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**Ballot Audit successfully completed for Nebraska’s General Election**

**LINCOLN-** A hand count of ballots in 30 randomly selected precincts across Nebraska verifies that equipment utilized to count ballots is both secure and accurate. Says Secretary of State Bob Evnen. Following each statewide election, a manual audit is conducted for two to three percent of precincts across the state.

The 30 precincts were selected from the total list of precincts across the state, with no more than two precincts from any one county selected. In total 27 counties were involved in the audit and 9563 ballots were hand counted out of a total of 706,652 cast. Three contest were selected to be audited- one federal contest, one state contest and one local contest.

The only discrepancies were found in the counties, where a total of 3 ballots were found not to have been read correctly due to light pencil marks or an eraser mark. “This highlights the importance of following the instructions and clearly darkening the oval on the ballot,” said Secretary Evnen, “If you make a mistake on a ballot you are allowed to ask for a new ballot.”

State law requires three independent test of the optical scanning equipment before it can be used to count ballots. These test are conducted by three different people who each mark a set of test ballots and compare the results of the machine to what was marked on the ballots. Such a test ensure that the equipment is properly functioning before the election.

Nebraska continues to use paper ballots, which allows for these post-election audits. Although not required by state law, the manual audit verifies that the equipment properly functioned on Election Day and was not tampered with at any point following the three independent test.

The manual audits have been utilized since 2008. “Nebraska’s elections are secure, reliable and accurate. This is one of the steps we take to ensure that our elections remain that way,” Secretary Evnen said. Nebraska’s eligible voters can be confident that their ballots will continue to be cast securely and counted accurately.

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