



Stakeholders'

REPORT

February 25, 2010

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Another successful election

Yesterday morning the King County Elections Canvassing Board certified the February 9 special election, with zero discrepancies. King County has been conducting all elections entirely by mail for a year now, and this past election was our largest mail ballot spring election in terms of volume, with nearly 400,000 ballots processed; our fifth largest mail ballot volume ever.

Service reductions

This election, voters experienced some effects of the tough economic times in the form of elections service reductions. King County Elections had to make some difficult choices in order to finalize our budget this year and we reduced non-mandatory services to voters, including the numbers of ballot drop boxes and operational hours of accessible voting centers, as well as the extra printed communications that accompanied the voter's ballot packet.

In order to alert voters to the service reductions, Elections:

- Removed drop boxes from King County Library sites;
- Posted signs and offered informational fliers at former ballot drop off locations;
- Published an alert in the local voters' pamphlet mailed to each King County household on January 19;
 - Posted service reduction information on our Web site;
 - Printed language on each outgoing ballot envelope instructing voters on how to locate designated ballot drop boxes;
 - Issued multiple press releases to inform local media; and
 - Published an alert in the February 3 edition of The Seattle Times.

While some voters did register complaints about the cuts, the overall number of complaints was not excessive. Of the 4,800 calls that the phone bank received from the time ballots were mailed out until Election Day, only 293 complaints of ballot drop box reductions were handled.

Voters' pamphlets in the news

An unexpected issue was raised in this election with respect to the voters' pamphlet. To keep voters' pamphlet costs contained for those that do participate, the County prints and distributes voters' pamphlets to households based on their

zip code.

Voters may reside within a zip code that has multiple districts participating in the election, creating some voter confusion. (For example, two school districts can share the same zip code, but

you only reside and vote in one school district.) It is not unusual for jurisdictions to choose not to participate in a spring election voters' pamphlet in an effort to spend less. This election, the King County Library System opted to publish a voters' pamphlet resulting in its mailing to most King County voters (excluding only five cities with their own library systems). Since the library district appeared in most voter pamphlets, it became more apparent when a school district was not included.

Although the voters' pamphlet did contain a section explaining the content and why some issues were not included and others were, we did receive calls from some voters and media asking for further explanation.



Closed signage at the Ballard Neighborhood Service Center

February election by the numbers...

ZERO	Discrepancies between ballots received and ballots tabulated
387,249	Total ballots counted
Zero	Provisional ballots counted
114	Accessible ballots counted
5,000	Ballots returned too late to be counted

Boundary changes

Over the past few months, Elections' GIS staff have been reviewing voter assignments along district boundaries and areas where large land parcels have been split between multiple taxing districts. School districts, by state statute, are responsible for establishing and maintaining school district boundaries. These are areas where updated data may be slow to reach us or may be more susceptible to recording errors. This type of review is constant and minor corrections resulting in voter reassignment are not unusual.

Our recent work resulted in the discovery of approximately 100 voters in several areas being assigned to the wrong school district, while the February special election was underway. These voters were issued new ballots along with an explanatory letter in time for them to vote in this election. Elections' staff also attempted to contact each of the effected voters by phone.

The Canvass Board and the County Elections Oversight Committee were both briefed on this matter while the election was underway.

As a result of these recent corrections, Elections and area school districts have jointly committed to working together more closely to support our mutual interests in maintaining an accurate voter database.

What's the latest with the move?

Executive Constantine recently directed



Renton facility

Elections to continue operating at our current location into June. By then, a decision is expected to be made regarding our future location and there is a possibility

that we will move back to the Renton building. Delaying this move until June allows us to concentrate on the upcoming spring elections without distraction. Also, experts can continue to study potential flood scenarios and plan for protective measures to ensure safe and secure operations at the Renton building, should that be our future location.

Vote by mail gaining industry awareness

Sandy McConnell, Elections Operations Program Manager, recently traveled to two conferences, presenting on King County's successful transition to all-mail voting.

In early February, she attended the California Secretary of State's public information hearing on the "future of voting." Three separate panels presented information to the Deputy Secretary

of State and five county election administrators from around the state. Presentations included emerging issues without HAVA-funding, voting system vendors and new developments in voting, and elections administration. King County presented on all steps of elections implementation, from initial planning to the processing environment of today. The presentations also served to provide us with much feedback from other county elections officials regarding our approach to the transition, our equipment, supplies, and communication plans employed.

Sandy also attended the Election Center workshop in St. Louis to share King County's experience administering all elections by mail, interacting with election officials from throughout the country. The presentation helped foster an environment for more jurisdictions to transition to vote-by-mail. It was evident that jurisdictions are looking for ways to meet the changing demands of their voters, and vote-by-mail is a clearly emerging trend. Demonstrating the successes of King County's first year of vote by mail is something to be proud of; if you'd like to receive this presentation, please contact Diana at 206-296-1540.

Looking forward

With last year's legislative changes to the elections' calendar, the March special election date was eliminated and preparations are underway for the April 27 special election. The deadline to file resolutions is March 12, with one resolution already filed and several more expected. For more information, please call the Elections Operations section at 206-296-1565.