2013 Professional Practices Program

National Voter Registration Day

Los Angeles County, CA

Submitted by:

Dean C. Logan
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
12400 Imperial Highway
Norwalk, CA 90650
(562) 462-2716
dlogan@rrcc.lacounty.gov
www.lavote.net
ABSTRACT OF THE PROGRAM

The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) partnered with the National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) program to proactively and collaboratively deliver its services to the citizens of Los Angeles County. As the only elections official nationwide to officially partner with NVRD, the RR/CC sought to increase access to voter registration opportunities by building relationships and trust with the diverse communities it serves through non-partisan community driven events. This level of openness and public participation further exemplified the RR/CC’s transparency and became a model example of community members working with government rather than alongside government.

The Department took the lead in Los Angeles County by offering participants voter registration training and materials. Additionally, the Department's Community and Voter Outreach Unit sought to recruit 300 independent sites that would offer voter registration cards (VRC) and voter education materials to the general public.

THE PROBLEM/NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

Covering over 4,000 square miles, Los Angeles County is the largest election jurisdiction in the United States. With 4.6 million registered voters and nearly 2 million eligible but not registered, the voting population in Los Angeles County is larger than 42 of the 50 states. Los Angeles County is also the most diverse electorate in the Nation. The RR/CC offers election materials and support in 10 languages including English. A phenomenal mobility rate of 1.2 years further increases the challenge of connecting with the voting population.

Guidance from the RR/CC involving voter registration was imperative since an incomplete or improperly completed VRC can lead to a disenfranchised voter. Individuals responsible for requesting VRCs must complete Deputy Registrar training hosted by the RR/CC. Deputy Registrar training is required to ensure individuals are educated and well versed on the proper method to complete a VRC. Reaching out to Los Angeles County's nearly two million eligible, not registered citizens with a part-time team of 10 field representatives was a daunting and nearly impossible task. Collaborating with partner organizations and volunteers who would in effect act as extensions of the Department created a win-win opportunity for the RR/CC and the community it serves.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The RR/CC coordinated a body of 20 organizations that worked collaboratively to steer countywide efforts. The Department empowered the organizations by providing assistance, training, and promotional materials. During this time, the RR/CC conducted nearly 5 Deputy Registrar training sessions per week, providing partner organizations with the knowledge and tools needed to ensure proper voter registration. The Department also coordinated communication efforts by issuing press releases and working with the organizations to implement a social media campaign around NVRD.
The RR/CC implemented additional public engagement strategies, by recruiting over 300 NVRD partners/sites where voter registration opportunities were made available to the public. To accomplish this goal the outreach team partnered with local businesses, other County departments and city clerks in Los Angeles County. Community, citizen, and government collaboration proved to be a determinant NVRD success factor.

**THE RESULTS/SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM**

The Department’s NVRD efforts were successful on many levels. The RR/CC expanded its network by including dozens more partners and volunteers. This network allowed government and community members of diverse backgrounds, interests and political affiliations to collaborate in a transparent environment to accomplish a shared goal. This collaboration led to one of the most successful implementations of NVRD nationwide. Online voter registration was heavily promoted and implemented in the days leading up to NVRD. The utilization of technology along with the level of public engagement to expand the voting population was unprecedented in Los Angeles County. Registering eligible voters while they commuted on the Metro trains is just one example of the innovative NVRD strategies implemented to facilitate the voter registration process and make it more convenient for the community. In addition to the capstone event held at California State University, Los Angeles, the committee organized and participated in a dozen other events on NVRD. As a result of these collective efforts, 5,000 people were registered on September 25, 2012. These efforts continued through the close of registration on October 22, 2012. In total, voter registration efforts on the close of registration more than doubled to 12,000 paper registrations and 82,000 online registrations. Voter registration activity spiked in the months of September and October (284,268), accounting for 49% of the total registrations for the year.

The RR/CC’s involvement underscores the value of a service delivery model that supports citizen participation through community organizations. More importantly, it showed how being proactive through resource sharing and collaboration with citizen driven initiatives, like NVRD, provides opportunity for success.
Voter Registration Trends in Presidential Elections

Voter registration in 2012 outpaced registration in 2008. Despite historic highs in voter registration figures during the 2008 Presidential Election, voter registration between 2008 and 2012 increased by 375,896; marking a 9% increase. This increase is higher than the increase between the 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections.

Voter Registration Activity in 2012

Voter registration activity in 2012 surpassed expectations, following historic voter registration figures from 2008. Between January and October the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk received and processed 581,025 voter registration forms. While a large share of the registrations processed were re-registrations, 37% were new registrations. This year, 213,213 new registrations have been added to the rolls.

Voter registration activity spiked in the months of September and October (284,288), accounting for 48% of the total voter registrations in the year. This period also recorded the highest number of new voter registration compared to previous months (93,924).

There were also significant increases in voter registration in the months following the June 5th Presidential Primary Election. Between the months of June and October 137,519 new voter registrations were processed.
About six potential new voters lined up at Pasadena City Hall on Tuesday afternoon, part of the national event that included 13 other Pasadena locations. Volunteers Denise Jones and Robin D. Smith of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a national group, backed up by Lilia Novelo of the City Clerk's office, agreed it's important to make registration easier, especially for young people and seniors who may need some help, and to remind those eligible to cast their votes Nov. 6. "My button says 'Register and Vote,' not just 'Register to Vote,'" Jones said. "It's important to get people to the polls, there's a lot of issues out there in the atmosphere, and everyone's voice is incredibly significant." Smith, originally from Washington, D.C., said she lived in Florida "two elections ago" and remembered the controversy over the vote count. "I knew when I came here I wanted to become more involved." Smith said she also volunteered at a registration drive held at PCC on Tuesday. "We like to get these kids just out of high school," she said. Alex Wasserman, who just turned 18, attends Los Angeles County High School for the Performing Arts. He registered to vote Tuesday at CSULA. "I feel my generation doesn't see the importance of voting. A lot of students don't take it seriously," Wasserman said. Among those encouraging political action from young people at the CSULA registration rally was musical artist Taboo, of the popular hip-hop group The Black Eyed Peas. "I'm here as a Mexican-American to get people to vote and to say, 'I want to make a difference in our community,"' said Taboo, who grew up in Boyle Heights and Rosemead, he said.

Rocio Aguayo, a student at Arroyo Valley High School in San Bernardino and a member of Inland Congregations United for Change, said the group plans to contact 30,000 eligible voters. So far, she said, they've reached 3,000. "The fact is, I can't vote because I'm only 16, but so many people can but don't," she said. "There are so many big issues that affect these people who don't vote. I don't understand why you wouldn't." Aguayo said she was particularly concerned about Proposition 30, a tax increase that supporters say is needed to avoid painful cuts to school budgets. But just a block from City Hall, San Bernardino resident Alexandria Williams said she hadn't registered and didn't plan to. "I think it's just a bunch of back-and-forth from all the candidates, but never anything about me," said Williams, 21. "I guess it's a way to have a voice, but there are other ones."

At Cal Poly Pomona, an Associated Students Inc. registration drive resulted in 61 new voters. "We've been holding voter-registration events all summer, and altogether it's over 500 people," said Chris Osuala, the ASI president.

Staff writers Ryan Hagen, Andrew Edwards and Janette Williams contributed to this article.
Online voter registration and get out the vote rallies roll across the Southland

By Steve Scauzillo, Staff Writer
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While other states are imposing stricter rules on voting, new laws in California have made registering to vote here easier, leaders from state government and the entertainment industry boasted on Tuesday. Their message was part of National Voter Registration Day, which featured dozens of local get-out-the-vote events from Los Angeles to San Bernardino.

Among the most significant changes: voters can now register to vote online, thanks to legislation approved in 2011. The law - which went into effect last week - is the biggest change to impact voter registration in the state since the advent of multilingual application forms, said Hal Dash, the chairman of Cerrell Associates, a political consulting firm in Los Angeles. Since Sept. 19, about 25,000 people have registered to vote online through the website, according to state officials. Of those, about 61 percent are under 35 years of age, said Secretary of State Debra Bowen. "On the first day it was available, 10,000 people registered to vote," Bowen said Tuesday at a Rock the Vote event at Cal State Los Angeles. So far, younger people have dominated the use of new online registration tools, she said. And the tools are needed - the largest group of unregistered voters in the state are 30 and under, she said. "You can throw away your paper forms, get out your iPads and your BlackBerrys and register to vote," she urged those gathered at the CSULA Student Union plaza. Voters who have a signature on file with the DMV or a state ID number can register at registertovote.ca.gov. People can also register in person at city clerk offices, libraries and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Registration can also be done at the local county registrar's office. Another law, signed by Gov. Jerry Brown on Monday, allows voters to register on Election Day. But that doesn't go into effect until 2014. For now, the last day to register to vote before the Nov. 6 presidential election is midnight, Oct. 22. The county will continue to see more registered voters as a result of these new laws, Dash said. "Anything that will help people to vote, and help them register to vote ... is better for democracy," Dash said. In California, about 17.5 million people are registered to vote. About 6.5 million people who are eligible are not registered, Bowen said. Half of those eligible, unregistered voters are in Los Angeles County, Registrar-Recorder County Clerk Dean Logan said. "Here in L.A. County, no one will get in the way of having your voice heard and your vote counted," Logan said. Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Los Angeles, urging the crowd at CSULA to register to vote, said California is encouraging people to exercise this fundamental democratic right, unlike other states that are restricting it. Courts are reviewing laws that require voters to have photo ID in Pennsylvania, Florida and Colorado. Supporters say these laws are aimed at rooting out voter fraud. But critics charge they are attempting to curtail Latinos from voting. Latinos generally vote Democratic and voted for President Barack Obama in 2008 in large numbers. "People around the country are trying to pass laws to make it impossible for you to vote. We are not like that," Becerra said. Raphael Sonenshein, the director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Politics at Cal State L.A., said after 2010, when Republicans gained majorities in certain statehouses, voting laws in those states became more restrictive. "In some cases, they are preventing people who have been regular voters for 40 and 50 years. So that makes no sense," Sonenshein said.
PRESS

THE LOS ANGELES REGISTRAR-RECORDER COUNTY CLERK

Monday, September 24, 2012

The Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC), along with a broad based group of national and local non-partisan organizations, will coordinate an unprecedented series of events around Los Angeles County in support of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), tomorrow, September 25, 2012.

The day kicks off with a press conference at California State University, Los Angeles at noon PST with Los Angeles County Registrar Recorder/County Clerk, Dean Logan and Taboo of the Black Eyed Peas. Following the press conference is an event featuring California Secretary of State, Debra Bowen, Assemblyman Mike Feuer, guest celebrities, and a constant flow of local artists and deejays.

Furthering the reach across L.A. County, volunteers will be staging a “ride along,” registering voters on Metrolink light rail lines and at Union Station.

Events will lead into the evening with Maya Jupiter headlining the NVRD Party in the Park at L.A.’s own MacArthur Park beginning at 6 p.m. Food vendors and local artists will be on hand.

Organizations leading the effort include Voto Latino, Rock the Vote, the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles, the California Participation Project, NALCIO Educational Fund, California Common Cause, Community Coalition, CSU Los Angeles Associated Students and Arts for LA. The effort seeks to increase voter registration rates in Los Angeles County.
NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY IS 09.25.12

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY
SEPTEMBER 25

REGISTER IN SEPTEMBER.
MAKE IT COUNT IN NOVEMBER

#925NVRD
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