

# Clerks claim statewide voter system not ready

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Nevada clerks say they can't switch to a new statewide voter registration system by next month's federal deadline because the system isn't reliable or finished yet.

The federal Help America Vote Act requires all states to have a statewide voter registration system in place by Jan. 1. The project has been managed by the Secretary of State's Office, which contracted with Covansys to design the computer program.

"It is the position of the 17 clerks and registrars in the state of Nevada that we cannot convert by Jan. 1, 2006, to the statewide voter registration system being developed by Covansys," wrote Clark County Registrar of Voters Larry Lomax in a letter to Secretary of State Dean Heller dated Nov. 30.

"It would be irresponsible on our part to switch to a system that would not allow us to carry out our statutory responsibilities and that would severely diminish our ability to provide even basic election-related services to the residents of our counties."

Carson City Clerk Alan Glover said he and other clerks agree the system isn't ready.

"There's absolutely no way that thing can be done by the first of January. There's been no training, no conversion and we really have only two weeks because we're starting to get into the holiday season."

Heller's Chief Deputy Renee Parker and Glover said the state has developed a compromise that could sat-

isfy both the clerks and federal officials while giving Covansys time to finish the system.

"We'll stick with our own systems through the 2006 elections," Glover said. "We'll just give them the data and they'll run it into their server. That will allow the state to run (the registration lists) against DMV and Social Security records to make sure people are who they say they are."

Parker said the clerks would file their latest voter registration data with the state daily and the state would put it in a central database that connects with both DMV and Social Security systems, satisfying HAVA requirements, which include catching voter fraud.

He said the complete system must handle petitions, voter registration, candidate filing, polling place management and a long list of other issues.

He said the biggest issue is the inability of clerks to get the reports they need.

In his letter to Heller, Lomax said the inability to run reports "on any subject" would prevent clerks from providing parties with the number of registered voters in a precinct, provide voters directions to their polling place, tell them who represents them or what contests a voter can vote in.

He said the system remains "unacceptably burdensome to navigate and operate" and that, as it operates now, Clark County would also lose the ability to track Hispanic voters, as required by the Justice Department.

Parker said the Secretary of State's Office shares those concerns.

"Everybody agrees this thing has to function for Nevada," she said. "We can't be in a situation where we're worried it might affect the integrity of the election."

Glover said Nevada isn't alone in needing more time. Colorado recently threw out its system and started over, and he said other states are asking for more time.

## Black Historical Society fundraiser

The Las Vegas Black Historical Society Inc. hosts a fundraiser social, "The Gathering," for fun, food and good storytelling at Nevada Partners, 710 W. Lake Mead at 5:00 p.m. Friday. LVBHSI begins its mission to collect, preserve and establish a museum to display African-American historical artifacts and record current events and accomplishments of Blacks in Nevada.

"It's an open invitation," said co-founder Alice Key. "We would like them to join us as members, but even if not, we want their histories — pioneers and descendants." Key added, "We invite young people to work with us, too."

For information, call 791-3564 or 435-3814.



*Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy*

## PRESERVING BLACK HISTORY

Local architect Winston Henderson and his wife Lucille came out to support relocating the La Concha Motel's lobby from the Las Vegas Strip to become the entrance to The Neon Museum. The famous motel was designed in 1961 by Paul R. Williams, architect of Hollywood's elite and the first Black member of the American Institute of Architects. The fundraiser was held last week at Ermenegildo Zegna at the Forum Shops.

## Screening

*(Continued from Page 1)*

The community, with street names that resemble the letters in a bowl of alphabet soup, is located northwest of the Strip hotel-casino drag and adjacent to the downtown casino corridor.

The Westside is home to community radio station KCEP FM-88.1; the historic landmark Moulin Rouge, site of the signing of desegregation agreements; and a cornucopia of churches that would give any holy roller the Holy Ghost. The area has seen better times and was central to some of Vegas' most disgraceful and darkest times.

"This has been a project that has been at least five years in the making," Stan Armstrong said.

Despite the glam that is Las Vegas, in its earlier years, the electricity and excitement was not enjoyed by all who resided here.

Whites barred Blacks from patronizing the hotels on the 1950s and '60s Strip. Most Black and other entertainers of color were hired to perform on the Strip but were not allowed to play in or stay at the casino-hotels.

They were not permitted to enter the front doors of those places, so the back kitchen door became the common means of entry to the stage.

Since Blacks could not party on the Strip, they had their own "jiving, jiggy juke joints" to patronize on the Westside.

This led to the area becoming a popular hot spot for Blacks, and providing all-night

entertainment, racially integrated with Whites and any others who wanted to be with their friends and favorite performers.

"We had been tossing around the idea and had decided to start filming interviews of West Las Vegas' pioneers," Armstrong explained.

Longtime residents and historians Alice Key, one of Las Vegas' first Black TV hosts, and Sarann Knight Preddy, former owner of the Moulin Rouge, along with stage performer Clint Holmes are just some of the featured interviews in the documentary.

"Clint Holmes credits legendary performers, such as Sammy Davis Jr. and Lena Horn, for him being around today," the producers said.

Ralph Ellison's landmark 1952 novel "Invisible Man," according to Armstrong, is the basis for his latest project. He said that the purpose is to examine the valuable contributions of the people and to show aspects of the Westside that are unknown and unseen by Nevada's broader community and many others.

One of the questions the producer hopes the film will evoke is whether Las Vegas is better off today than yesterday regarding race relations and community development.

"It's a question for the ages," said Armstrong, who also produced and directed "The Forgotten Battle of Fort Pillow" and "Black Confederates: The Forgotten Men in Gray."

For more information, visit [www.desertrosefilms.7p.com](http://www.desertrosefilms.7p.com) or call 507-3989.



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