2013 Professional Practices Program

Using Tablet Technology to Enhance Voter Processing

Osceola County, FL

Submitted by:
Mary Jane Arrington
Supervisor of Elections
2509 E. Irlo Bronson Memorial Highway
Kissimmee, FL 34744
(407) 742.6000
Maryjane@voteosceola.com
www.voteosceola.com
Using Tablet Technology to Enhance Voter Processing

Abstract of the program:

In anticipation of a high voter turnout at polling locations for the 2012 General Election, Osceola County Supervisor Mary Jane Arrington decided to take advantage of available technology to help enhance voter processing. She issued computer tablets to election workers at the largest and busiest polling sites and they used the tablets to check eligibility and verify the voters were at the correct polling location during Early Voting and on Election Day.

“Any problems were quickly detected and in most cases resolved before the voter reached the check-in table,” said Supervisor Arrington. “We couldn’t be more pleased with how well the use of tablets worked out for us during the Election.”

The tablets were also used to check the wait times of Early Voting sites for voters during the eight days of Early Voting as well as being used for face-to-face video chats with election workers to troubleshoot any issues with equipment or setup.

Need for the program:

The nature of Osceola County being highly transient where voters move in and out of the county frequently as well as between the cities in the county, was the catalyst for the decision to use tablets to alleviate problems of voters who were not registered, had changed their address or name but had not updated their information or were at the wrong polling location. On Election Day, the office processed 6,187 changes to voter files. That number includes any changes or notes made to the voter’s file.

Description of the program:

At selected locations, election workers were issued a tablet, a cell phone and a kit, which consisted of an apron with pockets to hold the contents, Refer to Clerk tickets, pens, a stylus, a list with the acceptable forms of photo and signature IDs, a clipboard and the tablet Quick Reference Guide. (See attachment 1)

Tablet operators attended a two-hour training session with labs on how to use the tablets. They were given various scenarios of issues voters may have and questions they might be asked. In their Tablet Operator Manual, they were given a variety of scenarios as well as troubleshooting tips for the tablet.

The tablet operators would stand outside the polling location door and ask voters if they would like to have their information verified. Voters could verify that they are registered to vote in Osceola County, that they have their current address and name on file, their current party affiliation and their voting precinct and polling location. If longer lines formed, the tablet operator would also walk up and down the line and offer to verify information.

The tablets were used to log on to our web site, www.voteosceola.com, and allow the worker to go to our Check Voter Registration Status page (See attachment 2). The information would come up on screen and confirm that the voter was registered and list the precinct number where that voter was to vote. It also would have the voter’s political party information, address and registration date. If the address was wrong, or the voter was not registered, then the voter could make the necessary changes. This process also verified that the voter was at the correct polling location. If not, then the voter was directed to the correct precinct.

We also used this technology during the eight-day Early Voting period to check wait times for any voters who may be in line at one location and informed them of shorter wait times at another Early Voting location. For instance, if
the Poinciana Public Library had a wait time of 45 minutes, but the nearby Celebration Library had a wait time of 10 minutes, the election worker could inform the voter the choice of going to another location. (See attachment 3)

Election workers followed our procedure for documenting wait times when a line reached 15 to 20 people. The election worker would write the time from their office issued cell phone on the time card provided in the Tablet Kit. They would hand that card to the last person in line at that time and ask them to hand that card to the worker at the check-in station. That worker would then call the Elections Office and our phone bank operators would update our web site with the latest wait times. We strived to keep the updates current based on the length of the lines.

“We had numerous compliments from voters who appreciated being informed of the different wait times. After seeing what we were doing, we had one County Commissioner at an Early Voting site that used his own tablet to check on wait times for voters and then gave them directions to another site if they were in a hurry. The use of this technology helped make the voting process in an election work more smoothly and enabled us to serve our voters more efficiently as well,’’ Supervisor Arrington said.

Results of the program:

After the implementation of the tablets during the 2012 General Election, Supervisor Arrington decided to expand the tablet program. We will now be using the tablets at all of our voting sites where wait times are anticipated.

Polling location clerks were also impressed with the new program as it helped cut down on the backup of voters with issues at the check-in table. The voters who had been given a Refer to Clerk ticket in line went straight to that table and were able to tell that election worker of the problem where it was addressed immediately and kept the flow of the line moving.

“The clerks felt that having the tablet operators helped speed up the process,’’ said Tammy Smith, Election Worker Coordinator. “The clerks also found that there was less paperwork at the end of the evening. There were less address and name change applications because the changes had already been taken care of while the person was in line.’’

Another benefit to stationing tablet operators at the various locations was they also served as Goodwill Ambassadors for the Elections Office. They were able to answer other questions voters had as well as inform them of the wait time at that precinct and other locations.

“They seemed to really appreciate having someone with them out there in line,’’ Smith said. “They were able to chat with the voters and that helped pass the time if there was a longer line.’’

Using the tablets to have live video chats with election workers helped instantly resolve any issues and helped to keep the voting process moving smoothly.

“In the past, we have had to send a tech out to a site to troubleshoot a problem with either a piece of equipment or to explain a set up issue,’’ said Alan Ortega, Election Systems Manager. “We are a large county with polling locations spread throughout. It could take a tech up to 45 minutes to get to some of the sites. This way they use their tablet and we used one of the two we keep here at the office for this purpose and they can use the camera to show us exactly what the error message may be or how they have a piece of equipment set up. Using the tablets was extremely helpful.’’

The cost of the program was not prohibitive either. Tablets were $650 per tablet and the price has stayed the same. The acquisition of additional tablets has already been budgeted and the tablets are in the process of being purchased for the 2014 Elections. The cost of the additional election worker is minimal as the person receives a lump sum of $235 for the position on Election Day. During Early Voting, tablet operators were paid $12 an hour.

We are very pleased with how well this new program helped streamline the voting process and are looking forward to implementing it on a larger scale in future elections.
The Tablet Kit includes:
* An apron with pockets to hold all the items.
* The Tablet Operator Manual
* The Tablet Operator Quick Reference Guide
* The Refer to Clerk Tickets
* Pens and a stylus
* List of acceptable photo and signature ID forms
* Wait time cards (pink)

The tablet is kept in a separate locked cabinet and the clerk gives the tablet to the operator before the polling location opens.

The Tablet Operator takes the tablet and asks the voters in line if they would like to verify their information.

The operator uses the tablet to connect to our website and search for the voter's information.

The operator is able to check that the voter is:
* A registered voter of Osceola County.
* Their current name, party affiliation and address is on file with our office.
* They are at the correct polling location.
Check Voter Registration Status

First Name: 
Last Name: 
Date of Birth: 

This Voter Lookup website is intended for use by the individual voter to determine his or her voter registration status and other information relating to voting. Access or attempted access to information that is exempt from public disclosure other than to you as the voter may subject you to criminal prosecution or civil liability.

I understand and agree.

Check Voter Registration Status

Voter ID: 106151734
Full Name: Mary Jane Arrington
Street Address: 1785 Big Oak Ln
City, Zip Code: Kissimmee 34746
Registration Date: Tuesday, January 04, 1972
Registration Status: You are registered to vote.
Voting Precinct: 300
Party: Florida Democratic Party

If the information shown is not correct, please contact our office at 407.742.6000 or via e-mail at soe@voteosceola.com.
## Early Voting Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Other Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebration Library&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;1134 Celebration Boulevard&lt;br&gt;Celebration, Florida 34747&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is less than 15 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor of Elections Office&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;2509 E. Irl Bronson Memorial Highway&lt;br&gt;Kissimmee, Florida 34744&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is less than 30 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart Memorial Library&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;211 E. Dakin Ave&lt;br&gt;Kissimmee, Florida 34741&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is more than 30 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVL Library&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;405 Buenaventura Blvd&lt;br&gt;Kissimmee, Florida 34743&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is more than 45 minutes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poinciana Library&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;101 N. Doverplum Ave&lt;br&gt;Kissimmee, Florida 34758&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is more than 1 hour.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran's Memorial Library&lt;br&gt;407.742.6000&lt;br&gt;810 13th Street&lt;br&gt;Saint Cloud, Florida 34769&lt;br&gt;Hours: 7:00AM - 7:00PM</td>
<td>Wait is more than 1 hour.</td>
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