

MERCER COUNTY

ELECTION SURVIVAL GUIDE '12 ...

... OR (ALMOST) EVERYTHING AN INFORMED VOTER NEEDS TO KNOW!

ELECTIONS

1. Election Dates:
 - a. **Primary – April 24, 2012**
 - b. **General – November 6, 2012**
2. Voting Hours: **7 a.m. to 8 p.m.**
3. Key word: **PATIENCE**
4. Educate yourself as to what offices are on the ballot. This year you will see the following:
 - a. Federal races: President of the United States, U.S. Senator, and U.S. Representative, National Delegates and Alternate Delegates for 3rd Congressional District
 - b. Statewide races: Attorney General, Auditor General and State Treasurer
 - c. State-level races: Representative in the General Assembly
 - d. Countywide races: None
 - e. Municipal races: None
 - f. Precinct-level races: Republican Committeeman and Committeewoman (winners decided in primary).
5. Redistricting occurred at both the federal and state levels and will affect voters' ballots in many precincts.
 - a. All of Mercer County will vote in the 3rd Congressional District. A small portion previously voted in the 4th Congressional District.
 - b. All of Mercer County will continue to vote in the 50th State Senate District.
 - c. There were many changes to the State House Districts in the county.
 - i. The following municipalities vote in the 7th State House District: Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon; Townships of Lackawannock, Pymatuning, Shenango, South Pymatuning and West Salem; and Boroughs of Clark, Greenville, Sharpsville, West Middlesex and Wheatland.
 - ii. The following municipalities vote in the 8th State House District: Townships of Coolspring, Deer Creek, Fairview, Findley, French Creek, Jackson, Lake, Liberty, Mill Creek, New Vernon, Perry, Pine, Sandy Lake, Springfield, Wolf Creek and Worth; and Boroughs of Fredonia, Grove City, Jackson Center, Mercer, New Lebanon, Sandy Lake and Stoneboro.
 - iii. The following municipalities vote in the 17th State House District: Townships of Delaware, East Lackawannock, Greene, Hempfield, Jefferson, Otter Creek, Salem, Sandy Creek, Sugar Grove and Wilmington; and Boroughs of Jamestown and Sheakleyville.

6. Voter ID: While discussion is underway among the General Assembly in Harrisburg that could change the Voter ID law in Pennsylvania, at this moment there has been no change to the current law. This will be updated if it does.
7. Haven't used the county's touch screen voting system before? No problem. A voting tutorial is linked at the county's Web site at www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us. Click on Voter Registration/Elections and then link to View ESS iVotronic. Or visit the election office at the courthouse for an opportunity to get your hands on a machine.
8. Expect lines at certain times of the day, especially first thing in the morning, around lunch time and then after dinner. The shortest waits usually occur mid-morning or mid-afternoon.
9. Pennsylvania law allows candidates and campaigners to electioneer, pass out campaign materials and talk to you as long as they are 10 feet from the polling room. There is nothing, however, that requires you to answer them or take their materials. But if you do take any campaign literature, please DO NOT leave it in the polling place. You MUST have a clear path to the polling room and if you believe campaigners are impeding or blocking that path, please inform a poll worker.
10. Mercer County voters are permitted to wear political attire into the polling place. Voters cannot, however, do or say anything beyond simply wearing the item or they will be asked to leave. Poll workers and poll watchers are not permitted to wear political attire.
11. ALL voters in line at 8 p.m. – even if that line stretches outside the building and down the street – are permitted by law to vote. If you are NOT in line at 8 p.m. when the Judge of Elections announces the polls are closed, you are NOT allowed to vote. The Judge should assign a poll worker to mark the last person who was IN LINE at 8 p.m.
12. Election returns will be posted as they arrive at the courthouse on the county's Web site at www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us.

PETITION INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

13. The first day to circulate and file a petition for Republicans and Democrats is Jan. 24, 2012. Packets for local candidates will be available in the county's election office beginning Jan. 20, 2012. The last day to circulate and file a petition is Feb. 14, 2012. Only committee candidates will pick up packets at the Mercer County Courthouse. All others will need to get them from the Department of State in Harrisburg and file them there.
14. The first day to circulate and file nominating papers for minor party and independent candidates is Feb. 15, 2012. The last day to circulate and file nominating papers is Aug. 1, 2012. Packets for those candidates will be available from the Department of State in Harrisburg and must be filed there.

VOTER REGISTRATION

15. Voter Registration Deadlines:
 - a. **Primary – March 26, 2012**
 - b. **General – October 9, 2012**

16. If you have moved since you last voted, you need to register at your current address. If your name has changed as a result of marital status or some other reason, you need to register under your new name.
17. If you haven't voted in more than five years, there is a good chance your voting status has been made inactive or canceled. If you are inactive, you can vote but you are required to show a proper form of identification and sign an affirmation.
18. If you have been canceled, you must register again.
19. If you have any question about your voting status, it's worth the time needed to check on it. Stop in the election office at the courthouse or call us at 724-662-7542. Our hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

20. If you are going to be out of the precinct on Election Day or you have an illness or disability that prevents you from going to the polls, you can vote by absentee ballot. Absentee ballot applications are available at some post offices, municipal buildings and libraries in the county, as well as online at the county's Web site or by calling the election office.
21. The deadline to apply for a regular absentee ballot for the primary is April 17, 2012, and the ballot must be returned to the election office by 5 p.m. April 20, 2012.
22. The deadline to apply for a regular absentee ballot for the general election is Oct. 30, 2012, and the ballot must be returned to the election office by 5 p.m. November 2, 2012.

POLLING PLACES

23. You can check your polling place location online at the county's Web site: www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us. Click on Voter Registration/Elections at left and look for a link to polling locations. There are also precinct maps.
24. There is one polling place change this year: Hermitage SW-3 is moving from Holy Cross Orthodox Church on Maple Drive to Kennedy Catholic School, 2120 Shenango Valley Freeway. Hermitage SW-2 is also at Kennedy Catholic and both precincts will be located in the gymnasium. There were three changes in 2011: South Pymatuning 2 moved from the township building to the South Pymatuning Township Volunteer Fire Station at 3505 Tamarack Drive. South Pymatuning 1 is also located at the fire station. Sharon 2-3 moved from Case Avenue School across the street to St. Joseph's Church, 79 Case Avenue. 3. Springfield East moved from London Grange to the new Springfield Township Municipal Building, 406 Old Ash Road, just off of 208.