

Plentiful options to register, vote in Illinois

By Kay Shipman, FarmWeek

Illinoisans eligible to vote will find several opportunities to cast a ballot in the Nov. 6 general election.

Most recently, the state allows eligible Illinoisans to register to vote when they get or renew a driver's license. Those not already registered in the state may answer "yes" to a voter question on the license application and receive a voter registration packet in the mail.

Information about registering through the Motor Vehicle Division is available by visiting cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/motorvoter.html.

Eligible residents must be at least 18. Seventeen-year-olds may register only if they are 17 on or before the primary and turn 18 on or before the Nov. 6 general election.

Residents unsure of their registration status may visit ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx. The deadline to complete a standard registration form is Oct. 9. A registration form may be downloaded by visiting ova.elections.il.gov.

To register online, an individual must supply an Illinois driver's license or Illinois State identification number, the date the license or identification was issued, the last four digits of his or her Social Security number and birthdate. Oct. 21 is the last day for online registration to vote in the November general election.

Individuals also may register to vote at a local election authority office. Contact those authorities for location and business hours.

If Nov. 6 doesn't fit your schedule, registered voters may choose different options, according to the Illinois Board of Elections.

Early voting in the primary starts Sept. 27 and ends Nov. 5 in the office of a local election authority and temporary locations. Check with local election authorities for polling places and early voting hours at each location.

Grace period registration and voting starts Oct. 10 and ends Nov. 6. Once registered during the grace period, a voter casts a ballot at the election authority's office or a specifically designated location.

Residents may also request to vote by absentee ballot by applying to the election authority in the jurisdiction where the voter is registered. For example, a voter registered in Quincy would contact the Adams County clerk. In-person absentee voting occurs at the county clerk or board of election office. Nov. 1 is the last day to apply for an absentee ballot.