

EXHIBIT B



Elections board addresses new voting system issues



From left, Bartow County Elections Supervisor Joseph Kirk and Bartow County Board of Elections and Voter Registration member Dexter Benning at Friday's public meeting.

JAMES SWIFT/THE DAILY TRIBUNE NEWS

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BY JAMES SWIFT

As one of six counties chosen for a trial run with Georgia's new Dominion Voting Systems hardware this fall, Bartow County Elections Supervisor Joseph Kirk said the local community wasn't without its fair share of technical hiccups during the pilot period.

To begin, he said there was an issue with the local database, which was corrected ahead of Election Day.

"We had a separate security key for one of the polling places," Kirk said at Friday afternoon's Bartow County Board of Elections and Voter Registration public meeting. "We're still investigating what issue occurred."

Elsewhere, Kirk said scanners at two locations jammed — one at the Cartersville Civic Center during the advanced voting period, and one at the City of White polling place on Election Day.

In the case of the latter, Kirk chalked it up as an "anomaly," while the former was diagnosed as a "mechanical failure" in the scanner itself.

"After we replaced it, we didn't see any other issues," Kirk said of the device used in Cartersville.

“A few voters were briefly delayed as a result of that first time it happened. We had a procedure available for them not to be delayed, they were happy to wait for me to get there and try to correct it where they could vote through the scanner like everybody else. Unfortunately, that effort was not successful in the end.”

That scanner, he said, is still awaiting examination by Dominion Voting Systems technicians.

Kirk said there were also several instances of scanners simply not accepting ballots.

“It would bounce back out,” he said. “We’re not sure if that’s an issue with how the ballots were inserted into the system or if it was something else, and again, that’s being looked into — but when the voters put the ballot back into the scanner, it read it, no problem.”

On at least five separate incidents, Kirk said the County’s ballot marking tablets “went dark” — albeit, without causing any major delays as a result.

“In, I think, two cases, we rebooted them and continued to use them until it happened again,” he said. “And the other instances, we had plenty of machines up and running — we just took it down until it was time to close the polls.”

While several of the pilot counties reported issues with poll pads, Kirk said the technical issues in Bartow weren’t quite as severe as elsewhere in the state.

“We had at least one pad up and and running at every polling place, and the ones that weren’t up and running, the vendor was able to correct that issue right around 8 o’clock,” he said.

AUDITS AND REJECTED BALLOTS

Overall, Kirk said he was quite pleased by how the new voting equipment performed during Bartow’s municipal-level elections.

“Every poll worker was instructed to prompt the voters to review their ballots before they put them in the scanner,” he said. “When I was out at the polls observing, I did observe the voters reviewing their ballots.”

[Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger told *The Daily Tribune News* that about 32,000 new voting devices and around 6,000 electronic pollbooks should roll out throughout the state in time for this spring’s primaries.](#)

He said the total contract amount for the State's new paper ballot-backed system came in at a little under \$107 million.

On the whole, Kirk said poll workers and local voters alike seemed to prefer the new voting system — although there were some complaints about the process.

Some voters, Kirk noted, had concerns about the visibility of the much larger electronic touch pads.

“We're going to adjust the way we put them in the polling place to try to increase privacy,” he said.

Other voters, he said, had complaints about the new poll pads being too low.

“I don't know that we're going to find a solution to that,” he said. “It may just be that we need to put a chair in front of them and get more poll pads because of that process taking longer than we thought it would.”

The State's first risk-limiting audit using the new equipment took place in Bartow on Tuesday.

“We had help from a couple of different national organizations to do that, Verified Voting and VotingWorks,” Kirk said. “It really was a cool thing to see.”

Nor were there any issues with observers from organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Unions, who were present at polling places throughout Bartow during the pilot run with the new equipment.

“That went very well here in Bartow,” Kirk said. “We had no complaints about anything they did, they all obeyed the rules properly and it was a very pleasant experience.”

As for “spoiled votes” — i.e., ballots that were damaged or marked in such a way as to make them ineligible for tabulation — Kirk said Bartow saw only a handful or so over the last election cycle.

“That's less than I expected, so that's nice,” he said. “In one case, it was because the voter changed their mind, in other cases because the ballot was damaged for some reason, or otherwise unusable.”

Meanwhile, Bartow County Assistant Elections Supervisor Cheryl Billard said that at least three provisional ballots were not counted. One involved a

Cartersville voter who had three days to bring in identification — but did not — while another involved a Euharlee voter who registered after the cutoff date twice.

“We had a gentlemen who didn’t realize he had to be off of probation completely in order to be a registered voter,” Billard said of the third rejected ballot. “So he cast a provisional ballot — he’s requested now that we’ve put that up that we do not process that registration and go ahead and reject that outright.”

Kirk said there was also an instance of the wrong ballot being issued during the advanced voting period.

“It was in the City of Cartersville, no contested race was left off that ballot, but I will address that with the employee moving forward to be sure that that person is verifying and issuing the proper ballot,” he said. “Whenever there’s human input, there might be human error.”

While the turnout for the municipal-level elections was fairly low, Kirk said he’s not expecting such anemic numbers when the presidential primaries roll around this spring.

“The more we can do to educate the public on how the system operates, the better off we’re going to be,” he said. “Unfortunately, none of them want to be educated right now — I figure about January, they’re going to get really interested in politics and really want to know how the system works.”

ELECTIONS RESULTS MADE OFFICIAL

The Bartow County Board of Elections and Voter Registration also certified the results of Nov. 5’s municipal-level elections at the public meeting Friday afternoon.

Kirk noted there were virtually no changes to the official numbers since election night.

With absentee, provisional ballot and advanced voting numbers tabulated, Matt Santini cruised to reelection as Cartersville’s mayor, garnering 1,238 total votes. Challengers Nicole Butler and Barbara Jackson collected 248 votes and 57 votes, respectively, in the final tally.

Running unopposed at the ballots, incumbent councilmen Jayce B. Stepp, Calvin Cooley and Taff Wren received 269 votes, 106 votes and 116 votes, respectively. Three City of Cartersville School Board incumbents — Tim Chason (1,418 votes),

Travis Popham (492 votes) and Sarah Broadnax (101 votes) — also ran unopposed.

By a 1,095-447 margin, City of Cartersville voters approved a “Sunday brunch” ballot item that would allow the City to roll back alcohol pouring hours from 12:30 p.m. to 11 a.m.

Roughly 11.3% of the City’s registered voters participated in the municipal elections earlier this fall.

Meanwhile, the City of Emerson saw a 12.69% turnout for its elections. The municipality’s only true race — initially, a three-man competition for two open city council seats — became decisively less competitive when candidate Corey Sanford dropped out shortly before Election Day, thus making incumbent Vincent Wiley (58 votes) and nominal challenger Charlie Lowry (86 votes) the victors by default.

Mayor Al Pallone, also running unopposed, received 93 votes. Emerson voters likewise approved a “Sunday brunch” ballot item, this by an 86-31 margin.

The final numbers for Euharlee show incumbent David Duncan (128 votes) and challenger Tim Abbott (111 votes) besting third-place candidate Michael W. Troxell (60 votes) in a race for two open city council seats. In total, just 6.7% of the municipality’s eligible voters cast ballots in the local election.

With 30% turnout, the City of White had the highest voting numbers out of any municipality in Bartow. The final, official numbers indicate incumbent Kim Dupree Billue defeated challenger David J. King 74 votes to 58, while incumbents Charles Buttrum (84 votes) and Ryan Evans (73 votes) topped challenger Norman Gary Crisp (66 votes) in a three-way race for two open council seats.

At Friday’s meeting, Kirk also addressed an incident that transpired at the City of White polling place on Election Day.

“One of the candidates was concerned and their people were concerned that there were candidates entering the polling place improperly during the day,” he said. “I’ve spoken with the poll worker, I’ve spoken with the folks involved and all I can determine is that there were candidates who entered the building without any campaign [apparel] on that used the bathroom — we give the poll manager discretion to allow that to happen, and they never entered the room where voting was taking place, they never interfered with the election in any way.”

But that doesn’t mean violations of State regulations didn’t happen.

“Because the other side was concerned about it, they were trying to call me and had the wrong phone number,” Kirk said. “So someone tried to go in and take pictures of evidence of wrongdoing, which, of course, is in violation of the election code.”

Since then, Kirk said he’s had some “follow-up questions” with the individuals involved in the incident.

“I’m confident the issue has been addressed as it stands right now,” he told the board. “But if you’d like to refer it to the State elections department, I’m happy to do that and I can write it all up and send it into an investigator.”



<https://www.savannahnow.com/opinion/20191107/editorial-new-voting-system-implementation-begins-now>

Editorial: New voting system implementation begins now

Two hours before the polls closed Tuesday, the precinct workers at an unincorporated Chatham County location were asked if they had any plans for the soon-to-be-retired voting machines along the polling place's back wall.

The question met with chuckles and suggestions that the day's last voters could take the machines home with them as souvenirs. Then one offered an even more popular idea: They'd take the displays outside and demolish them with baseball bats in the style of the 1999 film "Office Space."

Seventeen years worth of familiarity has bred plenty of contempt for Georgia's voting system. Tuesday's general election and next month's runoffs are the last to employ the touch-screen machines.

The next time many of us go to the polls — for the presidential preference primary next March — we will vote via ballot marking devices and optical scanners meant to make our elections more efficient, secure and verifiable.

Six counties tested the new system in their local elections this week. Some 9,000 voters cast ballots in those locales, and the system performed as one would hope and expect: far from flawlessly, but overall satisfactorily.

The experience did underscore the major challenge ahead: The human element. With 30,000 voting machines to roll out and easily that many poll workers to train, all in a span of four months, the transition promises to be rocky.

Furthermore, the state doesn't have the option to employ the old machines as a stopgap. A federal judge has mandated they be mothballed come Dec. 4. If the new system is not ready come March 24, the vote will be done using paper ballots.

Glitches to address

Among the issues encountered Tuesday in Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Decatur, Lowndes and Paulding counties were ballot printers not connected to power supplies, incorrect equipment setup and trouble checking voters into their polling place using a tablet device.

Training should negate these shortcomings, as should voter education. The Paulding County elections director noted the learning curve ballotcasters face with the new system. For 17 years, voting was completed at the touch of a screen.

The new system requires voters to mark their ballot via machine, print out the completed ticket, review it and then officially cast the ballot by placing it into a scanner.

“It adds a few more pieces to the puzzle but it’s working out,” Deidre Holden, the Paulding County elections director, told reporters Tuesday.

The new system vendor, Dominion, is in the process of delivering the voting machinery. The Chatham County Board of Elections has one of Dominion’s ballot-marking devices on hand currently.

Yet Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger acknowledged this week the full rollout of 30,000 machines to 159 county election boards won’t be completed until mid-January.

The transition window narrows by the day.

Be prepared, proactive

Citizens need to monitor the situation in the run-up to the presidential primary.

Local election officials are experienced and highly competent but could potentially be placed in a difficult position by the state.

Georgia’s new voting system rollout is the largest of elections equipment in America’s history. An elections official in Colorado, where the Dominion

system was adopted in 2016, told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that Georgia's timetable "basically blows my mind."

"We had 2 1/2 years to do it, and it was challenging," the official said.

The Georgia Secretary of State's office has a fallback. Along with the six counties that tested the new machines this week, one county conducted its election using hand-marked paper ballots.

This method met with its own set of complications — some voters failed to follow directions on how to mark their choices. Instead of coloring in a box next to their selection, ballotcasters used X or check marks. Some even drew lines through the names of the candidates they didn't want and circled the name they favored.

So regardless of the system employed, training and education will be the key. We encourage more of our neighbors to volunteer to work the polls and sign up immediately. The sooner their training begins, the better.

Likewise, the elections board needs to expose the public to the new technology and launch an education campaign well in advance of the March 24 primary.

Hopefully, the 2020 voting experience won't leave us all wanting to take a bat to the new system.

<https://www.chron.com/news/us/article/Georgia-tests-new-voting-system-before-ambitious-14809724.php>

Georgia tests new voting system before ambitious 2020 switch

Ben Nadler and Russ Bynum, Associated Press
4:30 am CST, Tuesday, November 5, 2019

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Photo: John Bazemore, AP

FILE - This May 9, 2018, photo shows a touch screen of a voting machine during early voting in Sandy Springs, Ga. New voting machines that combine touchscreens with paper ballots are getting a limited test run in Georgia. It's part of an effort to meet a court-ordered deadline to retire the old touchscreen only system before any votes are cast in 2020.

ATLANTA (AP) — A handful of local elections in Georgia are being used to test new voting machines that combine touchscreens with a printed ballot, part of the state's rush to meet a court-ordered deadline to retire its outdated, paperless system before any votes are cast in 2020.

State election officials are piloting the \$106 million system in six mostly rural counties holding elections Tuesday for mayors, city councils and school boards. Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger plans to use the new machines in all 159 counties for Georgia's presidential primaries in March.

The way Georgia conducts elections next year will be closely watched nationally after the officials faced a torrent of criticism in 2018. Problems including two-hour waits at some polling sites, security breaches that left voters' registration information exposed and accusations that strict voter ID laws suppressed turnout led to lawsuits and changes in state law that included switching election systems.

A federal judge in August upped the pressure for a new system. U.S. District Court Judge Amy Totenberg gave Georgia until Jan. 1 to retire the election system in use since 2002, calling it "seriously flawed."

And while the new machines will create a paper record, a positive trial run Tuesday isn't likely to satisfy advocates for greater election integrity. They insist the new system remains vulnerable and fails to deliver the auditable results they demand.

"Even if everything goes smoothly, that doesn't solve the problems," said Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance.

Election officials in the six counties chosen to test the new machines said more than 9,300 voters had few problems during three weeks of advance voting ahead of Tuesday's elections.

"It's been a whole lot better than I thought it would be," said Rickey Kittle, election board chairman for Catoosa County near the Tennessee line. "When you change anything, you always fear for the worst. It just didn't happen."

The new machines work similarly to the old ones with voters making choices on touchscreens.

But the new machines, unlike the old, print a paper ballot with a computer code and a list of votes being cast. That printout is inserted into a scanner that reads the code and stores the votes electronically for tabulation. Printouts are retained in case an election must be audited later.

Those getting familiar with the system have already begun sizing it up.

Some note the typeface on the new printed ballots might be small for some eyes. Lowndes County near the Georgia-Florida line had magnifying glasses on hand for voters if needed, said Tiffany Linkswiler, the assistant elections superintendent.

Linkswiler and Carol Heard, elections supervisor for Decatur County in southwest Georgia, said a few voters making final checks caught mistakes. The erroneous ballots were voided and they cast new ones.

"We had two spoiled ballots, which shows me at least two voters paid attention to their ballots after they printed them out," Heard said. "So that's a good sign. It means there's that opportunity" to correct errors.

But Marks said poll observers for the Coalition for Good Governance saw many voters scan ballots without bothering to check them for accuracy. If computer-generated ballots are cast without voters reviewing them, she said, audits are meaningless because "you don't know what the voter intended."

Advocates and individual Georgia voters who sued over the state's old machines are now challenging the new ones in court. They have requests pending, asking the judge to stop the statewide rollout of the new machines.

That's why Cobb County in suburban Atlanta is running a different test Tuesday, using hand-marked paper ballots that are scanned electronically. That option is Georgia's backup plan for 2020 if the judge rules against the new machines.

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Bynum reported from Savannah, Georgia.

<https://georgiarecorder.com/2019/11/07/georgias-new-voting-machines-buggy-in-tuesdays-election-debut/>

Georgia's new voting machines buggy in Tuesday's election debut

November 7, 2019

Dominion voting screens and stands at The Events Place precinct in Hiram, part of the new machine's pilot test on Tuesday. (Beau Evans/Georgia Recorder)

Glitches with check-in pads and ballot selection screens that turned off on their own delayed voters Tuesday in six Georgia counties that pilot tested the state's \$107 million new voting machines.

Election officials in Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Decatur, Lowndes and Paulding counties reported technical issues with new equipment, either with electronic entry points or with the new ballot-marking machines themselves. The six counties [provided a limited number of Georgians](#) their first chance to cast a ballot on Dominion Voting Systems and KnowInk equipment ahead of a late March 2020 election deadline for statewide rollout.

The Georgia Secretary of State's office is on a tight schedule to have 30,000 of the machines ready for 2020 elections. It bought them from Dominion Voting at the end of July and a contractor certified them as technically sound two weeks later.

Voters in five counties experienced problems with new check-in devices, called "poll pads," caused by a programming error that prevented them from using electronic ballot-marking machines. In three counties, some ballot-marking machines were pulled offline when they shut down and rebooted themselves.

The off-year election for cities and counties drew a light turnout Tuesday, which placed less pressure on county poll workers to resolve problems with the check-in devices or use paper ballots until technicians fixed the problem. Enough machines were on hand to replace equipment with the reboot malfunction. Only

a handful of people left precincts without voting or returning later to vote as precincts were kept open an extra hour, officials said.

The Secretary of State's office emailed a statement Wednesday evening saying it is still determining the extent of the problem.

"We are currently gathering information," said Jordan Fuchs, deputy secretary of state. "We have received information of some isolated reports with the poll pads but don't yet have all the details. Technicians were deployed in the pilot counties to address these types of issues. That's why we do equipment pilots like this in a low-turnout elections and why we have multiple backup measures."

On Monday, the Secretary of State issued a press release based on early voting headlined "[New voting system performs well in pilot counties, deliveries on schedule.](#)"

'Literally went black'

Voters in five counties were delayed by up to 45 minutes from checking in to precincts and creating access cards by buggy poll pads, which must function to cast votes on the new ballot-marking machines. Election supervisors in those counties said some poll pads failed to connect via Bluetooth. Some voters got confused when the machine asked them to select a party affiliation in the nonpartisan local elections. And some problems are chalked up to programming errors.

"We have the next couple of weeks to investigate these issues and figure out what happened," said Joseph Kirk, supervisor for the Bartow County Board of Elections and Voter Registration. "But anytime you deploy something new in the real world, things happen."

Meanwhile, some precincts in Bartow, Catoosa and Carroll counties saw ballot-marking machines suddenly shut down and reboot during voting hours, officials in those counties said.

“Some of the machines just literally went black and rebooted during the day,” said Greg Rigby, supervisor for the Carroll County Board of Elections and Voter Registration. “It was different precincts, different machines, different hours.”

A few machines also stopped reading the access cards, which kept voters from making selections on the machine’s screen that displays the ballot, Rigby said.

Dominion and KnowInk did not respond to emails and phone calls Wednesday asking for an explanation for the equipment malfunction.

The voting machines put to a limited test Tuesday and during early voting replace the state’s existing 17-year-old electronic touch-screens, which [a federal judge ordered in August never to be used again after this year](#).

Testing fell short, critics say

Proponents for all-paper voting systems criticized Tuesday’s performance of the new ballot machines and check-in poll pads. They argued Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger needed to complete more stringent testing of the equipment before certifying the new voting system in August.

That testing to assess the equipment’s functionality fell short of a full examination of how the machines and check-in devices will perform in upcoming elections, said Richard DeMillo, a computer science professor at Georgia Tech’s College of Computing.

“I do think they cut corners,” DeMillo, who advocates for paper-only balloting, said Wednesday. “They short-circuited a fairly well-defined process, and this is the consequence of doing that.”

In August, Raffensperger agreed to reexamine the ballot machines after about 1,500 people petitioned him to do that. That review has not happened yet.

Raffensperger has previously labeled the [petitioners as partisan activists](#). His office defends the new voting system’s security and its transparency, noting that scanning the printed ballots as the final step in the process creates an auditable

paper trail.

Editor John McCosh contributed to this report.



<https://www.valdostadailytimes.com/content/tncms/live/>

ZACHARY: Be open regarding voting machine

The Secretary of State's office needs to be completely open and transparent about everything that during the Tuesday trial run. The state must also be just as open and transparent about what is being

In at least one county — Lowndes — the elections office had to rely on the bar-coded paper ballots

Was this all human error?

Then tell the public.

Was this a problem with the software?

Then tell the public.

Was it a hardware problem?

Then tell the public.

The people of Georgia paid more than \$100 million for this new voting system and the people of Georgia were wrong and what is being done about it.

In addition to the issues in Lowndes, there were other problems at polling places in Carroll, Paulding

Apparently it was necessary to call in KnowInk technicians because of software programming issues in some precincts.

This Dominion Voting System is supposed to be the latest, greatest and was ostensibly researched

The \$107 million Dominion Voting System did not function properly despite the fact that representatives in the interviews the launch was smooth and successful.

Then why was it necessary to call in technicians and count paper ballots?

Why were election results delayed by hours?

There are 11,000 new machines waiting to be rolled out for the presidential primary in March.

Will Georgia be ready?

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger should not try to pass off the problems that occurred Tuesday.

Government should never try to “spin” the facts or re-frame the public conversation to make things look better.

What happened, happened. And it must be fixed.

While addressing the issue head-on is of utmost importance, it is also extremely important to be understood and fully informed.

Everyone in Georgia should know that their votes counts, and that their vote will be counted.

CNHI Deputy National Editor Jim Zachary is the vice president of the Georgia First Amendment Project.



<https://www.valdostadailytimes.com/content/tncms/live/>

Public left hanging on election night

VALDOSTA — New high tech voting machines failed Tuesday night leaving the public still speculating about who will be Valdosta's next mayor.

Elections officials worked into the night trying to count paper ballots after the electronic systems failed to tabulate the ballots. In addition to the mayor's race, the elections office was unable to provide results for a countywide sales tax referendum, city council races and school board elections, by press time. The first electronic failures happened early Tuesday when some of the devices used to check voters in at the polls did not work properly, delaying votes and resulting in an hour extension, meaning the polls did not close until 8 p.m.

After the polls closed, memory cards generated by the touchscreen voting machines could not be read.

There were reports of similar electronic breakdowns with the new voting machines in four of the six counties that were part of a pilot program to introduce the state to the new equipment.

A federal judge in August gave Georgia until the first of the year to retire its old system. The new \$107 million system will be the first update to Georgia's election system since 2002.

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger spent time on Tuesday at the Paulding County Courthouse, one of the locations testing the new system.

Raffensperger told CNHI that the rural counties piloting the system were picked in specific geographic locations — on the borders of Tennessee and Florida and at points in between — to test for "stress points" in the system.

"We're rolling through it, minor stuff happens time to time but that's why you do pilots so they don't happen on a big election day," he said. Raffensperger said there are 11,000 news machines waiting to be rolled out for the presidential primary in March.

See Hanging on 9A

It was unknown at press time Wednesday when final results would be available. The elections office is "ahead of schedule."

The system requires hundreds of thousands of paper ballots. Benefits of the paper print outs, he said, outweighs the electronic systems that "aged out" and were not kept updated.

"There's going to be a whole lot more paper, you're going to need the county commissioners, yes you're going to need some large warehouses," Raffensperger said, "but if you look at right now, over 7% of all people in America are voting with a paper ballot system of some sort. I think by 2020, 2024 it will probably be close to 100%."

As voters cast ballots, the new system is the center of another complaint in federal court with voter advocates saying the new system has security flaws similar to the previous system, was not tested and certified properly and, if implemented, violates

the First and 14th Amendments, protecting voters rights to a transparent and anonymous process.

“The new electronic system converts voters’ votes and ballots into undecipherable barcodes, forcing voters to cast a vote that they cannot read,” Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance, said in a statement.

“The barcodes can be miscoded or hacked without detection. Every voter, not just legal scholars, can see why this method of conducting elections is unconstitutional.” Their request for a judge to stop the statewide implementation of the new machines, is still pending.

Raffensperger said he is not concerned about the lawsuit and that he is confident the system will work as well in Georgia as it has in other states it is already implemented in.

“It’s being used right now in red states, blue states, red counties, blue counties, purple counties, you name it. The system is accurate and secure and what the voting system is doing is accurately recording votes,” he said. “It’s not trying to determine winners. People who determine winners are the voters, what people need to worry about.”

The system will allow physical recounts for the first time in 17 years, he said, and audits of voting samples will help determine if the votes were counted accurately.

“We understand 50% of the voters will be happy and 50% of the voters will be sad,” Raffensperger said. “Because we understand we live in polarized times. But we want 100% of voters to have the confidence that their vote was accurately counted.” Late Tuesday Deb Cox, Director of Elections for Lowndes County said problems with memory cards forced election officials to count paper ballots. “It’s nice to have these paper ballots as backups,” Cox said. It was unknown at press time early Wednesday when final results would be available.

The Valdosta Daily Times will post results online — valdostadailytimes.com — when they are available.

Statehouse reporter Riley Bunch and government reporter Chris Herbert contributed to this report.

SPLOST and 'Brunch Bill' undecided

BY DESIREE CARVER

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VALDOSTA — SPLOST VIII and the Valdosta “Brunch Bill” were still undetermined as of early Wednesday due to polling machine malfunctions.

With 20% of precincts reporting, 61.45% of the small sampling of voters favored the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax with 939 votes and 38.35% opposed with 584 votes. Georgia law allows local communities to use SPLOST proceeds for capital improvement projects that would otherwise be paid for with General Fund and property tax revenues or that would not be accomplished, according to the City of Valdosta’s website. SPLOST funds can not be used for operating expenses, including personnel salaries or ongoing expenses. SPLOST VII will end Dec.31. If voters pass SPLOST VIII, it would begin

Jan. 1 and would run for six years raising an estimated \$134 million to be used for various projects across Lowndes County.

The “Brunch Bill” had 57.79% in favor with 330 votes and 42.21% opposed with 241 votes with just

See SPLOST on 9A

SPLOST:

Visit valdostadailytimes.com.

20% of the vote tabulated.

This bill would allow alcohol sales at restaurants and bars to begin 11 a.m. Sundays, instead of the current time of 12:30 p.m. To follow up-to-date election results, visit valdostadailytimes.com.

Results will be posted when available

Mayor still up in the air

Officials counted paper ballots as public waited for results
BY CHRIS HERBERT

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VALDOSTA — More technology, more problems.

Residents will have to wait longer than anticipated to find out who will be the next mayor of Valdosta. Chosen as one of six counties to test new voting machines before the 2020 election, Lowndes County experienced the downside of being a guinea pig.

Problems with memory cards have forced election officials to count paper ballots, said Deb Cox, Director of Elections for Lowndes County.

MAYOR:

Officials counted paper ballots as the public waited for results

Wednesday morning, only 20% of precincts reported results.

Those numbers showed J.D. Rice leading the pack with 367 votes and 56.6% of tallied votes. Kevin J.

Bussey ranked second with 149 votes and 25.8% of the vote. David Sumner ranked third with 59 votes and 10.2% of the vote.

Scott James Matheson ranked fourth with 27 votes and 4.7% of the vote. Brooks D. Bivins ranked fifth with 16 votes and 2.8% of the vote.

Do not take these rankings as gospel, though.

The percentages are not indicative of a final result as they are too small and insignificant to provide an accurate indication of the outcome.

This also applies to the Valdosta City Council races for the at-large and District 3 seats.

For the at-large seat, only 20% of precincts had reported. Edgar “Nicky” Tooley led the race at 39.1% of the vote with 219 votes. Adrian J.

Rivers followed closely at 31.4% of the vote with 176 votes. Incumbent Ben H.

Norton slotted in at third with 16.6% and 93 votes.

Jeremy L. Stone sat in fourth with 12.9% and 72 votes. At 0% reporting for District 3, incumbent Sonny Vickers, 88 votes and 75.1% of the vote, led Thomas B. McIntyre Sr., 29 votes and 24.9% of the vote.

Issues with the new voting machines are not contained to Lowndes County.

Check-in problems occurred in four of the six counties testing new voting technology Tuesday morning, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

With the race still undecided and wide open, go to www.valdostadailytimes.com for the most up-to-date results.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/problem-with-new-election-equipment-delays-voting-georgia-counties/vxltEshk0grck0uJiWA5RM/>

Problem with new election equipment delays voting in Georgia counties

A glitch with Georgia's new voter check-in computers caused delays in most of the six counties testing it, causing some precincts to stay open late to accommodate voters who left without casting their ballots.

The problem occurred in at least four of the six counties where the [new voting system](#) was being [tested](#) Tuesday before it's rolled out statewide to 7.4 million registered voters during the March 24 presidential primary. Most Georgia voters were still using the state's 17-year-old voting technology Tuesday.

Poll workers weren't able to create voter access cards on new voting check-in computers manufactured by KnowInk. Those cards activate touchscreen voting machines so that they display the ballot associated with the jurisdictions where voters are registered.

In Decatur County, near the Florida border, some voters waited 45 minutes for the problem to be fixed. Decatur election officials decided to keep precincts open an hour later, until 8 p.m.

"Let's get these kinks resolved now, before March 24," said Carol Heard, chief elections officer for Decatur County. "My hair was red before today. Now it's gray."

The same issue also occurred in Bartow, Carroll, Paulding and Lowndes counties. Catoosa County had no problems.

Poll workers couldn't complete the check-in process on the computers, called [Poll Pads](#), said Carroll County Elections Supervisor Greg Rigby. Voter

information came up on the screen, but the Poll Pads wouldn't advance to the final step of encoding voter access cards.

Some voters were delayed about 15 or 20 minutes, and one precinct remained open until 7:30 p.m. to accommodate a voter who had to leave for work before casting a ballot in the morning, Rigby said. Election workers got around the problem by manually pulling up ballots on touchscreen voting machines so that they displayed the ballot associated with the jurisdictions where voters are registered.

"It was a programming issue. We did have that same problem that everybody else did," Rigby said.

KnowInk technicians resolved the issues in each of the counties, election officials said.

Lowndes County also kept polls open an hour later to ensure everyone has an opportunity to vote, said Elections Supervisor Deb Cox.

"Our voters were able to keep voting" using a backup check-in process, Cox said. "We're having one hour of extended voting just in case anyone didn't get to vote, or shied away."

Bartow County Elections Supervisor Joseph Kirk said some of the Poll Pads weren't functioning properly, but there was always at least one working in each precinct.

"It didn't slow us down at all," Kirk said. "Everything went fine."

In Paulding County, election hours weren't extended because the county didn't have to stop voting when the problem occurred, said Elections Supervisor Deidre Holden

The problem didn't occur during the previous three weeks of in-person early voting, when about 9,000 voters in the six pilot counties cast ballots on equipment made by Dominion Voting Systems, which won a [\\$107 million state contract](#) this summer to replace Georgia's electronic voting machines with a system that prints out paper ballots.

“It ran as smooth as silk” during early voting, Heard said. “The voters have been overwhelmingly positive with the new system.”

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Problems with new Georgia voting system found in test election

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Voting machines rebooted in the middle of voting. Computers [couldn't program](#) the cards voters use to activate voting machines. One voter inserted a driver's license into the voting machine, causing it to go blank.

Those were some of the 45 incidents reported during a test run of Georgia's [new voting system](#), according to a [summary](#) from the secretary of state's office. The pilot was conducted in six counties, where 27,482 ballots were cast in this month's election. The [test](#) identified issues with the voting system, which combines touchscreens with printed-out paper ballots, that can now be corrected before it's used statewide in the March 24 presidential primary, said Gabe Sterling, chief operating officer for the secretary of state's office.

"These problems are mainly human based," Sterling said. "We can train and train, and our plan is to train again. That's going to be the main thing that's going to make these things work properly."

Sterling said he's confident that the state's voting system will be ready for the presidential primary, and all equipment is scheduled for delivery by late January.

"We feel like we are in a good position to make sure that these kinds of issues don't happen," Sterling said. "Now we're going to have the ability to deal with them and shine a light on those problems."

Here's a look at some of the [incidents](#) in Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Decatur, Lowndes and Paulding counties:

Check-in computers: Some voters were delayed when polls opened on Election Day because iPads used to check in voters couldn't encode the voter access cards that activate touchscreen voting machines. The iPads got stuck when they incorrectly asked poll workers to select a political party for voters, even though this month's election wasn't a partisan primary.

The problem was caused by a programming error in a data set loaded onto the iPads before Election Day to verify whether someone has already voted. It was resolved when state election officials asked county workers to turn on Wi-Fi on the iPads. Then the

tablets downloaded corrected data from a server run by KnowInk, the company that provided the iPads to Georgia.

Rebooted touchscreens: Several voting machines restarted themselves, sometimes while voters were in the middle of completing their ballots. In most cases, the machines returned to normal after they were turned off and back on. Four touchscreens were taken out of service “out of an abundance of caution,” according to the secretary of state’s office. All voters were still able to cast their ballots.

Ballot scanning: After touchscreens printed out ballots, it took several tries before some scanning machines would accept voters’ ballots. The issues were resolved by trying again, submitting ballots face-down or replacing the scanner.

Power: Election workers couldn’t initially find live power outlets in Decatur County. Some power sources weren’t plugged into touchscreens correctly in Catoosa County.

Late results: A technician used the same file names for several memory cards containing vote tabulations, which prevented results from loading correctly and caused delays in Lowndes County on election night.

Wrong card: A voter in Carroll County inserted a driver’s license into a touchscreen instead of inserting the voter access card. Then screen then went black. The touchscreen was rebooted, but the black screen issue occurred “multiple times” on that voting machine.

Read the election pilot report

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<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/state-targets-voting-activists/85-446abb32-4dfe-402d-b038-67bc77913826>

State probe targets election activists critical of new voting system

Targets urged hand-marked ballots, now accused of interfering at polling places

ATLANTA — Georgia election officials have opened an investigation into two prominent critics of the state’s new touchscreen voting machines, secretary of state Brad Raffensperger’s office confirmed Wednesday.

Those critics called the investigation an attempt to intimidate detractors of the new machines.

Marilyn Marks, executive director of the nonprofit Coalition for Good Governance, and Richard DeMillo, a cybersecurity expert and Georgia Tech professor, are accused of “interfering with voters by being in unauthorized areas” of voting locations while observing pilot elections conducted on the new machines on Nov. 5.

RELATED: [State gets first test of new voting system before ambitious 2020 switch](#)

Raffensperger spokesman Walter Jones says the investigation was launched after complaints from “poll workers and voters” and that Marks and DeMillo were “in an area of the polling place where only voters and election officials are allowed to be.”

Marks responded, “I have absolutely no idea what this could be about other than just an effort to try to discredit us, because much of what we observed was not pretty.”

Marks said they worked with local election officials that day and hadn’t heard any concerns at the time. She said Raffensperger should be promoting open and transparent elections rather than “trying to make examples of people who want to exercise their right to learn more, who want to observe, who want to promote transparency.”

Jones said, “The Secretary of State takes voters’ reports that individuals are violating election law and undermining the integrity of our state and local elections seriously.”

Georgia elections have been closely watched since officials faced widespread criticism during the 2018 election cycle. Problems included reports of hours-long waits at some polling sites, security breaches that left voters' registration information exposed and accusations that strict ID matching requirements and registration errors suppressed turnout.

Georgia is racing to replace its outdated paperless voting machines with new electronic touchscreen machines that print a paper ballot under a court-ordered deadline to retire the old system before any votes are cast in 2020.

Raffensperger says the new machines will be used in all 159 counties for Georgia's presidential primaries in March. A pilot was held in six mostly rural counties holding elections for mayors, city councils and school boards on Nov. 5.

Electronic poll books used to check in voters in some cases malfunctioned as polls opened on the morning of the pilot, and several counties were forced to keep polls open late because of the issue.

Marks and DeMillo are among multiple critics who say the new machines share many of the problems of the old machines and can't be effectively audited. They favor a system using hand-marked paper ballots.

Marks' group Coalition for Good Governance is a plaintiff in an ongoing lawsuit challenging the new machines.

Raffensperger's office said past investigations have looked into infractions like a voter who took a selfie while voting, which is prohibited, and that a common outcome is a simple letter of admonition.

An investigation like this is generally conducted by the secretary of state's office before being presented to the state board of elections, which will vote on whether the alleged violations should be reported to the state attorney general for further investigation and prosecution.

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<https://www.wtxl.com/news/local-news/voting-in-decatur-county-delayed-due-to-software-glitch>

Voting in Decatur County delayed due to software glitch

DECATUR COUNTY, Ga. — Voting in Decatur County was delayed Tuesday morning thanks to a software glitch.

Polls in Decatur County have extended voting hours until 8 p.m. because of the computer glitch Tuesday morning.

For the first 45 minutes after polls opened, voters were unable to cast their votes.

The glitch impacted all the polling pads at all three precincts. We're told about a dozen voters had to either wait or come back later.

The county says there were no glitches during the advanced voting and everything had been running smoothly up until Tuesday morning.

Carol Heard, the Chief Election Official of the Decatur County Board of Elections, says the glitch was unexpected.

"I was surprised when that happened, but it was a computer glitch kind of thing that when we did the bulk update, that after all the advance voters have voted, you updated them in the system," said Heard. "So it's just something that happened."

Heard says she has no doubt that the new voting system is secure.

Again, the problem Tuesday morning dealt with new equipment used to check voters' registration.

All three of the precincts located at the Coliseum, the Fairgrounds and in West Bainbridge will be open until 8 p.m. Tuesday.