2009 Professional Practices Program

Election Data Reporting: New Methods Create New Look

Los Angeles County, CA

Submitted by:

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Our Goal

The goal of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is to use existing data functionalities to produce new, consistent and ongoing record keeping and reporting methods that present information to the public in useful and interesting ways in keeping with our pledge for an open and transparent elections process.

Background

After the 2008 November Presidential General Election the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) began a program to assemble, interpret and display data in a single publication that would present the record-breaking election in a visual perspective. The Report also acts as a valuable resource for elected officials, the media, academia, and the general public and is a template for future data presentations.

Because of the RR/CC’s data collection capabilities, comparative information representing many facets of the Department’s elections operation lent itself to an interesting set of facts that are displayed in easy-to-read charts, graphs and maps.

Our GIS and Mapping Division developed a system to interface with voter registration and ballot tally frameworks that created interactive maps displaying countywide, Congressional and supervisorial district snapshots of votes for President, votes by age cohort and gender, percentages of votes cast at polling places and through vote by mail, and distributions of newly registered voters by age group.

Additionally, statistics about voter registration, student poll worker recruitment and placement, early voting, vote by mail applications and returns, provisional balloting and more were compiled and compared to past elections – some conducted over 40 years ago.

Unlike pre-election media information based on polls and projection formulas, mapping data for the project was compiled from actual votes cast and tallied, and information such as age, gender and party affiliation was captured from active registrants who showed up at the polls or who mailed in their ballots.

GIS Mapping Capabilities

Ballot and registration information contained in the Report was first sorted into precincts and then communities and displayed in both static and interactive .pdf map formats. Viewers may look at overall county, supervisorial and Congressional district details or zoom into specific communities and view information contained within community boundaries (see attached CD for representations).

The system capabilities allow information from a voter registration application to be sorted into street segments, set into precincts, and then into districts. Districts can be manipulated into political or geographical boundary maps and can be presented online in many forms.
Utilization of GIS not only allowed the RR/CC to produce valuable maps for the Report, it also streamlined internal systems by: eliminating 50,000 obsolete street addresses in our voter registration database DIMSNet; reducing election precincts by 10 percent, and minimizing printing costs by offering precinct and district maps online. Our precincting component produced a 99.8 percent accuracy rate in address identification.

**Data Collection and Presentation**

Data for the Report came from several sources; historical information for voter registration and voter turnout was culled from records dating back to 1968, while present-day information such as Instant Voice Response (IVR) phone calls and web site visits came from data created by newer programs.

The Report is made up of two sections of graphs, charts and maps. The first section graphically displays election preparation efforts and highlights voter registration and early voting statistics, web site visits, the record number of phone calls received before Election Day and maps of registered voters by party affiliation as well as newly-registered voters. It also presents a map and description of our extensive Voter Education and Engagement campaign that reached millions of Los Angeles County residents.

The second section discusses Election Day and uses statistics from our voter database and ballot tally interface to give readers a descriptive perspective of who voters were (in terms of age, gender and party), which Presidential candidate they voted for, and what communities they came from. This section also compiles and displays historical information about provisional voting, Vote by Mail requests and returns, a comparison of voters from the past three Presidential elections by age group, and descriptive maps.

The Report concludes with maps of our new Internet Ballot Tracking function that shows, in real time, ballots being delivered from precincts to Check in Centers and finally to our Department headquarters for central tabulation.

**Concluding Remarks**

Compiling and disseminating statistical and descriptive reports to the public, elected officials, academia, and the media lends itself to an open and transparent elections process and allows the RR/CC to present products of its data capabilities in many interesting ways. Graphic and map-related data displays are also useful tools for presentations on the internet (our full Report can be found at [www.lavote.net](http://www.lavote.net)), at conferences and in many other venues where election-related issues are discussed.
Voter Registration

Monthly Registration Totals
By Presidential Election Year

Voter Registration by Presidential Election Year
(1968-2008)
The major story this presidential election was the influx of new voters. In L.A. County 50 percent of newly registered voters were between the ages of 18-29. The maps below show the distribution of voters registering for the first time in Los Angeles County.

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Ranges</th>
<th>Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Percent</td>
<td>Light Pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-25%</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50%</td>
<td>Light Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75%</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-100%</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
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Registered Voters June 6-Oct. 20, 2008

Ages 18-29