



**24<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference  
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## **2008 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES PROGRAM**

# **Phone Bank Calls**

**Gwinnett County, GA**

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From the very first elections in 1996, when NRVA, was in effect we noticed problems with the Department of Driver Service's system. Many voters who thought they were registered were not and vice versa.

In Georgia we also noticed that about 50% to 70% of phone calls on Election Day were those citizens who were trying to vote, but didn't get registered through DDS.

As a result, the Secretary of State's office began producing a monthly list of those citizens, and more recently a second list for those who said yes but failed to provide all the required information.

These lists are provided to counties for research purposes. If we research the list and the citizen isn't registered, we can request a reprint of the record. The problem is there's not always an electronic record maintained. This triggered the need to send those citizens a letter of explanation, along with a registration application. Unfortunately, citizens being apathetic do not always return the forms and show up to vote on Election Day anyway.

Thank goodness for provisional balloting. However, again the problem of those phone calls to the election office on Election Day. We needed to make the whole process more efficient for the voter, the poll official and our office.

So in 2007 I had my entire staff attend Microsoft classes at the local college. They took all classes from beginner to advance and we've made some remarkable progress in how we operate.

One of those progressions was the DDS list. We learned how to export the list into an Access document. Then remove the social security number and title the report. The title of the report will contain the registration cutoff date as well.

When a citizen "claims" to have registered through DDS, the poll officials will check the list and if the voter's name appears, they will allow them to vote a provisional ballot. This will eliminate the need to try to get through to the Elections office. This in turn eliminates the time that the voter is at the poll thus, in theory, making the poll officials and this office look more professional. Secondly, the administrative time spent on those citizens will be reduced by approximately 70%.

The voter will be in and out almost as quickly as those voters whose names are on the official electors list.

We will use this new list for the first time in our July primary elections. We have informed our poll officials and they are excited at the prospect of only having to call on real problems.

An unintended consequence with this same process is those citizens that we research and do send letters to, we no longer have to manually type names and addresses into a file and print labels. The Access program allows us to manipulate a couple of columns and then export that to the Avery label pro. This eliminates costly mistakes when manually typing and saves a lot of man hours, which helps with our temporary budget.