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## Session on voter woes won't be moved

By **CLYDE HUGHES** and **JOSHUA BOAK**  
**BLADE STAFF WRITERS**

A public meeting to discuss voting problems in Lucas County during the Nov. 8 election will be held by the Toledo NAACP branch Saturday - the same day as an appreciation breakfast planned for county poll workers.

The county board of elections will have its appreciation breakfast from 10 a.m. to noon at the Lucas County Recreation Center, Hall 2, in Maumee.

The community meeting is set for 3 to 6 p.m. at Warren African Methodist Episcopal Church, 915 Collingwood Blvd. U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D., Toledo), Tina Skeldon Wozniak, president of the Lucas County commissioners, and Toledo Councilman Michael Ashford are among the public officials expected to attend.

Meanwhile, officials of Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell's office were expected to arrive in Toledo today to begin its own investigation into the November election problems.

Lucas County administrator Mike Beazley yesterday asked the local NAACP to consider rescheduling the community meeting. He said he was concerned the breakfast, which was advertised in yesterday's editions of The Blade, and the popularity of the Ohio State-Michigan game, which starts at 1 p.m., may take away from the turnout at the afternoon meeting.

But Toledo NAACP president WilliAnn Moore, who worked the polls for the county elections board, said yesterday she saw no reason to change the meeting to hear voter concerns about problems at various polling locations last week. She added that she planned on attending both events.

"Why should the NAACP cancel its hearing?" Mrs. Moore said. "Why don't they cancel their breakfast? We're going through with this."

Mrs. Moore said she doesn't believe the Ohio State-Michigan football game will have much impact on the turnout at

the NAACP event.

Jill Kelly, executive director of the Lucas County Board of Elections and a University of Michigan graduate, said yesterday she will forgo watching the football game to attend both events.

Mrs. Moore said she expects NAACP state officers from Ohio and Michigan to attend Saturday's hearing. She said while voting problems occurred throughout the county, the difficulties weren't new for central-city residents.

"It's just wasn't African-Americans, but people all over [who] were having problems with the process," Mrs. Moore said. "The problem is that it didn't become a concern until it happened in Sylvania. Central-city precinct chairs have long-standing complaints about problems on Election Day."

Mrs. Moore said she has personally complained to Democratic party leaders and the county elections board about past Election Day problems.

Mr. Ashford said he and his wife had to leave and return to their precincts Nov. 8 because voting machines were not working. He said the problem he has with comments coming from some board of elections officials is the indication that the problems voters faced on Election Day were minimal.

"I can't accept that," Mr. Ashford said. "We're dealing with a lot of single parents who have to get to work. You have people who have limited transportation. You have some people working 12-hour days. It's unacceptable for people not to get a chance to vote."

Mrs. Moore and Ms. Wozniak said they have questions about the process, including the shortage of poll workers and their training. Mrs. Moore said she was called by election officials on the evening of Nov. 6 asking if she knew of people who could help at the polls.

"I know a lot of people who will work at the polls and could use the jobs," Mrs. Moore said, "but they need more than 24 hours' notice."

In advance of the September election, Ms. Kelly said she met with Ms. Moore to improve central-city residents' comfort levels with the new voting machines and provisional ballots. Ms. Kelly said she offered to train 100 additional volunteers assembled by Ms. Moore to assist at downtown precincts.

"I can't pay them," Ms. Kelly recalled saying. "They'll have God's thanks. They'll have the voters' thanks."

Despite the offer, only Ms. Moore worked at the polls during the September primary election, Ms. Kelly said.

The election board's call logs for the Nov. 8 election, reviewed yesterday by The Blade, show that paid poll volunteers made more than 180 requests for help. Many of the calls involved broken machines.

Rob Ludeman, a Toledo councilman and former mayoral candidate, dealt with troublesome machines at multiple voting sites. "He is trying to get machines running," one summary states. "Sixty some people standing around waiting."

State Rep. Edna Brown (D., Toledo), who also plans to attend the community meeting, said she would like to get beyond the finger-pointing over problems that have plagued Lucas County elections in recent years.

"I hope we can get to the crux of the problem so we can fix it," she said.

