

CAPITOL REPORT

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

Petitions, Training Pave Way for General Election

With the historic 2012 election now at a close, Secretary Martin said he is very pleased with the work of county election officials in facilitating a smooth voting process.

"These are hard-working, knowledgeable professionals," Martin said. "They are dedicated to making Arkansas elections a great exercise in our constitutional republic."

Thousands of voters used online resources from the Secretary of State to prepare for the election and follow returns. One tool known as Voter View allows Arkansans to look up their registration information, polling sites and ballots for participating counties.

The site had 2.5 million hits in October and almost 2.1 million hits November 1-6.

In preliminary results, voter turnout was in line with

Secretary Martin's prediction, totalling over 65 percent of the state's 1.6 million registered voters. That number almost matches the 2008 turnout of 64.6 percent. IZARD County topped the list this year with 77 percent.

"Voter registration increased by almost 80,000 this fall," Martin said. During the May primary, there were 1,538,619 registered voters in Arkansas. By the October 9th registration deadline, the state had 1,618,320 on its voter rolls.

More than 45 percent of Arkansans voted by early or absentee ballot, including around 2,750 ballots sent to military and overseas voters.

The race for U.S. President drove turnout in this election, but local contests also sparked interest, from proposed constitutional amendments to district races. Republican nominee Mitt Romney carried Arkansas, with 61 percent over President Barack Obama's 37 percent. Nationwide, however, Obama won re-election with 50 percent of the vote.

Arkansas's Electoral College will meet Dec. 17 when the state's six official electoral votes for U.S. President and Vice President will go to Romney and Paul Ryan.

Due to redistricting after the 2010 Census, all 135 seats in the Arkansas

General Assembly were up for grabs, as well as the four Congressional districts. If preliminary results hold, it was a landmark for Republicans, who gained enough seats in the state

legislature to control both the House and Senate for the first time since Reconstruction. All four Congressional seats were also won by the Republican nominees.

In unofficial results, the outcomes on three proposed constitutional amendments are:

- Issue No. 1 passed with 58 percent of the vote. The issue was known by its popular name, "An amendment to provide additional funding for state highways, county roads, city streets, bridges and other surface transportation."

See ELECTION, continued on page 2



The Secretary's Minute

What a year this has been. My staff has been hard at work this election year, and we are not finished yet.

Regardless of political affiliation, most Arkansans seem glad the General Election is behind us. This is especially true for our Elections division and the many county election officials with whom we coordinate and train. Each of those individuals has been working all year to make election night go smoothly.

With high voter turnout and an increase in voter registration, we were excited to help Arkansas voters monitor election returns in real time on our website. You can find more information in the Elections article at left.

The next big event is the annual State Capitol Lighting Ceremony. This year's ceremony is Saturday, December 1, and begins at dusk.

Christmas showcases the Capitol at its most beautiful. We've been busy decorating this month, and

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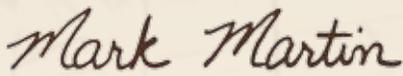
Early voting in Faulkner County

the tree should arrive as you read this. Whether you have never been to the Capitol or you come every year, I hope you will join us this year. See the article on page 3 for more details.

Of course it's also time to remind businesses of an important deadline. If you did not pay franchise taxes by the May 1 deadline, you must pay by December 31 to avoid forfeiting your corporate charter. If you are closing your business, you must file formal dissolution papers with our office to stop accruing franchise taxes. Our Business & Commercial Services division sent postcard notices to businesses that have not yet filed franchise taxes. If you receive a notice, be sure to file the 2012 annual report and franchise taxes by the end of this year. Visit our website or contact the BCS division for more information.

We have realigned two divisions within the Secretary of State's office for a more streamlined organization. Our Building and Grounds division has combined with the Mechanical & Electrical division, forming the new Capitol Facilities division. This department, under the direction of long-time employee Jim Comer, will manage the physical plant needs of the Capitol campus. I am proud to be the steward of this historic building, and we are dedicated to maintaining its beauty.

As 2012 ends, we look forward to doing great things next year. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful new year. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if we can be of service to you.



Arkansas Secretary of State

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Merger creates 'Capitol Facilities' Division



Capitol Facilities staff (above) install light strands in preparation for the annual lighting ceremony. Jim Comer (left), director of the new Capitol Facilities division.

For many years, two Secretary of State divisions have cared for the Capitol. The Building & Grounds division conducted maintenance and housekeeping duties, while the Mechanical & Electrical division was responsible for plumbing, HVAC and electrical components.

The two divisions now comprise the new Capitol Facilities department, which will handle all physical plant needs for the campus.

"Over time, this will allow more synergy and job-sharing," Secretary Martin said. "In fact, it is already helping increase functionality and breaking down interdepartmental barriers."

Jim Comer is director of the new division. He had previously been director of the Mechanical & Electrical staff and has been with the SOS since January 2006.

Several employees of the former grounds division were nearing retirement. As some began that process, Martin said, "we foresaw a need to absorb those duties internally. Combining the two departments helped manage those changes by providing cross-functionality."

Merging two divisions into the Capitol Facilities department will provide a more efficient use of resources.

"One of our foundational principles is good stewardship," Martin said. "By staff sharing jobs and resources, we are able to accomplish more than we could with two separate divisions, and that is good for the Secretary of State's office and the people of Arkansas."

Don't Forfeit Your Company's Corporate Charter

Corporations that have not met all Franchise Tax requirements are subject to forfeiture of corporate charter, in accordance with Arkansas Code, Section 26-54-101, et seq.

Payment of all Franchise Taxes, with penalty and interest is due by December 31, 2012. Unpaid entities will move from "not current" status to "revoked" on January 1, 2013.

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- Issue No. 2 failed with 57 percent against the measure. It is known as "An amendment concerning municipal and county financing of sales tax anticipated revenue bond projects, unfunded liabilities of closed local police and fire pension plans, and real and tangible personal property."
 - Issue No. 5, a proposal to legalize marijuana for medicinal use for qualified persons, failed with just over 51 percent opposed.
- For final, certified results in all races, visit the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.arkansas.gov.

Lights and choirs and Santa – Oh My!



The lights on the Capitol will go on at dusk during the December 1 lighting ceremony. Penguins from the Little Rock Zoo were among the honored guests last year.

The state's holiday season officially begins with the annual Christmas lighting ceremony at the Arkansas State Capitol on the evening of **Saturday,**

December 1. The Big Jingle Jubilee Holiday Parade will make its way down Capitol Avenue and end at the state Capitol. At dusk, representatives from the Easter Seals Society will help Secretary of State Mark Martin illuminate the

Capitol with around 100,000 lights outlining the building.

The grand lighting ceremony concludes with a fireworks show above the gleaming Capitol dome.

Afterward, families can venture inside the Capitol to discover magnificent decorations that are perfect backdrops for family photos. Children will be delighted by the Capitol's Christmas exhibit, which features the return of intricate creations made of Lego® blocks. The collection, on loan from Thomas Mears and family of Bauxite, will be on display through December.

Also following the lighting ceremony, the Top of the Rock and Diamond State choruses will entertain visitors in the rotunda as they await the most anticipated man of the holiday season.

Old St. Nick will greet children and find out who's been naughty or nice. Santa's helpers will provide fun activities for youngsters awaiting their turn with the jolly old elf.



Secretary of State Mark Martin and his family (above) invite you to join them for all the Christmas celebrations at the State Capitol.



Collectible Ornaments

While you're at the lighting ceremony, be sure to visit the Capitol Gift Shop for great gifts from Arkansas, as well as the collectible Capitol ornaments. The 2012 ornament highlights the Great Seal of State from the beautiful lighted display in the first floor rotunda. The ornament is also available online, along with previous ornaments in the series.



A portion of the proceeds from the ornament sales will benefit Arkansas Children's Hospital to celebrate a century of providing care, love and hope to the state's youngest patients.

Sounds of the Season

The music of Christmas will flow through the halls of the Capitol during the weeks of December 3-14. About 150 school choirs and dance troupes will perform in the Capitol rotunda each weekday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It's a highlight of the season for the performers and State Capitol staff members, as well as the many family members who also make the trip to Little Rock.



Pearl Harbor Remembrance

The annual Pearl Harbor Commemoration reminds us to stay hopeful for peace, not only during the holiday season, but continually throughout the year. Always a moving service, the ceremony will be held in the second-floor rotunda at 3 p.m. Friday, December 7, to salute the Arkansas veterans of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Blue lights just above the Capitol's front entrance spell out "Peace" in their honor.

For a schedule of choir performances, photo galleries and other information, visit our holiday web page at www.sos.arkansas.gov



SECRETARY OF STATE
MARK MARTIN

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www.sos.arkansas.gov



Use the QR code reader on your mobile device to see the full schedule of Christmas festivities at the Capitol.

Holiday Highlights

Capitol Lighting Ceremony

Saturday, Dec. 1

Festival of Choirs

Dec. 3-14

Pearl Harbor Commemoration

Friday, Dec. 7, 3 p.m.

Lights and choirs and Santa – Oh My!

The days are getting cooler and red-gold leaves are turning brown. When the Thanksgiving turkey is just a memory, it's time to create another memory. The State Capitol's annual lighting ceremony is the perfect place to start.

It all gets underway at the State Capitol with the arrival of the Capitol Christmas tree in late November, just in time for the annual lighting ceremony on **Saturday, December 1**. Choirs from around the state will then fill the Capitol halls with sounds of the season over the following two weeks.

Whether you come for the lights and fireworks of the lighting ceremony, the music or the wonderful scenery throughout the Christmas season, we look forward to sharing the spirit of the season with you.

**Turn to page 3
for more details
on all the festivities!**

