

Post-Election Audit Report 2024 General Election



State Board of Election Commissioners
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METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this audit is to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the voting process. Generally, the audit was conducted by selecting certain batches of ballots tabulated by the voting equipment and hand counting the paper ballots marked by the voter. This hand count of the paper ballots was then compared to the electronic count recorded on the official vote totals produced by the tabulator.

The State Board adopted a resolution governing the selection and performance of the audit. The Resolution authorized the random selection of fifteen (15) counties from across the State.

Pursuant to Resolution 1 of 2024, counties are randomly selected by lot by the SBEC Board including two (2) counties with a population of more than 100,000 people, five (5) counties from the first congressional district, two (2) from the second congressional district, one (1) county from the third congressional district and five (5) counties from the fourth congressional district. Counties were notified within 60 days from certification deadline date by SBEC staff. The SBEC Board set a target of five (5) percent (%) of statewide ballots cast to be included in this audit.

SBEC staff sent a survey to each selected county to identify the number of ballot batches and accompanying certified results tapes (CRT) (hereinafter “batches”) created from the 2024 Preferential Primary. Staff randomly selected a countywide race to audit. Staff then randomly selected between batches reported by the counties. If the county did not complete the survey, SBEC staff randomly selected from all the available batches when staff was on site in the county. On some occasions, when the targeted number of ballots from the selected batches was quickly completed, staff selected additional batches to audit.

For a box that was selected, the SBEC staff broke the seal and hand counted the votes cast for the randomly selected countywide race. The hand counted totals were then compared with the totals on the official certified results tapes for that box of ballots. These findings were then documented on a report which is signed under oath by the auditor. Those reports are attached as an appendix to this report. A preliminary summary of the audit details was also completed and left with each county’s election officials except for Searcy County.

Searcy County, however, opted to conduct a hand-marked and hand-counted election. As a result, the County did not utilize the DS200 results tapes as part of their certification or reconciliation process for certifying the results. Thus, the random selection of a county-wide race was utilized but the hand audit was compared to the certified results reported by the County. These results were the firm totals computed by the hand-count process and were the totals to which auditors could compare their audited count against.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was the first audit authorized by Act 620 from 94th General Assembly of 2023 to include Preferential Primary elections.

A random selection of 15 counties were chosen under the rules set forth as outlined in the Methodology section of the report.

SBEC audit teams began the auditing process beginning with Montgomery County on May 16 and ended with Lee County on July 12. Audit teams had very successful audits with the other eleven (11) counties. Counties where no issues were experienced or identified included Conway, Drew, Garland, Madison, Mississippi, Montgomery, Ouachita, Saline, Sharp, Van Buren, and Yell.

Two counties, Fulton and Lee, the SBEC counted all ballots because their ballots were comingled. Because of the comingling, the audit teams were unable to identify ballots by specific polling site. The audit confirmed that all ballots matched the combined totals of the results tapes, resulting in a 100% accurate audit.

A third county experienced some procedural and handling issues. Scott County informed SBEC auditors that they couldn't locate one DS200 results tape for one polling site. SBEC auditors determined that tape needed to be reproduced from the data stick while auditors were present. Further, since it was a small county, SBEC auditors elected to audit all ballots in the target race cast in the election. The audit confirmed a 100% accurate result.

A fourth county opted to utilize hand-marked and hand-counted ballots for its election. Searcy County presented a new challenge for the SBEC audit team. Because Searcy County did not utilize the DS200 results tapes as part of their certification, nor did they reconcile their hand-count to the results tapes, the audit team determined that the audit would review all ballots cast in the target race against the certified results as reported by the county.

The audit of Searcy County discovered several discrepancies that could not be reconciled by the audit team. One was a vote difference for Candidate Wes Bradford that could not be accounted for. Candidate Wes Bradford was reported as receiving 515 early votes, according to reports provided to the Secretary of State as of March 13, 2024. However, the certified results reported by Searcy Officials was 520 early votes for Bradford. The audit team discovered a calculation error such that the total votes, based on the math of the tally sheets should have been reported as 518. However, audit team also discovered that there were only 517 ballots that could be located from the early vote, thus the audited results for Bradford should have been

517, not the 515 reported to the Secretary of State's online reporting system, nor the 520 reported as the certified results. Auditors also located several ballots that were properly cast but were not counted. These ballots had yellow type sticky notes on them to be counted, but there was no record they were counted and included in the certified results. It is noted that these discrepancies did not alter the outcome of the election because the margin was greater than the identified discrepancies. SBEC auditors learned from Searcy officials from their testimony before the Joint Performance Review committee, that they discovered eleven (11) ballots that should have been counted but were not.

The result of the audit shows that counties utilizing voting equipment had confirmed 100% accurate results. The county that chose to utilize a hand-count process did not achieve 100% results and identified ballots that it failed to count.

STATEWIDE AUDIT SUMMARY

TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS AUDITED:	28,241
TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS CAST IN 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION:	360,746
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED (5% Goal):	7.82%

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Ballots Hand Counted</u>	<u>Machine Certified Tape Results (CRTs)</u>	<u>Tabulator Count Accuracy</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Vote Audited</u>
Conway	1,258	1,258	100%	55%
Drew	519	519	100%	31%
Fulton	1,662	1,662	100%	100%
Garland	6,606	6,606	100%	51%
Lee	1,590	1,590	100%	98.9%
Madison	1,452	1,452	100%	60%
Mississippi	2,747	2,747	100%	70%
Montgomery	679	679	100%	66%
Ouachita	667	667	100%	31%
Saline	5,320	5,320	100%	29.4%
Scott	1,261	1,261	100%	98.7%
Searcy	1,700	Not utilized	Not utilized ¹	100%
Sharp	968	968	100%	40%
Van Buren	946	946	100%	36.5%
Yell	866	866	100%	47%

¹ See individual reports page. Audited ballots were compared to certified results, and several discrepancies were discovered.

CONWAY COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Supreme Court Chief Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 2,297
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 55%
Date Audited: June 7, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Multipurpose Early Vote	611	611
Hillcreek	58	58
Multipurpose Election Day	489	489
Overcup	100	100
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1,258	1,258

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

DREW COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Supreme Court Associate Justice Pos. 2
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 1,661
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 31%
Date Audited: May 15, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Church of Christ	153	153
First United Methodist	203	203
Tillar City Library	73	73
Wilmar School	90	90
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	519	519

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

FULTON COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: Fulton County presented a challenge when we were notified beforehand that the ballots had been comingled with each other and not separated by polling site with the certified tape results as required. An explanation narrative of the situation from the Fulton County Election Commission Chair/Coordinator is in the Appendix explaining how that issue happened. The SBEC audit team determined that the only way to provide any accuracy was to count the entire number of ballots and match the number of the CTRs with the hand count at the end. Fortunately, the two end numbers did match at 1,662 of the contested race randomly selected. Therefore, we conclude the hand count totals did truly match up with each polling site tape count.

Race Audited:	Supreme Court Associate Justice Pos. 2
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	1,662
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	100%
Date Audited Was Audited:	May 23, 2024

<u>POLLING SITE</u>	<u>RESULTS TAPE</u>	<u>HAND COUNT</u>
Cherokee Village	104	104
Glencoe	128	128
Gepp	127	127
Viola	237	237
Mammoth Spring	260	260
Courthouse	264	264
Mammoth Spring Early Vote	74	74
Courthouse Early Vote	457	457

Absentee	11	11
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1,662	1,662
ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT:		100%

GARLAND COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: Explanation of extra tabulation sheets not recorded below: Garland County early vote sites report each day voting totals much like Election Day sites. Under the Community Baptist Early Vote, Fountain Lake Fire Department Early Vote, and the GCBEC (Garland County Election Commission Bldg.) Early Vote sites, there are twelve (12) individual sheets following the master sheet of the three (3) sites recording the individual totals of each of the 12 Early Vote days.

Race Audited:	Supreme Court Chief Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	12,857
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	51%
Date Audited:	June 25, 2024

<u>POLLING SITE</u>	<u>RESULTS TAPE</u>	<u>HAND COUNT</u>
Absentee	96	96
Community Baptist Early Vote	1532	1532
Creekside	468	468
Fountain Lake Fire Dept. Early Vote	170	170
GBCEC (Garland Co Election Comm)	773	773
GBCEC Early Vote	1988	1988
Mall	806	806
Mountain Pine City Hall	143	143
Red Oak Baptist	226	226
Roanoke Baptist	54	54

Royal Baptist	350	350
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	6,606	6,606
ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT:		100%

LEE COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: Lee County Officials did not have sufficient procedures in-place to keep ballots and CRT tapes separate. SBEC audit team determined that all ballots would be counted with the goal that the hand count totals would match the CRTs totals. The audit team found that the totals matched. There were 17 provisional ballots not counted by the audit team since they were hand counted after the election and had no CRT to match it to. Lee County election officials have put procedures in place to prevent the co-mingling in future elections.

Race Audited:	Office of the President (both Dem & Rep)
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	1,607 includes 17 prov. ballots not counted
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	98.9%
Date Audited:	July 12, 2024

<u>POLLING SITE</u>	<u>RESULTS TAPE</u>	<u>HAND COUNT</u>
Absentee	133	133
Aubrey	84	84
Early Vote	863	863
Marianna Civic Center	305	305
Moro	178	178
Whitten	27	27
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1,590	1,590

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

MADISON COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Supreme Court Chief Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 2,418
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 60%
Date Audited: May 24, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Absentee	16	16
Early Vote	794	794
Hindsville	324	324
Wesley	318	318
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1,452	1,452

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

MISSISSIPPI COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Office of the President (both Dem & Rep)
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 2,747
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 70%
Date Audited: June 7, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Charles Strong Center	30	30
Dell Community Center	87	87
Etowah	79	79
Gosnell Community Center	127	127
Leachville City Hall	134	134
Manila Police Department	335	335
Mississippi Co. Election Center	212	212
North End Early Voting	1,210	1,210
Osceola Courthouse	456	456
Trinity Baptist Church	77	77
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	2,747	2,747

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Supreme Court Chief Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 1,022
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 66%
Date Audited: May 16, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Annex	228	228
Lake Ouachita	105	105
Mt. Tabor	84	84
Norman	127	127
Pencil Bluff	135	135
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	679	679

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

OUACHITA COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: Absentee totals shown below indicate a one vote difference. The Ouachita County Election Coordinator explained there was an eligible absentee ballot that was returned late in the day after all other absentee ballots were processed and the DS200 had been closed. Local election officials opted to include the additionally located absentee ballot via a hand-count. Therefore, the tabulator did correctly count all the ballots run through it. However, because the additional absentee ballot was stored with the other thirty-three absentee ballots, Auditors were unable to identify which one was the additional ballot. The audit results matched the certified results.

Race Audited:	Office of the President (both Dem & REP)
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	2,171
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	31%
Date Audited Was Audited:	June 20, 2024

<u>POLLING SITE</u>	<u>RESULTS TAPE</u>	<u>HAND COUNT</u>
Absentee*	33*	34*
Bearden Lions Club	102	102
Calvary Baptist	209	209
Chidester	98	98
Elliott Baptist	133	133
Stephens City Hall	91	91
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	679	679

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

SALINE COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Court of Appeals Assoc. Judge, District 06
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 18,076
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 29.4%
Date Audited: June 5, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Absentee, Batch #31	5	5
Absentee, Batch #32	91	91
Alexander Community Center	116	116
Balboa Baptist Church	1149	1149
Benton Vote Center	641	641
Centerpoint Church	104	104
Haskell	234	234
Lake Norrell Fire Department	408	408
Kentucky	157	157
New Life Church ED	662	662
Owensville Early Vote	1321	1321
Paron Cafetorium	119	119
Traskwood Community Center	82	82
Trinity Baptist Church	231	231

SCOTT COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: SBEC was notified beforehand that one of the DS200 results tape was missing. SBEC audit team discussed the situation and decided to count the entire county's ballots. Once on site, we did a rerun of the results tape that was missing from the DS200. At the conclusion of the audit, all vote tabulation devices were found to be 100% accurate. Two hand count provisional ballots were not included in the audit. There were also 16 nonpartisan ballots not included in the audit.

Race Audited:	Office of the President (both Dem & Rep)
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	1,278
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	99.9%
Date Audited:	June 21, 2024

<u>POLLING SITE</u>	<u>RESULTS TAPE</u>	<u>HAND COUNT</u>
Bates Baptist Church	57	57
Black Fork	14	14
Blue Ball VFD	37	37
Green Ridge	49	49
Harvey/Nola	40	40
Memorial Hall	338	338
Memorial Hall Early Vote	427	427
Packsaddle	118	118
Parks	34	34
Solid Rock	64	64
Nella	37	37

Winfield	46	46
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1,261	1,261
ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT:		100%

SEARCY COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Hand-Count process used to certify the election permitted incorrect results to be certified and reported.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: Searcy County utilized a Hand-Count process to count ballots and used that count to certify their results. Searcy officials did not utilize the tabulator results as part of their computation or totals process, nor did they utilize the tabulator results as part of any reconciliation process to their hand-count process. Because of the lack of use by local official, auditors compared their audited results to the certified results reported by local officials. The SBEC audit team determined that it would audit the randomly selected race against the certified results reported by local election officials. That audit found discrepancies in the results.

Auditors did compare ballots to results tapes and as described below, several issues were discovered. Because the ballots were hand-marked there were several ballots that were not processed through the DS200 for a variety of reasons. These ballots were not remade to be processed through the DS200, but rather local officials relied solely on the hand-count process to resolve these DS200 rejected ballots. Further, because local officials did the DS200's as a central count, the rejected ballots were not discovered until after the polls closed and the voters were not present to remake their ballot to correct the errant marks. Auditors did ultimately compare their audited results to the certified results and noted several discrepancies as reflected in the attached Memorandum prepared and submitted to the Joint Performance Review Committee.

Race Audited:	State District Judge District 04
Total Number of Ballots Cast:	1,698 (certified hand count total)
Percentage of Ballots Audited:	100% of ballots SBEC had in their possession
Date Audited Was Audited:	June 14, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Absentee	None ran on DS200	8
Bear Creek Community Bldg.	31 (one did not run)	32
Dongola	68	68
Early Vote	753 (2 did not run)	755
Landis	58	58
Leslie Community Bldg.	184 (5 did not run)	189
Marshall Civic Center	253 (one did not run)	254
Rock Creek	60	60
St. Joe	191	196
Welcome Home	29	29
Witts Spring	49 (2 did not run)	51
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	1676	1700

**EXCERPT OF MEMORANDUM PROVIDED TO THE JOINT
PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

June 27, 2024

Joint Performance Review Committee
Attn: Senator Hammer -Co-Chair
1 Capital Mall, Fifth Floor
Little Rock, Arkansas, 72201

Re: March 2024 Preferential Primary Audit Process

Chairman Hammer,

The State Board of Election Commissioners (SBEC) are authorized and directed to conduct a post-election audit pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 7-4-121. The purpose of the SBEC audit is to “ensure the integrity and accuracy of the voting process.”

...

The SBEC randomly selected Searcy County as a county to be audited. That county was randomly selected by its name being drawn from a bowl during a public meeting.

While conducting the Searcy County audit, several discrepancies were noted that could not be completely reconciled. This memo is provided to identify these issues for consideration by the Committee and Legislature.

The county did not use tabulator provided results for their certified results relying instead on their hand-count. As such, SBEC and other local officials who assisted the SBEC in the audit reviewed the tabulator results, certified results, tally sheets and other documents prepared by the County during its counting process. Auditors discovered that the early vote count for Candidate Wes Bradford was certified as 520. The hand audit of the ballots showed 517 ballots for Mr. Bradford. While working to resolve the discrepancy two overlapping issues were discovered. First, the tabulator results indicated that 515 ballots were processed through it. Second, the non-partisan ballots for the election were not printed on the correct paper and would not scan through the tabulator. In the early vote, there were two of these ballots meaning auditors could identify and review 517 ballots for Mr. Bradford. While reviewing the tally sheets, auditors discovered a calculation error in Wiley’s Cove and Bear Creek #5 precincts. Without these calculation errors, the count should have been 518, according to the tally sheets. Thus, based on the math auditors should have located 518 ballots. Auditors, however, only

located 517 ballots. The discrepancy between the math total of 518 and the ballots numbering only 517 could not be identified.

Auditors also located two non-partisan ballots in another precinct that were rejected by the tabulator and were marked to be counted. However, auditors could not find where the two ballots were counted and included in the results. Auditors also discovered discrepancies in the number ballot stubs as compared to the number of voters on the sign-in sheet, and the number of ballots counted. It is possible that some voters walked out with their ballot and did not cast it, however, the discrepancies between ballot stubs and ballots could not be fully resolved.

Auditors noted that in the batches of ballots, some precincts included ballots from other precincts. For example, one batch of ballots from Bear Creek #5 Batch 7 included a ballot from Bear Creek 4. While this discrepancy does not affect the total vote count, intermingling precincts such as this could cause errors in precinct reporting.

SHARP COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: State Supreme Court Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 2,397
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 40%
Date Audited: May 22, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Ash Flat ED	275	275
Cave City ED	301	301
Evening Shade ED	112	112
Hardy ED	178	178
Highland ED	102	102
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	968	968
ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT:		100%

VAN BUREN COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: State Supreme Court Justice Position 1
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 2,588
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 36.5%
Date Audited: July 9, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Absentee	30	30
Fairfield Bay Baptist Church	401	401
Petit Jean Electric	515	515
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	946	946

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: 100%

YELL COUNTY

CONCLUSION: The Vote Tabulation Devices Functioned Correctly

ADDITIONAL ISSUES TO REPORT: None

Race Audited: Supreme Court Assoc. Justice Position 2
Total Number of Ballots Cast: 1,835
Percentage of Ballots Audited: 47%
Date Audited: June 21, 2024

POLLING SITE	RESULTS TAPE	HAND COUNT
Centerville	87	87
Danville Early Vote	224	224
Dardanelle Early Vote	304	304
Havana	117	117
Ola	55	55
Plainview	79	79
TOTAL BALLOTS AUDITED	866	866

ACCURACY OF TABULATOR COUNT: **100%**