

- Provided by Seward County Clerk's office

Stacia Long, Seward County clerk and election officer, would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Crystal Clemens, deputy county clerk for Seward County, who will be designated as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator, the highest professional achievement, in ceremonies conducted by the Election Center at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 16, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Savannah, Ga.

CERA designation is achieved only through a multi-year course of study conducted by The Election Center's Professional Education Program and completion of 12 core courses taught by the Master's in Public Administration facility of Auburn University – ranging from ethics to voter registration and elections law, planning, communications and voter participation among others.



The intent of the program is to professionalize the management of the voter registration and elections administration in promoting and preserving public trust in the democratic process.

Clemens is thankful to Long for allowing her the opportunity to participate in the CERA program.

“This is the highest designation available to elections and voter registration officials,” said R.

Doug Lewis, director of the center. “Of more than 21,000 elections and voter registration officials throughout America, this graduating class of 57 professionals takes us to 791 election officials who have achieved the CERA status. This is an outstanding accomplishment.

“Seward County is indeed fortunate to have Crystal Clemens as one of the top designated professionals in America. Obtaining and maintaining CERA status means that she has committed to a career long process of continuing education to improve the electoral process in Kansas and the nation,” he said.

“These truly are people who make democracy possible,” Lewis said. “Crystal Clemens and other CERA professionals serve as the nation’s protectors of the democratic process. Because of them, Americans have a trust and public confidence in the election process. They have assurance that the system is fair, free, honest and accurate. In many parts of the world, their citizens have no faith in the form of democracy offered in their home countries. The importance of what Stacia Long and Crystal Clemens are doing for Seward County is incredible but rarely noticed...unless something goes wrong.”

Clemens, an elections official for 12 years, said, “Rich or poor, weak or strong, young or old, we all count the same when we vote. What can be more equal than that? The CERA program elevates our thinking about the process and the people we serve.

“It is my great honor to assure that the public’s will is accurately reflected in our elections,” Clemens said. “I see my role to dignify all potential voters and to remove as many barriers as possible to participation in the democratic process. Our office cannot be responsible for how many actually turn out for each election, but we can certainly be sure that they have the opportunity to vote and have their votes counted accurately.”

The Professional Education Program is sponsored by The Election Center, a non-profit association of voter registrars and elections administrators throughout America. Its membership is comprised of township, city, county and state election officials. The center’s primary purpose is education for local and state voter registrars and elections officials to promote and improve the democratic process.

Professional Education Program participants receive continuing education credit from Auburn

University as well as professional training credits from The Election Center.

The Professional Education Program was recognized in 1996 as the top continuing education program in America by the National University Continuing Education Association.

“Normally, most Americans don’t even know the election officials exist in their community and that they work constantly to protect the democratic process for its citizens,” Lewis said. “Due to Election 2000, we now know just how important and complicated elections can be. In my opinion, the elections officials deserve the highest recognition that a community can give. If they don’t do their job well, then citizens have no faith in the democratic process itself. Without faith in the process, it is almost impossible to believe in government itself, and that is a very large responsibility.”