



Election Connection

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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

Welcome to the 2nd issue of the SBEC Newsletter since it was reinstituted! Because we have such an outstanding staff with some great leadership from Deputy Director Heather McKim, Legal Counsel Daniel Shults, and Educational Services Manager Jon Davidson, I have asked them to prepare some information for this publication. They have been instrumental in the success of this office over the past year and the information they supply will be helpful to all who read their comments, especially those who will be working with them in the future. Our other great staff members, Bernetta Levy, Tena Arnold, and Aly Humphrey will be adding information for your use in upcoming issues. It is our hope that you can and will be able to provide your ideas and comments to be included in the future.

-Keith Rutledge,

SBEC Director

Deputy Director's Dialog

As 2017 comes to a close, the evaluation process must now begin. Just as we all personally reflect over the past year and begin to make plans and resolutions for the coming year, the staff at SBEC believe it is important to evaluate our agency in the same manner. Where were we in January 2017? What progress or accomplishments did we make throughout the year? What will the priorities be moving forward into 2018 to better serve our constituents?

In the early part of 2017, the 91st General Assembly convened their regular session and our staff worked diligently to monitor all committee meetings and proposed legislation affecting elections as there were many to cover. Our legal counsel was at the Capitol almost daily and he routinely checked every morning to keep us abreast of anything that might have come up overnight. The session resulted in approximately 21 different bills that affected election laws, with at least 5 that would require additional rule changes by SBEC. It was an intense session, but we survived!

After the session concluded, our workload expanded greatly in every aspect. In addition to new legislation, the statewide ACECA organization dissolved and our staff decided it was necessary to take action to bring local election officials together to discuss all the important changes and challenges they would be facing as a result of the new laws. Following the lead of a regional group that had already formed in Northwest Arkansas, we collaborated with some of the county commissioners, clerks, and coordinators to get four other regional groups off the ground around the state. We have been to Hope, Paragould, Jonesboro, twice to Benton, twice to El Dorado, and have attended three regional meetings in NWA. We have also begun our mandatory commissioner training with the NWA group and will continue this on into the early part of 2018. Rules have been, and are in the process of being, promulgated and our new updated publications are hot off the presses.

The process of writing rules, training, and updating our publications was significantly improved as a result of the regional meetings. We cannot emphasize this point enough because our trainings must be of the highest quality and integrity. Without the input, and frankly, without working in collaboration with the local election officials, we would not have been able to do our work nearly as effectively.

Moving forward into 2018, it is important for the SBEC to continue to build positive relationships with local election officials in all 75 counties. Ultimately, we all want to serve the voters of Arkansas in the best possible way and we plan on achieving this together. Have a blessed new year!

-Heather McKim,

Deputy Director

Rules and Legal

As SBEC staff traveled around the state meeting with commissioners, coordinators, and clerks in our regional meetings, we have received many questions regarding how the reimbursement for the annual school election would work when the school election is held with the preferential primary or general election. In addressing these questions, it became apparent that further guidance beyond the statutory language was required. It was determined that the best way to address these issues was the promulgation of a new rule.

In its November 29th meeting, the SBEC authorized the promulgation of *Rules for the Annual School Election in Even Numbered Years*. This is essentially the same rule that several of the regions were able to review. In addition to the school reimbursement issues, this current version of the rule also addresses the transfer of candidate filing information and the transfer of election results between counties.

The rules and amendments to rules which were promulgated following the 2016 Session of the General Assembly were made permanent as of October 28, 2017. You can access all current rules and proposed rules on our website under the *Rules* tab.

As always, we want to encourage you to reach out to our office with any questions you may have regarding election law or SBEC rules. We would also ask that you review the proposed rule regarding school elections and reach out to us with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Training and Education

Running for Public Office Booklets

The State Board will be sending the 2018 Running for Public Office booklets to County Clerks beginning the first week in December. The booklets have updated information on obligations, qualifications and filing dates, and procedures for candidates seeking public office. A link to Candidate Information has been created on our website. The aforementioned link contains a copy of the Running for Public Office booklet as well as copies of Independent Candidate petition forms.

Commissioner Training

The 2018 County Election Commissioners Procedures Manual will be distributed during commissioner trainings that are being scheduled for January and February of 2018. The State Board has already conducted the mandatory commissioner trainings for several attendees in Northwest Arkansas and have the following future dates scheduled in the Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast areas of the state:

- January 18th – Hope
- January 25th – Batesville
- January 30th – Warren

Please be checking your email for additional information about these trainings in addition to more announcements for commissioner trainings in other areas of the state. As always, make-up sessions for commissioners who cannot attend training sessions on certain dates will be scheduled in Little Rock closer to the May Primary election.



Left: Legal Counsel Shults speaking to a group of NWA commissioners at their mandatory training session

Below: NWA Commissioners at a recent commissioners' training session

