

# SPECIAL ELECTION REPORT

## County goes big for Obama, first black sheriff

In one important category, Phillips County can claim to be No. 1 in Arkansas. It gave President Barack Obama the highest percentage of its vote in the general election of any county in Arkansas.

Obama led the ticket in only 10 Arkansas counties. Phillip County's 65.5 percent was his highest share in any county, followed by Jefferson County's 64 percent.

It was an election that produced the first African-American sheriff in Phillips County's history. Cornelius "Neal" Byrd, a Helena-West Helena police officer, won a surprisingly lopsided victory over longtime sheriff's deputy David Lawman. Byrd, who ran as an independent, received 59 percent of the votes.

Grace Henderson was elected to the Marvell City Council, the city's only contested race.

John Huff, formerly of Marvell, was elected to the Helena-West Helena City Council.

The election produced two new legislators for Phillips County: State Senator Keith Ingram of West Memphis and State Representative Chris Richey of Helena-West Helena, both Democrats.

The Arkansas Public Policy Panel held a widely attended candidate forum before the election at the Boys Girls Adults Community Development Center. Beatrice Shelby, executive director of BGACDC, said civic engagement was a major part of its parental-empowerment project for citizens 18 to 39 years old.

"We must involve our young adults in civic activities like elections so they make a difference in the civic lives of our communities and develop skills and values that make a continuous difference."



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