



**26<sup>th</sup> Annual  
National Conference  
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## **2010 Professional Practices Program**

### **Ballot TRACE**

**City and County of Denver, Colorado**

**Submitted by:**

**Michael J. Scarpello**

**Director, Denver Elections Division**

**200 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 100**

**Denver, Colorado, 80204**

**720-913-8683**

**[michael.scarpello@denvergov.org](mailto:michael.scarpello@denvergov.org)**

**[www.denvervotes.org](http://www.denvervotes.org)**



## **The Issue**

Recent changes in Colorado law have caused an increase in the number of voters in the City and County of Denver who have chosen to vote by mail. As a result, Denver's election administrators desired more information about the status of Denver's mail ballots as they moved through the postal system. Ideally this information would be available not only to election officials, but voters as well. This paper discusses the issues relating to development of a new service that will solve Denver's dilemma.

In 2008, the State of Colorado offered a very basic lookup function on its website where a voter could search to see if their voted ballot had been returned to its local county election official. However, this system did not produce timely results and did not provide any information about the status of a ballot other than when the voted ballot was received by a local election official. Consequently, the Denver Elections Division searched for other existing solutions across the country. What we found was an innovative TrackMyVote product offered by TrackMyMail.com which used recently developed intelligent mail barcodes to track mail ballots through the postal system. While this new system offered election officials some information about the location of the mail ballots, the system did not have the ability to offer that same information to voters.

## **The Solution**

Because no existing product offered the perfect solution to Denver's challenges, the Denver Elections Division entered into a partnership with a local Denver software company to develop Ballot TRACE: a ballot tracking, reporting, and communication engine.

Ballot TRACE is a service similar to TrackMyVote in that it utilizes the Postal Service's intelligent mail barcode technology to track a ballot through every stage of the mail ballot process and to report that information to election officials. But it also takes the next step by utilizing web-based software and a messaging system to deliver that same information to voters.

With Ballot TRACE, voters receive messages (see attachment #1) about the election and the status of their ballot: before it enters the mail system, while it is being processed by the USPS, and after it has been returned to the Elections Division. Voters can choose to retrieve their updates using the Denver Elections Division's website; or they can automatically receive (in English or in Spanish) email or text messages. In the future, messages can also be delivered to voters via robotic telephone calls. (see attachment #2 and #3)

## **Developing the Service**

Developing a new service like Ballot TRACE required hard work by our vendors and the Denver Elections Division staff. We began discussions about the service in May 2009 with a local printer (i3Logix) that was looking for opportunities to grow its business. We cooperatively developed a project proposal that laid out the details of every phase of the project including: development of the scope of the project; detailing the technical requirements; developing the

design documents; procurement of resources; software development; testing; training; and implementation.

In addition to partnering with i3Logix, we worked with our print vendor, Sequoia Voting Systems, to design a new ballot envelope that included an intelligent mail bar code.

Another important vendor necessary for successful implementation was the United States Post Office. First, we signed up for USPS Confirmation Services which created an account that establishes the barcode information specific to the Denver Elections Division. Second, i3Logix created a secure file transfer protocol (FTP) site for all automated data transfers from USPS. And third, we met with Post Office representatives to obtain approval of our plans and to learn about their operations in detail so that we would be assured that our service would perform as expected.

While we partnered with our vendors in the development of this service, the Elections Division staff had to consider other issues such as marketing the service. While i3Logix is currently offering this service with the name “i3Ballot”, we chose to market it using a different name and logo that was consistent with our other existing marketing materials. Thus, we spent a considerable amount of time developing a name and logo (see attachment #4) that is both memorable and accurately describes what the service offers. We also developed several marketing pieces that we used to promote the service. (see attachment #5)

### **Beta Testing**

Because the development of this service began in June 2009, we knew we would be taking a big risk if we planned for a full scale release during our November 2009 election. Thus, we conducted several internal test mailings in October and conducted a limited public beta test during the November election. We also had the opportunity to conduct a second public beta test during a May 2010 Special Vacancy Election. Approximately 400 voters participated in these beta tests and the feedback we received about the service was very positive. Most people reported that the messaging worked correctly and that receiving such messages gave them much more confidence in the mail ballot system. In addition, the reports from Ballot TRACE revealed several major issues regarding the timeliness of delivery by the Post Office. With these reports we were able to hold the Post Office accountable.

Of course, not everything went as planned and the issues identified during our testing provided us valuable information on how to improve the process. We have learned that certain carriers do not send mass text messages and email messages in a timely fashion; we adjusted the content of our messages based on voter feedback; and we have discovered several problems with Post Office procedures and equipment.

### **Future Plans**

In the coming months, the Denver Elections Division will continue to look for ways to improve the functionality and operability of the Ballot TRACE system and to improve our communications with the USPS. We currently plan on implementing a full scale release of the service during the 2010 election cycle. In addition, we are finalizing the trademarking of the Ballot TRACE name and logo and are contemplating how best to grant permission for the use of that name to other jurisdictions.

## Ballot Trace Messages

<b>System Trigger</b>	<b>Message</b>
Confirmation Message	Thank you for signing up for Ballot TRACE! You'll get messages on delivery of your ballot for the November 3, 2009 election.
Confirmation message for opt out	You have been unsubscribed from the Ballot TRACE system.
Print Message (IMB assigned by Sequoia)	Your ballot has been printed. It will be mailed to you during the week of October 12-16, 2009.
USPS ballot received at main post office	Your ballot for the November 3, 2009 election has been delivered to the <i>main</i> Denver Post Office.
USPS ballot received at local post office	Your ballot for the November 3, 2009 election has been delivered to your <i>neighborhood</i> Denver Post Office.
USPS ballot out for delivery	Your ballot for the November 3, 2009 election is now with your postal carrier for delivery to your address today.
Ballot not received by DED in 5 days of election	Just a reminder: The election is 5 days away. Today is the last day to mail your ballot to ensure it is delivered by 7 p.m. on Election Day.
Ballot not received, last day to request replacement	Today is the last day to request a replacement ballot be mailed to you. Please contact the Denver Elections Division if you need a replacement ballot.
Ballot not received, Election Day	Today is Election Day. We have not received your ballot. Please drop off your ballot to the Denver Elections Division by 7 p.m.
Ballot received- thank you message	The Denver Elections Division has received your voted ballot. Thank you for using the Ballot TRACE system.
Ballot received- id not included	Important: We can not count your ballot! It is missing the required ID. Please come to the Elections Division by Nov. 13 & sign your ballot. 3888 E. Mexico Ave.
Ballot received- not signed	Important: We can not count your ballot! It is missing the required ID. Please come to the Elections Division by Nov. 13 & sign your ballot. 3888 E. Mexico Ave.
Ballot received- undeliverable	Important: Your ballot was returned by the Post Office as undeliverable. Please contact the ED to request a replacement. 720-913-8683

**How does Ballot TRACE work?**

Ballot TRACE is an interactive full-service accountability tool designed to provide ballot packet tracking information to election administrators and voters during the outgoing and incoming process. The process is as follows:

1. Prior to an election, voter files are exported from SCORE (Statewide Colorado Registration and Election System) and sent to the print vendor.
2. The print vendor assigns USPS Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) to all voter addresses.
3. The printer formats the file according to the technical specifications promulgated by i3Logix.
4. The printer sends the voter file to the Denver Election Division which forwards the file to i3Logix where the file is then uploaded to the ftp site.
5. i3Logix loads the file into Ballot TRACE.
6. Now the voter is able to view online the status of their ballot information and voters who signed up for automatic messaging are sent all applicable messages.
7. On a daily basis, the Denver Election Division runs updated E-013 reports from SCORE and the reports are then sent to i3Logix. The daily updates capture all ballots sent out by the Denver Election Division as well as all voted ballots that have been returned by voters. i3Logix then uploads the updated file into Ballot TRACE.

**Signing up for Ballot TRACE**

A voter follows these steps to sign-up:

1. The voter can go to the Denver Elections Division website, [www.denvervotes.org](http://www.denvervotes.org), and click the Ballot TRACE button on any page.
2. The voter inputs their name, as they are registered, their zip code, and date of birth.
3. The voter can then choose whether they want to receive their ballot status information via email or text message.
4. The voter inputs their cell phone number to receive text messages. The usual text message fees from the voter's cell phone provider may apply.
5. Voters who do not have access to a computer but do have a cell phone may sign up to receive text messages by calling 311, Denver's centralized information and citizen assistance agency.

Ballot TRACE - Denver Ballot Tracking & Communications Engine | powered by i3Logix - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by CI

https://ballot-denvergov.org/

Denver Elections Division

## Ballot TRACE - Track the progress of your ballot through the mail



### Denver Elections Division



**BALLOT TRACE**  
Tracking, Reporting, And Communication Engine



**LOGIN**



**CONFIGURE**



**EMAIL & TEXT**

[en espanol](#)

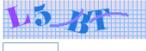
**Login to track your ballot**  
Use the form to login, configure and start getting updates.

First Name\*

Last Name\*

Zip Code\*  e.g. 80111

Date of Birth\*  /  /  mm dd yyyy

Type the characters from image above\*   [reload image](#)  
not case sensitive and no spaces

\*All fields above are required.

**BALLOT TRACKING MADE EASY**

- > Setup and get notified when:
  - > Your ballot is mailed out
  - > Your ballot is being delivered
  - > Your ballot has been received
- > Log in to view updates about your ballot
- > Get notified by email or text message

Ballot TRACE - Denver Ballot Tracking & Communications Engine | powered by i3Logix - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by CI

https://ballot-denvergov.org/setpreference.php



**BALLOT TRACE**  
Tracking, Reporting, And Communication Engine

**LOGIN**

**CONFIGURE**

**ALERTS & UPDATES**

Welcome Lucilla Tenorio

**Setup your notification preferences**  
Use the form below to setup your notification preferences.

Language English

**Email Notification**  
Type the email address you would like to have ballot notifications sent to.

I would like to receive email notifications.

**Text Messages**  
Type the mobile number you would like to have ballot notifications sent to.  
Choose Carrier ▼ At this time only carriers in this list are supported  
(  )  -  (303) 111-1111

I would like to receive text message notifications.  
**Important note: Standard message fees may apply.**

**I would like to**

[View ballot activity](#)  
[Logout](#)

**Your Information**  
If any information is out of date or incorrect please contact [Denver Elections Division](#).

Lucilla Esmeralda Tenorio  
3035 Lowell Blvd  
Denver, CO 80211

Date of Birth: 08/13/1945  
Language: English

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## Ballot Tracking Solution – Final Potential Name List

1. Denver  
IBT - Interactive Ballot Tracking
2. Denver  
IBT - Intelligent Ballot Tracking
3. Denver  
IBM - Interactive Ballot Messaging
4. Denver  
IBM - Intelligent Ballot Messaging
5. Denver  
BTN - Ballot Tracking & Notification
6. Denver's  
MA-BAL-IN-E - Mail Ballot Information Engine
7. Denver's  
BICS – Ballot Information Communications System
8. Denver's  
BCS - Ballot Communication System
9. Denver  
BTIS - Ballot Tracking and Information System
10. Denver  
STS - Smart Tracking System
11. Denver  
Voter's View  
Interactive Ballot Messaging (etc.)
12. Denver  
Vote View  
Interactive Ballot Messaging (etc.)
13. Denver  
VoTrVu  
Interactive Ballot Messaging (etc.)
14. Denver  
Voter Valet  
Interactive Ballot Messaging (etc.)
15. Denver  
Ballot Buddy  
Interactive Ballot Messaging (etc.)
16. Denver  
BalTrace
17. BalloTrace
18. Ballot Trace – Ballot TRacking and Communications Engine
19. Ballot Trace – Ballot Tracking, Reporting, And Communications Engine

# Council District 1 Special Vacancy Election May 4, 2010

## TRACK YOUR BALLOT!



POWERED BY i3ballot

*Ballot Trace allows voters to track their mail ballot from initial bulk mail drop through the mail to your mailbox, then back through the mail to receipt by the Denver Elections Division.*

*You can elect to receive text messages or emails informing you of your ballot's progress through the mail.*

*Help us continue to beta test this optional new service created through a partnership between the Denver Elections Division and i3logix™.*

**Go to [www.denvervotes.org](http://www.denvervotes.org) for more information and to sign up.**

*Voters with a cell phone but without a computer can sign up through Denver 311.*

*Consejo distrito 1 elección especial de vacante 4 de mayo de 2010*

### *¡Siga su balota!*

*El Ballot Trace permite que los votantes sigan su boleta por correo hasta el recibo por la división de las elecciones de Denver.*

*Usted puede elegir recibir los mensajes por correo electrónico o de texto que le informa el progreso de su boleta por correo.*

*Ayúdenos a continuar con este prueba beta de este nuevo servicio opcional que sigue su boleta por correo. Fue creado por unión de las Elecciones de Denver y i3logix™.*

*Ir a [www.denvervotes.org](http://www.denvervotes.org) para más información y para firmar para este servicio. Los votantes con teléfono celular pero sin computadora pueden firmar por llamada al 311.*