

Contact: Walter Jones,
Communications Manager
(470) 312-2803

Press Office: (404) 360-9033



Peanut Poll Results Are Peachy

(PERRY, Ga.) – Voters in a straw poll conducted at the Georgia National State Fair are feeling peachy about the new voting machines they used in the mock contest.

Peaches came out the winner in voting on the favorite Georgia Grown food, followed by pecans, peanuts and blueberries. If nuts and berry supporters were dejected by the results, they could have found comfort in knowing the election was secure, according to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

Raffensperger, Georgia’s chief election official, noted that the new voting technology’s paper ballots provide an audit trail to ensure election tallies are accurate in case the second-place candidate – or crop – requests a recount. Georgia conducts recounts when requested by candidates coming within 0.5 percent of the winner.

“Paper ballots are the secure way Georgia elections will be handled statewide, starting with next year’s presidential preference primary,” he said. “From now on, no one will feel sour about the integrity of the results.”

More than 3,700 ballots were cast by fairgoers who came by the Department of Agriculture’s Georgia Grown pavilion where the touchscreen voting was on display. Peaches topped the balloting for favorite Georgia Grown foods with 1,399 votes, coming next were pecans with 973, peanuts with 703 and blueberries in fourth place with 639.

Peaches also racked up 514 votes as the best ice cream flavor.

The Secretary of State’s Office annually conducts straw polls at the 10-day fair on topics like foods, ice cream, fair foods and favorite professional teams. The first Peanut Poll was in 2015.

This year Raffensperger wanted to showcase the new voting system that will replace the machines Georgians have used since 2002.

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A multi-agency committee evaluated proposals from national voting-system manufacturers with guidelines enacted into law by the General Assembly. In July, the state contracted with Dominion Voting Systems for touchscreen voting stations that print paper ballots.

As people at the fair learned, they can check the printout for their mistakes before casting the ballot. Reaction from those trying the machines was overwhelmingly positive.

“Try it out; it’s really easy... really, really easy. No confusion,” fairgoer Rhonda Stone told 42NBC.

As a pilot, the new system is being used in an actual election for municipal contests in six counties, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Decatur, Lowndes and Paulding. In a seventh county, Cobb, voters are using hand-marked ballots that will counted by scanners that are part of the Dominion technology.

Early voting in those municipal elections began Oct. 14. In the first five days in the pilot counties, 2,606 people have cast ballots. Local officials say voters have been very supportive.

“Voter surveys are 95 percent positive,” said Deb Cox, supervisor of elections in Lowndes County.

The experience is the same in the other pilot counties.

“During the demonstrations and open house and the first couple of days of voting, voters said they liked it,” said Carol Heard, chief election official in Decatur County. “It was easier than they thought, and they really liked the concept of the paper ballot.”

The Peanut Poll results are as follows:

BEST ICE CREAM FLAVOR

Vanilla	717
Chocolate	945
Cookies and Cream	519

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Butter Pecan	777
Peach	514
Write-in	214
Total Votes	3986

FAVORITE GEORGIA GROWN FOOD

Blueberries	639
Pecans	963
Peaches	1399
Peanuts	703
Total Votes	3704

FAVORITE FAIR FOOD

Hot Dogs	439
Pretzels	255
Fried Oreos	274
Corn Dogs	593
Funnel Cake	1278
Turkey Leg	484
Write-in	384
Total Votes	3707

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FAVORITE GEORGIA PRO TEAM

Augusta Green Jackets	83
Atlanta Dream	62
Savannah Bananas	157
Atlanta Braves	1760
Columbus Lions	39
Atlanta Falcons	685
Georgia Swarm	41
Atlanta United	289
Macon Mayhem	265
Atlanta Hawks	154
Rome Braves	77
Total Votes	3612

For more information about Georgia's secure, paper-based system, click here <<https://sos.ga.gov/securevoting/>> .

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