

Voting 101 in Chautauqua County for the Tuesday September 14th Primary Election

By Norman P. Green and Brian Abram

What Voting Machine Will Voters See? The Chautauqua County Board of Elections totally transitioned to the new paper ballot optical scan voting technology in 2009 and this year the rest of New York State will join county voters for the first time voting on paper ballots statewide.

Eligibility to Vote: Any county citizen at least age 18 at the date of election and who has previously registered to vote with the Democratic, Republican or Conservative Parties will find Primary Elections. Also, Independence Party registered voters in Pomfret will find a town justice primary contest

Hours to Vote? Polls are open Noon to 9 p.m. The busiest times to avoid will be Noon to 1 p.m. and in the evening during the dinner hour. In Erie County, NY polls will be open earlier at 6 a.m., but the rest of western New York votes later pursuant to state law.

Where to Vote? All Chautauqua County poll sites will be open. See the Sunday or Tuesday Sept.14, Post-Journal or Observer newspapers for complete details of locations. Call the Board of Elections for correct polling location at 363-4580, 661-7580 or 753-4580 or refer to www.votechautauqua.com A voter may need identification if they are newly registered by mail. An Election Inspector may also ask for an ID if they are unable to match or verify the voter's signature or if the voter is challenged by a poll watcher at the poll site.

What Poll Sites Changed this year? All Carroll voters are now voting at Frewsburg Fire Station #2, 25 Hazzard St. Frewsburg. All Clymer voters are now voting at Abbe Reformed Church, 595 Clymer Sherman Rd., Clymer. All Harmony voters are now voting at Panama Methodist Church, 22 E Main St., Panama. All North Harmony voters are now voting at Ashville District Fire Hall, 5338 Stow Rd., Stow. All Sherman voters are now voting at First Baptist Church, 113 Church St., Sherman. In Dunkirk, voters of Ward/Election Districts 2-1, 2-2 and 3-1 are now voting at the Fredonia State University College Business Technology Incubator, 214 Central Ave and voters of Ward/Election Districts 2-3 and 2-4 are now voting at St. John's United Church of Christ (Eagle St. Entrance), 733 Central Ave. West Ellicott voters of Ward/Election Districts 2-1 and 1-2 are now voting at Bethel Baptist Church, 200 Hunt Rd. And Stockton voters who formerly voted at Stockton Town Hall, now vote at the Stockton Fire Hall, 7240 Route 380.

Why Did Some Poll Sites Change in 2010? Carroll, North Harmony and some Dunkirk City poll sites were moved due to federal handicapped accessibility issues at voter's respective former poll sites. West Ellicott, Clymer, Harmony, and Sherman poll sites were moved as part of a county Board of Elections decision to vacate county public schools where possible due to on going school related scheduling issues. The fire at the North County Office Building in Dunkirk and a massive Dunkirk Schools construction project also played a part in voters being relocated to the Fredonia State University College Business Technology Incubator.

Why Are Some Poll Sites Located in Churches? Is that legal? The Board of Elections is charged to locate poll sites in public or tax exempt buildings. French Creek's Peek and Peak and Ellery's Greenhurst Health Facility are the only poll sites in the county located in non-tax exempt buildings. Twenty nine of the county's fifty four sites are in a taxpayer owned building and twenty three are located in tax exempt buildings. Any voter who objects to voting at any church may vote at the Board of Elections instead, if they choose.

How to Determine Current Major Party Affiliation and Registration? Visit www.votechautauqua.com and click on "Voter Lookup" or contact the Board of Elections from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 363-4580, 661-7580 or 753-4580.

Moved? A voter who has moved within the county and failed to notify the Board of Elections must go to their new polling place and fill out an affidavit ballot.

Who are the candidates on the ballot? Official ballot facsimiles are available at www.votechautauqua.com or see Tuesday or Sunday's Post-Journal or Observer for complete details. The marquee race for Tuesday's Primary is the Republican and Conservative Primaries for Governor. Democrats will choose the Democratic candidate for Attorney General. Pomfret Independence Party voters will select the party's endorsed candidate for Pomfret Town Justice. Other local primaries include a Ripley Republican Primary for town council and Conservative primaries though out the county for Conservative County Committee.

Election night unofficial results are available at: www.votechautauqua.com beginning after 9 p.m. on Primary Day.