

CAPITOL REPORT

News & Updates from Your State Capitol
By Arkansas Secretary of State Mark Martin



When You Head to the Polls, Remember Your ID

Arkansas elections will be significantly different in 2014.

The biggest change for voters, Secretary Martin said, is that they will be required by law to show photo identification before casting a ballot.

"This is a major change in Arkansas voting law," Martin said. "Poll workers have been required for several years to request identification, but Act 595 of 2013 is the first law requiring voters to show photo ID. This makes the law more consistent."

Most state or federally issued photo identification is acceptable.

Voters who have no form of valid photo identification may obtain a free voter ID card if they are registered to vote, or if they will be 18 years old by the next election and have submitted a voter registration application.

County clerks' offices will issue the cards at no charge. It is valid only for voting and will not replace any state or federally issued identification.

"This is just for persons who have no form of acceptable photo ID," Martin said. "If you already have photo identification, you are not eligible."

The Voter ID law will become effective Jan. 1, 2014, and Secretary Martin is rolling out a public education campaign to raise awareness of the new requirement. The campaign, known as **Face Your Vote**, will reach out to voters through a variety of means to ensure they have an accepted form of ID and remember to take it with them to the polls. For more information about voter identification, go to www.FaceYourVote.org.

Grant Funds Go to Counties

Many voters will also see additional voting equipment at their polling site. The Secretary of State's office distributed over \$671,000 in grants through the County Voting Systems Grant Fund this year.

Grant amounts were awarded to counties based on the county's proposed use and needs. The grants will be used to maintain voting systems, upgrade ballot-tabulating devices and purchase electronic poll books.



The Secretary's Minute

This summer, my office has been absorbed in implementing new laws passed during the spring legislative session.

One law that directly affects our customers is Act 1041, establishing a franchise tax penalty and interest amnesty season. Between September 1 and December 31 of this year, businesses whose corporate charters were revoked as of Dec. 31, 2012, can pay past due franchise taxes without being assessed penalties and interest. You can find details on page 2.

As always, business owners should remember that this year's franchise taxes must be paid by December 31 to avoid revocation.

We have prepared rules and procedures for the new law requiring voters to present photo identification at the polls. This law protects your vote. By requiring all voters to show identification, the law strengthens the integrity of our voting process. Poll workers have been required to request ID for years, but now voters are required to show it.

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Speaking of elections and voting, I was pleased to present almost \$700,000 in grant funds to counties recently. These funds, which can be used to upgrade and maintain the county's voting equipment, came from the County Voting Systems Grant Fund we helped establish in 2011.

I am also pleased to announce that we have revised and updated our very popular Young Voters Workshop. This event draws students from all four congressional districts for a day-long program about the importance and history of voting. We present the workshop each March and September, and this year's autumn edition introduces the revamped program.

We are also actively maintaining and preserving the State Capitol. Two of this year's major efforts are replacing the north and south sidewalks and steps, and restoring the interior of the dome. The dome's interior was last painted in 1986. The current restoration will repair water damage and repaint the interior. The finished project will be as historically accurate as possible.

That project began immediately after a major event saluting Arkansas veterans of the Korean War, six decades after it ended. The relative inattention to our military upon their return earned the conflict the title "the forgotten war." I was honored that my office helped present this ceremony, and I was humbled to meet veterans of that theater and their families, as well as South Koreans who shared how American intervention had spared their country.

Finally, I encourage you to connect with us for regular updates on what we at the Secretary of State's office are doing. You can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ARSecofState, or on Twitter (@ARSecofState).

Mark Martin
Arkansas Secretary of State

New Laws in Effect for 2014 Elections

Several laws enacted during the 2013 legislative session will directly impact elections and elected officials in Arkansas next year.

Act 312 amended state law about using public funds for campaign purposes. Public funds cannot be used to support or oppose a ballot measure, but the law does not prohibit a public servant from expressing his opinion. A governmental body may also pass a resolution or proclamation expressing its opinion.

Act 313 changed the filing period in a city administrator form of government. Candidates for mayor or director shall file their statements of candidacy no less than 75 days and no more than 90 days before the primary election.

Act 378 specifies that any elected county official who resigns during a term of office is ineligible for appointment to any county elected office during the term for which he/she resigned.

Act 466 protects a citizen's last vote. If a voter casts an absentee ballot but dies before election day, the vote can still be counted. To qualify, the ballot must be signed, dated and either postmarked and mailed or delivered to the county clerk before the date of death. In the case of active duty military personnel, the ballot must be executed before the date of death.

If a polling location changes, Act 546 requires the county clerk to notify affected voters by mail, at least 15 days before the election. This does not apply to school elections, special elections, or changes due to emergencies arising less than 15 days before the election. For those situations, voters are to be notified by posting information at the polling site used for the last election.

All counties will be required to improve protections for absentee voting. Act 1424 requires county clerks to submit written ballot accounting for absentee ballots to the Election Commissions. The Act also requires county clerks to follow certain steps to place information into the electronic voter registration system for all absentee ballots and applications. Clerks must also check to make sure that signatures on absentee applications are similar to the voter's signature on file.

Finally, all election officials at a polling site are required to complete training, according to Act 1457. The State Board of Election Commissioners is to coordinate training for poll workers and certified election monitors.

More information about these and other laws can be found online at www.sos.arkansas.gov or www.arkleg.state.ar.us.



Franchise Tax Amnesty Waives Penalties & Interest

Are franchise tax payments overdue for your business? Relief may be on its way through a one-time program made possible by new legislation.

For a limited time this year, penalties and interest will be waived on past-due franchise taxes. This is a one-time amnesty for business entities that were “revoked” on or before Dec. 31, 2012.

“During the past legislative session, we worked to ease repayment of old or forgotten franchise taxes, paving the way for corporations to return to good standing with the state,” Secretary Martin said. Act 1041, sponsored by Senator Eddie Joe Williams of Cabot, allows the Secretary of State’s office to provide a franchise tax penalty and interest amnesty program.

Franchise taxes are due each year by May 1 for the previous calendar year; penalties and interest begin to accrue at that point. When the tax goes unpaid through Dec. 31, the corporation’s charter is revoked.

From Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, 2013, franchise tax interest and penalty amnesty will be granted to taxpayers who submit all applicable franchise tax reports, forms and annual payments.

The program is simple; no explanation from the business is required. Business can complete the appropriate franchise tax forms (up to a maximum of three years’ taxes). Filing is by mail or in person; online filing for amnesty is not available.

Electronic Forms Available

Some of the forms for business filings are now available as “fillable PDF documents,” which allow users to enter their information into highlighted fields and print out completed forms. These new forms are in a Portable Document Format — or PDF — normally associated with Adobe software. By making it possible for customers to type and print the information, paper forms are more

legible, which results in fewer mistakes and a better experience for our customers. Revised forms will become available, one by one, as the office is able to program the forms. This process will take some time.

For information on PDF forms or to obtain franchise tax penalty and interest forms, please visit us on the web at www.sos.arkansas.gov/bcs/.



Chandelier Lowered for Rotunda Restoration

Two major projects contributed to the Capitol’s preservation this year, Secretary Martin said.

The interior of the Capitol dome is currently under renovation. Baldwin and Shell Construction began working at the end of July and is expected to complete the project late this fall. An \$800,000 grant from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council funded the work.



“I look forward to seeing this restoration completed in time for all our winter activities around the Capitol, from the Christmas lighting ceremony to press conferences,” Martin said.

The renovation required lowering the two-ton Mitchell-Vance Rotunda chandelier to the first floor. It will remain at ground level for the duration of the work, allowing Capitol visitors a rare close look at the intricate light fixture.

“I encourage all Arkansans to take the opportunity to see the Rotunda chandelier up close,” Martin said. “It is a treasure of early twentieth-century workmanship, and is quite literally the centerpiece of the Capitol.”

See RESTORATION continued on page 5

Young Voters Program Gets Fresh Take for Fall Workshop

Every year when school is out for the summer, it's time to get busy for the Communication and Education division of the Secretary of State's office. The Education team has conducted nearly 15 workshops around the state, all while revamping its semi-annual "Young Voters" program.

The team travels to different educational co-ops, schools, universities and even the State Capitol to conduct two-hour workshops on Arkansas history. The team also briefs the teachers on the duties of the Office of the Secretary of State, the teaching tools it has to offer and all of the free materials at their disposal.

"Our purpose is to help teachers teach Arkansas history and help students learn it," Secretary of State Mark Martin said.

"In the workshops, we're promoting everything that the Secretary of State offers them... it's not just the building or Arkansas government and tours. It can be Business and Commercial Services; it could be about the garden, the grounds," he said.

The Education Team has revamped the "Young Voters" program, an event that began almost 10 years ago.

The program will retain student and teacher favorites such as historical skits, a Jeopardy!-style game and videos.



Teachers become the students at State Capitol workshop.

The main differences moving forward will be the expansion of landmarks in voting history, giving students a wider perspective of voting history. The team also plans to cover some of the earliest known voting events (Mayflower Compact) up to more recent landmarks (Bush v. Gore, 2000), as well as the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009.

The workshop will emphasize the importance of voting and how far we have come in representation. Most of all, the program strives to teach students how important it is to be engaged in the voting process, to understand the issues and exercise their vote in order to make a difference in their world.

The program will begin Sept. 17 and end Sept. 19. To register your students, visit our website at www.soskids.arkansas.gov.

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Lee recounted the effects of the war on South Koreans. "After the war, most Koreans lived on food aid from the United States," he said. And Koreans, both in South Korea and the U.S., have worked hard to build and strengthen their country. "Our hard work and industry can help both the country we came from, and the country we now call home," he said.

Park said when the war began in 1950, "the aggression was not an attack on South Korea, but on the very idea of freedom."

American soldiers, he said, "risked and gave their lives for a country they had never seen, and a people they had never known... I am deeply honored and humbled to be surrounded by so many brave spirits. On behalf of the people of Korea, please let me express our gratitude."



Veterans are honored for their service in Korea.

Fall Exhibit Promotes New Offerings at State Parks

One stop at the State Capitol this fall will take you around the state, from the Delta to the mountains, with a look at four diverse state parks, including the oldest and the newest in the system.

Opening on Sept. 20, the Capitol's fall exhibit highlights new interpretive installations at the Delta Heritage Trail, Mather Lodge atop Petit Jean Mountain, Mississippi River Park, and Ozark Folk Center. Images and artifacts offer an example of the new features visitors can enjoy at each of the parks, which include:

- *Petit Jean State Park*, where the park system began in 1934. The legendary Mather Lodge, built by the Great Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), reopened in May 2012 following a major renovation. Modern additions have been replaced by facilities that harmonize with the original rustic design. Two paintings done on site by CCC artist George Snyder are now a centerpiece at the lodge.

- *Delta Heritage Trail State Park*, being developed along the former Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. It stretches through remote, scenic areas from just south of Lexa to Rohwer, extending to Arkansas City on the Mississippi River levee. The trail leads through a canopy of native hardwoods and along agricultural fields with historical displays along the way.

- *Ozark Folk Center State Park*, America's only facility dedicated to keeping the Ozark heritage alive through crafts, music and more. The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation funded the park's newest display, which explains the roots of music in the Ozarks.



- *Mississippi River State Park*, the newest park, developing in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service in the St. Francis National Forest. Exhibits and activities help visitors explore the ecology of the Arkansas Delta, the St. Francis and Mississippi Rivers and Crowley's Ridge. Phase I opened earlier this year with renovated campgrounds at Beech Point and a visitor center southeast

of Marianna.

Celebrating 100 Years of the Highway Commission

The Capitol just wrapped up its summer exhibit, *Spanning the Century (and more)*, which provided a colorful exploration of the state's bridges and highways to honor the Arkansas Highway Commission's 100th anniversary.

The Capitol exhibit celebrated a variety of engineering feats among those documented by the AHTD's Historic Bridge Program. The exhibit was produced in collaboration with the AHTD and its Historic Bridge Program, Hendrix College and the Arkansas History Commission.

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The Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council has provided several grants in recent years to restore and renovate the Arkansas State Capitol, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

"I appreciate the Council and its members for their support," Martin said. "The Capitol was competing with several other projects for this recent grant. Receiving this support will help us continue making the

Capitol a valuable resource for all Arkansans."

Over the summer, another project improved access to the Capitol.

The exterior steps on the north and south ends of the building were completely rebuilt.

"Redstone Construction did great work demolishing and replacing the steps at each end of the Capitol," Martin said. "The older steps had begun to deteriorate, so we're very glad to have the new steps completed."



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Korean War Veterans Celebrated at Capitol Ceremony

More than 300 people crowded the Capitol Rotunda on July 24 to honor veterans of the Korean War, 60 years after the conflict ended.

The emotional ceremony featured Secretary of State Mark Martin, Governor Mike Beebe, Grand Master In Ho Lee of the American Taekwondo Association and Ambassador Suk-Bum Park, consul general of the Republic of Korea, and other speakers.

Martin said when American soldiers returned from Korea, “they quietly went about their lives. No parades. No celebrations. No famous pictures from Times Square. Mostly, their service was ignored.”

That absence of tribute led to Korea’s being called “the forgotten war.” Martin said, “We want you to know you are not forgotten. We thank you, and we appreciate you. Today, we are here to honor you.”

Beebe spoke about Arkansas’s relationship with South Korea, and the sacrifices of military personnel and their families.

“It’s incumbent on us ... we have an obligation to say to all men and women in uniform, and their families — to say God bless you,” Beebe said “We thank you from the bottom of our heart, and we salute you.”



Dr. David Stricklin, director of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, described the Center’s project, “Arkansas Remembers: The Forgotten War.” Stricklin

encouraged any Korean veterans who have not already been part of the Butler Center’s research to contact his staff (www.butlercenter.org) to become part of the project.

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