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Officials receive expert's report

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— An expert on Friday delivered chapter and verse on damages to the county's new touchscreen voting units — which got soaked from a broken overhead pipe.

Only six of Cambria County's voting units will need to be replaced, a testing expert told the county commissioners Friday. And only three others will have to be repaired, said Ian Malee, president of Coastal Technical Services.

The nine units were among the 126 directly hit by the water, he said. An additional 150 that were exposed to moisture and condensation also have been tested, he noted.

By the time of the election, all will have been recertified as accurate and ready for use by Election Systems & Software, the manufacturer, Malee said.

Each unit will have documentation showing each meets recognized standards for accuracy, he said.

Assuring residents that all machines will be ready for the May 15 primary, President Commissioner P.J. Stevens said, "Any not meeting the strict criteria will be replaced."

Cambria will have to pay the first \$10,000 for the testing and replacement costs, with the rest paid through its insurance coverage, the commissioners said.

Malee said the decision by Fred R. Smith, county elections supervisor, to take out the batteries from the affected units was instrumental in containing the damage.

The batteries, if left in place, would have caused corrosion, he said.

County employees moved the affected units from the storage area in the old county jail into the basement of the courthouse to dry them out after February's mishap.

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