Using Geocentric Data to Confirm Viability of Early Voting Sites

Forsyth County, GA

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For many years in our county, we have redistricted and added precincts based on the population and recommended precinct sizes from our Secretary of State. With the introduction of the Early Voting Sites during the 2004 General Election, the percentage of voting prior to the day of election has increased significantly and introduced challenges to the site selection process.

Our concern has been that we are placing our Early Voting Sites properly throughout our county and meeting the stringent requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that we are bound by.

In meetings with our GIS department it was decided that we would capture the demographic data of our voters to be able to insure that we were able to meet the following requirements with our early voting sites:

- Political Party – even distribution of voters by political party
- Age – normal distribution of age groups
- Race – normal distribution of race

The challenge that we faced was the ability to have real time data to see how the distribution was working during the period of Early Voting.

We collect the external voter data from our statewide voter registration system and import that into data file resident on our internal server. The GIS department has used this spatial data to pinpoint the location of each voter in our county. As the daily log of voters is uploaded to our election office, we can download this to the GIS department and see what the trend is for voters throughout the county for each of our early voting sites. This has helped us to make dynamic changes to the sites i.e. adding additional informational signage to individual sites to attract voters.
GIS data has been used to help redistrict and change precinct boundaries in the past, but we have not seen it used to verify the requirements that we have with the Department of Justice to ensure our compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We are very pleased with this use of GIS data and it has had a lot of interest from academics, activist groups and the general public.

The attached logic diagram shows the capture of data from our external source, spatial data conversion by GIS and real time data input from our Early Voting Sites. In addition, I have attached graphs which show the breakdown of voting by age and political party per site as well as daily graphs of individual voting sites. While this has only been used for one election, we believe the potential is enormous to help us for future selection and confirmation of our voting site selection process.

Additionally, it will help us in the proactive nature of our voter registrations to ensure that we are providing the services to all of our potential voters.
Overall Logical Structure

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<td>222</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Daily Log of Advance Voting Sites
Advance Voting Turnout by Political Party by Location