

## Hand Counting Works in Any County, Any Size

By Linda Rantz, Author, *Missouri Elections: Return to Hand Counting*

### The Myth: Hand Counting Only Works in Small Counties

Many assume hand counting is only feasible in small counties, believing larger counties need machines due to higher ballot volumes. This myth ignores a key fact: the number of ballots cast at polling places, not the county's size, determines what's doable. Across the U.S., the average polling place sees 360–480 ballots cast (600–800 registered voters at 60% turnout). Whether in a small or large county, this workload is the same.

### Finding: Polling Place Size Matters, Not County Size

Compare Osage County, Missouri (under 10,000 voters), to St. Charles County (292,000 voters) during the April 2023 election:

- **Osage (Small):** At Westphalia polling place, 481 ballots were hand-counted by one team (4 people) in 5 hours.
- **St. Charles (Large):** Of 115 polling places, 83 had fewer than 481 ballots; the rest were under 1,000. With 1–2 teams per polling place, St. Charles could have hand-counted the entire election in 5 hours.

### Visualize and Plan with Tools

The Visualizations of Voter Turnout tool (available at [ReturntoHandCounting.com/Tools](https://ReturntoHandCounting.com/Tools)) uses historical data to show polling place turnout. In St. Charles, most polling places need just 1-2 teams, even in presidential elections. This proves hand counting scales to any county size efficiently.

### Action for Elected Officials

Hand counting works in any county—small or large. Use my Visualizations tool to assess your jurisdiction's polling places and support hand counting for transparent elections. For more data, including St. Charles' turnout graphs, scan the QR code, visit the hand count [website](https://ReturntoHandCounting.com), or email [ContactUs@ReturntoHandCounting.com](mailto:ContactUs@ReturntoHandCounting.com).

