

## Annual Highlights 2019 Board of Elections

The end of the decade brought more than fifty statewide Election Law changes, updated regulations, and new procedures to the Board of Elections. The most prominent change was the implementation of **Early Voting**. For the first time in New York State, every county offered voters an opportunity to vote early for nine days prior to the General Election. Early Voting is open to any registered voter in the county, and also provides an alternative to obtaining an absentee ballot for voters who cannot make it to the polls on Election Day. The unforeseen consequence of introducing Early Voting was the need to revise Election Law on how to track and update voter history, as well as the obsolescence of the current paper poll book. Hence, the next challenge to overcome was to choose and obtain State tested and certified **Electronic Poll Books**, upload the county voter database onto each unit, and train BOE staff and election inspectors to use them, all in a very short window of time. A benefit of electronic poll books is that they are designed to speed up the voter check-in process on Election Day, reducing overall wait time for voters.

A long overlooked resource on Election Day are the folks that embrace the opportunity to be an involved, integral part of the voting process: the Election Inspectors. For the first time in Tioga County an **"Election Inspector Recognition"** was held for over three hundred individuals; every person that has worked at a poll site on Election Day for as far as the Board of Elections could track. The Hubbard Auditorium was filled to capacity honoring these individuals. A small reception was held for those present, and certificates were presented to those in attendance with the remainder mailed. A representative from Assemblyman Friend, Senator Akshar, our County Legislators and the Election Commissioners were thrilled to honor these dedicated county individuals.