



Election Connection

Volume 1, Issue 1 August 2017

Board Members:

- Secretary of State Mark Martin, Chairman
- Commissioner Rhonda Cole
- Commissioner Chad Pekron
- Commissioner Charles Roberts
- Commissioner James Sharp
- Commissioner James Harmon Smith, III
- Commissioner Stuart "Stu" Soffer

Staff Members:

- Keith Rutledge, Director
- Heather McKim, Deputy Director
- Daniel Shults, Legal Counsel
- Jon Davidson, Educational Services Manager
- Bernetta Levy, Election Coordinator
- Tena Arnold, Election Coordinator
- Aly Humphrey, Administrative Analyst

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Words from the Director

On behalf of the State Board of Election Commissioners, I am happy to introduce you to our first edition of a new quarterly edition of the Election Connection.

This newsletter is meant to inform and update those who work with this office on important trainings, meetings, rule changes, and other election issues. The goal of the newsletter is to enhance the

communications between state and local election officials and to invite constructive dialogue on topics that you want to discuss and ideas you wish to share with other county election officials.

Our staff works hard to make sure that everyone involved in the election process is well-informed and well-equipped. If we can be of any service during the elections or

concerning the election process in general, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and informative and eagerly await your input for future editions.

-Keith Rutledge

Director of SBEC

Meet the Commissioners

Arkansas Statute 7-4-101 provides that the State Board shall be composed of seven (7) persons, with at least one (1) from each congressional district.

The current members are as follows:

Secretary of State Mark Martin - The law designates the current Secretary of State as Board Chairman. Because of his extensive duties, Kerry Jucas is currently serving as the Secretary's Designated Chairman.

J. Harmon Smith CD 1 is the Democratic Party Designee. (appointed in 2012)

Stuart Soffer CD 4 is the Republican Party Designee. (appointed in 2012)

Charles Roberts CD 4 is the Senate President Pro Temp Designee. (appointed in 2014)

Chad Pekron CD 2 is the Speaker of the House Designee. (appointed in 2013)

Honorable Rhonda Cole CD 4 is a Governor's

Designee. (appointed in 2013)

James Sharp CD 3 is a Governor's Designee. (appointed in 2017)

The Board shall meet upon call of Chair or upon written request to the Chair by any four (4) members. A majority of the membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for conducting business.



From left to right: Daniel Shults, Bernetta Levy, Tena Arnold, Keith Rutledge, Heather McKim, Aly Humphrey, and Jon Davidson

Meet the SBEC Staff

The State Board of Election Commissioners has an outstanding and experienced staff.

Currently serving as Director is Keith Rutledge of Batesville, AR. He has been with the Board since September of 2016. Before coming to work at SBEC, Mr. Rutledge served as a lawyer, Circuit Judge, and State Drug Director.

Deputy Director Heather McKim of Bryant, AR has been with the Board for a year and brings 21 years of experience in government and politics, including service in the Arkansas State Senate and Office of Lt. Governor Win Rockefeller.

Legal Counsel Daniel Shults of Pocahontas, AR has been with the Board since October of 2016. Before coming to work for SBEC, Mr. Shults was a lawyer in private practice.

Jon Davidson of Bay, AR is serving as the Educational Services Manager for SBEC. He has been with the Board for almost four years and before coming to work here, Mr. Davidson thrived at the Secretary of State for over two decades.

Election Coordinator Bernetta Levy of Little Rock, AR is our longest tenured employee having been at the Board for 13 years. Before coming to work at SBEC, she served at DHS – Division of Youth Services.

Tena Arnold of Hot Springs, AR has been with the Board for nine years as an Election Coordinator. Before coming to work at SBEC, Ms. Arnold served the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office for over a decade.

Aly Humphrey of Russellville, AR has been with the Board for almost a year and a half as their Administrative Analyst. Before coming to work at SBEC, she served in Governor Asa Hutchinson's office.

The State Board of Election Commissioners is tremendously lucky to have such a dedicated and friendly staff willing to help local officials with any election-related business they may have.



**The SBEC Staff is comprised of seven members: A Director, a Deputy Director, a Legal Counsel, an Educational Services Manager, two Election Coordinators, and an Administrative Analyst.*

Rules and Legal

The 2017 General Assembly saw several election-related pieces of legislation enacted into law. The State Board monitored these bills during the session and has summarized the resulting Acts in a memo that is available under the [Election Information](#) tab on our website.

Regarding the election process, one of the most significant changes is the requirement that voters verify that they are the person registered to vote by presenting photo identification to the poll worker. In most cases, if a voter fails to verify his or her voter registration, that voter will be required to vote a provisional ballot.

This new law has required the State Board to make changes to our provisional voting rule and to promulgate a new rule on the verification of voter registration. These rules took effect as emergency rules on July 31, 2017. The comment period for the permanent version of these rules, as well as a third rule that makes a small change to

the rule governing SBEC complaints, is open until August 21, 2017.

The State Board encourages you to review the new rules and send any comments you may have to info.sbec@arkansas.gov. We will also have a public meeting scheduled for August 23, 2017 in the SBEC Conference Room, located at our office in Little Rock, to allow individuals an additional opportunity to offer feedback. You can access the proposed rules and the emergency rule under the [Rules](#) tab on our website at any time.

Training and Education

Important Verification of Voter Registration (Voter ID) Upcoming Training Dates:

- Wednesday, August 9th from 1-3pm
- Thursday, August 10th from 1-3pm
- Tuesday, August 15th from 10am-12pm
- Wednesday, August 16th from 10am-12pm

*These trainings will be conducted by WebEx and Conference Call, for additional details please contact Bernetta Levy at (800)411-6996.

The Regional County Election Commissioners, Coordinators, and Clerks meetings have been a huge success around the state. We have now attended meetings in all five regions of the state and are already seeing more communication and collaboration among counties than ever before. The feedback we are receiving from our election officials as a result of the meetings has proven invaluable as we continue through the rule writing process. SBEC believes the continued

regional meetings will be both productive and effective and we hope to assist both the local county officials as well as state officials in streamlining elections in Arkansas.

Important Upcoming Regional CCC Meeting Dates:

- Central Arkansas Regional CCC Meeting – Tentatively October, Official Date TBD
- NEA Regional CCC Meeting – October 12th, Location TBD
- SEA Regional CCC Meeting – October 23rd at the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce
- SWA Regional CCC Meeting – Tentatively November, Official Date TBD
- NWA Regional CCC Meeting – November 15th at the Washington County Sheriff's Annex