



Election Judge News

Board of Elections Staff Points of Contact

- Kaye Robucci, Director
240-313-2053
kaye.robucci@maryland.gov
- Barry Jackson, Deputy Director
240-313-2054
barry.jackson@maryland.gov
- Teresa Morningstar, Supervisor & Absentee Voting
240-313-2052
teresa.morningsar1@maryland.gov
- Tammi Derr, Election Judge Coordinator & Voter Registration
240-313-2058
tamara.derr@maryland.gov
- Carl Dayley, Voter Registration
240-313-2055
carl.dayley@maryland.gov

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First Edition!

Hello, and welcome to the First Edition of Election Judge News!

This is something we've wanted to do for some time. We only get to see and communicate with most of you for a short period of time every two years. So, we wanted to come up with a way to keep you informed and engaged throughout the year.

We hope to make this a regular publication, once a month or so. In it will be election news to keep you up to date, training tips to keep you fresh, and even some fun things to keep you entertained!

The Election Judge News will be delivered electronically to those who have given us email addresses, and we will mail out the News to those who do not have email addresses.

If there is anything you would like to see in the News, contact the editor, Barry Jackson at barry.jackson@maryland.gov.

Staff Hours

The Board of Elections staff is working a rotating schedule in the office, so as to reduce the number of people in the office at one time. All county buildings are closed to the public, but we are open by appointment only.

Here's hoping that, with the recent delivery of vaccines, this pandemic will finally be put behind us!

We're on the Web!

Don't forget that our web address is www.washco-mdelections.org. You can click on the password protected link, titled "ELECTION JUDGES," to access information only available to our election judges, such as training aids, maps, and photos.

There are other helpful links for voters, such as voter registration, absentee voting, and many more.



The Board of Elections office is open by appointment only

2020 Election Review

Where does one begin to put into words the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on the 2020 Election?

First, by acknowledging and thanking the election judges who made the success of the election possible.

Not only did you answer the distress call for workers, you

also were flexible, adaptive, and accommodating to our ever changing requests.

Throughout the course of the year, the look of the election changed several times from the normal polling places and Early Voting to all Vote By Mail in the Primary, then back to all polling places open in the General, then only a handful of vote centers

and a few days of Early Voting, then to more vote centers and more days of Early Voting, all the while encouraging Vote By Mail.

In the summer months leading up to the General Election, it seemed that a new change was decided on every week. There were even changes to policy delivered after we had already

2020 Election Review (cont.)



Washington County, MD
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

35 West Washington Street
Suite 101
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Phone: 240-313-2050
Fax: 240-313-2062
Email:
washco.elections@maryland.gov

www.washco-mdelections.org

Questions or comments about the Election Judge News? Contact the editor, Barry Jackson

Phone: 240-313-2054
Email:
barry.jackson@maryland.gov

trained our election judges on the previous policy and had to communicate the new policy after the fact. The constant change was also confusing to voters. They went from automatically receiving a ballot in the mail during the Primary Election to having to request a ballot in the General Election, a major change that the state of Maryland does not ordinarily do in the middle of an election cycle. The look of the General Election was very different from the Primary

Election. With the requirement for in-person voting, we did everything we could to ensure our voters and election judges were as safe as possible, with plastic shields on check-in and ballot distribution tables, the requirement for voters to wear masks, social distancing of at

least six feet, our election judges wearing masks and gloves, not reusing pens or privacy sleeves, and cleaning all equipment and surfaces after every use.

These changes, in addition to having only 11 vote centers on Election Day, meant long lines all day, some waiting almost two hours to vote.

One would think, given the long lines, that we had a record setting Election Day, and that is true for the state of Maryland as a whole; however, in Washington County, we had a total turnout of 68.7%, less than the 71% turnout in 2016.

We all have our theories as to why that is, but one thing is indisputable: our election judges stepped up in a big way to deliver a smooth and successful election under the most difficult circumstances!

Even with the long lines, we received only positive comments from our

voters, with some of the adjectives describing our election judges being “professional, efficient, enthusiastic, and friendly.”

We may be a little biased, but we believe we have the best election judges in the state. We hope the 2022 election will be a return to normalcy, but whatever challenge we face, we know our election judges will boldly take it on with professionalism, efficiency, enthusiasm, and friendliness!

Voting Equipment Upgrade

SBE plans to replace our current electronic pollbooks with newer, tablet-style pollbooks in time for the 2022 election.

We have used our current pollbooks since 2006, so an upgrade is long overdue.

We are participating with SBE and other LBEs in the evaluation of the new pollbooks and will keep you updated on the progress.

New Facility Update

A new roof and HVAC system are currently being installed, and construction focus will turn to the office and warehouse areas after the new year.

The target move in date is April 1st, 2021!

Training Center

Can political clothing be worn in the polling place?

When we ask this question during training classes, we usually get mixed answers. The correct answer is:

Election judges MAY NOT wear political clothing or paraphernalia in the polling places, but:

Voters MAY wear political clothing or paraphernalia in the polling place, as long as they vote and leave without engaging others about political matters.

Trivia Question

What year was Washington County established? Answer below.

Happy Holidays

We close out the first edition of the Election Judge News by wishing you all a safe and happy holidays and a happy new year.

Perhaps we’ve looked forward to closing out the old year and welcoming this new year like no other!



New paint job and sign on front of new facility—11/22/20