2012 Professional Practices Program

CUTTING SAMPLE BALLOT PRODUCTION COSTS:
From Complexity to Simplicity

Submitted by:
Daniel Burk
Registrar of Voters, Washoe County, NV
1001 E. Ninth St.
Reno, NV 89512
775-328-3683
dburk@washoecounty.us
www.washoecounty.us\voters
CUTTING SAMPLE BALLOT PRODUCTION COSTS: From Complexity to Simplicity

The Issue:
Nevada law requires that a “sample ballot” (referred to in some jurisdictions as a “voter pamphlet”, “voter booklet” or “voter guide”) be sent to every active registered voter prior to each election; Washoe County has approximately 225,000 active registered voters.

Sample ballots inform voters regarding the dates, locations and hours of operation for early voting and instructions on how to request an absent ballot. In addition, the sample ballot includes the explanation of ballot questions to be voted on, with “fiscal impact statements”, arguments for and against passage and other election-related information deemed helpful to voters. The indispensable aspect of the sample ballot is a facsimile of the ballot a voter will see when he/she votes; provided in order for the voter to be better informed in advance of going to the polls. Finally, the back of the sample ballot contains information added by the County’s mailing house vendor after-production; to include the voter’s name, residence address, precinct number, assigned Election Day polling place and unique voter ID number (in Arabic numerals and barcode formats).

Because the ballot facsimiles reflect the different ballot styles (i.e. combination of offices, candidates and questions on the ballots and political parties [primary only]), the County’s print vendor, prior to 2010, was required to set-up and print a different version of the sample ballot for each ballot style. In addition, the sample ballots were produced using 60lb paper with saddle stitching for durability and then delivered to the County’s mailing house vendor for addressing and adding of the voter-specific information listed above, prior to being mailed.

Since the County had as many as 200 or more ballot styles in a Primary Election and as many as 165 ballot styles in a General Election, an equal number of sample ballot versions had to be produced and the cost for paper, ink and print vendor staff time continued to escalate to the point that by 2008 the cost to the County for printing and addressing its sample ballots for the Primary and General Elections reached $721,408. An expenditure of this magnitude was not sustainable. Consequently, a new approach to sample ballot production had to be found.

The Change:
In 2010 the County changed the production of the sample ballots from a traditionally-printed product (using individually-created plates) to a computer-generated, direct-load web press print product and moved from the 60lb. paper used previously to 27.7 weight paper (i.e. newspaper).

Also, since the overwhelming majority of data on the sample ballots was identical, with the exception of the ballot facsimiles and the fact that not all voters in the County were eligible to vote on every ballot question, it made sense to move to a generic version of the sample ballot, to the extent possible.
CUTTING SAMPLE BALLOT PRODUCTION COSTS

Early in 2010 the County did, in fact, change from producing multiple versions of the sample ballots that were based, primarily, on the various ballot styles, to a generic version of the sample ballot and contracted with a mailing house vendor to insert the ballot facsimiles in the sample ballots and, for the first time, printed the ballot facsimiles at the County’s Reprographics Division.

Moreover, to indicate when a ballot question was limited to some voters but not others, the following statement was added to the front of voter-limited questions:

“Not all voters are eligible to vote this question.
See your inserted ballot facsimile”

Finally, to ensure the inserted ballot facsimiles remained in the sample ballots during shipping and to meet postal requirements, the mailing house vendor was instructed to apply a tab (1” circular) on the outside (“open edge”) of the web press sample ballots.

The Payoff:
The move to web press printing of sample ballots on 27.7 weight paper (i.e. newspaper) for the 2010 Primary and General Elections saved Washoe County over $63,000. However, the bigger savings came as a result of the move to a generic sample ballot for all voters, printing the ballot facsimiles in-house and then having the unique ballot facsimiles inserted into the generic sample ballots.

Initially, there was concern that a separately-produced and inserted ballot facsimile process might result in the wrong ballot style being inserted into a voter’s sample ballot. To avoid this possibility the County required its mailing house vendor to work with only one ballot style at a time, before beginning the processes of insertion, tabbing and addressing with the next ballot style. Although this requirement slowed the overall production process by two days, it was deemed essential to ensuring that the correct facsimile was provided to each voter in his/her sample ballot.

With the change to a generic sample ballot printed on newspaper quality paper, along with the move to print ballot facsimiles in-house at the County’s Reprographics Division and inserting these into tabbed sample ballots at the point of addressing by the mailing house vendor, the total cost for sample ballot production and addressing for the Primary and General Elections in 2010 was $140,672. These changes resulted in a net savings to the County of $580,736 for sample ballot printing and mailing house services in 2010; when compared with the cost for sample ballot production and mailing house services in 2008 ($721,408).
“CUTTING SAMPLE BALLOT PRODUCTION COSTS: From Complexity to Simplicity”

Supportive Documents:

A.
2006 Sample Ballot with integral Ballot Facsimile. Printed on 60lb. bond paper and center stitched

B.
2010 Sample Ballot with inserted Ballot Facsimile. Printed on 27.7 weight paper (i.e. newspaper) and tabbed
OFFICIAL GENERAL ELECTION SAMPLE BALLOT

Oficial Muestra de la Papeleta para la Elección General

For Election Day TUESDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2006

Para el Día de Elecciones MARTES EL 7 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2006

Polls Open 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Urnas Electorales Están Abiertas desde las 7:00 de la mañana hasta las 7:00 de la noche.

Compiled and Distributed by the Washoe County Registrar of Voters. If you have any questions phone (775) 328-3670.

Registrador de Votantes. Si tiene preguntas, llame al (775) 328-3670.

NOTICE: To Receive a Sample Ballot in Large Type Call (775) 328-3670

Aviso: Para Recibir una Papeleta de Votación de Muestra en Letra Grande, Llame al (775) 328-3670

BRING THIS SAMPLE BALLOT TO THE POLLS

TRAIGA ESTA PAPELETA ELECTORAL DE MUESTRA A LAS URNAS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Vote Yes</th>
<th>Vote No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States Senator</td>
<td>John S. Harris</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Senator</td>
<td>Catherine Cortez</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Senator</td>
<td>David D. Dynia</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Steve Sisolik</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Chip Arden</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senator</td>
<td>Jacky Rosen</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Senate</td>
<td>Michael Roberson</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Senate</td>
<td>David Parks</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Senate</td>
<td>Chip Arden</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Supreme Court Justice</td>
<td>J. Bob Brown</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Supreme Court Justice</td>
<td>John S. Harris</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Supreme Court Justice</td>
<td>David D. Dynia</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Supreme Court Justice</td>
<td>Steve Sisolik</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT**
Official 2010
General Election Sample Ballot
Election Day Tuesday November 2, 2010
Polls Open 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Compiled And Distributed By
The Washoe County Registrar Of Voters Department
If You Have Any Questions Phone (775) 328-3670

Registrar of Voters
1001 E. Ninth Street
Building A, Room A135
P.O. Box 11130, Reno, NV 89520
FAX: (775) 328-3747
Website: www.washoecounty.us/voters

De Conformidad Con La Ley Federal,
La Versión Completa En Español
De Esta Papeleta De Muestra
Se Encuentra Incluida.