Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior announced today several proposed amendments to the Code of Federal Regulations governing the election of Osage Tribal officers.

Under the proposed rule changes, the requirement for a nominating convention in Osage County, Okla., would be eliminated and nominations would be accepted from any group of at least 25 qualified Osage voters. Write-in candidates would be barred.

Other amendments would limit the polling places to one, in conformity with the long accepted practice of the tribe, and would simplify the counting procedure by using identical treatment for absentee ballots and those collected at the poll.

Candidates' nicknames could appear on the ballot, under one of the new regulations, but titles or professional designations would be forbidden. Another change provides for two witnesses to an absentee voter's signature in lieu of notarization.

The amendments make mandatory the destruction of ballots 180 days after an election, require at least one judge and two clerks on a tallying team, provide for delivery of the ballot box and keys to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Osage Agency Superintendent, and set forth procedures for handling invalidated ballots.

Finally, the amendments provide that only unsuccessful candidates for an elective office may challenge the election with respect to that office. A $500 deposit is required to cover the cost of a recount.

A notice of intention to adopt the amended regulations is being published in the Federal Register. Suggested changes and comments should be forwarded to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20242, within thirty days of the date of such publication.