

# 2012 PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

## Overview

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The election was conducted on the boundaries defined in the *Electoral Divisions Act*, which was proclaimed into effect along with the issuance of the writs for the Provincial General Election. Electoral division boundaries had been adjusted following the independent review of the 2009/2010 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission and the December 2, 2010 acceptance of the revised electoral division boundaries by the Legislative Assembly. Order in Council 150 proclaimed the new electoral division boundaries in force on March 26, 2012.

Order in Council 149/2012 dissolved the Twenty-seventh Legislative Assembly on March 26, 2012 and Order in Council 150/2012 signalled the commencement of the Provincial General Election by ordering the Chief Electoral Officer to issue Writs of Election to each of the 87 returning officers listed on page 75 of this report, pursuant to section 40 of the *Election Act*.

## Key Dates

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The election calendar posted on the Elections Alberta website (the website) highlighted the following key dates:

Monday, March 26, 2012	Issuance of the Writs of Election to returning officers in the 87 electoral divisions
Saturday, March 31, 2012	First day for electors to be added to the List of Electors in the returning officers' offices
Monday April 9, 2012 at 2:00 PM	Last opportunity for candidates to file nomination papers in the returning officers' offices
Monday, April 9, 2012 at 2:00 PM	Last opportunity for Senate Nominee Election candidates to file nomination papers with the Chief Electoral Officer
Saturday, April 14, 2012 at 4:00 PM	Last opportunity for electors to be added to the List of Electors in the returning officers' offices
Thursday, April 19, 2012	First day to vote in the advance polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)
Friday, April 20, 2012	Second day to vote in the advance polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)
Saturday, April 21, 2012	Final day to vote in the advance polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)

<b>Monday, April 23, 2012 POLLING DAY</b>	<b>Polls open from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM; unofficial results web-posted</b>
Friday, April 27, 2012	Official results of the Senate Nominee Election submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer by the returning officers in the 87 electoral divisions
Thursday, May 3, 2012	Official results of the Provincial General Election announced by the returning officers in the 87 electoral divisions
Thursday, May 3, 2012	Provincial tabulation of the Senate Nominee Election official results announced by the Chief Electoral Officer

## **Communications**

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A comprehensive communications program was implemented to reach electors, of all ages, from all parts of the province. The communications strategy expanded to include communications media that have gained broad public usage since the 2008 Provincial General Election.

## **Pre-election Outreach**

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Groups that have experienced communication barriers in participating in the election were identified well in advance of the election. A pre-election communications strategy was developed to obtain input from these groups on how to bridge the communications gap and ensure the timely delivery of necessary information using their existing networks. The fixed election period established through recent legislative amendments facilitated the timely release of information.

For the first time, interested electors could sign up to receive an email notice of voting dates, Special Ballot information, and a link to find polling place information and contact information for sources of additional assistance. This service was particularly useful to electors who expected to be out of the province during the election period, since notice was provided on the day the Writs of Election were issued, leaving time for the acquisition and completion of a Special Ballot.

Specific pre-election outreach targeted the following groups:

- **Canadian Forces:** The Judge Advocate General circulated an internal document outlining requirements and best methods for members of the Canadian Forces to participate in the election. The Judge Advocate General website was linked to Elections Alberta's main page for additional information.
- **Disability Community:** An information sheet outlining voting procedures and new election materials was distributed to various organizations within this group, including the Alberta Council of Disability Services and Independent Living Canada.

- Ethno-cultural communities and new Canadians: A letter providing information on how eligible electors can participate in the election was sent to cultural and community centres across the province. Electors were directed to posters in polling stations, which explained elector eligibility in six languages to assist those who were unfamiliar with the voting process.
- First Nations: A full time liaison facilitated communications with First Nations communities. First Nations communities were asked if a poll on their reserve land was desired, and were offered the opportunity of identifying election officers.

There are approximately 100 reserves in Alberta, 72 of which have a resident elector population. Of these, seven are designated as remote areas and voted by Special Ballot. Of the remaining 65 reserves, 42 opted to have a poll on site.

- Homeless: Shelter administrators received an information packet to assist electors who received services at homeless shelters. Packets included letters of attestation that could be provided to homeless electors by shelter administrators to use as identification for the purpose of voting.
- Incarcerated: Information on obtaining Special Ballots was provided to Correctional Services for distribution to inmates of correctional facilities. Letters of attestation were provided to serve as inmates' identification, when signed by a facility administrator.
- Law Enforcement Agencies: Notification was sent to law enforcement officials regarding candidates' and campaign workers' statutory rights of access to multi-unit dwellings.
- Multi-unit Dwellings: A notice was provided through the apartment and condo associations to the majority of managers/owners of apartments and condos. Liaisons were hired to assist campaigns that had difficulties arranging for access to multi-unit dwellings.
- Post-secondary: With the aid of student unions and student associations, information booths were placed on 29 campuses. Staff at these booths were available to help students register to vote, request a Special Ballot and find the appropriate channels for additional information. Two campuses with a small student population had resource material placed on-site.

Polling stations were established in five post-secondary institutions to serve all institutions with a resident population of more than 450.

- Seniors: An information sheet outlining voting procedures and new election materials was distributed to various organizations within this stakeholder group including Seniors and Community Supports, Canadian Snowbird Association, CARP (formerly know as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons) and Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.
- Work Camps: Companies managing 86 work camps across the province were given Special Ballot posters and information cards to distribute to electors potentially absent from their electoral division during the election period. Information cards urged absentee electors to request a Special Ballot early in the election period.

## **Political Party and Campaign Outreach**

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Elections Alberta staff provided information relevant to political parties, candidates and their volunteers at three campaign colleges prior to the start of the election period. Each of the three sessions was attended by political party representatives seeking to gain a better understanding of the statutory requirements.

In addition, three open sessions were offered: in Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer. In total, approximately 400 candidates, chief financial officers, official agents and other political party representatives attended the open sessions. These sessions provided information on registration requirements, contribution limits, issuance of official contribution receipts, restrictions on spending activities, advertising, filing of nomination papers and filing of financial statements.

## **Election Period Outreach**

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Public outreach throughout the election period used various communication channels. Electors had access to election information via social media for the first time, in addition to other, more traditional methods.

- Direct mail to residences: Cards containing elector information were mailed to residences across Alberta.

Approximately 1,506,000 residences received a mail-out in the first half of the election period. Electors were notified of the dates and times for voting, along with contact information for obtaining further election information by telephone, email or online.

Approximately 1,302,400 residences received a mail-out in the last half of the election period. Electors received contact information for their local returning officer, along with more detailed information, including the locations for voting at the advance polls and on polling day.

Distribution of cards was limited to those residences with a physical (geographic) and mailing address. Mail-outs to residences in rural areas specified that polling place information was based on the physical location of the residence, often identified by a legal land description. This notified electors to contact Elections Alberta, or the returning officer, if the physical (geographic) address had changed.

- Elections Alberta Website: Expanded online resources were available around the clock. Electors were able to determine where to vote and whether they were registered. Approximately 18,000 electors added or updated their elector information for inclusion on the List of Electors.
- External Websites: Banner advertisements appeared on popular online news sites to provide a link to the Elections Alberta website. Over eight million display ads were delivered over a three-week period, inviting users to “click through” to the Elections Alberta main page. In addition, twenty-six million impressions were delivered on Facebook.

The click-through rate was four times the average; very successful by industry standards. A total of almost twenty thousand users accessed online election information via these sites.

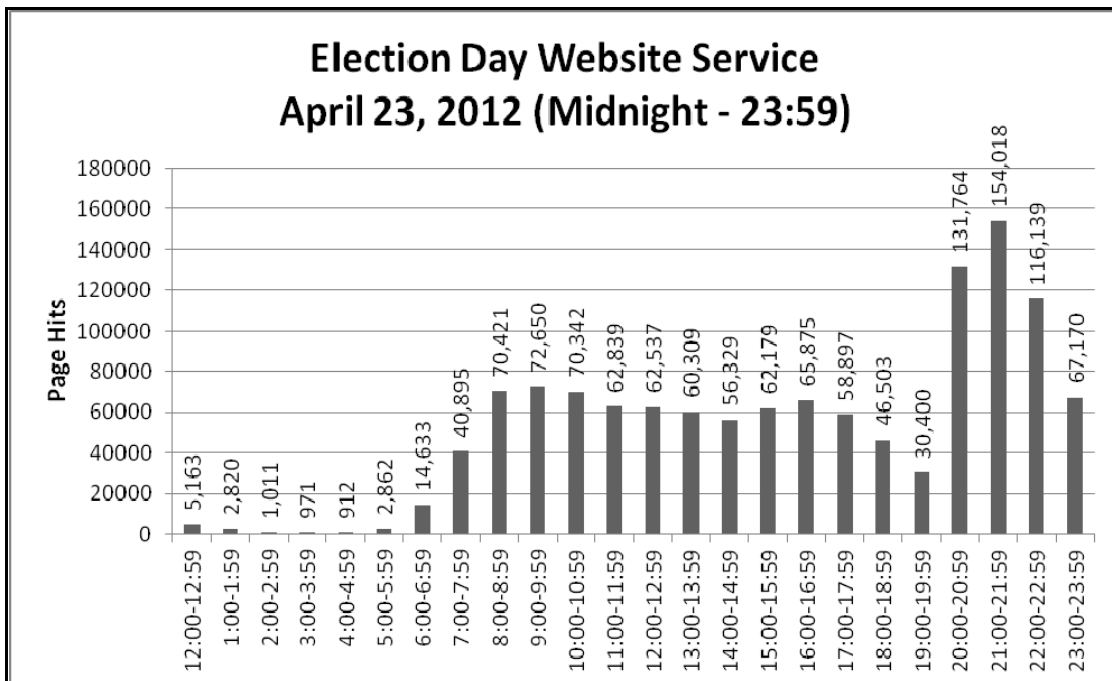
For the first time, electors could apply online to work at the polls and could submit a Special Ballot request online.

The website also supplied general information on eligibility requirements, dates and times for voting and options for electors who were away from home or who had other unique needs. The general information included notification of recent legislative amendments that affected electors, including new vouching rules and identification requirements for electors whose names were not on the List of Electors. Contact information for Elections Alberta and the returning officers was available to allow electors with specific questions to communicate in writing, in person, by phone or by email.

At the close of polls on polling day, the website provided unofficial results on a poll by poll basis. These results were posted by returning officers as unofficial counts were completed and communicated by election officers across the province.

The website was accessed over 1.25 million times on polling day, with just under 800,000 hits occurring by 8 p.m. Albertans were provided with flawless service as a result of a move to an independent server, and constant monitoring by dedicated staff.

The following chart shows website activity on polling day.



- **Handheld Devices:** Elections Alberta's where-to-vote website was designed to accommodate access by handheld devices for electors who wished to obtain general information, or determine where to vote, using this application. Quick response (QR) codes were included on print materials to allow users of handheld devices to capture the URL for the website.
- **Twitter:** Elections Alberta used Twitter for the first time as another method to keep Albertans informed. The number of followers started out at 65 as of March 14, and nearly doubled in ten days to 114 by March 25, the day before the writs of election were issued. Followers joined regularly; ultimately reaching 763, with 218 new followers joining on polling day alone. On polling day, 99 followers re-tweeted the message inviting electors to "Vote today" to reach 43,775 followers.
- **Radio:** Radio advertisements provided basic information and additional contact information for electors to determine where to vote. Advertisements appeared on 38 radio stations and are estimated to have reached over 1.5 million electors.
- **Telephone:** The voter information call centre was twice the size of the call centre for the 2008 election. Call centre staff were provided with enhanced resources to prepare for the anticipated high volume of calls; most often guidance on where and when to vote. Staff were available from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. through the advance polls and on polling day.

Operators assisted over 28,000 callers throughout the election period, an increase of 10,000 from the 2008 election. Operators kept pace with the volume of calls, including the 8,000 calls received on polling day.

- **Email:** Electors were provided with a dedicated email address to communicate with Elections Alberta. Electors received 1,800 personal responses to their specific concerns or questions, including 900 responses sent on polling day.
- **Newspapers:** As in previous elections, electors could consult local newspapers for information on polling places, dates and times for voting, in accordance with sections 55 and 70 of the *Election Act*. Newspaper advertisements in 121 newspapers provided information on voting opportunities for electors who were away from home or who had other unique needs.

In Calgary and Edmonton, advertisements were replaced by newspaper inserts in all daily newspapers. Inserts were delivered by a flyer delivery service to reach electors without a daily newspaper subscription.

## **Legislative and Procedural Changes**

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Elections Alberta is responsible for the conduct of provincial elections and for managing the registration, financial activities, reporting and disclosure of political entities, in accordance with the *Election Act* and the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*. Over one hundred amendments were approved by the Legislative Assembly in April 2010, representing significant changes to both statutes. Forms, guides and training material were prepared to communicate the changes to electors, election officers and political participants.

Legislative changes focused on increasing electors' accessibility and protection and on enhancing accountability and disclosure of political participants. Changes included:

- Removing the restrictions for use of advance poll voting, so all electors were able to vote in person over a four-day period, at their convenience
- Reducing the identification requirements for electors who are not on the List of Electors to one piece of identification, in most cases, and allowing for vouching in lieu of identification
- Increasing the security and integrity of the Special (mail-in) Ballot process
- Streamlining the voting process for electors in treatment centres, supportive living facilities and at regular polling places
- Increasing the disclosure requirements for sponsors of election advertising, including third parties that sponsored election advertising
- Increasing the security of electors' personal information
- Allowing for the testing of new voting technologies
- Developing a process for the elimination and reporting of candidates' campaign deficits
- Broadening the investigative powers of the Chief Electoral Officer

One additional amendment was passed in December 2011 to establish a fixed election period. Preparing for an election that would be conducted between March 1 and May 31 allowed for timely advance planning and for the establishment of returning officers' offices prior to the election period. This amendment allowed returning officers to provide immediate, effective support to electors and political participants upon the issue of the writs of election and allowed for timely public communications via the Internet, the radio and direct mail.

## Challenges

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Albertans went to the polls on new electoral division boundaries. This message was communicated to electors who had become accustomed to the names and geographic boundaries of provincial electoral divisions that were in place since 2004.

Additional communications were developed to address the confusion that sometimes occurs because of differences between the boundaries, polling places and procedures followed at the municipal or federal elections.

Particular emphasis was placed on the principal elements of the voting process to mitigate any possible confusion. Electors were able to confirm their eligibility, and to determine where and when to vote, through a broad spectrum of communications options.

The diverse group of electors across the province presents a number of challenges as we strive to deliver effective services to meet the electoral needs of Albertans. New resources are assessed on an ongoing basis and those deemed effective are made available to electors. New resources in 2012 included magnifying screens for electors with visual impairments, easy-grip pencils for those with limited dexterity, and translations of voter eligibility requirements for new Canadians who are more familiar with another language.

Challenges inevitably arise in managing an event of this scope, in spite of thorough advance preparations. Power outages can occur and telecommunication cables can be severed, delaying necessary communications. One polling place was flooded, requiring the notification of candidates and the posting of signage to direct electors to an alternate location. A suspicious-looking package resulted in the temporary closure of an access road to another polling place; the package was identified as a bag of refuse and voting continued following a brief disruption.

The majority of complaints received throughout the election period related to unwanted calls received via automated telephone messaging services. Current technology provides a cost-effective means to rapidly communicate a standard message to thousands of electors following the uploading of telephone numbers into a central system. Many recipients of the “robo-calls” contacted Elections Alberta to complain about the time that calls were received, the frequency of the calls, and the fact that the caller’s name and contact information were not always supplied. Recipients of the unwanted calls were particularly incensed when they continued to receive calls after contacting the sponsor of the call and asking to have their name removed from the calling list. At the same time, some campaigns complained that they were the target of negative messaging, or that the “robo-calls” erroneously implicated them in making the calls. These calls were sometimes difficult to trace and resolution was not always achieved during the election period. Future policy development will include input provided by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and other stakeholders. Political participants and electors will be informed of the regulations and the resolution process.



Additional challenges arose with the administration of the Senate Nominee Election. It was important to notify electors of the event and to provide clear instruction for marking ballots. Unlike the Provincial General Election where one candidate was selected, electors were able to mark their ballots for up to three candidates.

This challenge extended to the training of election officers who were called upon to answer questions related to the Senate Nominee Election and, later, to count the ballots. Voting directions were provided verbally by election officers, in written form via the posters in each polling place, and in a multilingual written translation for electors who required that service.

The timely payment of over 16,000 front line election officers is a significant administrative challenge. For the first time the returning officers had access to online payment approval within the Alberta Comprehensive Election System (ACES). Cheques were produced for 95% of election officers within two weeks of polling day.

Administering the two parallel events, and particularly tabulating the unofficial results, was identified by front-line election officers as the most challenging task related to the 2012 electoral event.

## **Election Recruitment and Training**

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Returning officers are assisted by two full-time staff during the election period: an election clerk and an administrative assistant. The election clerk, appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, shares many of the responsibilities of the returning officer and replaces the returning officer if he or she is unable to fulfil the responsibilities of the role. The administrative assistant assists with the Special Ballot poll and data management. All three positions received standardized training by Elections Alberta.

Returning officers are responsible for the recruitment and training of the front-line election officers who staff the advance polls and polling day polls. As with enumeration recruitment, they target community groups and contact electors with enumeration or election experience. In many cases, returning officers recruited well over 200 election officers.

Returning officers received educational resources to equip them to train election officers: supervisory deputy returning officers, registration officers and deputy returning officers. In many cases, returning officers trained well over 100 election officers.

In total, returning officers trained approximately 9,500 electors to staff the polls on polling day. This demanding task is accomplished by returning officers in the latter part of the 28-day election period.

Deputy returning officers trained approximately 6,200 electors to serve as poll clerks, as part of a staff complement of almost 17,000 front-line election officers trained and deployed to serve Albertans across the province. As with the enumeration, the election is a very labour-intensive process: 80% of the election budget is allocated to election officers' fees and associated costs.

With each election, new voting options are introduced to accommodate electors' needs. As voting options increase, the demands on election officers become increasingly complex. In addition to previous responsibilities, election officers were responsible for the conduct and counting of the Senate Nominee Election and the administration of the vouching process established to accommodate electors without identification who were not on the List of Electors. Options will be examined to enhance the training and support provided to election officers to better equip them for performing multiple tasks and completing various prescribed forms over the course of a 14-plus hour work day.

## **Nominated Candidates**

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The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* requires all political parties, constituency associations and candidates to be registered with Elections Alberta.

Each candidate must register with Elections Alberta prior to raising or spending money to help get elected. Candidates register by filing an Application for Registration, in accordance with the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*.

The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* provides for the public disclosure of contributions and expenses by registered political entities (political parties, candidates and constituency associations), both in the Public Files maintained by Elections Alberta and on Elections Alberta's website. Summary information will also appear in the 2012 Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* also prescribes contribution limits. Any eligible person, corporation, trade union or employee organization may contribute up to a maximum of \$2,000 to each registered candidate during the campaign period. The campaign period commences on the date the writs of election are issued by the Chief Electoral Officer, and ends two months after polling day.

The *Alberta Income Tax Act* provides a system of tax credits for contributions to registered political entities.

### **Example of Income Tax Credits**

<b><u>Amount Contributed</u></b>	<b><u>Calculation</u></b>	<b><u>Income Tax Credit</u></b>
\$ 200.00	75% of \$200.00	\$ 150.00
1,100.00	\$150.00 + 50% of \$900.00	600.00
2,300.00	\$600.00 + 33 1/3% of \$1,200.00	1,000.00

Candidates registered under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* were eligible to file nomination papers with the returning officer in the electoral division in which they wished to contest the election. Nomination day was Monday, April 9, 2012. That was the last day on which prospective candidates were able to file nomination papers and submit their \$500 nomination deposit.

When nominations closed on Monday, April 9, 2012 at 2:00 p.m., 431 candidates had registered under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* and 429 had filed nomination papers in accordance with the legislation.

No candidate withdrew following the close of nominations and no candidate was elected by acclamation.

All candidates registered under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* are required to file a candidate campaign period financial statement, including those candidates who did not file nomination papers with a returning officer. For the first time, candidates' campaigns were eligible to have their \$500 nomination deposit refunded for filing their financial statement by the prescribed deadline of August 23; four months post-polling day. A total of 418 candidates met the statutory filing deadline; 416 candidates had nomination deposits refunded to their campaign accounts and two candidates did not file nomination papers or a nomination deposit.

A breakdown follows:

	Number registered with Elections Alberta	Number nominated through returning officer	Number filed by due date
Alberta Liberal Party	87	87	82
Alberta New Democratic Party	87	87	84
Alberta Party	38	38	37
Alberta Social Credit Party	4	3	3
Communist Party – Alberta	2	2	2
Evergreen Party of Alberta	25	25	25
Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta	87	87	86
Separation Party of Alberta	1	1	1
Wildrose Alliance Party	87	87	87
Independent	13	12	9

Forfeited nomination deposits were paid through Elections Alberta to the Minister of Finance for deposit to the General Revenue Fund.

## **Special Ballot Polls**

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By legislation, a Special Ballot poll was established in each of the 87 electoral divisions. The poll is established to facilitate voting for electors who are not able to vote at the advance polls or on polling day. It is often used by electors who are physically incapacitated or who travel, work or attend an educational institution outside of their

own electoral divisions for extended periods. Availability of the Special Ballot was advertised in newspapers and on the website.

Special Ballot brochures were distributed to stakeholder groups whose members tend to use this voting option. Information was distributed on a proactive basis to trade unions, travel clubs, post-secondary educational institutions and the Canadian Armed Forces to allow them time to share information with their membership. This increased awareness directed electors' early attention to this voting option.

The Special Ballot is often viewed as a mail-in ballot, but ballots may also be completed in the returning officer's office or hand-delivered by an individual at the elector's request. While every effort is made to provide a Special Ballot to an elector, it is a legislative requirement that an elector must request his or her own Special Ballot: it cannot be requested on his or her behalf by another person. This is to ensure that the Special Ballot is issued to, and completed by, the appropriate elector.

Electors may request a Special Ballot in person, by telephone, by facsimile, by electronic mail, in writing, and for the first time, online via a secure Internet connection. The Special Ballot package uses a series of envelopes to protect the confidentiality of the ballot, and contains an elector's declaration identifying the reason for use, along with an undertaking confirming that the elector has not yet voted and will not vote a second time.

In the same way that each elector must vote within his or her own electoral division, each elector must request a Special Ballot from the returning officer in his or her own electoral division and return it to the office from which it was issued. Although Special Ballot requests may be made electronically, printed Special Ballots are provided to and completed by electors.

For the Provincial General Election, electors were able to request a Special Ballot at the beginning of the election period and were able to vote for the candidate or political party of their choice. This helped to ensure that electors had adequate time to complete and return the Special Ballot by the close of polls on polling day. Although express mail was used for the timely distribution of Special Ballots, a portion of Special Ballots was received after the close of polls on polling day and were rejected, in accordance with legislation. Alternate distribution methods are being examined.

Following a recent legislative amendment, electors completing Special Ballots were required to provide appropriate identification to verify their identity and place of ordinary residence. This added security measure enhanced the integrity of the Special Ballot process.

A total of 16,169 valid Special Ballots were received by the close of polls on polling day, providing a valuable option to electors who otherwise may have been unable to exercise their franchise.

## Advance Polls

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By legislation, advance polls were established in at least one location in each electoral division on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to polling day. The *Election Act* prescribes that up to four advance poll locations may be established to ensure elector convenience in electoral divisions that cover a large geographic area. The *Election Act* also allows for additional locations to be established, if deemed necessary by the returning officer and approved by the Chief Electoral Officer. Three electoral divisions had five advance poll locations and one had six, to ensure ease of access for electors.

Advance polls were open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 19, Friday, April 20 and Saturday, April 21, at sites that offered level access. Returning officers' offices were used, where appropriate.

Two recent legislative amendments were enacted to increase accessibility to voting. Previously, electors were able to vote at the advance poll only if they were unable to vote on polling day by reason of physical incapacity, absence, or participation as an election officer, candidate, official agent or scrutineer.

For the first time, electors could vote at the advance polls simply as a matter of convenience. Returning officers increased the number of staff and advance polling stations to prepare for the anticipated increase in use of this voting option: in many cases, the number of polling stations doubled.

For the first time, returning officers were directed to establish advance polls in locations that would ensure no electors would have to travel 100 kilometers to vote at an advance poll, unless the cost was unreasonable to do so. This was achieved in all cases, with the exception of an area in the electoral division of Peace River, where the advance poll in La Crete was up to 200 kilometers away from neighbouring populated communities.

As a result of the legislative change, electors were no longer required to complete an advance poll oath prior to voting. This served to streamline the voting process for all advance poll voters.

The level of interest in advance poll voting was underestimated in some cases, which made advance polls very busy, particularly due to the conduct of two elections on polling day. Additional staff were deployed to assist in the conduct of the advance polls and overall staffing needs will be carefully assessed prior to the next election.

A total of 179,820 valid ballots were cast at 222 advance polls. This is a significant increase, almost tripling the 64,332 valid ballots cast at 162 advance polls during the 2008 election.

## **Mobile Polls**

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By legislation, mobile polls were established on polling day in treatment centres and in supportive living facilities with ten or more resident inpatients or electors, where consultation with facility staff determined the service to be appropriate.

All electors identified by the facility staff as being well enough to vote are eligible to vote in the electoral division in which the facility is located. In accordance with legislation, facility staff can restrict participation to the deputy returning officer, poll clerk, interpreter and facility representative, if appropriate for the well-being of the residents or inpatients.

Mobile poll brochures were distributed to facility administrators early in the election period to inform them of the mobile poll process. Posters were provided to inform residents of the time and location for mobile polling within their facility to allow electors to plan appropriately for polling day.

Mobile polls accommodated electors within the facilities during hours agreed upon by facility staff. Polling was conducted in a fixed location, or by going bed-to-bed, or by using both methods, to best meet electors' needs.

A total of 20,772 valid ballots were cast at 552 mobile poll locations.

## **Polling Day**

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By legislation, polls were open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Monday, April 23, 2012. There were 6,676 polling stations established across the province, each staffed by a deputy returning officer and poll clerk. Supervisory deputy returning officers were hired in polling places with multiple polling stations to provide guidance to electors and election officers, and to direct electors to the correct polling stations. Registration officers were hired to assist electors whose names were not on the Lists of Electors, which expedited the process for all electors.

Election officers were responsible for setting up the polling places, taking the vote, administering declarations to electors who were not on the List of Electors, conducting the unofficial counts for both elections, and returning all election material to the returning officers in a secure manner.

Election officers were also responsible for answering electors' inquiries and for working with the scrutineers appointed by candidates to observe polling day proceedings.

The role of election officers also includes the collection of information that will be used in updating the Register of Electors. Polling day is an excellent opportunity to collect new and updated information from electors for use in refreshing the Register and subsequent Lists of Electors.

At the close of polls, election officers conducted the unofficial count for the Provincial General Election and the Senate Nominee Election, and telephoned results to the

appropriate returning officer. Communicating the results was delayed in some cases due to the high voter turnout and the challenges of conducting two unofficial counts.

Results were posted in returning officers' offices and were web-posted in their offices, as they arrived, for public access via the Elections Alberta website. Interested parties were able to view online poll-by-poll results, as well as results aggregated for the entire province, on a real-time basis.

## **Additions to the List of Electors**

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A total of 182,200 electors were added to the Lists of Electors during the revision period and on polling day. This figure includes electors who did not provide information during the enumeration, those who moved, and those who attained the age, residency or citizenship requirements following the enumeration.

Of this total, 17,372 electors added, updated or confirmed their information during the revision period, and approximately half updated their records online via Voterlink. This option continues to grow in popularity, as it allows electors to manage their own elector information at a time and location that is convenient to the elector.

While the addition of 164,828 polling day registrations appears to be a significant undertaking, only 25 electors, on average, were added to the List of Electors for each polling station. Not surprisingly, areas of high mobility or significant recent growth experienced the highest number of additions.

The Register of Electors contained 2,265,169 names following the Provincial General Enumeration and further enhancements. Names in the Register were used to create the Lists of Electors provided to registered political parties in January 2012, to meet the legislated requirement for receipt of a List of Electors in the fifth year following an election.

The number of names in the Register of Electors increased to 2,447,369 by the close of polls on polling day for the April 23, 2012 Provincial General Election. Names added during the revision period and on polling day were included at that point.

By July 2012, the Register of Electors contained 2,387,485 names. Electors' names had been removed from previous addresses, to avoid duplication. In addition, other data sources were used to delete decedents and electors who had moved out of province. At this point, the Register of Electors was used to prepare a "clean" List of Electors for registered political parties and Members of the Legislative Assembly, in accordance with section 19(2).

## **Accuracy of the Lists of Electors**

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Accurate, current Lists of Electors are essential both for campaigning and effective polling day administration. The Lists of Electors distributed to registered political parties in January 2012, and subsequently used at the polls, were compared to the post-election Lists produced in July 2012 to gauge accuracy.

It is recognized that an indeterminate number of eligible electors actively chose not to provide information to enumerators, opting for polling day registration instead. This convenient option appeals to electors who choose not to avail themselves of the various options available for advance registration. Legislation in Alberta permits this practice and polling places are staffed accordingly.

It is further recognized that an indeterminate number of eligible electors chose not to vote for any number of reasons, so it is acknowledged that the List of Electors does not contain every person who meets the elector eligibility criteria. At the same time, a benchmark must be established to gauge accuracy. For that reason, the assumption is made that the post-election Lists of Electors are 100% complete, since they include all electors who chose to participate during the enumeration, the revision period or on polling day.

Table 4, on page 38, illustrates the coverage (completeness) of the Lists of Electors prepared following the enumeration in comparison to the post-election Lists. Overall, the Lists were found to be 95% accurate. Only 5% of electors that appeared on the July 2012 Lists of Electors were added during the revision period and on polling day.



**Table 4: Accuracy of Lists of Electors Used for the Election**

<b>Electoral Division</b>	<b>Number of Names on January 2012 List</b>	<b>Number of Names on July 2012 List</b>	<b>Accuracy of January 2012 List</b>
1 Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley	13,950	14,699	94.9%
2 Lesser Slave Lake	17,001	18,225	93.3%
3 Calgary-Acadia	25,293	26,117	96.8%
4 Calgary-Bow	24,390	26,235	93.0%
5 Calgary-Buffalo	22,638	25,025	90.5%
6 Calgary-Cross	26,330	27,307	96.4%
7 Calgary-Currie	26,906	29,799	90.3%
8 Calgary-East	28,318	29,621	95.6%
9 Calgary-Elbow	30,338	32,222	94.2%
10 Calgary-Fish Creek	27,540	28,329	97.2%
11 Calgary-Foothills	28,360	29,218	97.1%
12 Calgary-Fort	24,755	26,041	95.1%
13 Calgary-Glenmore	32,940	33,734	97.6%
14 Calgary-Greenway	24,816	26,186	94.8%
15 Calgary-Hawkwood	32,150	32,848	97.9%
16 Calgary-Hays	26,750	28,097	95.2%
17 Calgary-Klein	27,637	29,432	93.9%
18 Calgary-Lougheed	28,727	29,898	96.1%
19 Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill	27,966	28,806	97.1%
20 Calgary-McCall	21,750	23,294	93.4%
21 Calgary-Mountain View	26,198	28,845	90.8%
22 Calgary-North West	28,638	29,999	95.5%
23 Calgary-Northern Hills	31,056	31,577	98.4%
24 Calgary-Shaw	28,785	29,664	97.0%
25 Calgary-South East	28,046	30,227	92.8%
26 Calgary-Varsity	27,466	28,787	95.4%
27 Calgary-West	26,125	27,278	95.8%
28 Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview	28,620	29,846	95.9%
29 Edmonton-Calder	27,274	28,855	94.5%
30 Edmonton-Castle Downs	29,226	29,872	97.8%
31 Edmonton-Centre	23,995	27,167	88.3%
32 Edmonton-Decore	27,648	28,596	96.7%
33 Edmonton-Ellerslie	24,945	26,274	94.9%
34 Edmonton-Glenora	26,626	28,491	93.5%
35 Edmonton-Gold Bar	30,349	32,049	94.7%
36 Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood	25,452	27,318	93.2%
37 Edmonton-Manning	26,987	28,340	95.2%
38 Edmonton-McClung	25,706	26,737	96.1%
39 Edmonton-Meadowlark	25,665	26,779	95.8%
40 Edmonton-Mill Creek	23,412	24,751	94.6%
41 Edmonton-Mill Woods	24,316	25,309	96.1%
42 Edmonton-Riverview	26,706	28,035	95.3%
43 Edmonton-Rutherford	25,392	26,444	96.0%
44 Edmonton-South West	26,469	28,340	93.4%

**Table 4: Accuracy of Lists of Electors Used for the Election**

<b>Electoral Division</b>	<b>Number of Names on January 2012 List</b>	<b>Number of Names on July 2012 List</b>	<b>Accuracy of January 2012 List</b>
45 Edmonton-Strathcona	24,171	27,242	88.7%
46 Edmonton-Whitemud	31,898	33,168	96.2%
47 Airdrie	28,928	30,637	94.4%
48 Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater	23,415	25,040	93.5%
49 Banff-Cochrane	26,362	28,447	92.7%
50 Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock	25,351	26,959	94.0%
51 Battle River-Wainwright	24,255	25,392	95.5%
52 Bonnyville-Cold Lake	20,329	21,266	95.6%
53 Cardston-Taber-Warner	23,606	24,276	97.2%
54 Chestermere-Rocky View	29,542	30,712	96.2%
55 Cypress-Medicine Hat	25,247	26,180	96.4%
56 Drayton Valley-Devon	23,051	25,085	91.9%
57 Drumheller-Stettler	23,320	24,505	95.2%
58 Fort McMurray-Conklin	13,272	14,334	92.6%
59 Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo	19,796	21,359	92.7%
60 Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville	28,029	29,603	94.7%
61 Grande Prairie-Smoky	26,123	27,359	95.5%
62 Grande Prairie-Wapiti	27,374	29,416	93.1%
63 Highwood	29,758	31,781	93.6%
64 Innisfail-Sylvan Lake	25,857	27,485	94.1%
65 Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills	19,463	20,578	94.6%
66 Lacombe-Ponoka	24,071	24,919	96.6%
67 Leduc-Beaumont	28,815	30,664	94.0%
68 Lethbridge-East	30,256	31,024	97.5%
69 Lethbridge-West	26,681	28,604	93.3%
70 Little Bow	22,225	23,018	96.6%
71 Livingstone-Macleod	26,862	29,192	92.0%
72 Medicine Hat	27,820	28,391	98.0%
73 Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills	26,626	28,876	92.2%
74 Peace River	18,280	18,952	96.5%
75 Red Deer-North	27,705	28,702	96.5%
76 Red Deer-South	31,049	31,975	97.1%
77 Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre	25,598	26,916	95.1%
78 Sherwood Park	29,081	30,102	96.6%
79 Spruce Grove-St. Albert	32,548	34,552	94.2%
80 St. Albert	31,065	32,000	97.1%
81 Stony Plain	27,243	29,383	92.7%
82 Strathcona-Sherwood Park	30,173	31,609	95.5%
83 Strathmore-Brooks	25,850	27,363	94.5%
84 Vermilion-Lloydminster	22,548	23,577	95.6%
85 West Yellowhead	19,115	20,323	94.1%
86 Wetaskiwin-Camrose	25,844	27,129	95.3%
87 Whitecourt-Ste. Anne	22,910	24,677	92.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,265,169</b>	<b>2,387,485</b>	<b>94.9%</b>

## **Official Results**

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The official results were announced by each of the 87 returning officers on Thursday, May 3, 2012.

No controverted election petition was filed for the election.

## **Judicial Recount**

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One judicial recount was requested, pursuant to section 144 of the *Election Act*. The unofficial count conducted on polling day in the electoral division of Calgary-Fish Creek showed a 74 vote margin of victory for the Wildrose Alliance Party candidate over the second place candidate, representing the Progressive Conservative Party.

Returning officers in all electoral divisions are required to perform an official count of ballots. This began on Wednesday, April 25, in Calgary-Fish Creek. The two leading candidates were present, or had representatives present, throughout the official count. The official results announced by the returning officer on Thursday, May 3, 2012 reduced the margin of victory for the winning candidate to 40 votes.

The returning officer's decision was appealed by the Progressive Conservative candidate, and a judicial recount of all ballots began on Thursday, May 10.

On May 10, upon conclusion of the judicial recount, The Honourable Mr. Justice C.S. Brooker certified the results to the returning officer. The Wildrose Alliance Party candidate was declared elected by a 38 vote margin of victory, subject to further appeal. No notice of appeal was served on the returning officer, and the Wildrose Alliance Party candidate was declared elected on Monday, May 14, 2012, in accordance with section 147.

## **Custody and Inspection of Election Documents**

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Polling day documentation for 86 electoral divisions was returned to Elections Alberta following the announcement of the Official Results, in accordance with section 142 of the *Election Act*. In accordance with that section, polling day documentation for Calgary-Fish Creek was retained by the returning officer until the conclusion of the judicial recount.

Section 152 authorizes candidates and their official agents to review all polling day documentation for their electoral division, with the exception of the ballots, in the thirty-day period following the publication of the names of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Alberta Gazette, which occurred on May 31, 2012. Six candidates and official agents availed themselves of this opportunity.

During this same time period, candidates and their official agents were entitled to obtain copies of the Poll Books used at the election. Copies were requested on a cost-recovery basis by 148 candidates and official agents.

## **Production of the Post-Polling Day Lists of Electors**

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Elector information collected throughout the election period and on polling day was incorporated into the Register of Electors for preparation of future Lists of Electors. Administrative assistants were responsible for the data entry, under the supervision of local returning officers.

Lists were updated following the election by:

- moving electors from old to new addresses,
- adding first-time electors,
- correcting polling subdivision assignments, where necessary, and
- correcting names and addresses, where required.

Lists were made available to registered political parties and Members of the Legislative Assembly in July 2012, in accordance with section 19(2) of the *Election Act*. Data files were downloaded via secure Internet connection to safeguard the transmission of personal information. Restrictions for use prescribed by section 20 were provided to List recipients to ensure elector information is used appropriately. Penalties for misuse include fines up to \$100,000, or a term of imprisonment up to one year, or both. For the first time, Lists were “seeded” with fictitious elector information for the purpose of tracing unauthorized use.

## **Continuous Register of Electors Management**

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Section 18 of the *Election Act* directs that both registered political parties and independent Members of the Legislative Assembly receive updated Lists on a regular basis. With any large database, it is a major challenge to compare and correct entries against other data sets. It is particularly challenging when some entries cannot be matched conclusively because of incomplete information. The challenge increases in the case of common names where birth date and previous address information is unavailable.

Maintaining the accuracy and currency of Lists of Electors is a high priority; increasingly so given the viability of future door-to-door enumerations. Continued emphasis will be placed on the economical acquisition of accurate, timely data for use in updating the Lists. Planning is also underway for the systematic collection of updated elector information directly from electors. All data collection efforts will continue to reconcile the need for updated information with the electors’ rights to privacy.

## Senate Nominee Election Highlights

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On April 23, 2012, an election under the *Senatorial Selection Act* was conducted in conjunction with the Provincial General Election. Names of thirteen candidates appeared on the ballot, from which Albertans were asked to elect three Senate Nominees. A summary of the provincial tabulation of official results appears below. Additional details will be made available in the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 2012 Senate Nominee Election.

<b>*Doug BLACK</b> , Progressive Conservative Party	<b>427,745</b>
Len BRACKO, Independent	141,830
Perry CHAHAL, Independent	65,164
William EXELBY, Independent	81,476
David FLETCHER, Independent	114,940
Paul FRANK, Independent	93,586
Raymond GERMAIN, Wildrose	299,800
Rob GREGORY, Wildrose	300,883
Elizabeth JOHANNSON, Evergreen Party of Alberta	149,844
Vitor MARCIANO, Wildrose	246,787
<b>*Mike SHAIKH</b> , Progressive Conservative Party	<b>309,587</b>
<b>*Scott TANNAS</b> , Progressive Conservative Party	<b>351,761</b>
Ian URQUHART, Independent	107,397
TOTAL	2,690,800

**\*Elected**