



**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.morningstar1@maryland.gov
- Tammi Derr, Election Judge Coordinator & Voter Registration
240-313-2058
tamara.derr@maryland.gov
- Cory Green, Election Program Assistant
240-313-2055
tamara.derr@maryland.gov
- Carl Dayley, Election Program IT Specialist
240-313-2097
carl.dayley@maryland.gov

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Election Judge News

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Hello and Happy Fall! Here is the latest information from the Washington County Board of Elections for September, 2021.

MAEO Conference

Election officials throughout the state of Maryland belong to a professional organization called the Maryland Association of Election Officials or MAEO for short. Board members, staff, and board counsel are eligible for membership.

Each year, MAEO holds a conference, bringing everyone together to learn new things, share ideas, and build comradie among its members. In 2020, the MAEO Conference was held virtually, due to the pandemic.

But this year, we were all back together at the Clarion Fountainbleau Resort in Ocean City (observing social distancing guidelines, of course!) from August 23-26.

The conference began with an address on the 19th amendment by State Senator Mary Beth Carozza. Later, Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones addressed us remotely.

Senator Paul Pinsky (Chair, Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee), Delegate Anne Kaiser (Chair, House Ways and Means Committee), and Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins (Chair, Election Law Subcommittee) spoke on election related bills they'll be focusing on in 2022.

There was a heavy emphasis on election security, both physical and cyber, with multiple breakout sessions devoted to those topics.

It was an action packed week, with sessions and events planned from morning to evening every day.

On Wednesday Evening of the conference, MAEO was finally able to commemorate the 19th amendment, as it had hoped to do in 2020, by having a whiteout dinner. All attendees wore white in honor of the 100th anniversary of the amendment's ratification in 1920.

Early Voting

Previous election law had requirements for each local board of elections (LBE) for the number of Early Voting centers, based on active voter registration numbers.

LBEs with up to 125,000 active registered voters were only required to have one Early Voting center.

In 2021, the General Assembly changed the requirements.

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The Washington County delegation celebrating the 19th amendment at the MAEO Conference in Ocean City.

Board President Marty Lumm inspects his conference "swag."



Good looking group!



Washington County, MD
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

17718 Virginia Avenue
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



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Early Voting (cont.)

Now, LBEs with up to 50,000 active registered voters are required to have one Early Voting center, between 50,000 and 100,000 are required to have two, 100,000 to 200,000 are required to have three, and so on.

As of the publication of this newsletter, Washington County is at 98,586 active registered voters, which means we are now required to have **two** Early Voting centers; however, we are so close to that magic 100,000 number, we decided to go with **three** Early Voting centers for 2022.

Since we are only required to have two, we will need approval from both the Washington County Commissioners and the State Board of Elections (SBE) for the third one.

At its regular meeting on October 12th, the Board of Elections will vote to approve the two new Early Voting sites the staff is recommending. Once approved the third Early Voting site will be presented to the County Commissioners for approval, then the two new sites will be submitted to SBE for approval at its November meeting.

SBE has a list of requirements when selecting an Early Voting site, such as proximity within a certain number of voters in the county, accessibility, ample parking, access to public transportation, etc. It is often difficult to find a venue that meets all these requirements.

In 2019, when we were looking for an Early Voting site for the 2020 election, we couldn't find a single site in the county that satisfied the requirements. Thankfully, the County Commissioners purchased the former Food Lion on Virginia Avenue in Hagerstown and created a new Early Voting site

for us. Now, we have to find two more!

We will let you know in the next newsletter what the Board of Elections decides.



Washington County's current only Early Voting Center at 17718 Virginia Avenue.

Retirement

Audrey Coffelt was a part time worker for the Election Board for over 30 years. She was part of the three member team of part time workers, along with Cindy Russell and Larry Shipe, that we affectionately referred to as ACL.

Audrey, Cindy and Larry handled whatever needed to be done in the office and warehouse, but their main responsibility was organizing, maintaining and assigning the election judge and polling place supplies.

So you probably saw Audrey if you came to pick up or drop off supplies, or if you were at the office or warehouse around election time.

Audrey had to sit out the 2020 election because of health issues, and she has decided to hang it up permanently.

The ACL team was inseparable for many years and always brought a smile to all who worked with them. Audrey will be greatly missed.

The staff recently had a get together to honor Audrey's decades of service.



Audrey Coffelt, on the right, with her husband, Jack.

Training Center

From the Election Judge Training Manual, Chapter 1:

1.17 How You Can Vote

- If you are assigned to work in a precinct that is not your home precinct, you must vote during early voting or by absentee ballot. Absentee ballot applications will be mailed to all registered voters.
- You may mail or deliver your voted ballot to the office **before** election day. You may also take your completed absentee ballot to an early voting center, ballot drop box, or to a polling place. You cannot submit your voted ballot online or return it by email or fax. You are not allowed to leave your assigned polling place to deliver your ballot.
- If you mail your ballot, the envelope must be postmarked on or before election day. It must be received by the Board of Elections by 10:00 a.m. on or before Friday, July 8, 2022 for the primary election or Friday, November 18, 2022 for the general election.

Trivia Question

Who was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in Maryland?

Answer below: