



Connect 24



Communicate

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Collaborate

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The MAEO Personnel Committee

The MAEO Personnel Committee may be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. After almost 2 years of meeting, brainstorming, planning, writing, devising, revising, and after many conversations with people at SBE and DBM (Department of Budget and Manage-

ment), the final outcome may be in view. The Personnel Committee's goal is to get final approval for the Election Program Management Series at the October 4th State Board meeting, although, as of mid-September, the proposal will not be on the State Board's agenda for this meeting. Some counties are already preparing FY20 budgets and approval by the State Board now would facilitate the LBE budget process and the implementation of the new Class Series. Meanwhile, the Personnel committee recommends that if a county has not put the salary increases in their budget that they do so in anticipation of approval for implementation July 1, 2019.

The Program Series is much more than a plan to get raises for current employees. Although that's certainly what everybody in the trenches is most focused on. It is also intended to address outdated job descriptions and classifications, to give a clear path for advancement in each of its classifications, to be flexible so it can be tailored to meet the needs of the biggest and smallest of LBEs. It is hoped that it will immediately impact and improve recruitment and retention in every office. The expectation is that the Program Series will be adaptable and endure within the Maryland election community for the foreseeable future.

Our job descriptions haven't been comprehensively revised and updated since 2003. Our Voter Registration system is dramatically different than in 2003. Our pollbooks were still paper. Offices were just starting to scale up to accommodate the new Diebold voting system. Cybersecurity wasn't even a buzzword yet. Maryland's election administration landscape has changed radically in 15 years. Year by year, the Election Classification and Salary Series becomes ever more outdated. This is what MAEO's Personnel Committee faced in January 2017.

As the final proposal stands, election work at the county level is divided into 9 Programs – Voter Registration, Absentee, Judges, Election Management, Outreach, Election Equipment, Polling Places, Project Management, and Office Administration. However, Programs can be added or combined to meet an LBE's needs. Within each of these 'tracks' are multiple levels – Election Program Trainee, Program Assistant I & II, Program Specialist I, II, III, IV, Program Supervisor I & II, and Program Manager I & II. Beyond that, the positions of Election Supervisor, Deputy Director and Director remain. Responsibilities and requirements for every track and level are spelled out and cumulative as

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The Closer...A Concept Whose Time May Have Come

Ben: “Hey Craig!”

Craig: “Hey Ben, can’t chat! I’ve got a Closer Class to train.”

Ben (scratching his head): “What’s a closer?”

Craig (after an AH-HA moment, when he realizes that this could make an interesting subject for a Connect 24 Newsletter article: “It’s a nifty little position we’re trying out in Baltimore County...stay tuned!” So, here we are and it’s time to share...

So what exactly is a closer? The closer is an elections official (not a judge) who does exactly what the name implies...closes, or rather assists in the closing of the election day polling place. Reporting directly to the chief judges, the closer arrives one to two hours before his/her assigned precinct closes. (Baltimore County closers were on the job, ready to work at 6:30 pm). Tasked with doing “whatever the chiefs require of them”, the closer might assist in the tallying, accumulation, and separation of the VACS (Voter Authority Cards), or could assist with the verification of security seals and tamper tapes on the voting equipment, etc. Ultimately, the closer is responsible for the closing of the DS200 Ballot Scanner(s).

Trained by Baltimore County trainers as a part of our ongoing Election Judge & Closer Training Program that is headed up by Administrator Ruie Lavoie, closers spend two hours in a comprehensive training session where first, the concept of the closer is introduced. Then thorough, hands-on, step-by-step instruction on how to close down the DS200 Scanner is presented in small group settings. Lastly, the key role of the closer is detailed to them...the transporting of critically important elections material (scanner memory sticks, scanner totals reports, and precinct payroll sign-in paperwork) to a regional collection site. Overseen by the

chiefs, all of the items are gathered and placed in a sealable security bag. Once verified, the bag is closed, sealed, and a Chain-of-Custody form is completed. This step helps to assure secure delivery of the items to the collection sites in a more timely fashion – placing this critically important information in the hands of LBE personnel...sooner in the collection process!

As referenced above, closers are NOT election judges, as they receive limited, specific, closing-only related training. They are, however, elections officials who are identified (by name badges and assistance buttons/stickers) and are treated as such. They are compensated at a rate of \$75-\$100 for their service on election day and \$25 for training. A substantial investment for the county, the jury is still out on return of this investment...but the preliminary indicators are good. The consensus of most chiefs reporting, is that the presence of the closer made the closing process more efficient, faster, and streamlined the entire closing, as the rest of the staff was able to focus on getting the precinct closed, and returning the room(s) back to their original state(s). Additionally, after soliciting feedback from both chiefs and closers, we are applying lessons learned that we believe will enable us to change (as needed), enhance, and improve the closer position moving forward. We like what we see as we incorporate closers into the Baltimore County mix! Perhaps you might too!

*Craig A. Booth
Baltimore County*



Somerset-Good Eats at Early Voting



Somerset County's voter turnout in the Primary ranked higher than a lot of counties, especially for Early Voting (4th). Not too bad. Except, when you have 7.5% of 11,000 eligible voters show up, spread out over 8 days, it still makes for very long Election Judge shifts. So how do we compensate? We eat!

Our 'food service' is highly planned and well organized. We have a sign-up sheet and map out the menu for all eight days well in advance. During slow points in the day, judges will lay out the food, plug in the crock pots, keep things neat, and put away the food at the end of the day. Of course, we in the office help too. For better or worse, my office looks out on the conference/buffet table, so I'm staring at the smorgasbord all day.

What do we serve? Homemade crab cakes (no filler) one day, homemade lasagna on another day, homemade Smith Island cake that lasts a couple of days, a Thanksgiving feast in June (turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green beans), chili, shredded chicken barbecue, crab dip, macaroni salad, potato salad, fruit salad, green salads, treats galore, and some healthy stuff too.

And we keep Early Voting running as well.

If you're not doing anything at the end of October (!), you're welcome to come down to Princess Anne for good eats!

Ben Frey
Somerset County



Worcester's Open House

The Worcester County Board of Elections held its Open House on Thursday, August 9th. Our office and warehouse are now together in one location (201 Belt Street, Suite C, Snow Hill). We moved the warehouse on May 14th and the office moved May 19th. It was a very busy time with early voting beginning in 5 weeks, but we pulled it off with no problems thanks to the hard work of our wonderful staff.



Outside of Building.

We would also like to extend our sincerest thanks to Linda Lamone, Nikki Charlson and especially Keith Ross for making this move happen. We couldn't have done it without you.

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Worcester cont'd

About 45 people attended our Open House. Below are some pictures of our new building. If you were unable to attend our Open House, please feel free to stop by whenever you are in the area. We'd love to see you!



Patti's Wall Art



Front Office



Karen Timmons in the Reception Area

When Duty Calls

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." --Henry Ford

I remember watching Lord of the Rings (Return of the King, I believe) and I was enamored by the scene in which the beacon fireplace of Gondor was lit because its Kingdom was under attack and needed help. This set off a string of beacons lit from east to west, and seeing as how there were no cell phones or other means of communications in those days, this was the quickest way to get the word out. Those beacons reached the Kingdom of Rohan; in which the King responded, "Rohan will answer." Well, following this year's Primary in which Baltimore County was in need of aid, the beacon was lit and the call was answered.



Bruce Robinson (left) swearing in Shawn Larson and Michael Thompson from Baltimore City.

When Duty Calls cont'd

In this case, Baltimore County was Gondor (although not under attack), and the LBEs that were called upon and able, were Rohan.

In a tight race for Baltimore County Executive, former Delegate Johnny Olszewski Jr. was declared the winner by narrowly beating out State Senator Jim Brochin by just nine votes. Brochin submitted a petition for a manual recount of the nearly 85,000 ballots cast in the Primary Election. This meant that the recount of 85,000 ballots were to be counted by hand. This was no easy task. Such a request required a lending (sworn in) hand.

Multiple hands to be exact.

Howard and Anne Arundel Counties, and Baltimore City all came out to assist Baltimore County in this daunting venture. We were there, counting, recording, repeating the same names so many times they ended up losing all meaning. No need to bore with

further details because there really wasn't anything more than the aforementioned. But in the end, with the media present, the results were given and accepted by both candidates.

In the end, Delegate Olszewski was officially declared the winner; however, the moral of this short story is that the outcome is irrelevant, as long as it is accurate. When looking at things from an LBE perspective, what's imperative is that a goal was achieved as a result of cohesiveness.

This embodies *Connect 24* about as well as any other example one can give. We may work individually, but at the end of the day we all have the same goal.

*Shawn Larson,
Baltimore City*

MAEO Personnel Comm cont'd

the levels advance.

What the Committee also had to address is covered in this brief excerpt from the letter recently sent from the Personnel Committee to Linda Lamone – *“Hiring and retaining essential employees with critical skill sets in today's election environment is paramount to ensuring that the public, elected officials, and the media are confident and trust the election processes, equipment, staff and results in Maryland. Elections is an industry where optics and trust guide the decisions, confidence, and opinions of elected officials and the public regarding the integrity of the election process and the election results. The work performed at the LBEs must be and appear to be above reproach.”*

So the Personnel Committee had quite the imposing set of tasks before them – work with Sylvia Brown, Director of SBE Personnel Services, to modernize the classifications of every one of our

jobs and devise a pay scale that would compensate us fairly yet not be out of line with what county budgets could absorb; present and receive a sign-off from the Classification and Salary Division of DBM (which stated that this process was “long overdue”); maintain open lines of communication with SBE; stay connected with all 24 Election Directors while acknowledging that the counties would likely not see things our way; and finally, obtain Mrs. Lamone's recommendation to the State Board, and ultimately the approval of the State Board of Elections.

Change, big change, dollars and cents change, is difficult. This has been “an Equity issue for almost 12 years”. The Personnel Committee's mission has been to get fair and equitable compensation for the increased and more complex duties and responsibilities that election jobs now require. The election ‘ground troops’ will certainly have an important stake and avid interest in the State Board's coming meetings and discussions.

*Ben Frey
Somerset County*

Do You Know What To Do?

From a small grease fire in your kitchen, to a mass casualty event at a polling place, do you know what to do? Some people don't think that anything bad could happen, ignorance is bliss. Of course, no one *wants* to think anything bad could happen to them, their loved ones or coworkers, but in the world we live in today, a person should at least be prepared, and know to how to react, in the case of a disaster, big or small.

C.E.R.T. stands for Community Emergency Response Team. I had the privilege of participating in a C.E.R.T. program and becoming a team member. Not only do you learn how to handle disasters that arise, but also how to be helpful for emergency responders, before they arrive on the scene. The FEMA.gov website describes the program as follows:

“The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates individuals about disaster preparedness and trains and organizes teams of volunteers that can support their communities during disasters. The CERT Program offers training in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. With proper CERT training, you can help protect your family, neighbors, and co-workers if a disaster occurs.”

I reached out to a couple of Directors I knew had taken C.E.R.T. training to get their thoughts on the benefits of this program. Here's what they had to say...

“Residents of Worcester County need to be aware that during and after a large emergency, local responders may become overwhelmed with the numbers of calls for assistance. To aid local residents in helping themselves and their neighbors, the Worcester County Department of Emergency Services spon-

sors CERT, also known as Community Emergency Response Training. The program, which is three-hours per class, one day a week for seven weeks, gives instruction in the following:

- Overall emergencies that we face in Worcester County
- How to properly use a fire extinguisher on a small fire
- Emergency first aid training
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Hazardous materials in the home, light search and rescue and take-home exam.
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS)

“In the case of almost any disaster, the fastest response will be from your neighbor.” This is a quote from Craig Fugate, past director of FEMA.

I took the CERT class last year. It was very informative and covered the above topics plus more. Upon graduation, I received a backpack with a first aid kit, certificate and a photo ID identifying me as a certified CERT participant.

I would highly recommend this training to anyone; you never know when you may need to use the skills learned to save someone's life.”

– **Patti Jackson,**
Worcester County Election Director



“Unfortunately, today you just never know what kind of disaster may hit or where you will be when it does. When I first saw the QACTV video promoting the new Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) program for our county, I instantly knew that this program would be something that would benefit all of my staff not only while they are working but in their personal lives as well. I will say my staff was a bit hesitant at first on what I was getting them into.

Continued on Next Page...

Do You Know (cont'd)

They tend to give me a hard time because I usually try to be “over” prepared. Upon completion they were all thankful that they were able to participate.

After speaking to our local coordinator, we were able to condense the normal 9 class sessions into 2 full days. Yes, the days were long, but because the sections were so informative and hands on, the time really flew. The purpose of the training is to teach us how to do the most good in a disaster situation. Sometimes when a disaster strikes Emergency Personnel may not be able to get to the scene right away. As a C.E.R.T. member we are trained in what to do to prepare for the arrival of those Emergency Personnel.

We covered topics such as Disaster Preparedness, Fire Suppression, Medical Operations (using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques, head to toe assessments, medical treatment areas, first-aid, tourniquets, CPR), Light Search and Rescue Operations, and Psychology and Team Organization in a disaster.



I know those topics all seem a bit extreme, and when would an Election Official really need to know these things? To you I ask this... if you were at a polling place, a voter outreach event, reading emails at your desk, grocery shopping on your

lunch, watching your kids play sports, shopping at the mall, or even just sleeping in your bed... if a disaster hit would you know what to do? I am proud to say that every staff member at Queen Anne's County Board of Elections does.

Upon completion of C.E.R.T. we were all given a backpack that contains the basic tools that are necessary when responding to a disaster. It hasn't been a

full month since we've completed it and between all of us there have already been at least 4 times that we've utilized one of the tools that they provided. None were major disasters thank goodness, but urgent enough that we could grab the bag and use the first aid kit or a tool to help solve a problem immediately.



I know that Queen Anne's County isn't close to most of you but I highly recommend that if your local county doesn't offer the program to come to ours. Joe Cichocki is our coordinator and he will try his best to accommodate your group. He is a younger guy that is full of energy and does an amazing job conducting these trainings.”



Chrissy Jones,

Queen Anne's County Election Director

For more information, visit <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=is-317> or speak with your local Emergency Services Department. -- *Jessica Noranbrock, Dorchester County*

Think Fast!

Tabletop Exercise – emphasis on the *exercise*.

There was a lot of motion at the Anne Arundel election office on August 16 as folks from around the state gathered for an all-day experience of thinking, and moving, on our feet in 15 to 75 minute bursts of activity.

The conference room was filled with a couple dozen

tables and organized with “SBE” in the middle, “counties” circling SBE, and polling



places in an outside ring. We were all assigned a role, sometimes close to what we actually do, sometimes out of our comfort zone (judge, Director, IT, etc.). To communicate between SBE and LBEs, we couldn't email or send texts, we had to walk across the room to deliver messages. That's where the actual exercise came in to play.

Mary Wagner was our State Administrator and Donna Duncan was our Deputy Administrator. Two special guests were included on the team – Andrea Trento is an Assistant Attorney General who frequently works with election-related issues at SBE. He was part of the SBE table and offered practical insight and advice as appropriate. We also had Bill Zorzi, a reporter for the news site Maryland Matters. He acted in his journalistic role by “attending” SBE news conferences conducted by Jared DeMarinis, our Communications Director for the event.

The day was full of issues and events, called Injects. We started a theoretical 4 months out from Election Day, and moved down the timeline (2 months out, weeks away, Early Voting, the gap between Early Voting and Election, and, finally, Election Day). Injects were continually introduced - written on a sheet and handed to the various groups, or displayed on a screen, or announced by one of the

moderators.

Here's a sampling of what was thrown at us throughout the day – uncertainty about the voter registration system and database; SBE website hacked; false information going out in tweets and other social media; sit-ins inside polling places; break-ins at local warehouses and pollbooks stolen; suspicious packages in front of polling places; wrong dates broadcast for Early Voting; a false report of Extended Voting; a false rumor that judges wouldn't be paid; complaints from voters about long (half-hour+) waits. That is just a sampling of what we faced through the day. The judges and/or the county and/or the state had to discuss, react and communicate decisions to all necessary parties. The



idea being to think, figuratively and literally, on our feet.

What came out at the end, as Guy Mickley reviewed the day and divulged some of the embedded intricacies of the TTX, was that certain injects were triggered by how the teams reacted to earlier injects. For example, the Counties received a memo from Linda during Election Day to shut down the BMDs. We were supposed to know that Mary Wagner was the State Administrator. For the purposes of the exercise, there was no 'Linda'. Thus, it was a fake memo. Had some precincts actually indicated that they had shut down their BMDs, this would have triggered actions later in the day from the “League of Women Voters” and “The Federation for the Blind”. However, we were too smart and nobody bit. Crisis (and subsequent inject) averted. *Continued on Next Page...*

Think Fast! cont'd

One amazing aspect of the effort was the “slides” of websites, Facebook posts, tweets and other channels of communicating with the “public” that were putting out bad information. There was even a fictional broadcast station (WBOE) passing along bad info and repeating rumors. They were expertly done and, for the purposes of the exercise, gave the



participants very realistic images to react to.

According to Erin Perrone, the idea was first discussed in March by Nikki, Guy, and herself. But life and elections intervened, so the actual planning, finalizing, and rehearsing took place just two and a half weeks before we all came together. Guy said that he and three of his Howard County staff – Jon Holton, James Holton, and Sally Chen – devised the scenarios and injects and Sally created the extraordinary graphics over an intense two-day period. Al-

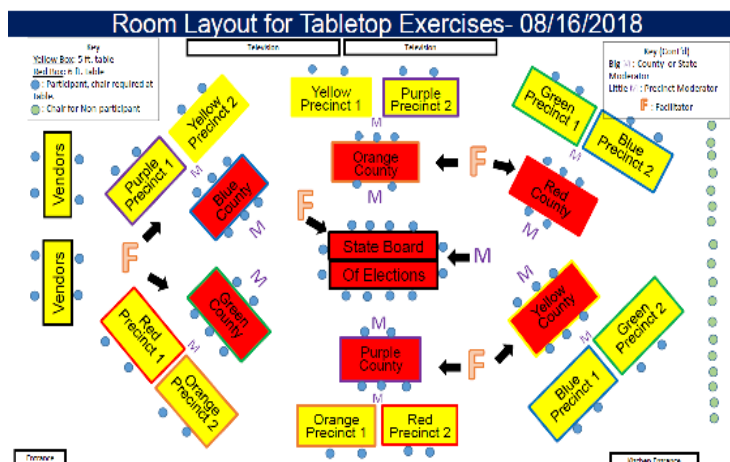
so with a hand in the preparation of materials, set-up and last-minute details were Tracey Hartman, Janey Hegarty, Ebony Parran, and Jessica Perkins.

It was an eminently successful and productive day. Nikki said that, for her, “it was a terrific experience as a participant and an organizer”. She hoped that “the LBEs thought it was useful and that they can use it in their work”. What we actually got out of it may not be fully known until the real crises hit (perish the thought). One thing that we came away convinced of was that we need to make this a regular event. Tracey Hartman provided the numbers gleaned from her post-Exercise survey – 97% posi-



tive from a response rate of over half the participants. A clear and obvious success.

*Ben Frey,
Somerset County*



More From Around the State-St. Mary's County Fair!

Hello to all,

As we are gearing up for the General Election, take some time and come join us for the St. Mary's County Fair! Thursday, September 20th through Sunday, September 23rd, come celebrate our country life and agriculture first hand. See various exhibits, livestock, home arts, flowers, field crops, 4-H and school exhibits, horse pulls, carnival and lots of local foods. We will have a table set-up all weekend! Hope to see you there!

*Brandi Underwood
St. Mary's County*



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