

INVOCATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners desires to begin each regular meeting with an invocation. The following Guidelines and Procedures are mandatory for implementation of the invocation process.

1. The County Manager's Office will be responsible for providing notice to the public that the County is soliciting organizations to provide invocations at regularly scheduled Board meetings in a neutral fashion. A notice and press release, approved by the District Attorney's Office, will be advertised through the local paper and a regular press release through the County Public Information Officer each January and July. Those religions and civic organizations without a regular meeting place in Douglas County or within 50 miles of Minden will be considered for inclusion on the list if they have Douglas County residents who routinely attend their services or meetings. The members of the Board of County Commissioners are prohibited from being involved with the recommendation or selection of invocation speakers.
2. The notice will request that the presiding official of the religious or civic organization complete the Invocation Interest Form and submit it to the County Manager's Office.
3. The County Manager's Office will track the fully completed and signed Invocation Interest Forms it receives in a spreadsheet and schedule invocations on a first come, first served basis.
4. If a religious/civic organization cancels its scheduled invocation after the agenda has been published, the County Manager's Office shall enter a notation on the list of the cancellation.
5. In the event that a speaker cancels, there will be no invocation. In the event that no interest was provided by a church or civic organization for a specific meeting date, there will be no invocation. Board members are prohibited from giving the invocation or soliciting an audience member to give an invocation.
6. Every July, the County Manager's Office and the District Attorney's Office will meet and confer to ensure that the guidelines are being followed. All records for the invocation process shall be kept a minimum of five years.

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The following guidelines will be incorporated into each invocation invitation.

- The invocation need not be religious in form, but rather it can be a thought, reading or moment of silence.
- No person at the meeting shall be required to participate in the invocation proceeding and the invocation speakers *must* not ask members of the Board or audience to stand, bow their head, or take other such actions.
- The invocation should be positive and uplifting and respectful of the diverse religious and spiritual makeup of the community and meeting audience.
- The invocation speakers must refrain from proselytizing or disparaging others and shall strive to be nondenominational and secular in nature.
- The invocation or message shall not address any particular items on the agenda or anyone by name or by inference.
- The invocation speaker shall not solicit membership or donations to the church or civic organization.
- The invocation shall last no longer than three minutes.
- There will be no compensation or other assistance provided to the invocation speakers.

END OF DOCUMENT