

## SOS reviewing contested races

Published: March 17th, 2011, Center Post Dispatch, Page 1



Photo by Teresa Benns SOS staffer Michael Hagihara and Saguache counting judge for the Republicans, Elvie Samora review the number of ballots counted during the SOS' last ballot review in Saguache on Nov. 16.

BY TERESA  
L. BENNS  
SAGUACHE  
On Tuesday,  
the Secretary  
of State's  
office (SOS)  
announced  
that SOS  
staffers will  
journey to  
Saguache to  
join a  
bipartisan  
team of  
judges who  
will hand  
count votes  
in the  
contested  
commissioner  
and clerk  
races on  
Thursday and  
Friday.  
SOS press  
officer  
Richard  
Coolidge  
invited all  
concerned  
Saguache  
residents to

come view the hand count and to feel free to ask appointed representatives questions during the process.

Secretary of State Scott Gessler spoke Wednesday to Saguache voters to answer questions and address their concerns about the election and the SOS' role in election activities, (see story on Gessler's visit at [www.centerpostdispatch.com](http://www.centerpostdispatch.com)). This will be the third time in the past six months the SOS has visited Saguache. An SOS observer came Nov. 2, 2010 to supervise the general election. They also came again on Nov. 15-16 to review the Nov. 5 retabulation of votes by Melinda Myers.

Some county residents believe that the entire election should be hand counted because only the votes in the commissioner's and clerk's races changed in the Nov. 5 retabulation. This, they say, this does not make sense and should be investigated.

Others have voiced concerns that the ballots are now so "contaminated" that even a ballot review will not provide a clear picture of what really happened or who, if anyone, is responsible for irregularities in the election.

Under the Bernie Buescher administration, the SOS appeared to stand behind County Clerk Melinda Myers' decision to retabulate the results of the Nov. 2, 2010 election. Myers often stated that the SOS approved her election decisions even though hard evidence to support these statements was not always forthcoming.

The SOS did, however, decline to officially sanction Myers for any misconduct in the election, choosing instead to order additional training for Please see SOS on Page 3A Myers and her staff and be on hand to supervise upcoming elections.

Under Scott Gessler's administration, the SOS has not appeared to be as supportive as Myers initially portrayed them, and have agreed to re-evaluate the Nov. 2 election. Gessler told the Center Post-Dispatch in February that he would "do everything in my power" to clear up questions concerning the election.

The SOS review of votes will likely draw a wide circle of onlookers, including Saguache citizens, vote integrity advocates, the Denver Post, Center Post-Dispatch, Crestone Eagle and possibly other news outlets.

Email Article

Print Article

Close Window