

CIRCUITS ARE BUSY AT THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Summary

The operations of the Registrar of Voters (ROV) on the day before and on Election Day November 5, 2002, were the focus of this study. The task of organizing 1,750 polling places and training more than 7,000 people for a short-term operation is monumental. For this study, select areas in the overall operations were reviewed and the results are being reported to the ROV along with recommendations for improvements.

An assessment of the expanded telephone system revealed that the system may be adequate throughout the year, but it is still not meeting the needs during the peak activities just prior to and on Election Day. An assessment of the polling places through visits made on Election Day revealed three areas of concern. Poll workers were not aware of the Direct Record Electronic (DRE) voting system demonstrations held in the County. Second, some polling places in schools lacked designated voter and handicapped parking. Third, entrance signs to polling places in some church or school parking places were not readable from the street.

Introduction

The 2001-2002 Orange County Grand Jury studied the adequacy of the ROV telephone system during the March 5, 2002 election, and it recommended an expansion of the number of telephone lines from 48 to 72. The ROV actually increased the number of lines to 96. The initial purpose of this study was to check the effectiveness of the expanded telephone system. Other Election Day activities were observed and assessed since the Grand Jury has jurisdiction responsibility for the ROV.

The purpose of this study was to recommend low-cost improvements in the overall election time operations. The recommendations are consistent with the use of either the punch card or the new DRE system.

Method of Study

- Prepared specific questions, placed calls to the ROV on the 1st, 4th and 5th of November 2002, and recorded the results.
- Prepared questionnaire, visited polling places on Election Day, asked the prepared questions and recorded the results.
- Attended poll worker training classes and observed the pre-election preparations.
- Visited ROV after polls closed and observed the vote-counting procedures.

Background

To assess the effectiveness of the expanded telephone system, eight Grand Jury members were provided with a specific question and asked to make calls on or before Election Day. The responses were recorded based on the criteria provided in Attachment 1. Results of the responses are summarized in Attachment 2. Of the thirty telephone calls made, only seven were satisfactorily completed through the whole cycle. In the other twenty-three cases, the circuits are busy message was received.

To assess Election Day activities thirteen Grand Jury members visited 59 polling places. Using the questionnaire shown in Attachment 3, questions were asked of the poll workers. Responses were recorded and are shown in Attachment 4. The majority of the polling places were found to be well run by trained and courteous staff. However, some areas of concern remain.

- In all but one precinct, poll workers were not aware that ROV had plans to replace the punch card system with new DRE voting machines. They were also not aware of the earlier opportunities to participate in the demonstrations that had been held in the community before the November 5, 2002, election.
- In a majority of cases, when the interviewed poll workers had need to contact ROV by phone, either the calls did not go through, or when messages were left, some calls were not returned. Fortunately, the poll workers were innovative and worked around many of the difficulties. In some cases, ROV coordinators helped them.
- Polling places in some schools and in some churches needed larger signs at the entrances so that they could be more easily read from the street. Parking at some schools was not adequate for voters and for handicapped individuals. The handicap access from parking areas to the polling room was inadequate in some school facilities.
- Some supplies needed for efficient operations at the polling places were missing in certain cases.



Ninety-six telephone lines in place, but many calls did not go through.

Findings

Under California Penal Code Section 933 and Section 933.05, responses are required to all findings. The 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at five findings.

1. Thirty phone calls were made to the ROV by eight Grand Jurors. Only seven calls were completed.
2. A majority of poll workers questioned were unaware of the Direct Record Electronic (DRE) voting system demonstrations conducted by the ROV.
3. A majority of phone calls made by the interviewed poll workers to the ROV received the circuits are busy message, and when messages were left at ROV, some calls were not returned.
4. Some polling places at schools lacked designated voter and handicapped parking. Some lacked access for the handicapped from the parking area to the polling place.
5. Signs provided by ROV for the entrances to school and church polling places were not readable from the street.

Responses to Findings 1-5 are required from the Board of Supervisors.

Responses to Findings 1-5 are requested from the Registrar of Voters.

Responses to Findings 1 and 3 are requested from the County Executive Office, Office of Information Technology.

Recommendations

In accordance with California penal Code Section 933 and Section 933.05, each recommendation must be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. These responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Based on the findings, the 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following recommendations.

1. Review the telephone system at ROV with the local phone carrier to determine why “the circuits are busy” message was received for a large number of calls. (Findings 1 and 3)
2. In addition to the media release, use the *Poll Worker Connection Quarterly* publication or a separate flyer to inform poll workers, and the public, as to future DRE introductory demonstrations. (Finding 2)
3. Ensure that adequate voter parking and access to polling places for the handicapped are provided. Make necessary arrangements with school authorities and inspect the sites prior to Election Day. (Finding 4)

4. Provide larger readable entrance signs directing voters to polling places located in churches, schools or any other similar large facility. (Finding 5)

Responses to Recommendations 1-4 are required from the Board of Supervisors.

Responses to Recommendations 1-4 are requested from the Registrar of Voters.

Response to Recommendation 1 is requested from the County Executive Office, Office of Information and Technology.

Attachment 1

Phone calls to the ROV

Questions assigned to Grand Jury members for calling on November 1-5.

1. I am worried that my absentee ballot may not have been received by the ROV; how can I be sure that it was?
2. I read in the newspaper that Los Angeles has 21 places you can vote on touch screen machines. Where can I vote on them in Orange County?
3. What times do the polls open and close tomorrow?
4. This will be my first time to vote. Will I need any identification to vote if I am already registered?
5. I have lost my sample ballot book. Can you tell me where am I supposed to go to vote?
6. I am a recent naturalized citizen and have not registered. Can I vote on November 5th?
7. I have my absentee ballot here and I forgot to mail it. What should I do?
8. How do I find information about candidates and measures not included in the voter's pamphlet?

Criteria for assessing phone calls to ROV:

Date and time of day of the call.

The time it took.

Did you receive an automated call, or a real person?

What were the options provided, if the response was automatic?

Did you get a busy signal?

Were you transferred?

Were they able to answer your questions? Were they courteous and helpful?

Attachment 2: Detailed results of the phone calls made to the ROV

Index	Time	Nov. 2002	Connected	Auto or Person	Transfer	Answer	Helpful	Phone Busy	Phone OK
1	10:30AM	1 st	Yes	Auto/operator	Yes	Yes	Yes		1
2	1:00PM	4 th	Yes	Auto/web	No	Yes			1
3	2:00PM	4 th	No	All Cir. Busy				1	
4	2:36PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
5	2:45PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
6	2:55PM	4 th	Yes	Person		Yes	Yes		1
7	2:47PM	4 th	Yes	Auto/operator	Yes	Yes	Yes		1
8	2:37PM	4 th	Yes	Auto/operator	Yes	Yes	Yes		1
9	7:50AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
10	8:09AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
11	8:46AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
12	10:40AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
13	10:50AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
14	11:25AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
15	3:06PM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
16	3:40PM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
17	5:05PM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
18	4:00PM	5 th	Yes	Auto/operator	Yes	Yes	Yes		1
19	3:45PM	4 th	Yes	Auto/operator	Yes	Yes	Yes		1
20	9:50AM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
21	10:00AM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
22	12:00PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
23	12:40PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
24	3:50PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
25	4:45PM	4 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
26	8:00AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
27	9:50AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
28	11:05AM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
29	1:20PM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
30	4:00PM	5 th	No	All Cir Busy				1	
Total								23	7

Note: The calls are grouped by the individual making the phone calls, not chronologically.

Attachment 3: Suggested questions for poll observers on November 5, 2002

A. Observations on the way to the polling place:

1. If polling place is in large building—such as a school—was the voting area easy to find?
2. Were the direction signs adequate?
3. Is the place accessible for the handicapped? If blue logo handicap sign is not visible was one needed?

B. Observations of the people and surroundings.

4. Are all of the people friendly, courteous and helpful?
5. Is the table set up correctly? You don't need to check every detail, but check to see if ballots and ballot box are in correct place.
6. Does the set-up of the booths afford privacy?

C. Questions for the poll workers:

7. How did things go this morning at opening? Did you have all of the supplies and ballots that you needed?
8. Have you had the need to call the ROV office today? Have you been successful getting through?
9. How many workers do you have working here today? Is it a problem to get workers in this area?
10. Did you get a chance to attend a demonstration of the new voting machines that we will be getting soon?

Attachment 4: Poll Observer Report Summary

The numbers under the “Problem” heading refer to the numbers of the questions in Attachment 3. The “Index” column is only for tracking the information. Precinct numbers are not in order, rather, the data is grouped by individuals visiting the polling places.

Index	Precinct No	Location	Problem	Comments
1	32-176	Huntington Beach	10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
2	32-308	Huntington Beach	10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
3	32-179	Huntington Beach	3	Must climb across curb. Parking inadequate.
			10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
4	32-366	Huntington Beach	1	Voting place not easy to find.
			2	Signs barely adequate.
			3	Handicap access very poor. All voters had to pass through school trash bins.
			10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
5	32-358	Huntington Beach	3	Handicap logo not visible.
			10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
6	32-306	Huntington Beach	10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
7	32-305	Huntington Beach	7	No “I Voted” labels.
			8	Call to ROV did not get through. GJ had same problem.
			10	Did not attend demo for new voting system.
8	02-365	Anaheim	10	No information on new touch screen voting system.
9	02-427	Anaheim	10	No information on new touch screen voting system.
10	48-251	San Clemente	10	No information on new touch screen voting system.
11	48-141	San Clemente	7	Missing items on Saturday. Were delivered on Sunday.
12	72-314	Santa Ana	8	Called three times. Missing supplies—no response. Regarding jammed machine—no response. Called again, left message, not return call.
13	72-264	Santa Ana	10	No knowledge of demo for new touch screen voting machine.
14	72-255	Santa Ana	1	Signs hard to find due to construction. Still putting up signs at 8:50 a.m.
			10	No knowledge of new voting machines.
15	72-310	Santa Ana	10	No knowledge of demo for new touch screen machine.
16	72-268	Tustin	10	No knowledge of demo for new touch screen machine.
17	75-110	Villa Park	10	Did not know of demo for new voting system.
18	75-112	Villa Park	3	Handicap logo was installed after inquiry.

Index	Precinct No	Location	Problem	Comments
19	14-059	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
20	14-031	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
21	14-041	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
22	14-042	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
23	14-044	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
24	14-207	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touchscreen machine.
25	14-215	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
26	14-295	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
27	14-244	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
28	14-021	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
29	14-234	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
30	14-034	Garden Grove	10	Did not know about new touch screen machine.
31	53-614	Newport Beach	10	Did not know about new voting systems.
32	53-393	Newport Beach	3	Handicap logo not visible. Parking major problem. Red curb or student parking and no handicap parking.
			9	Two workers did not show up, ROV provided replacement. Need larger signs.
33	53-099	Newport Beach	4	Workers not very friendly, busy talking to friends.
			9	Only 3 workers.
			10	Did not know about new machines
34	53-602	Newport Beach	2	Need larger signs at the entrance and corner.
			8	Call to ROV unanswered.
			10	Did not know about new voting system.
35	13-094	Fullerton	7	Short of nametags.
			10	Did not know about new voting machine.
36	53-603	Newport Beach	2	Need larger signs.
			7	Three items missing. Called Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Left message no reply
			10	Did not know about new machine demo.
37	53-089	Newport Beach	3	Need larger signs. Parking lot was closed off. Handicap parking major problem.
38	75-115	Villa Park	1	On Nicholas Street instead of Serrano Street.
			3	Handicap access not available.
			10	Did not know about new voting machine.

Index	Precinct No	Location	Problem	Comments
39	75-116	Villa Park	1,3,10	Same comment as 75-115.
40	63-384	Orange	7	Received extra signs.
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
41	63-383	Orange	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
42	63-066	Orange	3	Signs are too small.
			9	Student observer did not show up.
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
43	68-073	Santa Ana	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
44	59-027	Irvine	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
45	59-082	Irvine	2	Sign was hard to notice
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
46	59-609	Irvine	2	No sign on University Avenue.
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
47	59-111	Irvine	2	No sign on the street.
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
48	59-130	Irvine	2	No signs on the street
			7	No name tags
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
49	53-360	Balboa Island	10	Did not know about new voting machines
50	53-082	Balboa Island	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
51	53-361	Balboa Island	8	Made call but did not get through.
			10	Did not know about new voting machines.
				Several voters did not get absentee ballots.
52	53-098	Balboa	10	Did not know about new voting systems.
				Garage poorly lit. Need to change location.
53	53-102	Balboa	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
54	53-612	Newport Beach	10	Did not know about new voting machines.
55	39-366	Westminster		
56	14-602	Westminster	2	Need large signs
57	14-249	Westminster		
58	39-607	Westminster		
59	39-608	Westminster		