

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

ORGANIZATION

The Onondaga County Board of Elections is a County Office responsible for all Federal, State, County, City and Town elections, along with the Villages of Camillus, East Syracuse, Manlius, North Syracuse, Solway and Tully. Under present law, all villages (except Camillus, East Syracuse, Manlius, North Syracuse, Solway and Tully) and school district elections, as well as fire, water and other special district elections, do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Board of Elections at this time.

The structure, responsibilities and duties of the Board are set forth in the New York State Election Law. Formal Board meetings and documentation of actions, discussion and decisions are being maintained.

PERSONNEL AND BUDGET

In keeping with state mandate, two Commissioners, one Republican and one Democrat administer the Board of Elections. The Commissioners are recommended by their respective County committees and appointed by the County Legislature every 2 years. The Board has 16 full time positions.

Both Commissioners' terms end on December 31, 2018.

2017 was a local election year. (1) Surrogate Court Judge, (1) Family Court Judge, (17) County Legislators, City of Syracuse Mayor, President of Common Council, (2) Councilors-At-Large, (3) City Court Judge, (3) Commissioner of Education, (5) District Councilors, 19 Town Offices, and 4 Village Offices.

The Board of Elections is funded solely by the County of Onondaga. The 2017 budget as modified (BAM) include the following:

Total 2017 Budget

Total County Budget	\$ 2,285,578
Salaries (full time)	\$ 718,113
Salaries*(temporary)	\$ 492,664

(*includes election inspectors, voting machine technicians, training consultants and Memory Card Runners)

ELECTION COST

Onondaga County is responsible for paying all election costs. These costs include storing, transporting and maintaining the Imagecast machines, paying machine technicians and election inspectors.

The County Board of Elections reviews all polling places for use and accessibility and tests and certifies all voting machines in Onondaga County. There are **275** Imagecast voting machines and **25** Imagecast scanner only voting machines in Onondaga County.

There were no county election charge backs to municipalities for 2017. HAVA will have some one time reimbursements that will require future annual operating expenditures. HAVA requires the county to maintain a pre-HAVA level of expenditures. We are required to follow Federal and NYS contract processes for the purchases most related to the new voting systems.

ELECTION DISTRICTS

In 2017, there were **433** Election Districts in Onondaga County. Five (**5**) of these were non-working districts. There is an average registration of **666** voters in each district. In 2017, the smallest districts contained **2 to 6** voters (City 5-8, 9-6, 11-9 and 17-18) and the largest had an enrollment of **1,497** voters (Camillus 2).

POLLING PLACES

There were **179** polling sites in Onondaga County in 2017.

The polling place diagrams used on Election Day at each polling place in 2017 were revised based on reporting from the voting machine technicians and Election Day workers.

VOTING MACHINES TECHNICIANS/CUSTODIANS

Two (2) full time Onondaga County Voting Machine Custodians are responsible for maintaining, testing, and preparing the Imagecast voting systems for each election site within Onondaga County with the assistance of centralized voting machine technicians.

The State mandates quarterly testing of the Imagecast voting system. It takes a bipartisan team approximately 1 hour per machine. This testing is done to ensure that the machines are functioning properly.

We are required to perform a process called Pre Logic and Accuracy Testing (Pre-LAT). This process requires the creation of a test deck. A staff member creates a test deck by voting each position on the ballot and ensuring that the voting machines can read and tabulate each and every possibility. During Pre-LAT we test the functionality of all other voting interfaces used for the Ballot Marking portion of the machine. Five seals are attached to each machine and their numbers are recorded on the Statement of Canvass sheet. The seals are to alert our inspectors of any tampering if the seal is broken. The machines are packaged for delivery to the polling places. Pre-LAT is completed by a bipartisan team and takes nearly 1½ hours per machine.

In 2017, there were 26 additional voting machine technicians in Onondaga County, as well as 2 new technicians who were in training. Voting Machine technicians are appointed by the Board of Elections each year. The voting machine technician rate of pay was \$25.00 an hour.

The voting machine technicians are required to attend a meeting before the General Election to discuss any concerns and or changes regarding the election and the districts they will be covering. The 2 new technicians were required to attend both levels of poll worker training as well. Our two full time machine technicians continue to provide field support for all voting system technicians.

Temporary fixes were again used to bring Onondaga County polling places into compliance with the Federal Help Americans Vote Act. The technicians were successful at setting up and taking down the temporary fixes in a 48 hour time frame around each Election Day.

The number of machines used for each election in 2017 was as follows:

<u>ELECTION</u>	<u>IMAGECAST VOTING SYSTEMS</u>	<u>SCANNER ONLY</u>
Primary September 12th	191	0
General November 7th	179	18

Additional spare Imagecast voting systems were prepared in case of breakdowns before each election.

<u>NUMBER OF VOTERS WHO CAST A BALLOT USING THE BALLOT MARKING DEVICE (BMD)</u>	
Primary - September 12th	2
General – November 7th	7

ELECTION INSPECTORS

The election inspector program continues to be structured as follows:

- A.) Polling Site Manager – PSM
- B.) Voting System Specialist – VSS
- C.) Regular Inspector – RI

A. Polling Site Managers are responsible for assigning work to all the inspectors at the site, making sure the voting system specialists have the machine up and running, directing voters to the correct election district and returning the ballots, memory cards and supplies to the designated site after the close of the polls. They can also fill in for a regular inspector when needed

B. Voting System Specialists are responsible for opening and running the voting machine during the hours of voting. They can also fill in for a regular inspector when needed

C. Regular Inspectors are responsible for processing the voters and ballot distribution.

New York State Law requires county boards to conduct annual mandatory “hands on” training sessions for all poll workers with an exam. Poll workers are paid for their election duties by the county at a rate approved by the county legislature. For a General Election, Polling Site Managers are paid \$265; Voting System Specialists are paid \$235 and a Regular Inspectors are paid \$190 for the day. PSM and VSS are asked to report to work at 5AM to get the site opened and the voting machine ready for 6AM. Regular inspectors still report to work at 5:30AM.

All Poll Site Managers and Voting System Specialists received an additional training session with hands on experiences with the machines. This training provides them with the ability to be able to fix most problems that may occur during the day. A test with a BOE staff member follows the class. They must also be willing to work anywhere in Onondaga County.

An open house was held on the Saturday before the General Election at our training center for all Election Inspectors as a last minute refresher session. The session lasted 3 hours and approximately 45 people voluntarily attended. Those who attended were not compensated.

Our staff scheduled 126 Hands-On training classes for returning inspectors. All inspectors had to attend either the 3 hour training (NEW) or the 2 hour modified (Returning) hands on training class.

A total of 1,340 election inspectors attended the hands on training. Only 19 inspectors failed the test. The training included the actual handling of all the paperwork used at a polling place during an election. Each VSS and PSM were also shown how to open and close the Imagecast voting machine. Election Inspectors are paid \$25 per training session each year.

BALLOT ACCESS

Certain towns hold caucuses to select their candidates, but most candidates are required to file petitions to seek public office. All petitions for candidates for public office or party position, entirely within Onondaga County, are filed with this Board. Anyone seeking an office that crosses county lines is required to file in Albany at the New York State Board of Elections.

In 2017, candidates for public office filed **232** party designating petitions. Each petition is logged in by Board staff and each candidate for public office is notified in writing that a petition has been filed on his/her behalf and the candidate is given an opportunity to accept or decline the designation or nomination. Any objections to the designation of a candidate are filed with the Board and ruled upon by the Commissioners. There were **(38)** challenges to designating petitions filed. The Board received specifications on **(21)** of the challenges. There were **(13)** Opportunity to Ballot petitions filed. The Board received **(4)** challenges and **(3)** specifications on those challenges. Candidates desiring to run on an independent line are required to file independent nominating petitions. There were **(18)** independent nominating petitions filed. There was **(2)** challenges to those petitions. The Board received specifications on **(2)** of the challenges. Additionally, **(26)** Certificates of Nomination were filed for specified town offices. There were no challenges received.

There were a total of **(0)** candidates removed from the ballot because they failed to file their acceptance form, **(39)** candidates removed because they did not receive the party authorization and **(18)** candidates because they lost the September Primary Election.

Party authorizations are filed for candidates who are not members of a Party for which they are seeking the party endorsement/line. Party authorizations were filed for the following; Democratic, Republican, Conservative, Independence, Working Families, Reform and Women's Equality.

Vacancies occurred in the offices of Geddes Town Councilor.

IMAGECAST BALLOT PRINTING

In 2017, our office, the County Print Shop and the IT Department worked hand in hand to allow the Board to print the stubbed ballots and also the absentee/affidavit ballots in house. Ballots used in the elections are required to be bound and have a numbered stub.

Having the Print Shop do our ballot printing instead of an outside vendor continues to save our department thousands of dollars

Ballots Printed in 2017:

	<u># of styles</u>	<u>Total # of Ballots</u>
Primary (Local) September 12th		
(DEM)	80	23,750
(REP)	15	3,550
(CON)	54	3,770
(IND)	127	2,130
(WEP)	64	650
(REF)	189	14,640
<u>TOTAL</u>		48,490
General Election November 7th	428	186,900

The Print Shop also was able to print non-stubbed ballots for many Elections we do not currently run. In March, they printed ballots for the Skaneateles and Minoa Village Elections. In April, they printed ballots for the Baldwinsville Library. In May, they printed ballots for 15 different school district elections. In June, they printed ballots for the Village of Liverpool and Town of Cicero Referendum. In September, they printed for the North Syracuse School District and the Tully School District. In December, they printed ballots for the Fayetteville-Manlius School District and the Liverpool School District.

VOTER REGISTRATION

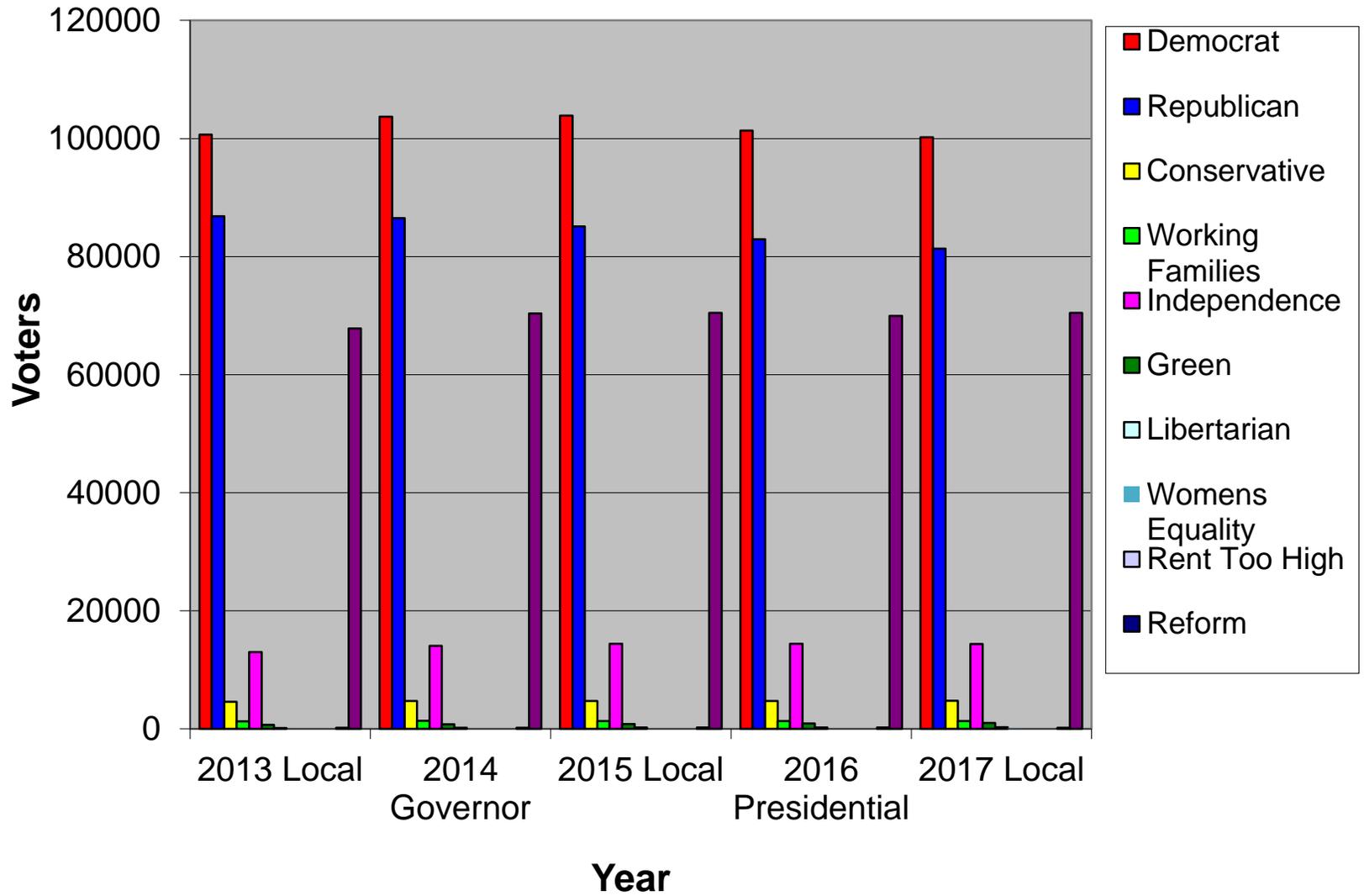
The qualifications for voting in New York State are as follows: 18 years of age by Election Day, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the State and County for 30 days prior to election. Residents of the County are allowed to register up to 25 days prior to an election during the year. **1,546** voter registration forms were delivered to the Office of the Board of Elections in person.

306,531 (Active/Inactive) residents of Onondaga County were registered to vote for the 2017 General Election. This number includes **21,494** inactive voters. Under the National Voter Registration Act [NVRA], a voter must be made inactive if mail sent to them is returned as undeliverable. If they remain inactive for 2 successive Federal elections, their registration will be canceled. The board purged **12,356** voters on the NVRA purge in December 2016. Voters can activate themselves by voting or notifying the Board that they still reside at the address indicated in the Board's files.

The Board processed **22,702** registration application forms during the year. This number includes **3,205** mail registration applications, **13,684** DMV, **2,109** Agency and **4,255** applications received over the counter through registration drives or other types of resources. Not all of these registrations were new voters. Many of them moved from one part of Onondaga County to another. **524** registration forms for other counties were received at our board and were forwarded to the correct county.

Pursuant to the federal court decision in the Green Party case of 2005, local election boards are mandated to keep enrollment numbers for the following groups/independent bodies until 2018: Libertarian and Sapien Parties. These are independent bodies which had gubernatorial candidates on the November ballot in 2014. These independent bodies are treated as though they are recognized parties for enrollment purposes only. In 2017, there were a total of **377** Libertarian, **0** Sapien and **159** other parties. (See chart #1)

Enrollment Numbers - Onondaga County



VOTER REGISTRATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our Commissioners reviewed the election process with some groups during the year. They included; Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs, Democracy in Action at Syracuse University, International Journalist at Syracuse University, Center State CEO, and News Channel 9's Bridge Street. The Board of Elections is often asked to speak at high schools and community meetings on such topics as the importance of voting; registering to vote; organizing a registration drive; and voting procedures. The Commissioners spoke at West Genesee High School, Faith Heritage High School, Westhill High School, and Bishop Grimes High School.

Our staff attended the NYS Fair and Senator Valesky's Community Fair at the Syracuse Boy's and Girl's Club to distribute registration forms and answer any questions.

In 2017, **15,100** registration forms were distributed to the high schools, town and village offices, various libraries and post office branches. An additional **7,260** voter registration forms were distributed to various other groups along with **1,846** forms mailed out to individuals upon request.

The following is a partial listing of the many diverse groups that organized registration drives:

Colleges and most area High Schools

Syracuse University, Onondaga Community College, NYPIRG, and several high schools.

Professional Associations & Labor Unions

SEIU 1199 and UA Local 267

Human Services, Community, & Neighborhood Organizations

The League of Women Voters, ARISE, Health and Community Fair, Spanish Action League, Syracuse United Neighbors, Uplift Syracuse, RISE, CNY Solidarity Coalition, NAACP, Syracuse PTO Connection, and the National Action Network.

As registration deadlines approached, press releases were faxed to all area media in August, September and October. General information faxes were also sent to local media as Election Days grew nearer informing the general public of polling hours, polling places, and phone numbers to call for questions. Public access television stations and a number of radio stations agreed to regularly broadcast registration deadlines and phone numbers at the Board of Elections to call for more information. Registration deadlines and mail registration forms were posted on our website for voters to access.

MAIL CHECK CARDS

Each year the Board is required to send a notice to each voter to determine if they still reside at the same address as in our files. The card also contains information that can be useful to the voter, including polling place location, dates and times for primary and general elections and information about registration and absentee voting. In 2017, **278,000** mail check cards were mailed out on August 12th. Of those cards, **16,306** were returned to the Board as moves within the county, moves outside of the county/state, undeliverable, post office boxes, left no forwarding address, etc. A number of these voters use post offices boxes and have not moved. The Board again used NTS Data Services to process our mail check cards.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Registered voters who will be outside of Onondaga County on Election Day and those who are physically unable to appear at the polls are eligible to receive absentee ballots. There are several types of absentee voters:

- A. MILITARY**--Members of the Armed Forces and their dependents.
- B. REGULAR**--Voters who are out of the county or ill on Election Day or Primary Day.
- C. PERMANENTLY DISABLED**--These voters are on a permanent list and receive a ballot for each election.
- D. SPECIAL BALLOT** - For those who are unable to vote in person due to Religious Scruples, Duties for the Board of Elections or a Victim of Domestic Violence

In 2017 the numbers of absentees processed are as follows:

	Sept 12 th						Nov 7 th
	DEM	REP	CON	IND	WEP	REF(including BLK)	ALL
<u>Military</u>							
<i>Mailed</i>	25	22	3	3	0	75	282
<i>Returned</i>	2	4	0	0	0	5	35
<u>Regular</u>							
<i>Mailed</i>	161	51	8	16	0	54	2,354
<i>Returned</i>	139	43	8	13	0	18	2,047
<u>Permanent Disabled</u>							
<i>Mailed</i>	503	121	17	56	0	427	2,821
<i>Returned</i>	264	67	7	22	0	123	1,761
<u>Special Ballot</u>							
<i>Mailed</i>	148	23	0	6	0	23	927
<i>Returned</i>	116	16	0	2	0	8	723
<u>TOTAL</u>							
<i>Mailed</i>	837	217	28	81	0	579	6,384
<i>Returned</i>	521	130	15	37	0	154	4,521

The total number of voters that voted in person at their polling place that had returned an absentee ballot to our office in 2017 was: **(1)** September Primary; and **(14)** General Election.

Twenty-Five (25) different absentee ballot styles were used in the Primary Election. Seventy (70) different absentee ballot styles were used in the General Election.

In 2017, the Board of Elections hand delivered ballots to nursing homes with more than five residents voting absentee. The ballots are delivered and voted under supervision of a bipartisan team from the Board. During the September Primary Election, there were **7** nursing homes visited with a total of **68** ballots voted and in the General Election, **11** nursing homes were visited with a total of **172** ballots voted.

MOVE ACT OF 2009

The Military Overseas Voters Empowerment Act requires that counties make official ballot materials available electronically to military and overseas voters who request it. The State Board hired a vendor (Scytl USA) to establish a program on a secured site (www.secureballotusa.com/NY) for military and federal voters.

In 2017, only **(2)** military voters used the email ballot from this site.

PAPER BALLOT COUNTING

We continue to use Dominion's Central Count absentee scanner. 2017 was the third year with this absentee system. It greatly enhances and expedites our recanvass procedures. This machine counts absentees and affidavits paper ballots. Candidates receive their official vote tally earlier and greatly increases this Boards ability to certify election results with the State Board of Elections prior to the deadline.

AFFIDAVIT VOTING

Registered voters who move within Onondaga County remain registered and can vote at their new polling place on Election Day by affidavit ballot. In 2017, we processed:

	Processed	Valid
September Primary (9/12/17)	124	72
General Election (11/7/17)	467	392

COURT ORDERS

Voters who failed to register in time for the primary or general elections can obtain a court order. There were:

	Processed	Denied
September Primary (9/12/17)	0	0
General Election (11/7/17)	21	5

After obtaining a court order, a voter is allowed to vote on the machine in their home election district.

ELECTION RESULTS

Each voting machine has a poll worker/administrative memory card with the election results saved on it. NYS Regulation 6210 states that all poll worker/administrative memory cards must be secured at the close of polls.

44 Memory Card Runners are used on election night to go and retrieve the poll worker memory cards at all of the town polling sites. Election runners are paid a flat rate of \$55 local and \$65 for distance routes. All runners were to be at their first polling site at 9PM. The City of Syracuse polling sites were directed to return their poll worker memory cards with their supplies on election night. All memory cards were returned on election night by 10:30 PM.

The memory cards were read on the Election Management System (EMS). Once read the system provides the public, candidates, and the media with quick and accurate unofficial results on our website. Results are available within minutes of the memory cards being delivered to our office.

The Board requires Inspectors to return their supplies on election night. City inspectors are required to deliver their supplies directly to the Board of Elections Office located at 1000 Erie Blvd W, Syracuse. The town inspectors, however, return the black suitcases containing all the ballots and election materials to their designated areas for pickup by a trucker or machine technician for return to the Board of Elections Office. This method provides increased security for elections materials and also prevents a last minute scramble if the Board receives a Court Order to secure election materials.

CANVASS OF RESULTS

All Imagecast voting machines are recanvassed at the Board of Elections Office once all the machines have been picked up and returned. This process is completed within one day. The administrative memory cards are removed from the machines and read by the EMS. Results are then compared to the poll worker memory cards from election night.

The Commissioners oversee the counting of absentee, affidavit and military ballots. They are responsible for ruling on any questionable ballot. According to New York State Election Law, Section 10-114 increased the time for military ballots to be received at a Board of Elections from 7 days to 13 days after a General Election. Absentee ballots are not counted on election night after the polls close. All paper ballots were opened, inspected and scanned for tabulation of results. The results were then downloaded and merged with the voting machine totals.

The paper ballot and machine results are merged and entered directly on the computer terminal. Board personnel then verify all entries. The official canvass is certified by the Commissioners and forwarded to the State Board of Elections. Bound copies of this document are printed in February and distributed to candidates and other interested parties upon request.

VOTER PARTICIPATION-2017

	NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE VOTER'S	NUMBER VOTED	TURNOUT %
September Primary (9/12/17)			
DEM			
City of Syracuse Mayor	37,830	8,656	
22%			
City Court Judge (3)	37,830	8,656	22%
Councilor – 4 th District	8,242	1,775	21%
Salina Town Justice	7,153	671	9%
REP			
Legislator - 13 th District	6,912	1,133	16%
Elbridge Town Supervisor	1,424	485	34%
Skaneateles Town Supervisor	2,368	798	33%
Skaneateles Town Councilor (2)	2,368	798	33%
CON			
Legislator - 3 rd District	411	86	
20%			
Legislator - 6 th District	334	102	30%
Legislator - 13 th District	460	114	25%
Elbridge Town Supervisor	114	30	26%
Geddes Town Councilor (TFV)	208	14	6%
Manlius Town Justice	364	124	34%
Van Buren Highway Superintendent	221	77	34%
IND			
Legislator - 7 th District	770	75	9%
Legislator - 8 th District	641	72	11%
City of Syracuse Mayor	2,584	269	10%
Clay Town Councilor (3)	2,114	52	2%
Manlius Town Justice	1,221	210	17%
WEP			
City Court Judge (3)	42	2	4%
REF			
Surrogate Court Judge	72,325	831	1%
Family Court Judge	72,325	831	1%
City of Syracuse Mayor	15,519	610	3%
City Court Judge (3)	15,519	610	3%
General Election (11/7/17)			
All Parties	285,126	106,053	37%

3% AUDIT

The 3% audit was done for the Primary and General Elections for the total number of voting machines used during the elections. Using software from RANDOM.org, a draw is made at 9PM on election night of the voting system to determine which machines will be audited. It took 2 bipartisan teams, 6 days to complete the audit on 7 voting machines that contained 17 election districts.

The 3% audit was also done on the Dominion ICC Absentee Counting System. The drawing also took place at 9PM on election night. It took 1 bipartisan team a day to complete the audit of 7 election districts.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

New York State Election Law requires all state and local candidates and committees to file electronically with the State Board of Elections. Candidates for Federal offices file with the Federal Election Commission, Washington, D.C. Local filers who do not intend to raise or spend over \$1,000 are still required to file with our office.

Financial Disclosure training for treasurers and candidates was presented by the New York State Board of Elections on June 9th the Board of Elections office, 1000 Erie Blvd W, Syracuse, New York.

WEB SITE/FACEBOOK

The Board of Election's web site, which was launched in 2000, continues to thrive.

The Board and the County's Web Site Administrators continue to jointly revise the website to improve navigational ease for the end user.

Our website has seen increased usage following the addition of pages and content for:

- Public Notices
- Press Releases
- Election Inspector Training Materials
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Clickable button directing voters to the Election Results
- Clickable button directing voters to education on voting machines sponsored by the State Board of Elections (VoteNY.Com)
- Clickable button for Military and Overseas Voters (MOVE ACT) providing them with on-line ballot access
- Posting of various caucus notices from the Towns and villages
- Links to follow our Board on Facebook and Twitter

The polling place locator feature is continually updated through the updated web table builder from the vendor. Updated maps for Wards and Towns were placed on the Map Page along with updated maps for the various Legislative Districts.

We continue to place an emphasis on educating the public as to those services available through the internet, and the ease in obtaining necessary forms and instructions. Callers continue to be informed of their options when requesting forms.

The Commissioners once again participated in multiple live Q&A sessions at Syracuse.com, to help with voter outreach and education. They also appeared on various media events throughout the year to promote participation at the polls before each of the elections in Onondaga County. They also worked with student media groups at Syracuse University on how to properly cover Election Day and best practices for reporting from pollsite locations.

In 2017 we continued to use our Facebook and Twitter accounts to notify voters of registration and filing deadlines. We also experimented with releasing of results on social media for Village Elections run by the Board of Elections.

LONG RANGE GOALS

We continue to encourage the villages of Onondaga County to move to the November elections. This will allow the Board of Elections to not only administer their village elections, but save the villages' money as they will not have to reimburse costs to the BOE as they do in their March and June elections. Of the 15 villages in Onondaga County, 6 currently have the Board of Elections administer their elections. The Villages of E Syracuse, Solvay and Tully have moved their elections to November in 2017. With the move to optical scan machines, for the various elections in the county throughout the year, we believe this preemptive move will not only save the villages, schools, and libraries unanticipated costs but reduce voter fatigue and ensure fair elections run by our professional staff.

We look to amplify our voter outreach programs by addressing outgoing high school seniors in May of this year at many area High Schools. We can not only register and pre-register many seniors; we can also teach them the requirements and deadlines for absentee voting while they are away at college.

Lastly, we will continue to conduct fair elections, as perfect as possible.