



# *Yates County Board of Elections*

## *2013 Annual Report*



*“Ours is the only county deliberately founded on a good idea.” ~ John Gunther*

*Robert F Brechko, Democratic Commissioner  
Stephanie Mann, Deputy Commissioner  
Susan Wolff, Voting System Technician*

*Amy J Daines, Republican Commissioner  
Helen Scarpechi, Deputy Commissioner  
Charlie Kreuzer, Voting System Technician*

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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, 2013 through December 31, 2013.

*“Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote that he is not making a present or a compliment to please an individual – or at least that he ought not so to do; but that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country.” – Samuel Adams (1722 - 1803) Father of the American Revolution, Patriot and Statesman*

# 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, taxpayers and community members 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) part-time Machine Technicians, four (4) Poll Site Coordinators and ninety (90) Election Inspectors. 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. Some of the services we offer the community include voter registration, information to candidates running for office, absentee ballot processing and elections that offer the opportunity to vote and an assurance that every legal vote is counted before the elections are certified. We continue to educate the voting public on how to use the voting system in a manner that would encourage their desire to participate in the democratic process. We educate and register the high school seniors from Penn Yan, Dundee, Marcus Whitman and the Prattsburg school districts explaining the voting process and giving them the opportunity to mark and cast a practice ballot so they are familiar and comfortable with the voting process when they vote for their first time. We also visit the Keuka College campus educating and encouraging students to not only register to vote but to also encourage them to vote by using the Absentee Ballot process. We are continuously challenged to manage our department, which is mandated by state law, within our budget constraints. We constantly review our processes and procedures to find ways to reduce our budget going forward. In 2013 we were very successful as we were able to reduce or prevent expenditures by **\$4876.00**.

**Boards of Elections are “The Foot Soldiers of Democracy”**



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

Oversee the printing of ballots and administer all Federal, State, County, Town, Penn Yan Village and Penn Yan Central School elections.

Provide materials to candidates to ensure the petition process goes smoothly, receive and file petitions and maintain campaign finance records.

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

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

We provide the Yates County Legislature, Town Board members and the State and Federal Board of Elections with enrollment reports, yearly statistical data and annual reports and fulfill any additional requests for information as needed.

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, then complying with the changes as required.

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 the proper way to mark their ballot and voting machine usage to ensure their vote counts.

Provide outreach to unregistered voters in area high schools, Keuka College, home school groups and the public.

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

Maintain Board of Election website with informative and useful information for all interested individuals.

The Board of Elections interacts with agencies and county departments to map out voting districts and boundaries, interpret maps, legal descriptions and geographical data, determine correct addresses, locate and manage polling sites; prepare for emergencies, conduct elections in assessable safe locations.

The Board of Elections Commissioners and Staff interact with United States Postal Staff – in all areas of the county, Yates County 911, Yates County Legislators, Administrator, Attorney, Budget Officer, Buildings and Grounds, Highway, Yates County Chamber of Commerce, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Town & County Clerk, Treasurer, Court Security, Emergency Management, Historian, Information Technology, State and Local Motor Vehicle, New York State Officials, Office of the Aging – Pro-Action, Personnel and Risk Management, Sheriff, Yates County Real Property Tax Department, Yates County Soil and Water, Village, Area Fire Departments, Town and School officials on a regular basis and could not perform our duties without the aid and support from these individuals and departments. For that we say THANK YOU, you're help makes our work more accurate and efficient.



## 2013 Commissioner Goals

1. Fulfill all of the requirements listed in our annual calendar. The calendar includes holding monthly staff meetings to track accomplishments and make adjustments to planned activities based on unforeseen requirements.
2. Run three successful elections by not disenfranchising the voters, inspectors following procedures, accurate and timely results and meeting all time lines involved.
  - Penn Yan School District Election (*This is limited to programming and testing ballots, equipment set up and tear down. The school runs the rest of the election.*)
  - Local Primary Election (*September 10<sup>th</sup> subject to change*)
  - General Election (*November 5<sup>th</sup>*)
3. Conduct Voter Registration Drives in Marcus Whitman, Penn Yan, Dundee and Naples & Prattsburg in an effort to Register High School Seniors. This includes;
  - Introducing them to the voting process (from signing the poll book to casting their ballot).
  - Allowing them to vote on the voting machine utilizing a sample ballot.
  - Encourage their participation in all elections.

- Invite Ontario County BOE to join in the activities for the Marcus Whitman & Steuben Commissioners for Prattsburg.
4. Continue to review procedures looking for additional cost savings measures throughout 2013 and budget submission for 2014.
  5. Election Inspector recruitment and training by July 14<sup>th</sup>.
    - Find Inspectors in towns where we currently do not have enough from within that town.
  6. Continue to publish election results electronically by 10:30 PM on Election nights. **This does not pertain to any hand counts required or results for write in campaigns.**
  7. Eliminate the leave report process for paying Election Workers. Learn the TEAM Poll Worker payroll module and export capabilities to Treasures office and MUNIS. This will eliminate redundancy and improve efficiency.
  8. Review and assemble data needed to write a grant to move elections into a full document imaging operation (*Image-It Solution*) preventing the need to increase our budget for any costs except annual maintenance. With or without a grant we believe all election offices within the state will be required to manage all documents in this manner during the next 2 – 3 years due to the DMV transition into electronic imaging. The cost for Installation, configuration & training quoted to us for 2012 was \$7,100 and Application Software perpetual license was \$34,863. The quote noted that beginning in 2013 software maintenance and support for the Image-It Solution would be approximately \$5,229.45 per year. These figures do not include the labor costs to actually digitize the current voter records. The desire with the grant funding would be to see all systems in place and current voter files digitized. This would eliminate the need to overburden our part time Deputies (*or hire part time clerks*) to work at this as they manage the increasing demands currently placed on their time.
  9. Review Poll Site setup for improved voter processing while still maintaining voter privacy by April.
  10. The Commissioners plan to visit Town Board meetings to discuss proposed changes to Election Law and answer questions by July.
  11. Expedite the implementation of any and all changes the State Legislature produces.



**“A Vote Is A Terrible Thing To Waste”**

# 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 2013, there were 851 registrations cancelled. A breakdown of the cancellations is shown below on the chart on the left.

Reasons for Cancellation of Records	Number
Deceased	182
Judged Incompetent	0
Moved out of County	189
Felony Conviction	14
Cancelled at Voter’s Request	14
Inactive Voter’s Purged	452
Miscellaneous	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>851</b>

Reasons for Inactivation of Records	Number
Mail Check	442
National Change of Address (NCOA)	60
Mail Undeliverable	26
Miscellaneous	4
Moved out of County	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>537</b>

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 July (12,404 in 2013), 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 2013 there were 537 records inactivated. The breakdown is above on the chart on the right.

# 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 2013 we received 312 registrations from NVRA agencies; Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Labor, Office of the Aging, Department of Social Services and other Yates 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	0
Agencies/DMV Transmittals	312
Blue Dot	2
Board of Elections Office/Our Registration Efforts	279
Election Inspectors / Poll Sites	3
Mail	85
Other Local County Boards	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>694</b>

Beginning in 2013 the DMV (at the Governor's directive) implemented a new process whereby registrations would be transmitted to the Boards of Elections electronically. The process may be completed during 2014 and any associated cost is unknown as yet.



## 2013 Statistical Report

TRANSACTION DATA 2013	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	YEAR TO DATE
New Voters	32	40	43	88	35	48	77	80	63	33	56	33	628
Change of Address	29	41	34	18	13	72	13	241	23	62	30	15	591
Name Changes	6	63	48	45	3	0	11	8	13	10	9	0	216
Inactivated	162	42	0	55	15	98	4	9	4	144	3	208	744
Re-instated	5	3	3	1	24	9	15	16	14	25	18	1	134
Purged	41	39	49	31	29	35	36	13	44	26	31	54	428
Cards Mailed	234	189	128	207	90	227	120	354	117	274	116	257	2313
Duplicates Received and Searched	11	8	15	8	1	4	14	15	15	6	23	4	124
Registration Forms Distributed	55	93	273	13	479	1286	135	156	726	52	12	42	3322
Absentee Applications Mailed/Distributed	0	11	0	0	6	11	15	119	500	108	22	47	839
Absentee Applications Submitted	0	3	0	0	6	1	16	87	43	180	14	0	350
Absentee Ballots Mailed/Issued	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	254	42	551	14	2	863
Absentee Ballots Returned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	143	75	392	69	0	679
Military Ballots Mailed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	33	0	0	52
Military Ballots Returned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	0	7
Agency Transmittals	12	12	14	7	5	6	13	9	8	10	8	3	107
DMV Transmittals	62	49	54	22	20	22	28	19	22	23	33	15	369
Party Enrollment Change Requests	8	12	12	9	3	11	11	15	32	7	21	9	150
Check Cards Mailed	0	0	0	0	0	0	12404	0	0	0	0	0	12404
Check Cards Returned	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	536	10	0	0	0	546
Lists/Disks Requested	5	12	10	9	20	30	16	2	1	10	2	6	123
Inspector Tests Given	0	0	0	0	90	0	0	0	0		0	0	90
Candidate Petitions Accepted	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	9	0	0	0	0	95
Financial Disclosures Submitted	1	0	0	0	0	1	38	21	0	2	0	0	63

Transfer Notifications sent to State Board	2	4	2	3	3	6	10	5	4	0	7	4	50
Signatures Digitized	40	56	51	132	52	48	84	96	68	46	67	33	773
Incomplete Registrations	20	0	9	4	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	42
HAVA Letters	1	0	0	18	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	23
Blue Dot Forms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Miscellaneous Letters to Voters	32	50	23	0	0	0	8	15	12	15	12	17	184
<b>NOTES</b>													
<b>January:</b> 24 letters and reg forms sent to voters showing changes on challenge reports from GE12													
<b>February:</b> 24 letters and Reg forms sent to voters showing changes on challenge reports from GE12 / all names changes did not get digitized as the signatures were correct in TEAM already													
<b>March:</b> 38 letters and Reg forms sent to voters showing changes on challenge reports from GE12. Internal Audit of Active voter records - 43 name corrections & 22 corrections to addresses made													
<b>April:</b> Internal Audit of Active voter records - 45 name corrections - 13 corrections to addresses made. Voter reg drive at PY, MW & Dundee Schools produced 141 registrations processed.													
<b>May:</b> petition packets distributed, voter registration drives from Finger Lakes Patriots, other org													
<b>June:</b> Community Group requested 2K Reg forms, only had 800, got 300 from State. Group to produce their own. State unable to supply until 6/20/2013													
<b>July:</b> New Registration Forms Received from State													
<b>September:</b> County wide Form distribution. 675 Reg & 390 Abs. / 9 forms @ Keuka College Reg drive													



**“Elections belong to the people. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.”**

- Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) Sixteenth President of the United States

## Cutting the Cost of Voting (summarized from an article in the Chronicle - Express 4/10/2013)



By John Christensen

Yates County Election Commissioners Robert Brechko and Amy Daines have been credited by County Legislature Chairman Taylor Fitch for effectively trimming costs to the taxpayers by working outside their job descriptions and beyond normal hours with creative and collaborative thinking with other election boards in the state. They have found ways to improve their operations while trimming waste. Continued careful use of inspectors, reducing transportation costs and adding to that the savings brought by multi-year deals with printing firms, in-house printing of absentee ballots, frugally using ink and paper that would otherwise have been wasted after an election, and the savings add up rapidly. Both say they do what they do as fellow taxpayers. "We are always mindful of whose money we are spending," says Daines. The thought they put into that effort goes beyond their own department and into the community. "The Penn Yan school district will be utilizing the County's voting machines, thereby saving taxpayer dollars. But all of that saving is under threat this year. In the disastrous results of Hurricane Sandy at election time last year, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Speaker Sheldon Silver are pushing New York to adopt "Early Voting" laws. In the proposed form, that would mean keeping five polling stations open with four inspectors on duty in each for 11 hours per day for

14 days prior to Election Day. This would add over \$30,000 to the cost of each election and \$15,000 to each primary, according to the commissioners. “That doesn’t even begin to address the nightmare of logistics this will mean. The costs become astronomical for a small county,” says Brechko. Both commissioners believe Albany lawmakers are failing to weigh the cost versus return on this legislation. Early voting would be just another unfunded mandate resulting in little to no increase in voter participation. A report from the New York State Bar Association that suggests early voting, also admits that the 32 states which have it already do not experience a significant increase in voter turnout.

Daines cited a report from Erik J. Haight, the Republican Dutchess County Commissioner of Elections, which says, “In addition to increased personnel costs, there would be an explosion in ballot costs. Early voting days would require a unique ballot style, and the state suggests printing ballots for 110 percent of the registered voters per election district to allow for spoiled ballots and to ensure a county has an ample number of ballots. Since the entire county would be eligible to vote early, we would need to print a ballot for every possible scenario for any voter that may show up, and in local election years there are more than 70 ballot styles. Ballots that go unused on early voting days could not be used in November because of unique hash marking and ballot security. Ballots are 57 cents apiece, and I believe our printing costs would at least double with early voting. “There are other miscellaneous printing costs that would increase for election material; however, poll book printing costs would easily double. Early voting advocates suggest that electronic poll books would resolve this issue; however the upfront investment for e-poll book systems are huge. Notwithstanding the increased cost, registration deadlines built into the law would need to be amended.”

Current law holds each voting district to 1,150 people, statewide. With a statewide voter turnout of 46 percent versus Yates County’s excellent record of 70 percent, both Daines and Brechko wonder what the problem is. “We have no long lines here and our districts are the same size. Why do the cities have these long lines?” asks Daines, who believes the real problem is poll site management. They both agree there is little more Yates can do to cut costs, but State Sen. Tom O’Mara’s bill to increase district limits to 3,000 voters and consolidating districts, thereby reducing inspectors, will be a great help.

At their April 8 meeting, the Yates County Legislature unanimously passed a resolution opposing the early voting law, describing such “state-imposed mandates” as placing “an unprecedented strain on local governments to provide more services with less funding.” Further, if early voting is enacted, the resolution asks they allow counties to “opt-in” if they need early voting, and provide full state funding for those that must have it. Even without the specter of this new legislation, Daines and Brechko remind us that this is the fifth year for the new voting system, and the warranties on the ballot scanning machines expire this year. They believe it is time to weigh other options rather than to double down on a technology whose costs will only continue to increase. One option they both favor is voting by mail for all voters, just as absentee ballots are done now. That would expand the period for voting as Cuomo and Silver want, allow for a single site with multiple machines to scan the ballots, and expand the voter franchise to everyone, regardless of transportation or ability to get to the polls on Election Day. But with all the on-line technology available and developing daily, Brechko foresees a time when hand-held devices may become our polling booths, with secure identity protocols much like on-line banking, and friendly reminders to do our civic duty.

The cost savings during 2013 from labor, not purchasing the Business Reply Mail permit and the extended contract discount for printing the ballots is \$4876.00. This does not include the saving from the reduction in the number of ballots ordered as opposed to the suggested order of 110% per election district.



# MONTHLY NARRATIVE

## JANUARY

- We held our annual meeting of the Board of Elections with staff members on January 8<sup>th</sup> with Carolyn Schaeffer Democratic Committee Chairperson in attendance. The 2013 Calendar was developed with specific dates as known.
- Began the Voting system hardware and software updates and created a ballot for review at Conference.
- Attended the Election Commissioners Winter Conference in Albany. The State shared their opinion of the roll commissioners play in elections in that we wear 2 hats, the party hat to ensure our party gets a “fair shake” and we are co-administrators of the process in a by-partisan manner. We were reminded that when the call arrives with a question about village elections (unless we conduct them) our answer and only answer should be to contact the village attorney and/or consult with the Council of Mayors, we should NEVER give legal advice.
- We completed the annual statistical report required by the State Board of Elections.

## FEBRUARY

- Worked on the office procedures manual.
- Finished the Voting System updates and quarterly testing.
- Begin to prepare statistical report on in-house ballot printing
- Posted the list of offices up for election in 2013 on web site and forwarded it to interested parties as requested
- Inactive Voter files have been reviewed and Active voter files are in progress (comparing hard files to electronic files for accuracy)
- Began research on early voting processes in other states to aid in lobbying strategy
- Registration forms delivered to the Chamber of Commerce for their “New Resident” package

## MARCH

- Completed the Annual Report to the Yates County Legislature
- Presented Election updates to 8 of the 9 Towns
- Web site was updated

## APRIL

- Printed annual enrollment April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Calculated signature requirements for petitions & posted on web
- Presented the Town of Italy with Election updates to complete the Town visits and one of the 2013 goals
- Registered the High School Seniors in Dundee, Penn Yan, Marcus Whitman and this year joined Steuben Commissioners @ Prattsburg
- Notified Inspectors of Scheduled Inspector training classes for May/June
- Processed NCOA address changes

## **MAY**

- The Democratic Deputy was replaced by Stephanie Mann and training started
- Inspector training classes were held with 9 in all and 88 Inspectors certified.
- The NCOA report arrived with changes being processed.
- The Penn Yan Central School election was held on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **JUNE**

- June 4<sup>th</sup> was the first day to be able to sign Designating Petitions.
- June Election Commissioner's Association Conference was held June 18- 21<sup>st</sup> at Lake Placid, Amy was reappointed to the Legislative Committee.
- Processed all NCOA changes.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter tests of the voting machines were completed.
- NTS has begun to upgrade the absentee module to be in sync with the State relating to the MOVE act.

## **JULY**

- Processed 77 Designating Petitions. All but one was approved.
- Ballot position drawing was held on July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The Primary ballot was been prepared and the absentee ballots printed and ready to mail.
- Completed the conversion of the Absentee module in TEAM.
- Independent Petitions were picked up by several candidates.
- The IMS server that communicates with the State crashed Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup>. IT worked with NTS to get a new server on line.
- Conference call w/ State Board of Elections.

## **AUGUST**

- Continued to prepare for the Primary Election
- Started receiving Mail Check cards and processing changes.
- Independent Petitions were received August 13<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.
- Ballot and machine testing / training with the Inspectors was conducted.
- Mailed / processed military ballots
- Went "live" with time clock
- Conference call w/ state

## SEPTEMBER

- Held a training class for the Inspector Chairs on September 5<sup>th</sup> to review new changes for year. Positive results were reflected in the Election Day operations with fewer Affidavits and of the few that were completed, only 2 did not count (incorrect party). These last minute training sessions emphasize practices that will not disenfranchise the voter.
- Held a successful Primary Election on September 10<sup>th</sup> with a tie vote in Jerusalem for Town Council.
- Continued to process Check Cards.
- Began working on the General Election Ballot.
- Conducted a registration drive at Keuka College on September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> during Family Weekend. Processed 5 registrations and 10 absentee ballot requests of which none were from Yates County. In the future select a date void of other activities.
- Registration form and Absentee Ballot Application forms were distributed to public offices and distributions sites around the county.
- Changes to Election Night reporting. Most of the new requirements are normal for Yates County. (Posting to our web site and at the polling locations.) Will begin uploading the Election Night Results to the State NYSVoter site with this coming General Election.

## OCTOBER

- Completed the General Election Ballot.
- Mailed Military Ballots by October 4<sup>th</sup> and were able to meet requirements.
- Processed 566 absentee ballots out as of October 30<sup>th</sup> and have received 354 back to date.
- Inspector assignments were made and revised to fill last minute vacancies. Two additional training classes for new Inspectors were held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The office had extended hours for absentee ballot requests (required EL3-214.3) Oct 22, 24, 29 & 31 until 7pm and Sat Oct 26 & Nov 2 from 9 – 1.
- The Yates County Republican Committee has unanimously voted to reappoint Amy as their Commissioner. A resolution to that affect will need Legislative approval for Amy to continue to serve Yates County from January 2014 through December of 2015.
- The web site was updated to prepare for election results.
- Check Card processing continued
- Participated in Conference Call with the State and ECA members
- Technicians and Inspectors tested Ballots and Machines to prepare for Election Day
- Beginning to develop agenda for Conference in January

## NOVEMBER

- Held a successful election on November 5<sup>th</sup> (the longest day). However interesting it began for some.....

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# How NOT to Start Election Day!

By Amy Daines, (R) Commissioner, Yates County

At 4:46am I was en route to deliver a replacement key for a poll site and I get a text message from a site 18 miles away: “Amy, ALARMS going off inside and outside the building what do I do?????”

I called 911 to alert them it was our Inspectors. I was asked “why I did not have them enter the code for the security system?”



My response was that I could not as we did not have a code as we did not know there was an alarm system.

The dispatcher began laughing and could not speak.

Poor Inspectors won't settle down for a month.

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- Counted absentee and affidavit ballots on November 13<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup> with Candidate, Representatives & Media present.
  - Audited the Town of Italy voting machine on November 14<sup>th</sup>. The results were the same as what the machine generated.
  - Certified the General Election by November 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Processed voter party changes after the Election. There were 171 party changes this year.
  - Had a conference call with the State and ECA members on November 21.
  - Reviewed Budget for year end
  - Prepared for State Audit
  - Updated Web site

### State Legislative Update:

- A bill has been submitted by the Assembly to change the Primary Election for the State and Local Governments to the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in June to coincide with the Federal Primary.

## DECEMBER

- Reviewed the General Election and procedures related to it for revision if necessary in 2014.
- Prepared for the annual meeting that will be held on January 8th.
- Reviewed budget figures against 2013 budget.
- Village Petitions started to be signed on December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Received Authorization to travel to the Winter Conference being held in Albany January 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Completed Check Card processing.
- Prepared for January Election Commissioners Association Winter Conference
- Prepared goals for Commissioners and department for 2014
- Began annual report creation
- Began reviewing office practices and procedures



# Commissioners Thoughts

## Robert F Brechko – (2007-present)

I had a new Deputy Commissioner start in May. Welcome Stephanie.

This past year went by without the State Legislature changing the date of the State and Local Primary Election to coincide with the Federal Primary Election or changing the size of the election districts to enable us to reduce costs associated with each election. We will again be faced with having to hold an additional election in 2014 and the cost associated will affect budgets statewide.

The budget and mandates continue to be an issue for the County. So much so that the General Election resulted in a 50% turnover in County Legislators.

The election procedures for the election inspectors have been fine-tuned over the past few years and I think we finally have it right. Overall our inspectors did a great job this past election season.



**“Every voter ought not merely to vote, but to vote under the inspiration of a high purpose to serve the nation. It has been calculated that in most elections only about half of them entitled to vote actually exercise their franchise. What is worse, a considerable part of those who neglect to vote do it because of a curious assumption of superiority to this elementary duty of the citizen. They presume to be rather too good, too exclusive, to soil their hands with the work of politics... Popular government is facing one of the difficult phases of the perpetual trial to which it has always been and always will be subjected. It needs the support of every element of patriotism, intelligence and capacity that can be summoned.”**

- Calvin Coolidge (1872 – 1933) 30<sup>th</sup> President of the United States

## **Amy J Daines – (2009 – present)**

I referenced change in my 2012 thoughts and certainly change is in the air. Currently, there is still a court order in place for the State and Local elections to force compliance with the Military Overseas Empowerment Act (M.O.V.E. Act). This legislation changes the date the ballots must be mailed to the Military and Overseas Voters from 35 days to 45 days. The Election Commissioners Association supports the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in June as being the best all-around date for the election which is the date of the Federal Primary. Governor Cuomo has encouraged and legislation is being considered to enact Early Voting. Early Voting in and of itself is not a bad idea, however the current legislation as written statewide from all current estimates will cost the state in excess of 55 MILLION dollars. As has been the case in the past, many of us believe this is yet another unfunded mandate. However, if passed, it WILL BE funded. It, more than likely will be billed in the local taxpayer's bill, but the reality is (in my mind) a taxpayer is a taxpayer is a taxpayer. Town and County, School or maybe just plain old SALES Tax. Don't be fooled we're paying the bill here in New York and Yates County!!!

I support and believe in elections. It is the only time I can without question speak my mind without ever speaking a word or telling a sole. I do not have to debate or defend my choice.

I try my level best to consider not just my opinions, but the other individuals that a decision will affect. Some days it is not easy being me, thinking about all of the perspectives – my Dad taught me that. So, Early Voting, I am thinking about. Why do we go to a polling site to vote? Do we have to? Should we continue? Do we need 14 days of “early Voting” to get the job done? Will we get more voters to vote? What election laws must change to allow for the current early voting legislation? What if we just mail not just every registered voter a ballot, but how about every driver? Or maybe every property owner? Maybe every individual receiving public assistance? What about voting from our phones? Can we regulate and control that only 18 year olds or/and older US citizens are voting? Does it matter? Maybe we should just make everyone go to the DMV web site and vote, heck the Governor wants to help us in our daily work, maybe DMV should just have an electronic ballot on the very-phone in each office. That makes about as much sense as the current Early Voting Bill being considered, but being considered it is. So what do we do? Voting is a right. We do not want to take it away. Politicians depend on us. Politics is important in our country, but yet we have a dismal turnout in primaries. Yates County has a respectable turn out of REGISTERED Voters on Election Day, but far too many residents are not registered.

I have considered how to get more individuals to care about voting and the decisions being made and until most recently nothing constructive comes to mind. BUT, I believe the Governor finally succeeded. I believe the greatest motivator has been the “SAFE ACT” and I believe change is in the air and the registrations for new voters will double if not triple and the registered voters will vote. Then who knows what could happen to early voting....

It is tough being me sometimes.

**Progress is a nice word, but change is a motivator. And change has its enemies.”- Robert F Kennedy**