



ISSUE 17
JUNE 2019

VOTING SOLUTIONS FOR ALL PEOPLE

Quarterly Newsletter

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THE LATEST



Our office received 15 production-grade VSAP Ballot Marking Devices. Currently these devices are in our Election Operations Center where both County and Smartmatic teams will create the infrastructure to test all the device hardware and software components.



Operational and technical procedures were center stage in Hawaiian Gardens and the Norwalk Headquarters as project teams presented each component of the new voting experience. This event, known as Test Lab 1 is the first of three that will occur throughout the summer months.



The second round of Vote Center Placement Project community meetings is complete. This round of community meetings focused on the specific locations that met the criteria to be a vote center within the community. Over 1,300 individuals attended one of the 34 community meetings.

CONTACT US

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MESSAGE *from Dean*

On Monday, June 17 our office received a glimpse of reality when the long-awaited shipment of 15 Ballot Marking Devices traveled over 6,800 miles to our very own Election Operations Center. This shipment is significant as it represents over a decade of tireless work from our staff at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, IDEO, Smartmatic, Gartner and many stakeholders.

Although the first half of the year has been busy – conducting six elections on top of our work on the Voting Solutions for All People initiative – I am proud to see the level of detail and commitment from the project teams to get us to this point.

In the upcoming months our focus will remain on the testing and development of technical and operational procedures along with the kick-start of our community-based awareness campaign. This campaign will include reoccurring e-newsletters with project updates, timelines, outreach opportunities and educational materials to share with the community.

I look forward to our continued partnership as we take the Voting Solutions for All People into the final implementation stages.

Sincerely,

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Los Angeles County



FEATURED STORY

VSAP Ballot Marking Devices are in the House

June 17, 2019

In June 2016 the Voting Solutions for All People had just reached its most significant milestone in completing the Research and Design Phase of the new Ballot Marking Device. Three years since reaching that feat our Department now has in its possession the first 15 production-grade Ballot Marking Devices. These units are the first of 31,000 that will be arriving later this year in preparation for the full implementation to the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election.

On Monday, June 17 both the VSAP Executive Steering Committee and Smartmatic project teams assembled at the Election Operations Center to unveil the new devices. After recognizing this accomplishment our teams immediately went to work examining the devices and setting up the infrastructure to begin testing.



While these Ballot Marking Devices are predominately intended for testing purposes our office will offer community based-organizations the opportunity to receive live demonstrations at our Norwalk Headquarters or at a specified event – with notice. If your organization would like more information, please contact outreach@rcc.lacounty.gov.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Second round of Vote Center Placement Project Community Meetings



2019 Los Angeles County
Equity Summit



Future of California Elections Bootcamp:
L.A. County Elections 2020



VSAP SPOTLIGHT STORY

NBC News

Has Los Angeles County just reinvented voting?

For 2020, the nation's biggest voting district decided to grow its own voting machines and change the meaning of "Election Day." The reviews are glowing.



Dean Logan oversees the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, the largest voting district in the United States.

May 2, 2019, 10:00 AM PDT

By Kevin Monahan and Cynthia McFadden

LOS ANGELES — The biggest voting district in the United States came up with an audacious answer to the growing national problem of aging, malfunctioning and hackable voting machines.

It decided to build its own.

Los Angeles County, which has more registered voters than 42 states, gave NBC News an exclusive national broadcast look at what may be the future of voting systems. The county's 5.2 million registered voters will give the new system a test run in real time during California's presidential primary next March.

VSAP SPOTLIGHT STORY (CONT.)

Built with open-source technology over 10 years for \$100 million, and combined with a rethink of the voting process that lets locals cast ballots over 11 days instead of 13 hours, L.A. County officials believe their new machines will cut down on mechanical breakdowns and crowding and provide sophisticated protections against hacking.

“We thought, ‘We can’t wait any longer,’” said the man in charge of the new system, L.A. County Registrar Dean Logan.

A decade ago, Logan and his team decided the “voter experience,” as he calls it, needed an overhaul. For years, the county has been voting on technology that dates back to 1968, when Richard Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey for president.

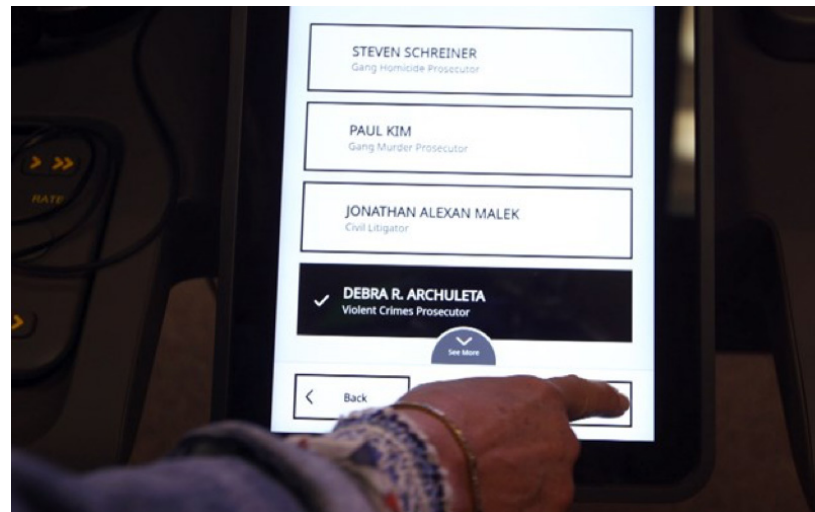
A voter’s choices are recorded on a punch card, the kind that used to be fed into bulky computers.

“The root problem was that the current system was becoming obsolete,” Logan said. “Nobody makes those card readers anymore, because IBM punch cards aren’t used to program computers anymore. We can’t replace it.”

L.A.’s predicament may seem extreme, but the problem of obsolete voting technology is nationwide. A study by the Brennan Center for Justice shows that 38 states use discontinued voting machines — machines that are no longer manufactured — in one or more jurisdictions. Another seven states use voting machines that have been discontinued in all their jurisdictions.

Machines that old are not only prone to breakdowns, but their security software also typically cannot be updated to safeguard against cyberattacks.

With nothing on the market that could meet L.A.’s needs, Logan says, the county decided to



Prototype of a new voting system in L.A. County.

build new machines itself. By using open-source technology — meaning available to everyone, instead of owned by a specific firm — the county no longer had to depend on a vendor to keep producing updates.

The machines are designed to be agile and interchangeable, Logan says. If a better part comes on the market, components can be swapped out without scrapping the whole machine.

The new L.A. voting system combines a paper ballot with a touch screen. Inside the voting booth, a person makes his or her choices on the screen. The voter then reviews the choices, feeds a paper ballot into the machine, and presses an on-screen button to complete the vote.

The paper ballot then drops into a secure box, becoming the official record of the voter’s selections as recorded using the interface on the Ballot Marking Device. Official ballots are counted independently on a separate tally system after the polls close on Election Day.

The system accommodates write-in votes, and will also allow a voter to fill out the paper ballot manually and then feed it into the machine if the person prefers. There are also 14 different languages available, large-type and earphone

VSAP SPOTLIGHT STORY (CONT.)

options, and a screen that can adjust for voters in wheelchairs.

The county's other innovation is changing the definition of Election Day. Some states have reduced crowding and increased turnout by allowing votes by mail. L.A. County believes that spreading voting over 11 days and directing residents to "voting centers," some of them mobile, will result in less chaos on Election Day, and will also save money. Without the crush of single-day voting, the county will only have to deploy 31,000 machines, half as many as in the past, and use fewer staff to check registrations and monitor the machines.

Logan concedes that "a lot" of voters will still show up on election day because that's what's ingrained, and some will show up at their old familiar polling places only to find that those sites are no longer in use.

"Hopefully, we will have socialized that to an extent that we can minimize it," Logan said. "The beauty is that in an 11-day window voting period, we're going to get a chance early on to see how things are working and correct things. We can adapt. We can get the word out to the public."

Logan also says the county may eventually be able to recoup some of the millions spent on the machines by sharing what L.A. has learned. He says the county doesn't want to go into the voting machine business, but may eventually want to provide its hardware designs and expertise to other voting districts.

Reviews from voting experts and activists have been enthusiastic.

Amber McReynolds, the former director of elections for the city of Denver and now executive director of the National Vote at Home Institute, said she has been to L.A. for a tour of the new system. "I really do believe that they have done something that's transformational in terms of how we see elections today," she said.

Lawrence Norden, deputy director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center, said the system addresses the frustration he hears from local election officials about the limited options in the voting machine market. Norden said, "I think everybody around the country that works in the election space is watching L.A. County and looking to see how this rolls out. And if it's a success, which I suspect it will be, it could have repercussions for the future of voting in the country."

Meanwhile, it's still 1968 in L.A. There are 200 separate elections in various nooks and crannies of the sprawling county every year, and until March those elections will still use the punch card-based dinosaurs.

"We're still using them in the meantime," Logan said. "We just had an election in the city of Compton and we're squeezing all of the life we can out of them. But come 2020, we'll be ready."

"A lot's changed since 1968 and we need to offer an experience that matches what people expect today."

NBC Nightly News:
<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/has-los-angeles-county-just-reinvented-voting-n1000761>

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