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## **Indiana secretary of state talks vote centers with county elections officials**

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Stay with precincts or switch to vote centers?

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It's a question that Indiana counties will have to decide but they are getting some help from the state in the form of information.

The Indiana Secretary of State held a regional meeting on vote centers today in Plymouth.

Changing to vote centers is an option not a requirement and they want to make sure every county in the state is well informed before they make a decision.

Seven counties in Indiana currently use vote centers which centralizes where you vote on election day to fewer places.

Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson supports vote centers but she wants to make sure counties like St. Joseph and Elkhart have all the information they need to make their own decisions.

If they do decide to make the switch she says, "The vote centers and the county clerks offices on election day are all connected in real time by an electronic poll book so there is no wrong place for the voter to show up and vote on election day."

She adds that the way voters sign in could be a little different, but people will most likely be casting their ballots on the same machines they've used before.

Vote centers could save counties money by having fewer locations, fewer poll workers and reducing the need for voting machine storage. However, there are expenses associated with changing over.

She says, "They're not hidden costs but there are initial costs for the e-poll books, possibly computers and voter education as well."

If a county decides a vote center is the right move there are several more steps to accomplish before the change can be implemented.

Lawson says, "Then there's a 30 day public comment process where you can incorporate the public's comments as well. then it takes a unanimous vote by the county election board because we want both parties to be involved in the decision."

Once a county has a unanimous vote it needs to be on file with the state election division for 60 days before officially saying goodbye to precincts.

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