

# State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

212 East Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Post Office Box 7984  
Madison, WI 53707-7984  
Voice (608) 266-8005  
Fax (608) 267-0500  
E-mail: [gab@wisconsin.gov](mailto:gab@wisconsin.gov)  
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE THOMAS H. BARLAND  
Chairperson

KEVIN J. KENNEDY  
Director and General Counsel

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**DATE:** November 18, 2011

**TO:** Wisconsin Municipal Clerks  
City of Milwaukee Election Commission  
Wisconsin County Clerks  
Milwaukee County Election Commission

**FROM:** Nathaniel E. Robinson  
Elections Division Administrator  
Wisconsin Government Accountability Board

**SUBJECT:** Redistricting Update #5: Municipal and Ward Boundaries

The G.A.B. technical team is working hard preparing to implement the new legislative districts in SVRS on December 1. As clerks know, we are importing the new wards, aldermanic, county supervisory, State Assembly, State Senate, and Congressional districts from WISE-LR, the tool that the Legislature used to facilitate Redistricting, into SVRS. The districts in WISE-LR are based on census data and use census blocks as the building blocks for districts.

## Census Data Accuracy

Some geographic information specialists and clerks have contacted G.A.B. with questions regarding anomalies between census data and the actual municipal boundaries and geography. According to the Census Bureau, the Census geographic data is accurate to approximately 50 meters. 50 meters can be enough for a house to potentially appear in the wrong district, so to address this, G.A.B. is allowing counties to provide us with wards from their county GIS systems that have been adjusted to reflect actual physical municipal boundaries and geography.

## Using County GIS Data

The data from the county GIS systems tends to be highly accurate, and in some cases at a survey level of accuracy. So far, approximately 15 counties have provided us with adjusted wards. For those counties, we will use the adjusted wards instead of the census-based wards we receive from WISE-LR. Using the adjusted wards also ensures that all other districts that are built upon those wards (aldermanic, county supervisory, State Assembly, State Senate, and Congressional) will also follow the correct municipal boundaries. We will continue to implement corrected wards as counties are able to provide them to us. If we get corrected wards from a county after December 1, we will work with the impacted clerks so you know if your boundary lines will be changing.

## Correcting Exceptions

For counties that were not able to provide us with adjusted wards from their county GIS systems, clerks may see some discrepancies with municipal boundaries in SVRS on December 1 when the new districts become available. G.A.B. is creating a special exception report specifically to identify any registered voters who appear in the incorrect municipality after we implement the new district maps. Clerks will

be given instructions and training on how to correct any registered voters who are inadvertently placed in the wrong municipality. Future guidance will also provide instructions as to any new voter registration issues that may arise.

### Fixing Boundary Lines

Starting after the Spring 2012 elections, in Phase II of the changes to SVRS, as part of the G.A.B. Redistricting Initiative, SVRS will have a boundary management tool that will allow clerks to correct inaccuracies in their boundary lines. For counties that were not able to provide corrections from their GIS system, they will be able to make those corrections in SVRS using the district management tool. If your county did provide us with corrected wards from your county GIS system, then corrections can continue to be made in the County system, and then imported into SVRS from the County system.

If you have questions on the Redistricting project, please do not hesitate to contact the Help Desk at [gabhhelpdesk@wi.gov](mailto:gabhhelpdesk@wi.gov), or (608) 261-2028. Thank you.

cc: Kevin J. Kennedy  
Director and General Counsel  
Government Accountability Board

Ross D. Hein  
Elections Supervisor  
Government Accountability Board

Sarah Whitt  
SVRS Functional Team Lead  
Government Accountability Board

Shane Falk  
Staff Counsel  
Government Accountability Board