

YATES COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

2011 ANNUAL REPORT



ROBERT F BRECHKO, DEMOCRATIC COMMISSIONER
SUSAN GRIFFIN, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
SUSAN WOLFF, TECHNICIAN

AMY J DAINES, REPUBLICAN COMMISSIONER
HELEN SCARPECHI, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
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Pursuant to the provisions of Section 3-212(4)(a) of the New York State Election Law, we hereby submit our Annual Report for the period beginning January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.



Mission Statement

The Yates County Board of Elections works to furnish the voting public, candidates, and all individuals interested in Yates County Elections with professional service and efficiency. We also strive to provide the voters of Yates County with elections that are administered in a fair and democratic manner, as well as election results that are completely accurate, and for which we are 100% accountable to the voters.

Introduction

The Yates County Board of Elections is made up of two (2) full-time Commissioners, two (2) part-time Deputy Commissioners, two (2) Machine Technicians and four (4) Poll Site Coordinators. Perceived by some as a simple clerical operation, we are indeed more than that. We provide our county with many important services related to the democratic election process which is the foundation of our government. In order to insure non-partisan elections, our procedures are continuously scrutinized, questioned and challenged. Since HAVA became law in 2002, but not passed into law in NY until 2005, we have had to change many of our operating procedures in order to offer every U.S. citizen the opportunity to vote and to insure that their vote counts. Boards centralized in 2006, taking over the voting machines, inspectors and custodians. We have done this with very minor staff increases. Some of the services we offer the community includes voter registration, information to candidates running for office, absentee ballot process and elections that offer the opportunity to vote and an assurance that every legal vote is counted before the election are certified. In 2008 the new voting machines were partially implemented. Ballot Marking Devices for individuals with disabilities. In 2009 we decided to participate in a Pilot Program fully implementing the new voting machines and processes, county wide. In doing this we were faced with educating the voting public in a manner that would encourage their desire to participate in the democratic process. Certification of the new voting system was granted to Yates County in the first half of 2010. This proved difficult within today's current financial crisis. We are challenged to manage our department, which is mandated by state law, within our budget restraints. As managers of the election process we did just that with few problems.

In 2011 we reduced or staff eliminating the Election Operation Assists, we attended a Town Board Meeting for each of our towns. We developed and expanded our Voter Education and Outreach efforts. We reduced our operating costs, rewrote our training materials and Inspector guides, initiated electronic election result reporting and changed our voting material deployment operation.

Commissioners developed and initiated a meeting with the 3 major public schools within our county to offer our experience and knowledge to assist the schools as they near their requirement to begin using current voting practices at the end of 2013. Commissioners and Technicians visited each of the schools to observe their current voting process in an effort to bring the two processes together for each of the schools. Penn Yan Central School decided not to wait until 2013, thus training of school election workers began and we will work together on their first election in May of 2012 providing equipment, configuring the ballot and providing technical support on Election Day.

The Board of Election office is also charged with the following responsibilities:

Oversee the printing of ballots and administer all federal, state, county and town elections.

Interact with town officials to map out voting districts and boundaries, interpret maps, legal descriptions and geographical data.

Provide materials to each candidate to ensure the petition process goes smoothly – receive and file petitions.

Prepare public service announcements, legal notices and maintain working relationship with the media.

Recruit, train, certify, schedule and supervise election Inspectors.

Report, to the State Board of Elections enrollment reports, yearly statistical data and annual reports.

Provide statistical data and voter lists to potential candidates and their consultants, staff, political committees and interested parties.

Track pending legislation on federal, state and local basis concerning Election Law recommending changes as needed.

Prepare and oversee department budget and supervise Deputy Commissioners, Technicians, Poll Site Coordinators and Inspectors.

Maintain voter registration database, monitor NYSVOTER (Statewide voter registration Website) and correspond with voters when additional data is required.

Instruct the voters of Yates County on voting machine usage.

Provide outreach to unregistered voters and high school seniors and the public.

File and monitor candidate campaign finance filings and provide information to interested parties.



Abraham Lincoln “The ballot is stronger than the bullet.”

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT "NVRA STATISTICS"

A voter registration record is never cancelled without verification that the voter is no longer eligible to vote in our jurisdiction. Cancellations are recorded on a daily basis, and there are several reasons for this process: voter is deceased, voter sends letter in writing to the Board of Elections requesting that their registration be cancelled or as a result of a move, voter is incarcerated due to a felony conviction, confirmation is received from another Board indicating that the voter is registered in another jurisdiction, duplicate information is received from NYSVOTER, or we receive a court order from the Supreme Court Clerk’s Office confirming that a voter has been judged incompetent. Obituary records are reviewed on the internet for local newspapers, funeral chapels and the New York State Department of Health which also provides a computerized list of deaths. During 2011, there were 415 registrations cancelled. A breakdown of the cancellations is as follows:



Reasons for Cancellation of Records	Number
Deceased	178
Judged Incompetent	1
Moved out of County	208
Felony Conviction	16
Cancelled at Voter’s Request	6
Miscellaneous	6
TOTAL	415

We inactivate voter records throughout the year due to National Change of Address Records (NCOA) as received from the US Postal Service in April, Mail Check cards sent out in August, undeliverable mail or returned mail with a change of address notification, license surrenders to other states and felony conviction notifications received from court administrators. During 2011 there were 685 records inactivated. The breakdown is as follows:

Reasons for Inactivation of Records	Number
Mail Check	280
National Change of Address (NCOA)	167
Mail Undeliverable	105
Miscellaneous	15
Moved out of County	118
TOTAL	685



REGISTRATION PROCESSING AT A GLANCE

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was passed in 1994, and was implemented by County Boards of Elections in 1995. NVRA significantly impacted voter registration and has permanently increased activity within our office due to the many agencies that we interact with daily. In 2011 we received 827 registrations from NVRA agencies; Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Labor, Office of the Aging, Department of Social Services and other county agencies. All registration forms received from NVRA agencies are delivered or mailed to our office without any indication as to where they originated with the exception of DMV registrations, as they are openly identifiable and we therefore group them under "Agencies"; this protects the identity of those voters receiving county benefits.

Registration Sources	Number Received
Affidavit Ballots provided at Polls	33
Agencies/DMV Transmittals	827
Blue Dot	2
Board of Elections Office/Our Registration Efforts	744
Election Inspectors	0
Mail	383
Other Local County Boards	0
TOTAL	

TRANSACTION DATA 2011	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YEAR TO DATE
New Voters	34	39	36	116	37	44	40	55	76	45	248	47	817
Change of Address	20	13	28	92	29	213	27	205	30	23	49	21	750
Name Changes	10	7	4	2	2	5	2	6	7	7	17	10	79
Inactivated	56	2	5	64	44	168	5	11	38	5	2	285	685
Re-instated	7	2	11	6	24	13	18	27	10	16	11	1	146
Purged	25	31	25	26	21	20	42	49	35	51	41	25	391
Cards Mailed	127	63	84	280	136	443	92	304	161	96	269	364	2419
Duplicates Received and Searched	16	7	14	17	16	28	13	20	16	6	13	11	177
Registration Forms Distributed	53	2	105	34	49	90	76	44	73	30	49	58	663
Absentee Applications Mailed/Distributed	1	0	1		22	5	18	44	54	220	20	0	385
Absentee Applications Submitted	0	2	1	16	1	0	15	30	41	226	26	0	358
Absentee Ballots Mailed/Issued	0	125	124	0	0	0	0	172	35	498	26	0	980
Absentee Ballots Returned	0	12	53	0	0	0	0	111	45	299	101	0	621
Military Ballots Mailed	0	5	5	0	0	0	11	0	0	22	0	0	43
Military Ballots Returned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	5	2	0	10
Agency/DMV Transmittals	33	52	30	59	61	88	30	128	39	84	54	55	713
Party Enrollment Change Requests	12	4	12	15	9	13	13	15	20	6	10	5	134
Check Cards Mailed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12,794	0	0	0	0	12794
Check Cards Returned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	578	11	1	0	0	590
Lists/Disks Requested	5	8	19	5	42	43	24	14	19	28	12	5	224
Inspector Tests Given	0	0	0	0	0	79	0	0	2	0	2	0	83
Candidate Petitions Accepted	0	1	1	0	0	0	76	24	0	0	0	0	102
Financial Disclosures Submitted	1	0	0	1	0	0	41	5	4	9	1	2	64
Transfer Notifications sent to State Board	3	8	4	8	5	5	5	11	6	9	2	6	72
Signatures Digitized	54	43	41	180	60	47	42	60	201	59	168	122	1077
Incomplete Registrations	28	10	13	3	5	4	10	1	0	10	3	15	102
HAVA Letters	1	1	3	15	1	4	2	18	2	1	1	0	49
Blue Dot Forms	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total													

MAY: 20 e-mails and 9 letters sent to military voters in need of updated voter registration information. 10 letters sent to family in attempt to locate military voters in need of updated registration form. Email to FVAP resulted in 7 military address changes.

June: 167 voters made inactive through NCOA. 144 voters transferred through NCOA.

September: All Republican Primary poll books were scanned and voting history updated. Poll books also inspected for poor voter signature quality and replaced with improved signatures as needed.

December: Letters sent to 14 military voters. Letters sent to 30 Special Federal Voters. 6 letters sent to voters generated by poll site information, letters sent to 15 voters for no record found.

December: 280 voters made inactive through mailcheck cards

SIGNIFICANT OFFICE PROJECTS FOR 2011



YES: NO:

Proposition 1: Purchase 4 new School Busses for 2 roosters, 1 cow, 3 goats and 18 horses.

CHANGE: we said there was more to come. It is here, the schools will no longer be able to use the lever voting machines beginning in 2013. We invited the school Superintendents and District Clerks from Dundee, Penn Yan & Marcus Whitman to join us to discuss ways for which we may be able to assist. We presented the costs our office experienced in 2008 to purchase 2 voting machines and all of the additional equipment and supplies for the school to purchase a “stand alone” system. This included the ballot configuration software and equipment. The cost estimates were near \$100,000.00.

Next, we offered our services not only to the schools but to **OUR Taxpayers**. The Board of Elections has the experience, equipment and supplies to support the 3 schools in Yates County with their elections, with limited additional costs for each district for ballot configuration and technical support, based on their own needs. Each school would order and purchase their own ballots, run the election and report their results: the estimated cost to each school, \$5000.00.

The Yates County Board of Election will assist Penn Yan for their first election in 2012. Makes good sense to us!



PLACEMATS: the single most cost effective tool to inform, educate and remind Voter's

If you have not voted yet with the new voting system, please review this fun ballot to learn the correct way to mark your ballot on Election Day.

Do not forget to check the back of your ballot!

Yates County Commissioners': Robert F. Brechko (D) Amy J. Daines (R) 315-536-5135

For Info on Becoming an Inspector Contact the Board of Elections

How to Register to Vote: Forms at Post Offices, Libraries and Town/Village Offices or Online at www.yatescounty.org/departments/boardofelections

Election Dates: Primary Election Day September 13th, 2011 • General Election Day November 8th, 2011

Military & Overseas Voter - M.O.V.E. Act: <https://newyork.overseasvotefoundation.org/overseas/home.htm>

Your Vote Is Your Voice!

In 2011, 17,000 placemats were distributed & used in Yates County for the Primary & General Election.

MONTHLY NARRATIVE

JANUARY 2011

The Board of Election's Annual meeting was held on the 5th of January. Tim Dennis and Mark Morris Yates County Legislator's were able to join us for part of our meeting and Mark comments to Tim "these folks are already doing the kinds of things we're asking others to do." These "things" are the cost savings measures we regularly seek to find. The 2011 calendar was reviewed and fleshed out with additional specifics with action dates adjusted based on the new State supplied calendar. Specific dates were chosen for Bob & Amy to attend the various Town Board meeting over the next 3 or 4 months to discuss any questions or concerns the boards may have and share activity and changes the Board has planned for the specific towns, if any.

Amy Attended the Election Commissioners Winter Conference in Rockland County and was elected to the Legislative Committee. The Association has a new list of desired election law changes that the Commissioners will work to get implemented by the New York State Legislature. The number 1 recommendation is to move the Primary Election to the 4th Tuesday in June in order to allow enough time to mail the Military Absentee Ballots (45 days before the election as required by the Federal MOVE Act.)

FEBRUARY 2011

Three Town Board meetings were attended and schools were notified requesting dates for the student registration sessions. Petitions for the Penn Yan Village election were accepted and the ballot was configured by the Technicians as was the quarterly maintenance. The Annual Report for the Legislatures was prepared.

A cost saving measure we have implemented has us emailing our Inspectors. We have 109 Inspectors and can email 89 of them, the anticipated saving in 2011 is a minimum of \$306.30. Quarterly newsletters were sent to Inspectors. Election districts for Potter 1 & 2, Milo 1 & 2 were being considered for consolidation by the Commissioners as the active voter enrollment numbers dropped. Consolidation if it does not cause undue hardship to voters reduces the risk of disenfranchising voters and can be cost effective.

MARCH 2011

Four Town Board meetings were attended by the Commissioners. Goals and Objective were submitted to the Legislature for the Board of Elections. They are to: **1-** *Fulfill all of the requirements listed in our annual calendar,* **2-** *Conduct 3 successful elections, fine tune the election time line by May 31st and train inspectors with emphasis on enfranchising voters by June 16th,* **3-** *complete town board visits by April 15th,* **4-** *register high school seniors to vote by May, introduce them to the voting process, let them vote using a sample ballot and casting it using the ImageCast voting machine and encourage them to participate in all elections,* **5-** *continue throughout 2011 reviewing procedures looking for cost savings measures to incorporate into our 2012 budget request and* **6-** *recruit and train sufficient team of inspectors by June 16th.*

After discussions with the Yates County Democratic and Republican Committee's, Town Board Members, Inspectors and Staff the Commissioner's made the decision to consolidate Potter Districts 1 and 2 into District 1 thus eliminating the need for a polling site at the Rushville Village Hall and Milo Districts 1 and 2 into District 2 and notified the Towns and Inspectors involved. The Technicians created a new training ballot for use in the schools, training & voter outreach.

*We count our blessing; we deploy equipment in a few hours with Four Poll Site Coordinators,
New York City hires moving companies and it takes a full two weeks.*

APRIL 2011 Conducted voter registration at Dundee, Penn Yan and Marcus Whitman High Schools. Ontario County Commissioner's were invited and joined the activities at the Marcus Whitman School. Two Town Board meetings were attended. Amy scheduled a meeting with the school district Superintendants and Clerks to discuss the future elections without lever machines. We began revisiting training materials for Inspectors ultimately updating practically everything. We toured the Ft Orange Press facility (our ballot printer) prior to returning home from attending the Commissioner's Spring Election Conference in Albany, April 27th through the 29th.

Jerusalem has been renumbering and it continues..... The web site has been updated and has new content.

MAY 2011 Commissioners and our Techs spent time at the 3 schools May 17th to learn what they do during school elections so we can work together to develop the most cost effective solution for all. Our greatest concern is the security and "chain of custody" REQUIREMENTS of our equipment. We prepared and sent a Pre-Training Inspector Newsletter, created and finalized Inspector training classes, attendees list and created DRAFT election Schedules. Commissioner Brechko and Republican Technician Charlie Kreuzer attended required Poll Site Accessibility training. Re-evaluation of our poll sites for accessibility for people with disabilities will be completed after the training and certification in June.

New York State Board of Elections conducted an audit of our Board. Everything was OK, but a few additional documents were requested.

JUNE 2011 Inspector training started June 6th with 6 scheduled classes; each class lasted for approximately 4 hours. Penn Yan School District staff participated in our Inspector training classes (unpaid) so they too could begin to understand how to effectively combine resources for school elections. Penn Yan plans to move forward with the Yates county Board of Election for the 2012 election. Designating Petitions could be circulated for signatures starting on June 7th. Second quarter voting machine testing was conducted. The Election Commissioner's Association conference was held June 13th through June 16th at Ft William Henry with only transportation cost born by the county.

Commissioners & Deputies attended a training session on Campaign Finance for Board of Election staff in Steuben County.

JULY 2011 The following was as a result of sumitting the documents requested and updating the Yates County web site after the state audit:



*"Wow! I am overwhelmed by your collective ambition there!
So noted -- and to be reflected in your Board Review report.
Thanks -- you guys are just impressive!"*

Tarry Breads @ New York State Board of Elections June 27th, 2011



Currently awaiting the Governors' signature is the bill establishing the Presidential Primary in New York State for 2012 as April 24.

JULY CONT. HAVA UPDATE In an effort to reduce federal spending by an estimated \$14 million annually there is a bill with 21 sponsors in the House subcommittee on Elections to eliminate the Election Assistance Commission. The ECA was created in 2002 to implement the Help America Vote Act largely to distribute funds to update voting equipment, a program which is, for the most part, complete. Mississippi Republican Rep. Greg Harper, sponsor and Chairman of the House subcommittee on Elections said “the ECA has clearly served its purpose and is no longer essential to the administration of our elections.”

Independent petitions were passed for signatures starting on July 12th. The ballot definition for the Primary Election was started in July. We met with Penn Yan school representatives to determine our path and time line as we move forward with preparations to begin the Yates County Board of Elections involvement with the Penn Yan School election process. We created a list together reflecting the needs, desires, direction and end results for the School Inspectors and school elections.

AUGUST 2011 We continued to improve our Inspector Manuals and added suggested changes from our inspector training. All Poll Site manuals were assembled before the Primary.

We worked on our 2012 budget but, were unable to reduce our budget by 5% as requested as 2012 is a Presidential Election year and we have an additional election to hold the Presidential Primary. The ballot requirement for the year will be high based on 2008 turnout of 80% county average. We continue to make every effort to cut where we can.

SEPTEMBER 2011 We held Just in Time training of our inspectors on September 8th to cover new procedures and procedure changes to the election process. It is now our practice to bring all of our equipment back election night. We are a small county; this can be done easily and timely without additional costs to the county. We had all equipment back and put away by 1:00 AM. This spells tremendous benefits as we do not run the risk of injury or frustrations to coworkers or the public with the congestion we create in the lobby and the elevator. The process was faster and easier and in the future (learning & training time) will save tax payer dollars even after we pay to rent the U Haul.

A region 5 meeting to discuss election night, machine practices and procedures was held in Chemung County with Commissioners & Technicians in attendance. Originally scheduled to be held in Owego, it had to be moved due to the flooding problems they experienced and current State of Emergency still in place. Several Region 5 counties experienced staffing turnover and asked for this meeting to assist the new people.

We wrote new procedures to implement the electronic result reporting process that we expect the State Board of Elections to mandate as New York State moves forward with the Optical Scan Voting Systems; when the process is tried and true we expect more accurate and timely results. There was not any election reporting activities for the public at the county office building this year. Similar processes are practiced in other counties within the state with great success. The results of the elections were available on the web site as soon as they were known. Candidates are allowed at the poll sites as the results are canvassed. Once the results were compiled for the web, an email to the candidates, media and interested individuals was sent.

SEPTEMBER CONT. The Primary Election was held on September 13th. We had an error prior to polls opening that resulted in 10 of 18 voting districts opening using the emergency voting process, the error has since been determined to be as a direct result of our staffing cuts. The issues were identified and resolved with all polls operating normally by 3pm. The remainder of the day went as planned. Turnout countywide was 1691 Republican voters or 25%.

OCTOBER 2011 STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: The United States filed an action against New York State, to remedy violations of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (“UOCAVA”), 42 U.S.C. §§ 1973ff to 1973ff-7, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act. This has to do with the State not meeting the required 45 days before an election to get out the Military and Special Federal Ballots. To do this they need to move the primary election.

We produced our own absentee ballots and did not require them from the printer. We were able to print on demand and therefore did not have to inventory blank ballots in anticipation of voters. As these ballots do not require ballot stubs and the quantities were minimal, we were able to do this successfully with a savings of \$240.

NOVEMBER 2011 STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: The United States failed to approve New York State’s request for an exemption to the MOVE Act. A hearing is scheduled for December 12th at 2:30 PM. The Election Commissioners Association has requested that the primary election be held the 4th Tuesday in June. Support from the State is split with the Assembly in favor of June and the Senate in favor of August.

We delivered supplies to the polls on Monday, using 2 teams instead of requiring delivery of supplies on Friday and the machines on Monday as in the past. The truck and trailer were loaded starting at 6:00 AM and was completed before employees and public were in the building. Also, return of supplies and equipment was done right after the polls were closed Tuesday night and completed by 2:30 AM Wednesday morning. This procedure was considered successful and did not interfere with the public or County employees using entrance or elevator.

The write-in campaign for County Coroner required a considerable amount of extra time election night to tally. The last poll site to report did so at 11:45 PM. This required an additional cost to election workers wages of \$500 as they normally work until 10:00 PM and we had to pay some of them until 12:00 PM. This also took us longer to get the results to the public. Considerable effort was placed on the Coroner write-in results which caused us to lose site of the candidates who filed petitions and ran for office following the rules and regulations at hand. *Let this be our record of expressing our deep regret and also our sincere promise not to allow this situation to repeat itself.* The election itself had few problems. There were some machine jamming issues because of the write-in and the large ballot, but were taken care of in short order.

DECEMBER 2011 Close the election and file documents from 2011. Prepare the calendar for 2012, which will prove difficult because of the uncertainty of the primary elections next year.



Almost done.....

COMMISSIONERS THOUGHTS

ROBERT F BRECHKO – 2007

We have 3 years behind us now using the new Imagecast Voting System. We had completely rewritten the Inspector manuals and voting machine instructions this past year to make it easier to use and understand. I believe we are at a point now where we are operating effectively and efficiently. We have made every effort to reduce costs where we could and ended up returning several thousand dollars to the General Fund at the end of the year as a result. Any further reductions will depend on the New York State Legislature making changes to the Election Law adjusting mandates such as the size of election districts and mandatory registration times in Presidential Election years. I do have a concern going into 2012 about not having the New York State Legislature pass a bill moving the State Primary Election to allow for the MOVE Act and the Military Absentee Ballots. The year 2012 will be a very busy year with the addition of the Presidential Primary and the Presidential General Election with its major voter turnout.

AMY J DAINES – 2009

As I reviewed the various reports for the year it did not take long to remember why we were so very busy in 2011 and yet it was not the anticipated 2012 year with the Presidential Primary, the additional school election, redistricting and the potential for a 4th major election, all with an unknown calendar. All of the expected election activity came and went, we had cost effective valuable additions, meaningful interactions and a fairly sturdy foundation was laid for the year ahead. Let's hope it worked



“Progress is a nice word, but change is a motivator. And change has its enemies.”

Robert F Kennedy