

Election panel gets two new commissioners

By [David Showers](#)

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The Republican and Democratic party committees of Garland County have filled their respective positions on the Garland County Election Commission for the 2017-2018 term, and the panel will meet next week to elect a chairman.

County Republicans selected Gene Haley for Position 1 and Ralph Edds for Position 2. The Democratic Committee selected Harold "Butch" Davis for position 3. The election commission will meet Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the election commission building, 649-A Ouachita Ave., to select a chairman.

Haley, a fourth-generation poll worker from Lonsdale, served as chairman the last two years and oversaw the county's transition from assigned election day polling places to vote centers. He also helped the county get approved for a state pilot program that awarded it new electronic ballot marking devices, optical scanners and electronic pollbooks ahead of last year's elections.

Edds ran for the District 13 Justice of the Peace Republican nomination last year after retiring as state coordinator for the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy program.

Davis is a retired teacher who worked for more than 20 years in the Hot Springs School District and was chief judge of a vote center during last year's elections. He and his wife have been poll workers during the last three general election cycles.

The county party committee of the state party that controls the majority of the state's seven constitutional offices gets to select two of the three election commissioners in January of odd years. The Republicans swept all seven offices in 2014, giving the county election commission a Republican majority since January 2015.

Haley said the commission will hold a retirement reception for former commissioners Ginna Watson and Dennis Bosch on Feb. 1.