districts made up of five or more precincts. At the biennial county reorganization meeting, the House District Central Committee elects one or two Captains per Captaincy to serve two-year terms. Captains:

- Recruit and supervise Committee People
- Coordinate caucuses
- Attend Central and Executive Committee meetings
- Direct Get Out the Vote – GOTV – activities

Senate Districts

Jefferson County Democrats also organize around state Senate Districts, and each Senate District elects volunteers to fill the roles of Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Responsibilities include:

- Recruiting a State Senate candidate
- Coordinating campaign activities
- Attending meetings of the County Executive Committee
- Conducting Senate District meetings

County Central Committee

Volunteers and elected officials make up the County Central Committee. Specifically, the Central Committee consists of:

- Precinct Committee People (precinct leaders)
- House District Officers, Captains and Co-captains
- County party officers
- Democrats elected to office at the county, state or national level

The county Central Committee meets at least twice per year. It is the governing body of the party and has the ultimate authority to resolve all disputes.

The Central Committee designates the time and place of all county assemblies and conventions. This group also adopts the county's delegate selection plan for state assemblies and conventions.

In February of odd numbers years, the county Central Committee meets to reorganize the county party by electing new party officers. At the same time, Central Committee members of House and Senate Districts elect their organizations' officers.

County Executive Committee

The County Executive Committee meets at least twice per year to approve the organization's budget and perform duties such as setting times and places for assemblies and conventions. Members of the County Executive Committee are:

- County Officers
- House and Senate District Officers
- Elected House District Captains and appointed Captains-at-Large

Elected members serve until the next biennial county party reorganization meeting held in February of odd numbered years. Appointed members serve at the discretion of the county Chair.

County Party Officers

Any registered Democrat in Jefferson County may run for election as a county officer, but only members of the Central Committee may vote in the biennial reorganization meeting held to elect county officers in February of odd numbered years. County officers serve for two years. Following is quick view of our officers listed in order of leadership succession.

- **The Chair** is the Chief Executive Officer of the party. This person carries out the mandates of the Central and Executive Committees, announces meetings, presides at meetings and acts as a public spokesperson for the party.
- **The First Vice Chair** performs tasks assigned by the Chair and presides at meetings if the chair cannot attend.
- **The Secretary** keeps minutes of meetings, maintains files and records, oversees the operations of our headquarters and provides information requested by the County Clerk or Secretary of State.
- **The Treasurer** has custody of party funds. Consequently, the treasurer makes all payments, prepares financial reports and helps write annual budgets.
- **The Second Vice Chair** also supports the Chair.
- **The Assistant Secretary** coordinates the work of office volunteers and performs tasks requested by the Secretary.

Organization of the State Democratic Party

Like our country party organization, the state Democratic Party also has a Central Committee of volunteers who are:

- Officers in county party organizations.
- Representatives elected by county central committees.
- Elected representatives such as Democratic U.S. Senators or members of Congress, as well as state-level representatives, including a Democratic Governor, state House or Senate representatives, District Attorneys and others elected to public office.

These people, who meet at least once per year, serve as the policy governing body of the state party *except* during sessions of state assemblies. Their terms of office

begins on the day they are elected to the position that places them on the state Central Committee, and it runs until their successors have been elected. Along with setting the time and place for state assemblies and conventions, this group also adopts delegate selection requirements and procedures that will be followed at assemblies, conventions or conferences. The State Central Committee also elects the officers to the State Democratic Party.

State Party Officers

- **The Chair** is the chief executive officer of the state party and a member of the Democratic National Committee. The Chair administers the budget and may appoint personnel to manage business and financial affairs of the state party. In addition, the Chair, with the advice of the Executive Committee, oversees all state campaigns.
- **The First Vice Chair**, who must be of the opposite gender of the Chair, assists with the running of the state party and serves as a member of the Democratic National Committee. In the absence of the Chair, the First Vice Chair presides at meetings and exercises the authority of the Chair.
- **The Second Vice Chair** assists the Chair and, in the absence of the Chair and First Vice Chair, presides at meetings and exercises the authority of the Chair.
- **The Secretary** will keep the minutes of all meetings, keep all records sent to the State Central Committee and maintain membership lists of the committees of the party.
- **The Treasurer** has custody of the party funds and provides a written account at each meeting of the State Central and Executive Committees. The Treasurer also prepares financial reports as required by law.

Multi-County Districts

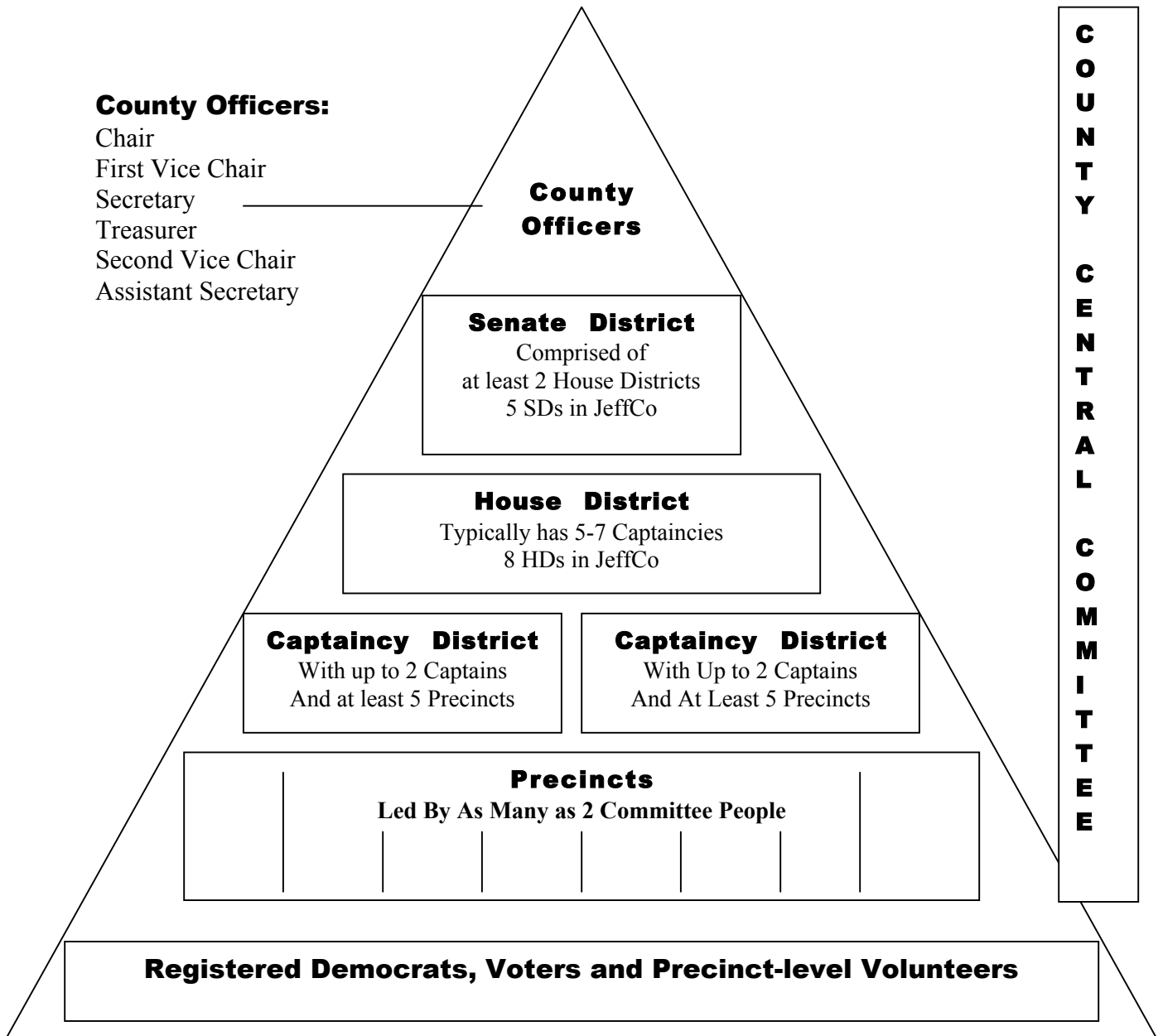
Congressional District Central Committees

This group recruits candidates for U.S. Representative, State Board of Education and the Board of Regents. It is made up of the Chair and Vice Chair from Central Committees of counties that fall within a U.S. Congressional District, as well as Democratic representatives elected on the State and Federal level, plus two others for every 10,000 Democratic votes, or major fraction thereof, cast for president or governor, whichever number is greater, at either of the last two general elections. The group also elects one member to the state Platform Committee and three members to the State Outreach Committee.

Judicial District Central Committees

This group recruits candidates for District Attorney. It is made up of the Chairs and Vice Chairs from Central Committees of counties that fall within a judicial district as well as a Democratic District Attorney and two others for every 10,000 Democratic votes, or major fraction thereof, cast for president or governor, whichever number is greater, at either of the last two general elections..

County Party At-a-Glance



Understanding Precinct Numbers

Colorado's ten-digit precinct number represents political subdivisions and identifies each of the major representative districts where a voter resides.

- The first digit shows the U.S. Congressional District (CD). There are seven Congressional Districts in Colorado and seven Colorado Representatives in the U.S. Congress.
- The second and third digits show the Colorado State Senate District (SD). There are 35 state Senators and 35 SDs in Colorado.
- The fourth and fifth digits show the Colorado House District (HD). There are 65 State House Representatives and 65 HDs in Colorado.
- The sixth and seventh digits represent the county. Jefferson County is 30.
- The last three digits are the individual precinct within the CD-SD-HD-and county combination.

If your precinct number is 7212630038, your precinct number breaks down as follows:

Precinct Numbers

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---------------|---|-----------------|---|
| 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 |
| Congressional District | | Senate District | | House District | | County | | Precinct | |

This precinct number serves a voter in Congressional District 7, Senate District 21, House District 26, County 30 (Jefferson) and Precinct 038.

Glossary

Note: (Words in *bold italics* are defined elsewhere in this glossary)

Assemblies: Meetings that are held in even numbered years to designate candidates for public office. *House Districts, Senate Districts, County Parties, Congressional Districts, Judicial Districts* and the State Party have Assemblies.

Caucus: A meeting of eligible registered voters in a *precinct*, held the third Tuesday in March in even-numbered years to elect precinct committee people and delegates to the *County Assembly*.

Captain at Large: One of up to 12 people appointed by the elected County Chair to serve the County party as Captains at Large, doing those things assigned to them by the County Chair and serving on both the *Central Committee* and the *Executive Committee*.

Captaincy: A subdivision of a *House District*, consisting of no fewer than five *precincts*. Every two years, at the bi-annual re-organization meeting, House Districts may reorganize their Captaincies to more efficiently provide for coordination and communication between the *Committee People*, the House District and County Party.

Committee Person, Committee People: A person elected at the *precinct caucus* or appointed to represent his or her precinct at the county level and organize his/her precinct for political action. Colorado law allows two Committee People for each precinct for each of the major parties.

Conventions: A meeting held to select delegates to other political conventions – including the national convention – and to nominate presidential electors. Conventions are held in counties, congressional districts and the state during each presidential election year. At the state convention, delegates elect Colorado’s representatives to the Democratic National Committee.

County Assembly: A meeting of party delegates, held 10-40 days after the *caucus*, to designate candidates for nomination at a subsequent assembly or primary election. Delegates are elected at precinct caucuses.

County Central Committee: An organization consisting of the following:

- *Precinct Committee People*
- *House District* Officers and *Captains*
- *Senate District* Officers
- *County Officers*
- Elected Democratic officials in the county

County Convention: A meeting of party delegates, held to designate delegates to other political conventions and for other political purposes (e.g., to create resolutions for the party platform). *Convention* and *Assembly* delegates are often the same people. They simply change hats during the meeting. County conventions are held in presidential election years only.

County Executive Committee: A group made up of *county officers*, as well as House District Officers and Captains, Captains at Large, Senate District Officers and Elected County, State and Federal Democratic officials residing in the county.

County Officers: The County Chair, First Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Second Vice Chair and Assistant Secretary. These officers are elected to two-year terms in odd-numbered years.

GOTV: An acronym for Get Out The Vote. GOTV is usually a concentrated effort to get people who support the Democrats to vote by absentee ballot, early voting or voting at the polls on Election Day. Election day GOTV efforts typically center on **poll watching and telephoning**.

House District: A set of *precincts* within designated boundaries, represented in the state legislature by a single State Representative. The precinct *Committee People* in each house district elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer at the *Re-Org* meeting held in odd numbered years, confirm captaincy districts and elect **Captains**. The purpose is to build a strong organization to help elect the Democratic candidate for State Representative, who is nominated at their Assembly in even numbered years.

House District Captains: Volunteers supervising a set of precincts within a *House District*. Each House District is organized into Captaincies, consisting of no fewer than five precincts each. Each captaincy can have two Captains, who serve as members of the *County Central Committee* and *County Executive Committee* and are responsible for coordinating the efforts of the *Committee People* within their Captaincy.

Judicial District: The judicial organization of the state. Judicial Districts in Colorado may contain one or more counties. Each Judicial District has at least one District Court Judge, at least one judge for each county in the district and a District Attorney who oversees the prosecution of any criminal offenses in the district. District Attorneys are elected officials, while judges are appointed but stand for retention in elections every several years.

The Democratic Party's Judicial District Central Committee is organized to nominate and help elect the Democratic candidate for District Attorney.

Precinct: A neighborhood division established by county officials, based on census data. Each precinct contains approximately the same number of residents (1000 to 1500).

Poll Watching: An election day activity in which one Democratic and one Republican volunteer monitor voting activity at a specific precinct's poll, record voters who have visited the poll, and then turn in their list of voters so that those who have not shown up can be contacted by other volunteers via telephone.

Re-org, Re-organization or Re-org Meeting: A series of meeting held in February and March of odd-numbered years so that elected committee people and party officers can reorganize leadership by electing new officers and members of the *Central Committee* for various party units, including the County party as a whole, as well as the House, Senate, Judicial, and Congressional District organizations.

Senate District: A set of **precincts** within designated boundaries, represented in the Legislature by a single State Senator. The precinct *Committee People* in each Senate District elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer at the **RE-ORG** meeting held every four years. The purpose is to have an organization to help elect the Democratic candidate for State Senate, who is nominated by their Assembly every 4 years.