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Guest column: Vote by Mail? We've got this

Jerry Pettit contributed column
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Jerry Pettit

This is the first in a three-part series on elections.

Vote-by-mail has become a focus of national conversation for the upcoming November General Election. I have been hearing from family, friends and neighbors about their concerns, with some anxiety, regarding the mail-in ballots and the postal system. Every day we hear about a new assault on our election system and lack of security in our election process: the United States Postal Service (USPS) is being dismantled; ballot drop boxes are not secure; international actors will flood our vote-by-mail system with fraudulent ballots.

I know how important this election is to all of you. So, I would like to provide you with some information. Most importantly, we've got this!

Washingtonians have been voting by mail for over a decade and prior to that most voted absentee/mail for several decades. We in Kittitas County together with the county auditors throughout the state and the elections director in King County, [work](#) closely with the Washington Secretary of State and the USPS to forge strong

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relationships. We meet with the local, regional and national representatives of the USPS regularly to coordinate everything from mail pick up to envelope design. Two weeks before election day, county auditors meet each morning via phone and web to ensure we are aware of problems or potential issues that may arise. I am also a member of the Election Assistance Commission Standards Board USPS Committee that works directly with the USPS on a wider level. We've got this!

Did you know you can monitor if we have received your ballot? Once we receive your ballot and verify your signature, you can log on to the VoteWA website (voter.votewa.gov) and verify that your ballot has been accepted for tallying.

If you are going to mail in your ballot, mail it early. If you mail early, you will be more comfortable that we will receive you ballot timely. Check the mail pickup times at mailboxes when you mail your ballot and check the mail pickup times at your small post office.

Also, if we receive your ballot prior to election day, it is likely to be included in the preliminary numbers reported on election night. We encourage you to mail your ballots back not later than Oct. 27th. That way they have a very high probability of being included in the numbers on election night. Ballots received after election night will be tallied if they are postmarked no later than election day. Together, we've got this!

Ballots will be mailed to Kittitas County voters on October 13, 2020. You should start receiving them on October 15th. If you have not received your ballot by October 20th, please contact the Kittitas County Auditor's Office.

Jerry Pettit is the Kittitas County Auditor.