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UOCAVA Electronic Ballot Delivery System

Maricopa County, Arizona

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UOCAVA Electronic Ballot Delivery System

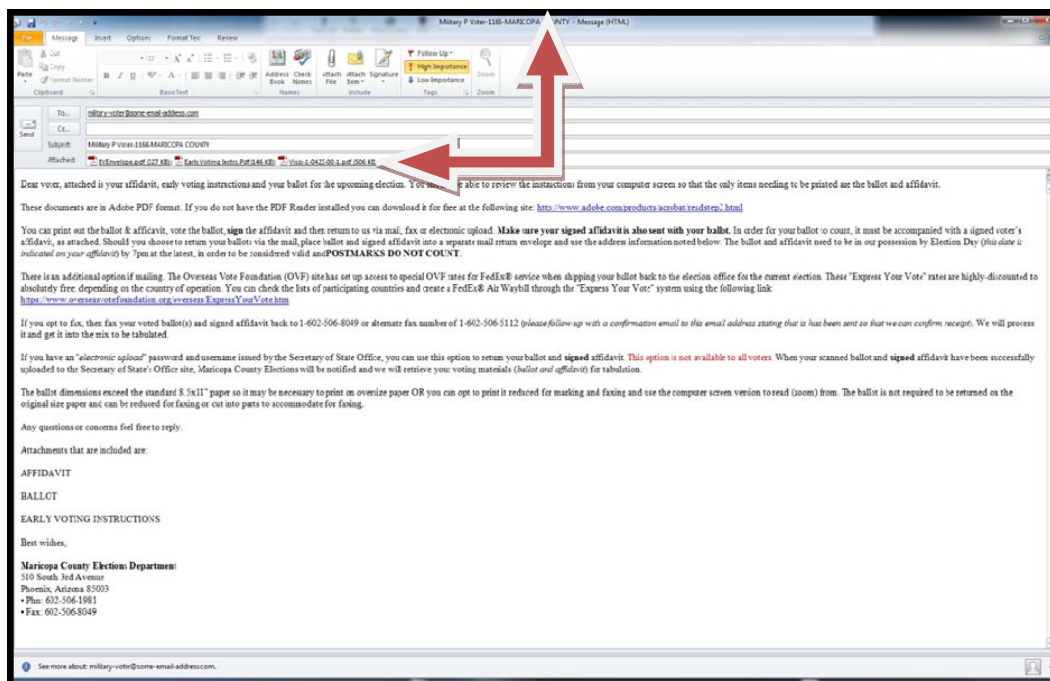## Recorder/Elections
Maricopa County, Arizona

1. Abstract

When the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) was amended in 2009 with the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act requiring voters the right to request the reception of their ballot and voting materials electronically, Maricopa County Elections Department manually generated emails to voters who had designated electronic delivery as their preferred method. This was not the most efficient option, so we created an Electronic Ballot Delivery System.

2. Description

The Electronic Ballot Delivery System allows for voters who have requested electronic delivery to have their standard ballot packet's barcode (which contains the voter's voter identification number) scanned thereby creating the election-specific email.
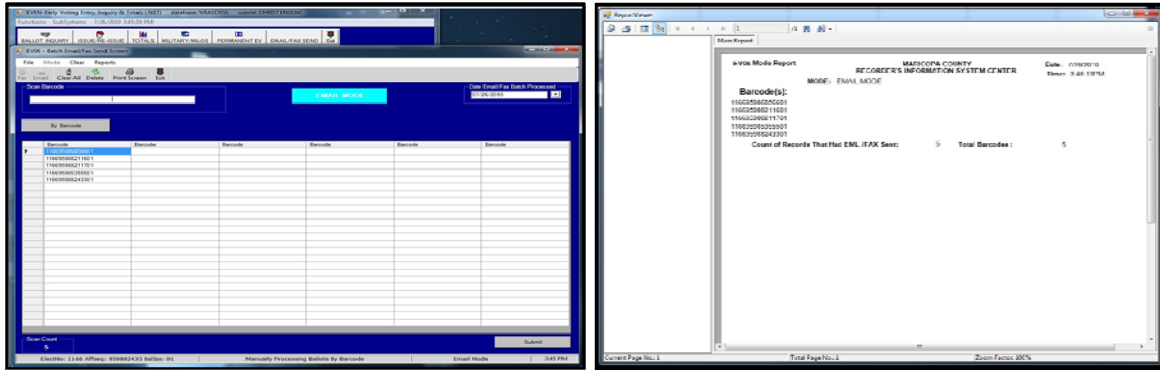
The data in the barcode is used to auto-populate the email address, pull and attach the correct ballot, and personalize the voter's affidavit.
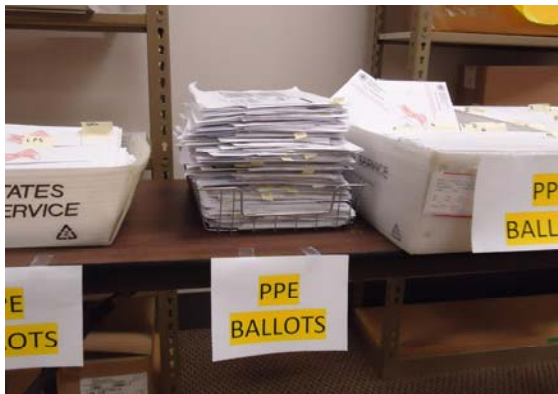
The designated staff visually confirms the accuracy of the information prior to sending. (Although the entire process could have been automated, a cognizant choice was made to retain some personnel oversight.)

Emails are grouped into batches which can then be utilized for chain of custody tracking and auditing:

The original ballot packet is then retained in the batch along with the report. Upon the return of the electronic ballot a citizen's processing board will replicate the voter's choices from the returned ballot onto the standard ballot for tabulation.

Returned ballots sent electronically are matched with the original ballot packet for processing and tabulation.

3. Worthiness

Voters can face a variety of challenges in participating in the electoral process; for some it is a question of the accessibility of a polling place, for others it is being able to understand the information if English is a second language, while still others are at a disadvantage because they are serving their country in the military, diplomatically, or by circumstance find themselves out of the country during an election. Any program that can be implemented to level the playing field so that all voters are able to exercise the franchise is a program worth pursuing.

Supporting Documentation:

Cost

The costs incurred in creating the Online Mapping Tool include planning & programming costs for the upgrades provided to our existing election management system. These costs are not reflective of what it would take if starting without that base. However, any elections department would already have a similar election management system.

324 hours programming for implementation= $11,015.60

Results

The use of technology to assemble the outgoing ballot emails has dramatically decreased the time needed to fulfill requests from days to mere seconds; after implementation thousands of ballots can be prepared in a matter of hours. Additionally, it allows for the automation of attachments and ensures the 100% accuracy of the ballot style being sent.

Voters who received their ballot electronically are able to vote and return their ballot at a much higher rate than other delivery systems. In the 2010 General Election the average return rate for UOCAVA voters was 28%, but for those who utilized the available electronic method it was an astounding 68%! Additionally, the ballots that were returned were more likely to be sent for tabulation because they were less inclined to arrive after the deadline or without the mandated voter signature:

2010 UOCAVA Ballots Returned Late

2010 had a higher percentage of voters returning their ballots late; however, none of them had received their ballot electronically—all of those voters returned their ballot on time.

- 34%
- 17%
- 38%
- 10%

Legend:
- Domestic Military
- Overseas Military
- Overseas Citizen
- Overseas Employee
- Electronic

2010 UOCAVA Ballots Without Signature

2010 had a higher percentage of voters returning their ballots without a signature; 1 voter returned theirs electronically without the necessary signature.

- 45%
- 18%
- 27%
- 9%

Legend:
- Domestic Military
- Overseas Military
- Overseas Citizen
- Overseas Employee
- Electronic