

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2026

Hancock County Clerk's Office Provides Important Vote-By-Mail and USPS Information

Carthage, IL — The Hancock County Clerk's Office announces that Vote-By-Mail ballots for the **March 17, 2026 Election** will begin mailing to voters around **February 9, 2026**. Voters returning ballots by mail are encouraged to review important information regarding ballot deadlines and recent United States Postal Service (USPS) policy changes.

USPS Postmark Information

Recent USPS policy clarifications explain that some postmarks may reflect the date mail is processed at a sorting facility rather than the date it was dropped off. To ensure a postmark that aligns with the date of mailing, voters may request a **manual local postmark** at a USPS retail counter.

Voters who wish to retain proof of the date their ballot was accepted by USPS may purchase a **Certificate of Mailing, Certified Mail** and **Registered Mail** services also provide official mailing receipts for individual mailpieces.

Vote-By-Mail Deadlines

All Vote-By-Mail ballots **must be postmarked no later than Election Day, March 17, 2026**. Under Illinois law, ballots postmarked on or before Election Day may be counted if they are received by the Hancock County Clerk's Office within **14 days after the election**.

Hand Delivery Option

Vote-By-Mail ballots may also be **hand delivered** to the Hancock County Election Office located in the Hancock County Courthouse. Ballots may be delivered by the voter or by another individual, provided the voter has properly completed the return envelope.

Voters with questions regarding Vote-By-Mail ballots or return options may contact the Hancock County Clerk's Office at **217-357-3911** or email **wilde-tillman@hancockcounty-il.gov**.

The Hancock County Clerk's Office encourages voters to return ballots early and use available mailing or delivery options to ensure their vote is counted.

Holly A. Wilde-Tillman
Hancock County Clerk & Recorder