Communicating Post-Election

NASED Winter 2023
Goals

What We’re Trying to Accomplish

• Create a baseline of knowledge heading into Election Day- what’s normal?
• Minimize opportunities for mis, dis or mal information
• Anticipate areas for confusion, use history as a guide
• Prepare so you can free up capacity on Election Day or during a crisis on or after Election Day

✓ For Local Election Officials
✓ For Media
✓ For the Public
✓ Staff, Lawmakers, Commissioners
Before Election Day

Media and Public

- Weekly and daily media availabilities

- Elections 101 videos [https://elections.wi.gov/101](https://elections.wi.gov/101)

- Media Advisories

- How Votes Will Be Counted in the Nov. 8 Election
Before Election Day

Clerks/Staff

- **Communications Toolkit** [Microsoft PowerPoint - WEC_2020 Clerk Toolkit Training Final.pptx (wi.gov)]
- **Social Media** Plan [https://elections.wi.gov/resources/quick-reference-topics/spring-2023-social-media-posts-clerks](https://elections.wi.gov/resources/quick-reference-topics/spring-2023-social-media-posts-clerks)
- **Talking Points** on Emergent Issues
- **Expanding** our Communications **Capacity**
  - Joint Information Center Established with military affairs and emergency management
  - LTE positions, retired communications professionals

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**Kormanik v. WEC Talking Points (Appeal Stage)**

**Main Message**

On Monday, a stay was issued by District IV of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, which has temporarily paused a lower court order in Kormanik v. WEC that may affect a voter’s ability to spoil or otherwise cancel an absentee ballot.

- At this time, nothing has changed in terms of the WEC’s guidance on a voter’s ability to spoil his or her absentee ballot.
- However, this guidance may be curtailed or altered if a higher court upholds the lower court’s order or otherwise disagrees with the Commission’s position on absentee ballot spoiling before ballots are counted on Election Day.
- Future court decisions could affect whether an absentee ballot that has already been returned to a municipal clerk can be spoiled and a new ballot issued, or, if a new absentee ballot has already been issued to replace an absentee ballot spoiled after being returned, whether it can be counted.

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**Election Results - February 21, 2023**

*Important Note:* The municipalities above use more than one tabulator to process ballots. This means that election results for these municipalities will be provided in phases.

- The City of Beloit and The City of Janesville, both use a central location (Central Counting) to process their absentee ballots. The results from ballots cast in-person at the polling location and results from absentee ballots will be received separately.
- The Town of Beloit has three polling locations. The results from each polling location will be received separately and tabulated together.
- Once all the results for the above municipalities are confirmed, the checkboxes will be checked green.

*February 21, 2023 - Spring Primary - Unofficial Results*
• **8:15pm Media Availability** to discuss what is happening after the polls close. Voting has stopped, but the counting is still open to public observation. 
[Campain 2022 News Conference: Wisconsin Elections Commission Briefing – Part 2 - WisconsinEye (wiseye.org)]

• **Track issues** at the local level through social media

• **Extended hours**, our office offers extended hours, lines open to the public, until midnight. This is when we often hear of issues and are staffed to be able to respond. We don’t go home until all unofficial totals are posted. [https://elections.wi.gov/memo/wec-extended-hours-support-general-election-november-8-2022](https://elections.wi.gov/memo/wec-extended-hours-support-general-election-november-8-2022)
• **No Election Night Reporting**, but we are monitoring county websites to see if results have been posted.

• **Continue to Monitor** social media, the news, and incoming calls and emails

• **Transmission and Modeming of Unofficial Results.** Preparing before Election Day to have back up plans in the event of issue like DDOS. Also, physical security. Large jurisdictions who walk media to county office, etc.

• **Election Management Systems.** Awareness that the media and observers are in county offices.

• **Media.** Often the AP stringers are calling in results from individual polling places. Means sometimes they don’t have the full context.

• **Central Count Jurisdictions.** Making corrections to reports of results being in while absentees are still being counted.
The Morning After the Election

- **We Open Early the Next Morning.** Call jurisdictions who experienced challenges or delays. Work with them to develop a statement. This gives us official, first-hand info to refer media.

- **Day After Media Availability and Press Release:**
  - Results are unofficial
  - All of the important steps that go into making results official

- **Monitoring** reporting and MDM related to results
Canvass and Certification

- **Publicizing** opportunities for public to observe the canvass process in every municipality, then in every county [Statement on Unofficial Results, Verification of Vote | Wisconsin Elections Commission](#).

- **When an issue is identified** during canvass or during an audit, working with locals to draft statements which give full transparency.
  - The purpose of canvass is to triple check, this is when we want to find any and all issues!

- **Recount.** monitoring margins, explaining the recount laws, starting to work with counties to prepare cost estimates, timelines.

- **State Canvass.** not required to be public, but we broadcast a public meeting, have a script explaining process.

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**Statement on Unofficial Results, Verification of Vote**

**POST-ELECTION ACTIVITIES**

MADISON, Wis. – Following Tuesday’s General Election, the Wisconsin Elections Commission is pleased to confirm Wisconsin’s 72 counties have reported 100% of the unofficial results. “We’re proud of the hard work that our dedicated local election officials undertook to run a smooth election without...”
 Audits

• **Publicizing** opportunities for public to observe at audits
• **Template Press Release** for Clerks
• **Audit report** to Commission
  https://elections.wi.gov/event/wisconsin-elections-commission-february-2023-meeting
• **Press Release**
• Data reconciliation
• Voter felon audits
• Referrals to DA’s report of fraud to legislature

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**[County/Municipality] Completes Post-Election Audit**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Name of Clerk or Public Information Officer, Email Address

COUNTY/MUNICIPALITY, Wis. – Residents in [county/municipality] can be confident that votes were counted accurately in the Nov. 2022 election following the completion of a post-election audit of voting equipment used in [county/municipality] on Nov. 8.

On [date], election workers completed an audit of voting equipment in X reporting units (typically a ward or wards that report out election results) in [name municipalities audited], which were randomly selected for audit by the Wisconsin Elections Commission during an event open to the public. The audit provides an additional way to ensure that voting machines worked properly, and that the election was conducted accurately.

Wisconsin statutes require a post-election audit of voting systems used in Wisconsin after each General Election. During the post-election audit, election officials check to make sure the vote totals compiled by the voting equipment on Election Night are accurate. During this process, elections workers conduct an independent hand count of paper ballots and tally the results of the selected contests. The final hand-count tally total is compared to the election night voting system results.

[Optional: Provide a summary of your municipality’s audit results. If there is a discrepancy, you may wish to discuss the discrepancy once a full analysis has been conducted by the WEC.]
**Fact Checks**

https://elections.wi.gov/fact-checks

**Did military absentee ballot numbers unexpectedly decrease between 2020 and 2022?**

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

The number of returned military absentee ballots did in fact decrease between the 2020 and 2022 General Elections. However, this decrease aligns with longstanding trends and follows a pattern dating to at least 2016.

Determining the number of military members who voted absentee in an election is done by calculating the number of all voters designated as military voters within Wisconsin’s voter registration list whose voter record indicates that their method of voting was absentee.
Thank you!

For further information, contact WEC or Meagan Wolfe
PH: 608-266-8005   Email: elections@wi.gov