ELECTION CENTER

July 5, 2018

Shantell Kinslee
skinslee@amadorgov.org

Dear Ms. Kinslee:

The Election Center, also known as The National Association of Election Officials is very interested in providing you with a response to your RFP/RFQ for the Amador County Registrar of Voter's Office.

Per your request, I have enclosed proposed methodology to accomplish the goals of you radministrative review/audit. Our response to RFP/RFQ will be more comprehensive, including cost information.

For your immediate review I have attached a final copy of the Review we completed couple of years ago for Sacramento County. I will enclose a copy of another review completed for Sacramento County in 2008 with our response to your RFP/RFQ.

Please send your RFP/RFQ to:

Ernest Hawkins
Project Manager
Consulting Office
P. O. Box 965
Elk Grove, CA 95759

Or electronically to ernieh@aol.com

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (916)686-7928

Very truly yours,

Ernest R. Hawkins
Project Panager
Consulting Services

THE ELECTION CENTER INTEREST IN BIDDING

The Election Center is a 501c3 organization with 34 years of experience training election officials both nationally and internationally. We provide consulting, education and research services.

We understand that Amador County wishes to complete an Operational Review of its Department of Voter Registration and Elections. Specifically, you want "to evaluate and investigate election-related errors revealed in the last election and provide recommendations for improved internal policies, procedures, practices, and contingency plans as well as assisting the Registrar's Office in training and implementation."

The Election Center is well qualified to perform the review. We generally use one or more consultants, depending on the scope of the project and length of time allocated to complete.

DOCUMATION

We propose to first gather as much data as possible about the Department by conducting interviews and reviewing available documentation. We will request copies of or access to the following documents:

- Policy and Procedure Manual(s)
- Ballot ordering process
- Election Critical Event Calendar (and description of usage)
- Job Descriptions and functional statements for all line staff, supervisors and managers positions
- Reports written to the Board, County Executive, and/or others regarding errors
- Corrective Plan of Action reports
- Press releases and newspaper articles written about the department in the last three months
- Organizational charts and work flow documents
- Work space layout
- Handbooks prepared for stakeholders (candidates, political parties, the media, cities, school and special districts
- Current Department Budget (2018-19)
- Proposed Department Budget (2020-21) if available
- Memorandums of Understanding with cities and others for whom the department administers elections
- Expenditure report for current FY
- Contact information for appropriate election officials in cities, schools and special districts for who the County administers elections
- Emergency/Business Continuity Plans

- Vendor contracts (i.e. ballot printing, support and maintenance, ballot processing, etc.)
- Fee schedule for services provided by the Department
- Contact information for all permanent staff

We will also research professional papers for additional ways to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department. We will also include an assessment of the Department's operational capacity and application of the operational capacity and application of organizational management systems (i.e. quality assurance, efficiency initiatives, etc.)

We will compare several key operational factors with county voter registration and election departments of similar size. Factors and similar sized counties to be considered will be approved by Amador County. Factors that will be considered include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Number of cities, schools and special districts within the jurisdictions for whom the county conducts elections
- Number of registered voters
- Size of staff, both permanent full time and temporary staff
- Number of vote by mail ballots issued in last election for governor
- Operation revenue and expenditures for FY 2014-15

INTERVIEWS/QUESTIONNAIRES

We will interview or send questionnaires to the following stakeholders:

Meetings will be conducted individually, in groups, or by questionnaires to the following stakeholders:
- Select line, supervisory, management and executive staff
- Agency Administrator
- County Executive
- Members of the Board of Supervisors (if available)
- All City Clerks
- School and special district staff who coordinate election activities
- Members of the media
- Select poll workers
- Representatives of minority language groups
- Representatives of disability organizations
- Other stakeholders as determined by your staff

The purpose of the interviews (questionnaires) will be to identify any issues that potentially impact the delivery of required or anticipated services by the department. The review will identify any potential weaknesses such as; compliance with federal and state laws and directives (Secretary of State) and local (Board of Supervisors)

regulations and memorandums of understanding with those for whom the Department administers elections. The review will also cover technology, systems, management and operational approaches/systems and application of project management techniques that have the potential for improving operations. To do this, we will rely on the comprehensive knowledge base of the consultants assigned to this project. We also maintain an extensive searchable library of professional practices from all over America. We will also compare questionable areas of concern with similar sized voter registration and election departments in California.

FINAL REPORT

The final written and verbal report will document the following:
- A review of objectives, including project scope and methodology.
- Measurable operational performance for similar sized jurisdictions in the areas of candidate filing, preparation and ordering of Sample Ballots, Official Ballots proofing and other areas identified by Amador County.
- An analysis of Department problem areas.
- Recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative work flow, employee skill sets, technology and customer service. (Support documents for findings and recommendations will be made available to the County if requested.)
- Identification of any impediments, budget or other constraints to implementing recommended improvements.
- Recommendations will include priorities for immediate, midterm and long term changes to processes and structure.
- Cost of additional resource requirements, if any, will also be identified.

A record of all data collected from interviews conducted and contacts made, etc. will be provided.

COSTS

When we present our RFP/RFQ, we will include cost information which will be in the form of a fixed price. We have never asked for additional funds unless there was a change in the scope of work and we have never missed a deadline for the presentation of a final report.

EXPERIENCE

The Election Center has had paid consulting contracts, as prime contractor, (except for Clemson, where we were a sub-contractor), with the following organizations:

Beaufort County, South Carolina
Consulted on voting equipment allocations.

Calaveras County, California

2007: Consulted on poll worker training, nomination process, and petition verification.

Clemson University, South Carolina
2013-14: The Election Center was a sub-contractor for a United States Election Assistance Commission project. Our role was to bring together voter accessibility groups, and to provide   educational seminars for election administrators from all over the United States. Ten seminars were conducted at hub airports all over the United States.

Delaware (Commissioner of Elections)
2009: Consulted on administrative and training issues.

District of Columbia
2008: Consulted on election night issues.

Henderson (City), Nevada
2008-09: Several consulting projects dealing with the impact of elections legislation in Nevada.

King County, Washington (three projects)
2005: Conducted a major Elections Operations Management Audit and two follow-up projects.

Montgomery County, Maryland
2006: Consulted on administrative issues.

New York City Board of Elections
2014-18: Currently working in New York City on a major revision of their Poll Worker Training Program. Also will be providing recommendations for changes   in New York State law impacting the operations of the Election Department.

Orange County, California
2006: Two challenged elections consulting projects.

Sacramento County, California
Operational Review of Registrar of Voters
2008: A copy of our final report will be provided with our response to your RFP/RFQ
2016: A copy of the report is attached

Solano County, California
2008: Ballot handling procedures.

United States Election Assistance Commission
2008: Conducted two major research projects, on Alternative Voting and Absentee Voters.

We believe our recommendations for each consulting project were implemented where resources were available.

The Election Center is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with 34 years of experience training election officials nationally and internationally.   The Executive Director is Timothy Mattice. The Board of Directors are:

Ernest Hawkins, California, Chair
Susan Gill, Florida, Vice Chair

Other Board members are:
Kathleen Hale, Alabama
Dean Logan, California
Alice Miller, Maryland
Robert Montjoy, Alabama
Steve Moreno, Colorado
Julie Pearson, South Dakota
Tom Wilkey, New York

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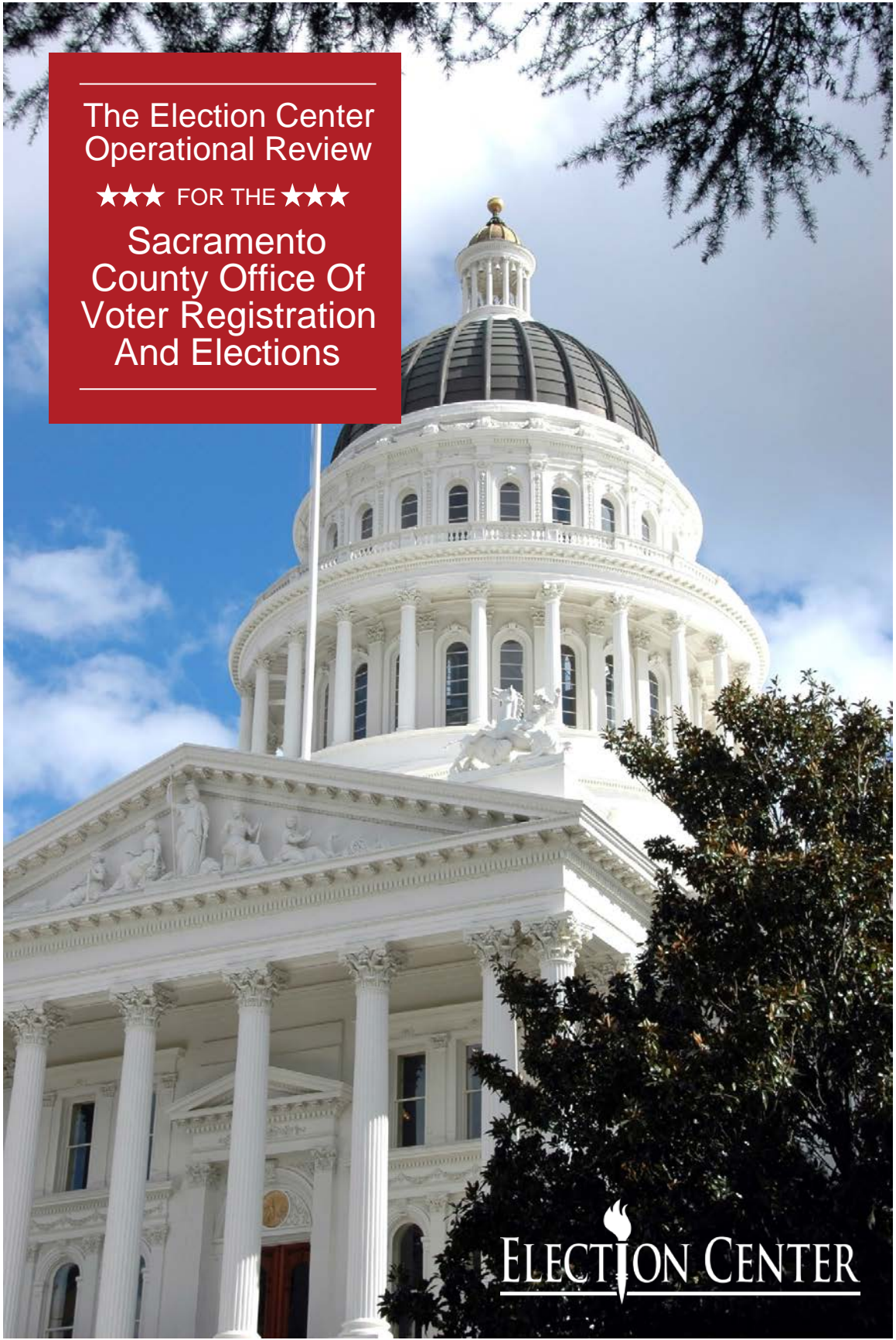
The Election Center
Operational Review

★★★ FOR THE ★★★

Sacramento
County Office Of
Voter Registration
And Elections

ELECTION CENTER

Table of Contents

Operational Review

SACRAMENTO COUNTY OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Election Center ("Contractor") was retained by the County of Sacramento ("County") to perform an operational review of the Department of Voter Registration and Elections ("VRE"). This document reports the results of that review and addresses Past, Present, and Future issues and opportunities related to the performance of the office.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

Contractor was charged with reviewing operational workflow, identifying operational standards for VRE program areas, measuring VRE processes against industry standards and identification of obstacles to increased efficiency and effectiveness, including services provided to both internal and external clients and customers receiving those services.

Specifically, the review is to:

- Identify opportunities for improvements to the delivery of election services as well as customer service practices to better meet the business needs of the County and the customer service needs of its many political jurisdictions, constituents and voters within the boundaries of state and federal election rules.

- Review the department's organizational structure and recommend changes where appropriate.

- Determine the appropriateness of resource allocation within the department's budget.

- Identify potential problem areas/weaknesses in internal customer service and business processes.

- Identify technology that could potentially improve customer service and business processes.

- Recommend best practices and prioritize opportunities for improvement.

- Identify possible changes necessary to respond to new and proposed election laws such as VoteCal, Automatic Registration and Vote Centers.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONTRACT

The Contractor will interview or survey the department's staff and customers and provide a written report that will include recommendations to maximize the department's efficiency and effectiveness through the use of technology, training, organization and distribution of staff, and processes and practices that establish and promote continuous improvement of service to all customers.

The Contractor is required to make recommendations to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency in the Department in terms of customer service, use of technology, training, adequacy of staffing and appropriate distribution of staffing to meet VRE responsibilities, identification of best practices to provide a high level of customer service in all election processes with specific attention to proofing of election materials, procedures for candidate filing and preparation of sample ballot and other materials provided to voters.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into three sections.

The first section (THE PAST) addresses errors of election administration and organizational procedures identified in news reports from prior elections. The report outlines what these problems were, whether appropriate action was taken to remedy them at the time they occurred and what policies or procedures were put in place to prevent them from happening again.

The second section (THE PRESENT) describes current policies, procedures and technologies and compares them to industry standards that promote efficient election administration and continuous improvement of those policies, procedures, and technologies.

The third section (THE FUTURE) identifies anticipated challenges the VRE faces in response to changes in law and regulation, as well as to keep pace with technological advances that better serve VRE customers, including voters, candidates, the media and the public at large.

METHODOLOGY

Extensive interviews were conducted (or attempted) in person with each interviewee able to speak off the record at any point in the interview as well as an opportunity to submit, postinterview information anonymously. Completed questionnaires were mailed to the Contractor's Texas Office where the results were summarized and written comments were typed so that handwriting would not be recognizable. The summaries and written comments are included in the Appendices. Persons interviewed included: (a) all current VRE employees; (b) all county supervisors; (c) senior county staff; (d) all clerks of incorporated cities within Sacramento County; (e) representatives of "benchmark counties" of similar population and demographics (or for other reasons) as Sacramento County in California, Nevada, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington; (f) representatives from local print and television media; (g) a representative of language and disability community stakeholder; (h) former VRE employees; (i) a political consultant.

Survey questionnaires were also sent to each school district and special district within Sacramento County.

A complete List of Interviews Conducted is attached as Appendix 3.

A list of documents reviewed is also attached as Appendix 18.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS RECOMMENDATION MATRIX

Following is a roll up summary of the recommendations cited in the report. The recommendations are delineated under two general themes: Leadership and Organizational Capacity and Elections and Voter Registration Operations. In summarizing the recommendations, it is recognized that the accountability for the integrity and continuous improvement of the elections and voting process is a shared responsibility and not solely that of the Registrar of Voters. This matrix includes an initial designation of priority/timeframe and designated accountability for each recommendation. Sacramento County should review these designations carefully and collaboratively and use them as guides for monitoring progress in the improvement of operations and building a more conducive, functional and professional work culture.

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

SECTION 1: THE PAST		
1. OFFICE REORGANIZATION	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**
There are clearly significant communication, teamwork, and morale issues in the VRE office. The county should engage a facilitator to provide a sustained effort to improve workplace culture.	90 days	County Executive Officer
The reasons for reassigning responsibilities for mail ballots should be clearly explained to staff.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
2. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2008 REVIEW OF OPERATIONS	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**
A process should be developed by the county to avoid repeating the neglect of the 2008 recommendations.	90 days	County Executive Officer
The County should evaluate which recommendations to implement in both the short and long term.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters County Executive Officer
An implementation team should be formed that is led by a representative from the county executive office and also includes the county fiscal office and VRE.	90 days	County Executive Officer

The County Executive Office should track progress on implementation through regular meetings with VRE.	90 days Ongoing	County Executive Officer
The team should report progress to the Board of Supervisors on a semi-annual basis.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters County Executive Officer
The county should consider an independent third party to review progress towards implementation on an annual basis.	3-6 Months	County Executive Officer
The Board of Supervisors should conduct a comprehensive review of all job descriptions and qualifications to ensure VRE can attract and retain superior employees, with specific attention to the need for knowledge and experience with technology and the requirement that employees work in a team environment.	3-6 Months	Human Resources Registrar Of Voters County Executive Officer

SECTION 2: THE PRESENT | MANAGEMENT		
1. TEAMWORK 2. MORALE	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Engage a facilitator to assist VRE in reestablishing teamwork and collaboration in the office.	90 days	County Executive Officer
Adopt a coaching and training program on leadership skills for senior management.	90 days	County Executive Officer
3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT 4. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Identify and implement a Critical Events Calendar with functionality described above. This may be purchased or could be developed in conjunction with DTech. Development by DTech would have the advantage that support for the system would be in-house.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Develop a Strategic Plan for the office that sets out its vision, mission, and goals. This Strategic Plan should form the basis for efforts to improve programs and services and to obtain necessary assistance or funding for implementation.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters

Develop a 5-Year Elections Operation Plan that addresses office operations and administration, including: staffing, resource management, technology, business continuity, and contingency planning.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
5. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**
VRE should revisit its determination that county policy prohibits the use of social media, obtain a copy of the guidelines, and develop procedures and business rules for VRE programs accordingly.	90 days	County Executive Officer Registrar Of Voters
VRE should request that the County Executive remind all county departments that the Board of Supervisors has determined that "a vital interest is served by encouraging county employees to volunteer as poll workers" and encourage approval of employee applications to volunteer.	90 days	County Executive Officer
6. COMMUNICATION	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**
The Board of Supervisors should conduct a comprehensive review of all job descriptions and qualifications to ensure VRE can attract and retain superior employees, with specific attention to the need for knowledge and experience with technology and the requirement that employees work in a team environment.	3-6 Months	Human Resources Registrar Of Voters County Executive Officer
The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should implement weekly and effective meetings with managers and supervisory staff.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters Assistant Registrar Of Voters
The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should formalize regular communication with line staff.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters Assistant Registrar Of Voters
Efforts should be made to increase contact with and confidence between stakeholders and staff; specifically City Clerks.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters Assistant Registrar Of Voters

	90 days	Registrar Of Voters Assistant Registrar Of Voters
The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should *bury the hatchet* with DTech; the consolidation of IT staff and the removal of staff from VRE, is a done deal. The job now is to create a strong and positive relationship that benefits VRE in both the long and short term. Roles and responsibilities should be discussed and clearly established, including the need for VRE to have some level of supervisory oversight over embedded DTech employees in order to improve office operations and accountability.		

SECTION 2: THE PRESENT | STAFFING AND FUNDING

1. STAFFING LEVELS 2. TEMPORARY HELP 3. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT 4. FRONT COUNTER	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Completion of a Strategic Plan to determine, among other things, adequacy of current staffing levels and the potential need for additional personnel.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
Review of VRE job descriptions, recruitment and retention issues, and succession planning.	3-6 months	Human Resources Registrar Of Voters
Evaluation and determination of how best to staff the front counter.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters

SECTION 2: THE PRESENT | TECHNOLOGY

1. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Funds should be provided to VRE to purchase software for Automated Signature Verification.	1 year	County Executive Officer Registrar Of Voters
Given the potentially critical vulnerability of equipment failure during an election, funds should also be provided to VRE to purchase backup equipment on the market from jurisdictions upgrading their equipment.	1 year	County Executive Officer Registrar Of Voters

VRE should, in accordance with its Strategic Plan, analyze the potential use of social media for purposes spanning all VRE programs, and implement this technology according to county guidelines.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should continue to assess options for new voting equipment.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should invite DTech personnel to any demonstration of new equipment, and involve that office in its efforts to pursue technology improvements generally.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should continue to pursue online filing of candidate contribution and expenditure reports by all candidates.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters

SECTION 3: THE FUTURE

1. LEADERSHIP	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
The elections process in Sacramento County should include formalized cooperation between the Board of Supervisors, the County Executive Office, the Registrar of Voters, the Department of Information Technology, Human Resources, and Office of Financial Management.	Ongoing	Board Of Supervisors County Executive Officer Registrar Of Voters
The work plan and performance measurement tools for the Registrar and Assistant Registrar should demonstrate leadership and the ability to inspire staff to implement the department's work plan including consideration for its vision and mission. These characteristics should be included in any recruitment materials for Registrar or Assistant Registrar.	90 days	County Executive Officer
The work plan and performance measurement tools for the Registrar and Assistant Registrar should reinforce and reflect the incumbents' understanding of the importance of efficiency and customer service in obtaining and keeping the trust and confidence of the public.	90 days	County Executive Officer

2. INNOVATION	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Employees at all levels should be encouraged to bring ideas for improvement forward. Successful identification and implementation of innovative ideas should be one metric used for salary increase and promotional decisions.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters

The relationship between VRE and IT should be characterized as "joined at the hip," mutually defining goals and cooperating to accomplish those goals.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology
VRE should aggressively, methodically, and in line with its Strategic Plan, pursue training opportunities for staff at all levels.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters
VRE staff should be encouraged to visit model jurisdictions and attend meetings and conferences where discussion about new practices, methods and equipment take place.	3-6 months	County Executive Officer Registrar Of Voters

3. CHANGE CONTROL	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Decisions to obtain new voting systems or other equipment that requires substantial investment should include evaluation of long-term costs and vulnerabilities. In particular, consideration should be given to a vendor's commitment to upgrading equipment in response to defects, changes in law, or version changes of software not under the vendor's control.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology County Executive Officer
The county might give consideration to development, either on its own, as is the case with Los Angeles County, or via a consortium of election jurisdictions to develop and use a voting system that is accurate, fair, reliable, meets federal and state requirements, and the maintenance of which is performed internally or through the consortium. Such a system could be intentionally designed to be relatively low cost and flexible to change.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology County Executive Officer
VRE should develop a Strategic Plan that details budgetary, equipment, and personnel needs with a five-year horizon. It should also include a longer-term view –-- perhaps 10 years -- that, without budgetary details, establishes a vision for the office in the future. This document should be updated annually to maintain its reach five and ten years into the future.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology County Executive Officer
4. TECHNOLOGY	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY

VRE, with IT assistance, should include analysis of those technologies currently available in development of the Strategic Plan for VRE. Those technologies or applications that meet the requirement of the Strategic Plan should be approved for funding by the county.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology
If the county decides to purchase a new voting system, the choice of hardware and software will have long-term implications for the future. This choice should be made after due consideration and consultation regarding characteristics of excellence.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters Information Technology County Executive Officer

ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION OPERATIONS

SECTION 1: THE PAST | MEDIA REPORTS OF ERRORS OR PROBLEMS		
1. DEMOCRATIC PARTY LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Training: The requirement that VRE staff contact any political party that has not submitted a list of endorsements 2 days prior to the deadline should be incorporated into Campaign Service training materials.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Business Rules: Campaign Services procedures, manuals, and flow charts should be updated to include this requirement.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
Documentation: Contact of political parties as required by this procedure should be documented as to the date contact was made and by whom.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
2. PETITION FOR APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC FUNDS – PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ARENA	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
VRE should review MOU's from other jurisdictions (e.g. Ventura County in California and the City of Littleton in Colorado) that contract to conduct city elections. The MOU (also referred to as an "Inter- Agency Agreement") from the City of Littleton and Ventura County is included in the appendices.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters

The new MOU should include a process that provides for rapid resolution of any dispute or issue not specifically foreseen in the MOU. VRE should request that all cities incorporate an MOU, by reference, into city resolutions requesting that the county conduct the city election.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
VRE regularly convenes a meeting of all cities for which it conducts elections. The MOU should be reviewed at those meetings and future meetings should include materials for discussion of issues as they arise. VRE staff should have personal conversations with each city clerk to determine appropriate time and place details for these meetings.	Annually	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should clearly designate a staff member who can serve as the primary point of contact for city clerks in terms of election issues.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters

3. SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE STATEMENT MISSING IN SAMPLE BALLOT	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Training: The procedure for city clerk sign-off of candidate materials should be incorporated into Campaign Service training materials.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Business Rules: Campaign Services procedures, manuals, and flow charts should be updated to include this requirement.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
Documentation: The procedure for sign-off by city clerks should be documented as to the dates actions were taken and by whom.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters
4. CITY OF GALT: LIST OF CANDIDATES	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
VRE invites all cities with consolidated elections to a workshop prior to November even-year elections to discuss procedures, deadlines, responsibilities, and expectations. In addition to regular agenda items, future meeting invitations should address recent or past problems, such as appropriate use of random alphabets, and how to avoid them, as well as solicit suggestions from the cities for items they would like discussed or clarified.	Annually	Registrar Of Voters
5. CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA: MEASURE H BALLOT ARGUMENT	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY

Training: Although acceptance of materials for city ballot measures is the responsibility of the City Clerk, in this instance the deficiencies in the materials forwarded to VRE might easily have triggered a communication with the City Clerk to point out these deficiencies and offer, within the time constrictions of VRE, an opportunity to correct the filing. This level of "customer service" should be a regular practice of the VRE.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Training: VRE invites all cities with consolidated elections to a workshop prior to November even-year elections to discuss procedures, deadlines, responsibilities, and expectations. In addition to regular agenda items, future meeting invitations should address recent or past problems such as this one, and how to avoid them, as well as solicit suggestions from the cities for items they would like discussed or clarified.	Annually	Registrar Of Voters

Business Rules: VRE has a ministerial duty to print, without alteration, materials submitted by the city clerk and had no authority to unilaterally, and without consultation with the city clerk, insert the word "to" into the title of the rebuttal argument. In the course of our interview, the Registrar clearly articulated this business rule, but it appears it is not uniformly implemented in practice. The Registrar should reinforce this business rule with staff.	Ongoing	Registrar Of Voters
Documentation: Any changes made to candidate materials should include documentation of when it was made, by whom, and under what authority (e.g. written request of a city clerk).	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
6. NOVEMBER 2012 ELECTION: MISSING BALLOTS	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Training: VRE should reinforce procedures for proper return of vote by mail ballots turned in at polling places.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Business Rules: Polling place procedures should require a log or other form that provides a chain of custody for transportation of voted absentee ballots from the polling place to the counting center. The form should indicate the number of ballots turned in to the polling place as a separate line item in the total number of voted ballots being transported to the counting center.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters

Documentation: The log or form should include the signature of the poll worker in charge of the polling place.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters

SECTION 1: THE PAST	STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2008 REVIEW OF OPERATIONS		
PROOFING ELECTION MATERIALS	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**
The VRE should formally allocate responsibility for proofing to a permanent staff member. Duties would include: overseeing the proofing process, on-site visits to vendors during printing of ballots and sample ballots, oversight of translating ballots into required languages, and development of audio materials for persons who are visually impaired. This person should have general responsibility for all election materials; printed, on the website, etc. and develop working knowledge of the requirements of candidates, city clerks, and other election stakeholders to enable him or her to catch mistakes before they are problems. The person designated to this responsibility should be professionally trained and should, in turn train and supervise employees, whether permanent or temporary, during proofing of materials.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should obtain proofing procedures from other jurisdictions, develop detailed procedures, checklists, and flow charts. Examples are included in an appendix.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should provide regular training of several employees by a professional trainer. This would include the professional trainer becoming familiar with election specific proofing requirements. The professional trainer could be engaged on a short-term contract during key election times.	1 year	Registrar Of Voters
OFFICE OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STAFFING	**PRIORITY**	**ACCOUNTABILITY**

VRE should obtain and use an electronic Critical Events Calendar that includes at least the functionality described below (it should be noted that staff is in the process of evaluating various options to implement this recommendation). • Enumeration of all tasks related to administration of an election on the date the action is to be taken, as well as the number of days from that date to the election (E minus). • The ability to automatically fill calendar dates for each election (i.e. manual entry not required). • Identification of responsibilities by program, and the ability to separate out program responsibilities for use by	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
those persons implementing that program. • Progressive accountability for missed deadlines from line staff to supervisor, to manager to assistant registrar and registrar. • Permits ongoing capture of suggested revisions from staff, over the course of an election cycle for discussion and decision whether or not to incorporate into future calendars.		
VRE staff should produce policies, procedures, desk manuals, and flow charts of sufficient detail to enable a new employee to efficiently execute the tasks of each program.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters
VRE is undertaking significant efforts to identify and use technology to provide better customer service, including having begun placing election materials and forms online. These efforts should continue and be fully supported. In addition: • All job descriptions should be updated to require familiarity with technology; • Programs, such as Voter Registration and Outreach, should use new tools, such as social media, to reach potential voters; • Funding for purchase of relatively low tech tools to improve program administration and customer service should be identified, and; • The VRE budget should include funds for employees to attend training as well as for travel to observe and learn how technology is being used in other jurisdictions.	3-6 months	Registrar Of Voters Human Resources

SECTION 2: THE PRESENT		
OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT	PRIORITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Reprioritize proofing as an essential, rather than an "add on," procedure. Current practice is to have temporary employees conduct much of the proofing process, supervised by a permanent employee. At the same time, permanent staff members are assigned to outreach duties. While outreach is important, this prioritization should be reversed.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should obtain proofing procedures from other jurisdictions, review them, and create business rules and procedures similar in detail and form (e.g. flow charts). Examples of proofing procedures from other jurisdictions are included in an appendix.	90 days	Registrar Of Voters
Contract with a professional proofing firm to be on-site during proofing times.	Based in Findings from Research	Registrar Of Voters
Consider contracting with outside persons or organizations, such as former English teachers with membership in the California Retired Teachers Association.	Based in Findings from Research	Registrar Of Voters
VRE should consider contacting both county and state retiree programs and request to communicate with these retired employees through newsletters, or other communication tools used by these organizations.	Based in Findings from Research	Registrar Of Voters

SACRAMENTO COUNTY OFFICE OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

BENCHMARK JURISDICTION DATA AND RESOURCES

The following benchmark jurisdictional data and information is provided, not for apples to apples comparison, rather to illustrate the variables associated with elections and voter registration administration. While some comparative analysis may be possible using this data, what it demonstrates is that there is no single structure, budget, staffing and service delivery model that applies uniformly to elections and voter registration. These core public services are functions of – and dependent upon – the organizational structure and leadership of the local government in which they exist. By the same

measure, there is much to be gained by seeking out and sharing information with other jurisdictions. To that end, we have included a variety of sample materials in the report appendices that align to the focus areas and recommendations included in this review.

Specific analysis of salary levels and budgets was out of scope for this operational review; however this cursory profile of jurisdictions offers a baseline confirmation that the VRE is generally aligned with other elections and voter registration jurisdictions. This is a good indication that Sacramento County and the VRE is best positioned to focus first on strategic planning, development of business rules and process improvement. Once that organization foundation is re-established, a more detailed analysis and comparison of structure, salary and budget would be prudent to ensure ongoing support and capacity to carry the organization forward.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE/GOVERNANCE

	Sacramento County, California	Clark County, Nevada	Contra Costa County, California	Pierce County, Washington	Multnomah County, Oregon	Ventura County, California
Elected/Appointed Official	Appointed	Appointed	Elected	Elected	Appointed	Elected
Partisan/NonPartisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan	Non-Partisan
Single/Multiple Discipline	Single Voter Reg & Elections	Single Voter Reg & Elections	Multiple Clerk/Recorder/ Voter Reg & Elections	Multiple Recording/ Licensing/Animal Control/Voter Reg & Elections	Single Voter Reg & Elections	Multiple Clerk/Recorder/ Voter Reg & Elections
Contract Length or Term of Office	At-Will	At-Will	4 year term	4 year term	At-Will	4 year term
Permanent Employees (Elections)	33	34	31.5	13	11	14
Seasonal Employees (Even-Year Cycle)	300-500	150	40	300-500	260	50-100
Number of Facilities	1	2	2	1	1	1
Active Registered Voters	675,640	806,746	530,000	449,621	446,000	395,471

Annual Budget -- Elections	$8,830,975	$10,257,803	$10,100,000	$10,000,000	$4,000,000	$4,374,703

JURISDICTION DATA PROFILE

	Sacramento County, California	Clark County, Nevada	Contra Costa County, California	Pierce County, Washington	Multnomah County, Oregon	Ventura County, California
Permanent Vote By Mail Voters	403,435	Not Applicable	296,000	449,621 All Vote By Mail	446,000 All Vote By Mail	219,333
Number of Polling Places	Between 525-550 (not including mail ballot precincts)	280	287	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	365
Ballot Drop Off Locations	15	7 preelection, 12 Election Day	12	30	27	12
Vote Centers/Early Voting Locations	1	95	6	4-6	1	1
Number of Municipalities	7	5	19	23	8	10
Number of Special Districts	59	5	33	57	42	92
2012 General Election Turnout	74.7%	81.21%	79.48%	78.89%	82.45%	77.39%
2014 General Election Turnout	48.4%	41.48%	49.10%	49.96%	68.59%	47.06%

RESOURCES/SAMPLE MATERIALS : APPENDICES 10-18

(keyed to priority operations covered in the Review)

	Clark County, Nevada	Contra Costa County, California	Pierce County, Washington	Multnomah County, Oregon	Ventura County, California	Other

Election Calendaring/Task Management Procedures and Protocols	X	X	X	X	X	Los Angeles County, CA Denver City/County, CO Arapahoe County, CO
Quality Assurance (proofing) Procedures and Protocols	X	X	X	X	X	Larimer County, CO
Media and Public Information Procedures and Protocols	X		X	X		
Service Agreements for services provided to Municipalities and Special Districts	X	X	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	X	Arapahoe County, CO
Organizational Chart (Elections)	X	X	X	X	X	
Employee Orientation/Onboarding Procedures and Protocols	X		X	X	X	
Supervisory and Managerial Position Descriptions	X	X	X	X	X	
Salary Schedules – Elections Positions	X	X	X	X	X	

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES/MODEL PROGRAMS (SELF-IDENTIFIED) : APPENDIX 2

Clark County, Nevada	Contra Costa County, California	Pierce County, Washington	Multnomah County, Oregon	Ventura County, California	Other

Early Voting/Vote Centers	Project Management & Planning Lean Management	Ballot Drop Box Program Election Information on Website Jurisdiction Guide Candidate Guide Online Voters' Pamphlet Petition Checks Ballot Processing and Recounts Transparency	Vote By Mail Automated Ballot Intake Online Replacement Ballots Signature Verification Observation	Ballot Layout Procedures Technical Operations (Access) Procedure Manual	Election Center Professional Practices Database Candidate Manuals and Resources – Arapahoe County, CO

SECTION 1: THE PAST

Contents

- Corrective Action Taken
- Changes To Administrative Procedures To Prevent Reoccurrence
- Recommendations For Further Action

6. NOVEMBER 6, 2012 ELECTION: MISSING BALLOTS

- The Situation
- Corrective Action Taken
- Changes To Administrative Procedures To Prevent Reoccurrence
- Recommendations For Further Action

OFFICE REORGANIZATION

- The Situation
- Actions Taken
- Result SOF Actions Taken
- Recommendations

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2008 REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2008: The Situation
- 2008: Actions Taken
- 2016: Recommendations For Implementation

PROOFING ELECTION MATERIALS

- 2008: The Situation
- 2008: Actions Taken
- 2016: Recommendations For Proofing

OFFICE OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, AND STAFFING

- 2008: The Situation
- 2008: Actions Taken
- 2016: Recommendations For Office Operation, Management, Staffing

Introduction

ONE OF THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR THIS OPERATIONAL REVIEW WAS CONCERN OVER A NUMBER OF MEDIA REPORTS OF ERRORS OR PROBLEMS WITH ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IN PRIOR ELECTIONS, NOTABLY THE NOVEMBER 4, 2014 GENERAL ELECTION.

Also of concern was the reorganization of staffing responsibilities within the VRE prior to the November 4, 2014 General Election and its possible effect on efficiency of the VRE office.

The Election Center team also reviewed recommendations made in the 2008 Performance Review of the VRE office to determine whether recommendations were implemented and, if the recommendations involved changes in office processes, these changes were still in effect today.

The problems identified below came to the public's attention through reporting of various news media and, taken together, created a concern for the efficient and effective operation of the election process in Sacramento County. Confidence that elections are conducted fairly and accurately is a critical component of the public's participation in, and trust of, the democratic process.

Experience with elections and election officials in other jurisdictions indicates that elections are complicated and detailed events that take place over an extended period of time, involve staff, candidates, members of the public, vendors, volunteers, and others. To a certain extent, the measure of an efficient election is both minimizing errors and effectively responding to those that do occur.

MEDIA REPORTS OF ERRORS OR PROBLEMS

1. DEMOCRATIC PARTY ■ LIST OF ENDORSEMENTS

THE SITUATION

Elections Code section 13302(b) requires the election official to notify the chair of each political party of candidates within that party to be voted on at the election and permits but does not require, the party to submit to the elections official for inclusion in the sample ballot a list of candidates endorsed by the party.

According to VRE the deadline for submission of the list of endorsements passed without receipt of a list from the Democratic Party. As a consequence, sample ballot booklets were printed without the list of Democratic Party endorsements, an omission that was reported to VRE on Friday, September 26, 2014, 39 days prior to the November 4th election and 10 days before the period for absentee voting was to begin on October 6th.

The Registrar of Voters contacted the Democratic Party and determined that, although VRE had no record of having received a list, the Party was able to produce a fax receipt indicating that such a list had been sent. The Sacramento County Department of Technology (DTech) analyzed the history of incoming faxes to VRE and was able to confirm that the Democratic Party had sent, and VRE received, a fax at the time the Democratic Party indicated it had been sent. The appropriate fax machine at VRE received the fax before the deadline for submittal. VRE staff was unable to locate the fax and began corrective measures

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

In an email sent at 4:27 pm on September 26th, the Registrar informed the Board of Supervisors advising them of the problem and informing them that she had consulted with
County Counsel. The Registrar determined, as an administrative remedy, to mail the list of Democratic Party endorsements to all registered voters, to be received prior to the October 6th start of absentee voting.

At 4:42 pm the Registrar received an email from Supervisor MacGlashan's office stating that this remedy was not appropriate, that a mailing of just the Democratic Party endorsements put other parties at a disadvantage with voters and that the mailings should include endorsements from all political parties that submitted a list.

On Monday, September 29th a representative from the Democratic Party asked the Assistant Registrar to see a proof of the corrective post card before it went to print. County Counsel advised that all parties included on the list should have an opportunity to review the post card before printing. The proof of the proposed corrective post card was sent to all interested parties on September 30th and was placed in the mail to voters on Monday, October 6th, the first day for absentee voting.

CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURRENCE

On Friday, October 3rd, 3 days before the corrective post cards went in the mail to voters, VRE staff developed written procedures to require that: (a) VRE staff contact any political party that has not submitted a list of endorsements 2 days prior to the deadline, and (b) establish "chain of custody" procedures for materials received in the office in person, by mail, or via email. Responsibility for this procedure was assigned to the Manager of Campaign Services.

VRE also initiated a Telecommunications Service Request for capability of the Manager of Campaign Services to be automatically notified by email when a FAX is received in the office. This capability was operational by Wednesday, October 8th.

Additionally, an all-staff meeting was held on October 2nd to inform staff about proper procedure for handling incoming information.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Training: The requirement that VRE staff contact any political party that has not submitted a list of endorsements 2 days prior to the deadline should be incorporated into Campaign Services' training materials. The Campaign Services manager should be assigned responsibility for this procedure.

- Business Rules: Campaign Services procedures, manuals and flow charts should be updated to include this requirement.

- Documentation: Contact of political parties as required by this procedure should be documented as to the date contact was made and by whom.

2. PETITION FOR VOTER APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC FUNDING OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ARENA ACT

THE SITUATION

On June 26, 2014, the Sacramento city council, by resolution, consolidated its municipal election with the November 4, 2014 Statewide General Election and requested that the Sacramento County Registrar of Voters provide election services for that election.

In addition, the city council, on December 27, 1983, adopted Resolution Number 83-1034 that, among other provisions, detailed the election services to be provided by the county, including printing ballots and sample ballots, recruiting poll workers, and canvassing the vote. More generally, the city, through a corresponding Memorandum of Understanding, stated that Sacramento County was to provide, "Supervision and conduct of the election" as well as "All things necessary or incidental to the above in accordance with California election law in effect at the time of the election or other functions as may be requested from time to time by the city". The document concluded with the provision that: "This agreement between the City and County is adopted pursuant to provisions of law. It shall remain in effect until cancelled by either party." This resolution was never cancelled and was in effect, although outdated, for the November 4, 2014 election.

Due to the strong public interest in the proposed ballot measure resulted in unusual focus on the process by which signatures on petitions were verified and counted in order to determine if the measure would appear on the ballot. The City Clerk and the Registrar have divergent views on how the process of verifying and counting signatures was conducted. It is difficult, at best, to arrive at a single set of facts, but it is fair to say that the overall process was not without tension or controversy.

Although an MOU existed to resolve possible procedural disagreements its provisions were not generally known or applied during the course of the signature verification process.

In essence, the difficulty between the Registrar and the City Clerk resulted from lack of a detailed common understanding of the appropriate role for each in conduct of a municipal election. This had not been an issue in past elections; the intense interest in the potential ballot measure brought out questions that had not arisen in prior elections. Specifically, the role of each in determining how to verify and count signatures, whether separately for each version of the petition or combining signatures on all versions into one total. The difference is not trivial and goes directly to the measure's potential for qualification for the ballot. If each version of the petition were to be considered a separate petition, then the measure could only qualify for the ballot if one individual version received the sufficient number of valid signatures.

A second point of difficulty involved responsibility for dissemination of information and progress reports to the press and public. In most past elections the Registrar had routinely issued daily email updates on the progress of signature verification. In this case, due to the strong public interest on the proposed measure, the City Clerk requested that informing the press and public be the responsibility of the City Clerk.

On December 10, 2013, proponents of the "Voter Approval for Public Funding of Professional Sports Arena Act" filed petition signatures with the City Clerk who in turn requested that the County Office of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) conduct "a full examination of the submitted signatures." In addition to the 12 boxes of signed petitions, the request was accompanied by "two blank petition versions provided by the proponents" and four boxes containing approximately 15,000 forms signed by voters requesting their signatures be withdrawn from the petitions.

Examination by the City Clerk of the petitions submitted revealed potentially eight different versions of the petitions. The City Clerk maintains that VRE was requested at this time to separate the petitions and verify signatures accordingly but that the Registrar understood VRE's responsibility to verify signatures without regard to version. The Registrar, on the other hand, indicates that although the city recognized there was more than one version, they wanted the petitions processed as one. In any case, subsequent discussions that also involved the city attorney and county counsel determined that signatures would be verified and counted separately for each version, that daily totals would be provided by the Registrar to the City Clerk, and that numbers from all versions would be rolled up into one total for dissemination to the press and public in the Registrar's daily email update.

On the morning of January 10, 2014, the Sacramento Business Journal published an article entitled "Arena ballot measure tally starts over," indicating that "Concern over variations in the ballots (sic) used to collect signatures …" required that the signature

verification process be restarted, citing a statement by the Registrar that the City Clerk had requested the petitions be separated.

In a series of subsequent emails on January 10th, (1) The Registrar inquired of the City Clerk whether she could indicate in her daily email update to interested parties that the city had requested the separation; (2) The City Clerk, in consultation with the city attorney, provided language very general in nature to be used by the Registrar in the daily email update. Specifically, the suggested language from the city attorney as provided by the City Clerk, stated in its entirety: "The county continues to comply with city requests related to the petitions. The counting includes separating petition forms and withdrawal requests along with signature verification"; (3) The Registrar indicated she would do as the city attorney requested; (4) The City Clerk indicated there were 9 separate versions; (5) The Registrar issued raw count and other data as requested by the City Clerk and City Attorney in the daily email update.

As the County, in reporting the total of all nine versions, approached verification of the number of signatures needed for the initiative to qualify for the ballot, the City Clerk, in a January 17th news release, clarified that "simply reaching this threshold does not conclude the petition validation process" and that "the City Clerk has the responsibility and sole authority to accept or reject petitions per the CA Election Codes and the Sacramento City Charter." On January 24th, the City Clerk issued a press release with her decision that the proposed measure failed to qualify for the ballot due to insufficiencies in the petitions. No one version of the petition garnered the requisite number of signatures.

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

During the signature verification process the City Clerk and the Registrar of Voters, in consultation with their respective attorneys, clarified responsibilities and procedures.

CHANGES TO ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE

Subsequent to the election the Sacramento City Clerk and the County Registrar of Voters negotiated a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to update the 1983 version and clarify roles for future elections.

Based on this new MOU, the Registrar of Voters also drafted a model MOU for use with all cities for which the county conducts elections.

Included in the new MOU is a requirement that the county provide the city an opportunity to review and certify the correctness of sample ballot materials. This is an example of a procedural change that will avoid problems that have arisen in the past and reinforces the need to make the MOU a living document that operates to encourage continuous improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- The new MOU, though an improvement on the 1983 version, may not include sufficient detail and clarity to avoid future problems. VRE should review MOU's from other jurisdictions (e.g. Ventura County in California and the City of Littleton in Colorado) that contract to conduct city elections. The MOU (also referred to as an "Inter-Agency Agreement) from the City of Littleton is included in the appendices.

- The new MOU should include a process that provides for rapid resolution of any dispute or issue not specifically foreseen in the MOU.

- VRE should request that all cities incorporate an MOU by reference, into city resolutions requesting that the county conduct the city election.

- VRE regularly convenes a meeting of all cities for which it conducts elections. The MOU should be reviewed at those meetings and future meetings should include materials for discussion of issues as they arise. VRE staff should have personal conversations with each city clerk to determine appropriate time and place details for these meetings.

- VRE should clearly designate a staff member who can serve as the primary point of contact for city clerks in terms of election issues.

3. SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE STATEMENT MISSING IN SAMPLE BALLOT

THE SITUATION

As indicated above, the City of Sacramento requested that the Sacramento County Department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) conduct the November 4, 2014 municipal election in conjunction with the Statewide General Election. The 1983 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describing the duties of the County included printing of the sample ballot mailed to each voter. Included on the ballot was the contest for Council District 8, in which Ms. Toni Colley-Perry was a candidate.

Elections Code section 13307 permits a candidate for municipal office to file a Candidate Statement describing that candidate's education and qualifications.

Elections Code section 13300 requires that sample ballots be mailed to voters between the 40th and 29th days before the election so as to be available to voters when absentee voting begins. Candidate statements are included in the sample ballot. VRE printed and mailed sample ballots. On September 29th, one week before voting by absentee ballot was to begin, Ms. Colley-Perry sent an email to the City Clerk who in turn notified the Registrar of Voters that Ms. Colley-Perry's statement had not been included in the sample ballot, setting in motion the following sequence of actions.

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

The Registrar verified that VRE staff was responsible for the error indicating that VRE had received the statement but it had been misplaced.

The Registrar contacted the candidate, all other candidates in the contest, the Chief Deputy County Executive and the City Clerk to indicate that VRE would produce and mail, at VRE expense, a copy of all candidate statements (printed in English, Spanish, and Chinese as required by law) to all voters in Ms. Colley-Perry's district.

Meanwhile, VRE staff worked with the printer to produce, translate, proof and send copy to the printer the corrected version of the sample ballot material. Turnaround time for this remedy was one day.

Sample ballots in the VRE office were corrected as were the sample ballot on the VRE website and sample ballots sent to polling places.

The additional mailing cost the county $2,500.00. The County worked with the City Clerk to refund Ms. Colley-Perry's $400 fee for her candidate statement.

CHANGES TO ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE

Included in the new MOU between the County and cities requesting the county conduct their municipal elections is a requirement that the county provide the city an opportunity to review and certify the correctness of sample ballots prior to mailing to voters.

For future elections VRE will send a copy of the report of candidates and whether each submitted a candidate statement to the appropriate city clerk to proof and sign off on. VRE amended its procedures to require that incoming emails notifying the office of receipt of candidate materials be routed to multiple members of the Campaign Services team.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Training: The procedure for city clerk sign-off of candidate materials should be incorporated into Campaign Services' training materials.

- Business Rules: Campaign Services procedures, manual and flow charts should be updated to include this requirement.

- Documentation: The procedure for sign-off by city clerks should be documented as to the dates actions were taken and by whom.

4. CITY OF GALT: CANDIDATE ROTATION LIST

THE SITUATION

Elections Code section 13112 requires the Secretary of State to conduct a drawing to produce a randomized alphabet to determine the order in which candidate names will be printed on ballots. Elections Code section 13111(i) requires the VRE to produce a second random alphabet, known as the "county randomized alphabet" to determine the order of names for elections in which a state assembly or senate district includes voters in more than one county.

Both the Secretary of State and VRE produced the required randomized alphabets on August 14, 2014. The Secretary of State's random alphabet placed candidate Mike Singleton's name third from the top of the ballot whereas using the county randomized alphabet placed him fourth from the top.

On August 1, 2015, nine months after the election, an article appeared in the local paper indicating that there had been confusion in the use of the randomized alphabet. The article attributed several statements to the Galt City Clerk, including that: (1) VRE had sent the city clerk the wrong randomized alphabet, (2) the city clerk had provided it to candidates for city council, (3) candidates often used this information in their campaigns, and (4) they did not find out until after the election that they had been using the wrong list. The top three vote getters won seats. One of the candidates, incumbent Mike Singleton, placed fourth, missing re-election by 50 votes.

According to the news article, the Galt City Clerk claims that on December 11, 2014 she sent a letter to VRE with a copy to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, complaining that she had received an erroneous list from VRE. The Registrar indicates that neither VRE nor the Board of Supervisors has a record of receiving the letter and that VRE was first made aware of a possible problem in the August 1, 2015 news article, nine months after the election. The article further indicates that the City Clerk called the VRE to complain and was only told, "Sorry."

The Registrar indicates that her office did not send either version of the random alphabet to the City Clerk. VRE posts both versions on its website. The Secretary of State posts only the state random alphabet. The Registrar indicates that after the news article was published efforts were made to contact the city clerk to clarify the situation but the city clerk had retired and these efforts were unsuccessful. Discussions with the new City Clerk failed to shed any light on the issue.

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

VRE was not aware of the issue until nine months after the election; too late for any corrective action.

CHANGES TO ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE

None

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

VRE invites all cities with consolidated elections to a workshop prior to November even-year elections to discuss procedures, deadlines, responsibilities, and expectations. In addition to regular agenda items, future meeting invitations should address recent or past problems such as appropriate use of random alphabets and how to avoid them as well as solicit suggestions from the cities for items they would like discussed or clarified.

5. CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA: MEASURE H BALLOT ARGUMENT

THE SITUATION

The City Council of Rancho Cordova placed Measure H on the ballot for the November 4, 2014 Election. Pursuant to Elections Code section 9282, ballot arguments both for and against the measure were prepared, and the signers of each were offered the opportunity to prepare rebuttal arguments to those of the other side.

Pursuant to Elections Code section 9285, rebuttal arguments were to be filed with the city clerk and accompanied by an "Authorization for Another Person to Sign Rebuttal Argument." Only one side submitted a rebuttal argument.

The form that was submitted to the City Clerk on August 14, 2014 was deficient in several ways and should have been rejected by the City Clerk, as the responsible election official, or returned to the signers for correction.

First, the form included five separate places in which the filers were required to check a box to indicate if the rebuttal was to the argument in favor or the argument against the measure. In all five the filers indicated, in error, that it was a rebuttal to the argument in favor. The persons submitting the rebuttal argument were authors of the original argument in favor and had no authority to write a rebuttal to their own argument.

Second, the rebuttal argument as submitted was titled, "Rebuttal Argument in Favor of Measure H".

Third, in order for a person other than a signer of the original argument to sign a rebuttal argument, that person must be authorized by the signature of a majority of the persons who signed the initial argument against the measure. Neither of the persons who signed the initial argument against Measure H signed the form.

The City Clerk, on August 15, 2014, submitted, via email, the "Rebuttal to Argument Against Measure H" though the form and the actual title of the argument indicated it was a rebuttal to the argument in favor. Reasonably, the VRE should have, at this point, noticed the discrepancies and notified the City Clerk. This did not happen. VRE apparently inserted the word "to" into the title of the argument so as to read, "Rebuttal to

Argument in Favor of Measure H," citing the requirements of Election Code section 9317.

On September 23, 2014 the City Clerk sent an email to VRE pointing out the error and asking how it could be fixed. The email was forwarded to management staff.

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

VRE indicated to the City Clerk that the information had been printed as provided to the office and that VRE could print and send to voters correction materials but this would be at the expense of the city. The City Clerk declined this offer.

VRE also indicated to the City Clerk that the word "to" had been added to the title of the rebuttal argument in accordance with requirements of the Election Code.

Measure H was approved with 61.45 percent of the vote.

CHANGES TO ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE

None

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Training: Although acceptance of materials for city ballot measures is the responsibility of the City Clerk, in this instance, the deficiencies in the materials forwarded to VRE might easily have triggered a communication with the City Clerk to point out these deficiencies and offer, within the time constrictions of VRE, an opportunity to correct the filing. This level of "customer service" should be a regular practice of the VRE.

- Training: VRE invites all cities with consolidated elections to a workshop prior to November even-year elections to discuss procedures, deadlines, responsibilities and expectations. In addition to regular agenda items, future meeting invitations should address recent or past problems such as this one and how to avoid them as well as solicit suggestions from the cities for items they would like discussed or clarified.

- Business Rules: VRE has a ministerial duty to print, without alteration, materials submitted by the city clerk and had no authority to unilaterally and without consultation with the city clerk, insert the word "to" into the title of the rebuttal argument. In the course of our interview, the Registrar clearly articulated this business rule but it appears it is not uniformly implemented in practice. The Registrar should reinforce this business rule with staff.

- Documentation: Any changes made to candidate materials should include documentation of when it was made, by whom and under what authority (e.g. written request of a city clerk).

- Whenever possible, VRE should provide an opportunity to city clerks to proof materials concerning municipal prior to printing sample ballots.

6. NOVEMBER 6, 2012 ELECTION; MISSING BALLOTS

THE SITUATION

Approximately three months after the November 6, 2012 election VRE located 407 uncounted absentee ballots in a sealed bag on a shelf in the warehouse. The absentee ballots had not been opened.

Elections Code section 3017 permits absentee voters to vote their ballot, place it into a sealed return envelope and rather than return it by mail, hand it in to precinct officials at a polling place. In this case the polling place at the Natomas Community Center was also a drop-off location where any voter from any part of the county could drop off his or her voted ballot. The 407 ballots discovered after the election were from voters in 92 precincts.

In Sacramento County, precinct officials are to place voted absentee ballots dropped off at the polling place, in a pink bag marked for that purpose. Sacramento County also operates Supply Vans to replenish supplies given to a polling place if they are getting low. These bags are red and labeled "Supply Van."

In this instance, in order to handle an overflow of voted absentee ballot, the precinct official requested an extra bag from the Supply Van and was given a red bag. The voted absentee ballots were mistakenly placed in this bag and were returned to the elections office without any notation that anything other than supplies had been placed in the red bag.

At that time, canvass procedures did not include opening and inspecting the contents of red precinct supply bags. After the election was certified, VRE staff, according to agency procedures, checked all the supply bags in advance of the next election and it was at this point that the voted absentee ballots were discovered.

CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN

After consulting with county counsel and the Secretary of State's office and alerting the Board of Supervisors, VRE sorted the ballots by precinct to determine if opening the envelopes and counting the votes would change the outcome for any offices or measures voted on at the November 6, 2012 election.

It was determined that the outcome of only one election contest, a seat on the Rancho Cordova City Council, might be affected, since one candidate lost by only a three vote

margin. However, only one of the 407 ballots included a vote for that office so, absent any authority to do otherwise, VRE did not open and count these ballots.

CHANGES TO ADMINSTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO PREVENT REOCCURENCE

VRE changed its procedures for canvassing elections to require that all bags and containers from polling locations be inspected prior to certification of the election.

VRE also changed procedures for red bags provided by Supply Vans to polling placed to include a label affixed to the bag that states: "Supply Bag; Reverse this label if bag is used for any other purpose" and on the other side of the label the precinct official is to indicate the precinct number.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- Training: VRE should reinforce procedures for proper return of voted absentee ballots turned in at polling places.

- Business Rules: Polling place procedures should require a log or other form that provides a chain of custody for transportation of voted absentee ballots from the polling place to the counting center. The form should indicate the number of ballots turned in to the polling place as a separate line item in the total number of voted ballots being transported to the counting center.

- Documentation: The log or form should include the signature of the poll worker in charge of the polling place.

Office Reorganization

THE SITUATION

The retirement of two long-time program managers triggered a comprehensive evaluation of VRE programs and responsibilities as well as a process to fill the vacant positions. The two retiring managers were responsible for Precinct Operations and Vote By Mail/Registration. Their retirements were January 10, 2014 and November 2013, respectively.

In addition, the person initially appointed as the new Precinct Operations Manager left the office on August 12, 2014 thereby also requiring replacement.

Discussion regarding the reorganization process began in November of 2013 and reassignment of duties was completed in January of 2014.

Conversations with the Registrar and Assistant Registrar indicate the reorganization process involved all VRE staff. Managers and supervisors participated in an exercise to identify all office tasks and responsibilities and to attach each of these to a specific VRE program. Line staff was invited to comment. Anonymous comments were also solicited.

Descriptions of the process vary but, as is usually the case in discussions that involve "territory," most employees indicated there was a degree of tension and lack of universal cooperation. Some employees complained about a lack of communication during the process.

Interviews with staff produced the general impression that the office reorganization was "making do" with what resources were available in the sense that staffing levels were not considered adequate to respond to all the requirements of the office.

It should be noted that the recently enacted county policy to consolidate IT functions in a central location was perceived by several staff to have a negative effect on VRE programs. This consolidation did not lead to any errors or inability to perform election functions. DTech personnel were credited with placing a priority on VRE needs at election time. Nonetheless, several staff indicated this consolidation contributed to operational and management difficulties of the overall reorganization.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The Registrar and Assistant Registrar indicate they took the input they received from this process and announced the results of the reorganization. Specifically: an employee who had worked under the previous manager for several years was selected as manager of Registration and Outreach; the then-current manager of Voting Systems and Technology continued in that position and also assumed responsibility for Vote By Mail; a manager who had prior experience with Precinct Operations was transferred to that program from Candidate Services, and; an employee who had prior experience in Candidate Services was selected to manage that program.

The person selected to manage Precinct Operations subsequently left the office and a new manager was selected for that program.

RESULTS OF ACTIONS TAKEN

The reorganization described above produced significant change in the VRE. Although those persons selected as managers and supervisors brought significant experience to their new positions, the combined loss of experience due to departure of three long-time managers represented a challenge for the continued efficient operation of the VRE.

Implementation and execution of the reorganization appears to have been at least partially responsible for ongoing personnel management issues in the office, including inadequate communication, decreased morale and loss of a spirit of cooperation that some employees indicated used to exist but was no longer present among what are basically programs in separate "silos."

Several employees indicated that the reasoning behind reassignment of responsibility for mail ballots from the Voter Registration program to Voting Systems and Technology was

not explained by the Registrar or Assistant Registrar and that breaking apart the voter registration and mail ballots didn't seem to make sense.

Interviews with several stakeholders indicated a loss of continuity with the office; the person who would have been the usual contact on a given issue was no longer there. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the former Campaign Services Manager who received many unsolicited positive comments about his customer service over the years.

Building a relationship with stakeholders takes time, and building that relationship to a level of trust between the stakeholder and the manager such that the stakeholder has confidence that the manager is speaking with the authority of the office is the result of interaction over conduct of multiple elections.

It is fair to say that the current incumbent managers are building this trust with stakeholders.
There were no news reports of errors or problems in the four elections conducted by VRE in 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are clearly significant communication, teamwork, and morale issues in the VRE office. The county should engage a facilitator to provide a sustained effort to improve workplace culture.

- The reasons for reassigning responsibilities for mail ballots should be clearly explained to staff.

Status of Implementation of Recommendations From the 2008 Review of Operations

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS

2008: THE SITUATION

Sacramento County commissioned a comprehensive review of VRE in January of 2007 and
a report was presented to the Board on May 6, 2008. The report included 138 recommendations, 44 of which were designated as "Priority 1" to be implemented before the November 4, 2008 General Election.

On September 9, 2008, VRE, in collaboration with the Countywide Services Agency, reported to the Board on progress towards implementing the proposed improvements and recommended, in pertinent part, that the Board: (1) "Direct the Registrar to move forward with solutions to the recommendations that can be implemented at no cost including those recommended to be addressed prior to the November election," and (2)

"Direct the Registrar to develop a plan for financing and implementing those recommendations that cannot be accomplished at no cost."

2008: ACTIONS TAKEN

Consultants have reviewed the proposed recommendations, as well as VRE's responses, but were unable, due to time constraints, to verify all of those responses. However, the following list of recommendations appear to either not have been implemented or were implemented at some point in time but have not been in place continuously through to the present.

It is noteworthy that the recommendations coincided with the financial melt down in 2008 and implementation could have been adversely affected by ensuing budgetary constraints. However, it does not appear that a process was in place, either in VRE or at the level of the County Executive office, to track, fund, and implement these recommendations.

2016 RECOMMENDATIONS

- A process should be developed by the County to avoid repeating the neglect of the 2008 recommendations.

- The County should evaluate which recommendations to implement in both the short and long term.

- An implementation team should be formed that is led by a representative from the County Executive office and also includes the County Fiscal office and VRE.

- The County Executive office should track progress on implementation through regular meetings with VRE.

- The team should report progress to the Board of Supervisors on a semi-annual basis.

- The County should consider an independent third party to review progress towards implementation on an annual basis.

PROOFING ELECTION MATERIALS

2008: THE SITUATION

High on the list of priority recommendations were proposed improvements to the process of proofing election materials, an activity of central importance to ensuring the accuracy of forms, ballots, sample ballots, and other materials.

Proofing is at the core of accuracy when it comes to election materials and improvement of the current process deserves to be high on the list for implementation. Ensuring

accuracy of election materials is required for ensuring public confidence in elections; it is also essential for avoiding costly actions to repair errors.

The September 9, 2008 report to the Board recommended, among other proposals, that a position be designated in VRE specifically focused on proofing. VRE agreed with this recommendation and requested $67,000 to fund a new position for this purpose indicating that while this position was being created, recruited and filled, existing VRE staff would implement improvements for the November election.

The report also recommended that VRE staff be on-site at the vendor's facility to observe, when practical, printing of ballots, sample ballots and other materials.

2008: ACTIONS TAKEN

The position was not created. Since that time the Registrar and Assistant Registrar indicate they have "tried everything" to improve the proofing process including, at times, using temporary employees for this critical purpose because "all permanent staff are occupied with other critical program requirements." A Senior Election Assistant, under the supervision of the Assistant Registrar, is currently overseeing the proofing process in addition to his regular duties.

Several VRE staff also volunteered that current proofing procedures are a weak spot and a potential source of errors for the department.

It should be noted that all VRE staff recently attended training on the proofing process by a professional proofreading company.

2016 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROOFING

- The VRE should formally allocate responsibility for proofing to a permanent staff member. Duties would include: overseeing the proofing process, on-site visits to vendors during printing of ballots and sample ballots, oversight of translating ballots into required languages and development of audio materials for persons who are visually impaired. This person should have general responsibility for all election materials; printed, on the website, etc. and develop working knowledge of the requirements of candidates, city clerks and other election stakeholders to enable him or her to catch mistakes before they are problems. The person designated to this responsibility should be professionally trained and should, in turn train and supervise employees, whether permanent or temporary, during proofing of materials.

- VRE should obtain proofing procedures from other jurisdictions and develop detailed procedures, checklists, and flow charts. Examples are included in an appendix.

- VRE should provide regular training of several employees by a professional trainer. This would include the professional trainer becoming familiar with election specific proofing requirements, The professional trainer could be engaged on a short term contract during key election times.

OFFICE OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, AND STAFFING

2008: THE SITUATION

Much of the following will also be discussed in Part Two of this report; "THE PRESENT."

Recommendations in the 2008 report included several related to office operations, management practices and staffing, some of which were "Priority 1" to be implemented more or less immediately.

2008 ACTIONS TAKEN

Many of these recommendations were implemented. However, others were not put in place, were ineffectually installed, or have lapsed and are no longer a part of the office's efforts to continuously improve its performance. Examples include:

- A Critical Events Calendar be developed and used at manager and staff meetings that would identify "action items," assign them to a specific person and track accomplishment of each task in order to ensure accountability.

- Collect and record issues that arise over the course of an election cycle including errors and improvements, and routinely update procedures and practices to ensure continuous improvement.

- That each program have a procedures manual that both ensures that programs are accurately implemented and also serves as a very detailed desk manual should a new employee take over the task.

- That "flow charts" be included in program procedures and desk manuals.

- The Board of Supervisors should consider a comprehensive review of positions, job qualifications and job descriptions to determine if "classifications, salary levels, benefits, and opportunities for advancement are sufficient to recruit and retain staff including providing redundancy or qualified back up for critical positions. This review should address the issue of technological changes in the election process, as well as enable independence from vendors and permit VRE to take advantage of the Internet and other tools to provide information and services to the county."

- VRE should consider "developing a career development and training program for each employee …"

- In addition, provide on-line filing of documents.

- Purchase and use Electronic Poll Books at polling places on Election Day.

2016 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICE OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFFING

Office Operations, Management Practices and Staffing at VRE can be improved. Several staff indicated a desire for better communication, accountability and tools to enable them to be efficient and innovative in the performance of their jobs.

- In terms of items 1 and 2 on the list of 2008 ACTIONS TAKEN above, VRE should obtain and use an electronic Critical Events Calendar that includes at least the functionality described below (it should be noted that staff is in the process of evaluating various options to implement this recommendation).

- Enumeration of all tasks related to administration of an election on the date the action is to be taken, as well as the number of days from that date to the election (E minus).

- The ability to automatically fill calendar dates for each election (i.e. manual entry not required).

- Identification of responsibilities by program and the ability to separate out program responsibilities for use by those persons implementing that program.

- Progressive accountability for missed deadlines from line staff to supervisor to manager to assistant registrar and registrar.

- Permits ongoing capture of suggested revisions from staff over the course of an election cycle for discussion and decision whether or not to incorporate into future calendars.

- In terms of items 3 and 4 on the list of 2008 ACTION TAKEN above, VRE staff should produce policies, procedures, desk manuals and flow charts of sufficient detail to enable a new employee to efficiently execute the tasks of each program.

- In terms of items 5 and 6 on the list of 2008 ACTIONS TAKEN above, the Board of Supervisors should conduct a comprehensive review of all job descriptions and qualifications to ensure VRE can attract and retain superior employees with specific attention to the need for knowledge and experience with technology and the requirement that employees work in a team environment.

- In terms of items 7 and 8 on the list of ACTIONS TAKEN above, VRE is undertaking significant efforts to identify and use technology to provide better customer service including having begun placing election materials and forms online. These efforts should continue and be fully supported. In addition: (a), all job descriptions should be updated to require familiarity with and ability to use technology; (b) programs, such as Voter Registration and Outreach, should use new tools, such as social media, to reach potential voters; (c) funding for purchase of relatively low tech tools to improve program administration and

customer service should be identified, and; (d) the VRE budget should include funds for employees to attend training as well as for travel to observe and learn how technology is being used in other jurisdictions.

SECTION 2: THE PRESENT

Contents

INTRODUCTION METHODOLOGY

- Improvements Made By The Department Of Voter Registration And Elections Since 2014
- The Current State Of The Sacramento County Voter Registration And Elections Office

MANAGEMENT

1. TEAMWORK
   - Recommendations

2. MORALE
   - Recommendations

3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
   - Recommendations

4. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
   - Recommendations

5. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, TRAINING, AND RECRUITMENT
   - Recommendations

6. COMMUNICATION
   - Recommendations

STAFFING AND FUNDING

1. STAFFING LEVELS
2. TEMPORARY HELP
3. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT
4. FRONT COUNTER
   - Recommendations

TECHNOLOGY

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

- Recommendations

Introduction

THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS (VRE) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE "INFRASTRUCTURE OF DEMOCRACY" THAT ENABLES CITIZENS TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS TO VOTE AND RUN FOR

OFFICE. ENSURING THE ACCURACY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ELECTION PROCESS IN A MANNER TRANSPARENT AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES IS INTEGRAL TO THIS MISSION.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors in requiring this performance review of the VRE, seeks to evaluate, first and foremost, whether the office is functioning properly and meeting its program responsibilities. More than that, however, interviews with Board Members and Executive Office staff indicate a desire that this minimum level of operation is not sufficient. The goal is operational excellence coupled to a culture of continuous improvement. The charge to consultants was to take the measure of current office practices and determine which programs or procedures meet this higher standard and those that fall below and need improvement.

METHODOLOGY

All current staff including managers, supervisors and line staff, were interviewed to determine current operational workflow, identification of obstacles to increased efficiency and effectiveness, and to frankly assess the morale and culture of the office.

Contractors met with all managers independently as well as in a group to assess current delivery of election services and commitment to customer service.

To the extent possible, former employees (those who had worked for VRE in the last two years) were identified and offered the opportunity to provide input as to their experience working with VRE and reasons why they left.

Interviews were conducted with representatives of other county departments or personnel, such as Information Technology, media relations, Human Resources and the County Executive's office that have a direct business interaction with VRE.

All members of the Board of Supervisors were interviewed to determine their personal knowledge and impressions and to learn what may have been expressed to them by their constituents.

All city clerks in Sacramento County were interviewed in person. School districts and others for which VRE conducts elections or provides services were sent a questionnaire and offered the opportunity for an in-person interview.

Stakeholders who use or rely on VRE programs, including representatives of the disability and minority language communities, were also interviewed or offered an opportunity to respond to a questionnaire.

Consultants identified elections jurisdictions in California, Nevada, Oregon, Colorado, and Washington to determine how Sacramento County compares in terms of professional practices as well as other administrative benchmarks.

Consultants also accessed a national database, compiled by the Election Center, of professional practices and programs in use across the country.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS SINCE 2014

The Voter Registration and Elections office (VRE) has implemented several changes to practices and procedures in response to the problems experienced in the November 4, 2014 General Election. Many of these are detailed in the "Actions Taken" portion of Section I of this report: "The Past."

VRE has also been identifying and implementing other procedures and practices to improve efficiency and customer service.

A partial listing includes: (1) Making a wide variety of election materials available online so that they are easily accessed by anyone without requiring a visit to the elections office; (2) Converting multiple paper forms required to be completed by candidates and others to "fillable" online forms, most of which can be filed electronically; (3) Converting candidate contribution and expenditure reports to an online format to improve accessibility to the general public; (4) Updating procedures to improve efficiency and accuracy of several office programs; (5) Use of a polling place survey tool developed by San Joaquin County to improve accessibility of voting locations, and using this tool to survey all polling places; (6) Worked with the disability community to implement an "Accessible Sample Ballot Project" to improve online access of persons who are visually impaired to election resources; (7) Became a pilot county for testing implementation of the VoteCal online voter registration and list maintenance program to be implemented statewide in 2016; (8) Undertook to design new and more secure ballot collection boxes for return of voted absentee ballots to remote voting locations and possible future use at Voting Centers; (9) Provided training on signature verification on initiative petitions to employees participating in that process; (10) Provided training on proofing of documents to all staff; (11) Updated and improved the Candidate Guide for 2016 elections; (12) Began the process of evaluating new voting systems, including inviting vendors to

demonstrate equipment to VRE staff; (13) Arranged for training of several staff members, resulting in professional certification; (14) Implemented the state online voter registration system that decreases processing time and increases the accuracy of the voter file.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SACRAMENTO COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS OFFICE

Not surprisingly, in the course of this review, consultants discovered programs and practices that VRE is doing well. There have been multiple improvements in the current operations of the VRE and this should not be minimized. In general the staff, from top to bottom, is motivated to provide superior customer service and is generally successful in this regard.

This report, however, was charged with identifying areas that need improving. These are organized below in discussion of: (1) Management; (2) Staffing and Funding, and: (3) Technology.

MANAGEMENT

In general, the work of the VRE gets done and competent and efficient managers and supervisors staff key positions. It should be noted that following the controversies of the 2014 election, VRE has conducted four elections that have not resulted in any reported problems. However, in some respects management of the office appears to be an area that requires improvement for the office to transcend "good" or even "great" in pursuit of "excellence."

The Registrar and the Assistant Registrar appear to be highly competent in terms of election administration and are very well regarded by their peers. Program managers and supervisors generally feel positive about both, indicating that both are subject matter experts, are approachable, work hard to make the office a good place to work and that they enjoy working under their leadership.

However, interviews with current staff indicate several issues in the office, the responsibility for which must ultimately rest with the Registrar and Assistant Registrar.

One comment sums up what several in the office expressed: "There is a difference between a manager and a leader." Our interviews have indicated a general consensus that there is a need for improved leadership.

1. TEAMWORK

Teamwork is an essential ingredient for successful administration, especially in a resource limited office where cross-training and back up are important securities against program failure.

Staff almost universally pointed to a "silo effect" in which programs and the personnel that work on them, are isolated from each other, not so much in terms of physical location, but more in the sense that the office lacks an overarching spirit of teamwork that once existed but is no more. To a person, those interviewed expressed a preference for a more team oriented office environment.

Interviews identified several reasons for the lack of teamwork. One viewpoint attributed it to after-effects of the office re-organization in 2014, which some thought did not include adequate staff participation. Also cited was confusion about reassignment of responsibilities and a lack of communication about why some decisions were made. Many commented that they did not know what the "vision" was for the office. In addition, some employees expressed resentment that they had not received promotion.

Confusion, internal resentments and territoriality are often after-effects of a large-scale reorganization but the salient point here is that these persist.

In interviews, the Registrar and Assistant Registrar detailed the process used for the reorganization. This process included brainstorming with managers, individual discussions with managers and supervisors and an opportunity for all staff to view the process and provide input, but they agreed that, in the end, the results were announced rather than representing a conclusion to a group discussion.

The perception that a "one for all" sentiment had somehow been lost in the reorganization was virtually universal. Several employees pointed to one section in particular as being unwilling to share staff when help was needed. It was also stated that "cliques" had developed in the space formerly occupied by an atmosphere of teamwork.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage a facilitator to assist VRE in re-establishing teamwork and collaboration in the office.

- Adopt a coaching and training program on leadership skills for senior management.

2. MORALE

A portion of staff interviewed indicated problems with morale. In some cases this was expressed as a fear of punishment. In other instances it was described as a lack of

communication or feedback from management about job performance, or uncertainty about one's responsibilities. Some also attributed it to the "silo" effect noted above, wherein the lack of teamwork produced an atmosphere of unfriendliness that interfered with communication across program lines.

Other factors cited as causes of low morale include negative publicity in local media, resource limitations that constrained VRE's ability to obtain desired funding and positions, and personnel issues and conflict within the VRE itself.

Although more interviewees than not indicated they liked their job and enjoyed coming to work each day there is a significant undertow of discontent and dissatisfaction that requires addressing.

In addition to interviews with current staff, consultants also provided staff an opportunity to submit anonymous comments. Each staff member was provided a survey form and a stamped envelope addressed to the Election Center in Texas. The survey included 4 questions. Staff ranked their answers on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being Excellent, 4 Very Good, 3 Average, 2 Poor, and 1 unsatisfactory. 18 responses were received.

The averaged responses are as follows:

- "How well is the office managed?" – 3.4

- "Are you satisfied that you have the knowledge, resources, tools, and support to do your job?" – 3.5

- "How would you rate working in the elections department?" – 3.9

- "How well does management keep you informed of new procedures and new laws?" – 4.2

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage a facilitator to assist VRE in reestablishing teamwork and collaboration in the office.

- Adopt a coaching and training program on leadership skills for senior management.

3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Interviews with managers and supervisors indicate a high level of ability, professionalism, and commitment to customer service but also brought to light the absence of a strong culture to identify and implement continuous improvement of programs and practices. Although many program improvements are being made, the

office lacks tools that could contribute to creating such a culture and institutionalizing it so as to withstand personnel changes or other contingencies.

Specifically, VRE lacks a "Critical Events Calendar" (CEC) that identifies each and every action required for election administration, is attached to a date and citation to law or regulation, and references a person or position responsible for accomplishing that action.

Such a tool is, as its name implies, "critical" for program execution, continuous improvement and as a resource or "desk manual" for persons new to a position.

Obtaining and using a CEC was a recommendation of the 2008 Review of Operations. It appears that VRE attempted to implement this recommendation but the version of software available for this purpose was flawed and difficult to use and frustration with its limited capability caused its abandonment. VRE has recently been re-investigating the use of this tool, through discussions with other counties and is currently undertaking a second attempt, this time with a more robust tool and with the assistance of DTech personnel.

A Critical Events Calendar can promote efficiency and accountability by including escalating notification of missed deadlines to supervisors, manager and finally to the Registrar and Assistant Registrar.

Another essential tool for continuous improvement of office practices is the use of a "debrief" following each election. Problems and suggestions for improvements should be identified and captured on a continuous basis during the months leading up to an election. Robust software included in a Critical Events Calendar can provide an effective means for capturing this information. Interviews indicate that the office does conduct such a debriefing following elections but this is generally ineffective due to: (a) the absence of systematic capture of problems and issues over the course of the election, and; (b) the debriefing is held so long after the election that problems and ideas are often forgotten, thereby diminishing the productivity of the debriefing.

VRE currently operates a "Command Center" for each election that includes capture and visual display of each problem as it arises on Election Day, its assignment to staff and its resolution. This is a potentially strong tool for continuous improvement and should also be incorporated into the debriefing process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Identify and install a Critical Events Calendar with the functionality described above. This may be purchased or could be developed in conjunction with DTech. Development by DTech would have the advantage that support for the system would be in-house.

- Develop a Strategic Plan for the office that sets out its vision, mission and goals. This Strategic Plan should form the basis for efforts to improve programs and services and to obtain necessary assistance or funding for implementation.

- Develop a 5-Year Elections Operation Plan that addresses office operations and administration, including: staffing, resource management, technology, business continuity and contingency planning.

4. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The Registrar and Assistant Registrar expressed frustration in their efforts to improve administration. According to their statements, some employees did not respond to requests for work products such as procedure manuals. Others resisted attending training to improve their skills. Also mentioned was difficulty in resolving disputes or reducing tensions between employees and inability to overcome the "silo" effect through cross training, encouragement of a "team" atmosphere or other methods.

Both the Registrar and the Assistant Registrar expressed that they had attempted by coaching, encouragement, discipline, reassignment of staff, reorganization of staff and training to resolve these issues and were frustrated by their seeming intransigence.

There are multiple ways of examining the cause of this frustration and finding a remedy. One, there may be techniques and methods that are successful in bringing employee concerns to light in a productive manner. The Registrar and Assistant Registrar might benefit from some training specifically focused on personnel management. More than once, either the Registrar or the Assistant Registrar commented to the effect, "I've tried everything. I just don't know how to fix it."

Two, an issue has been raised as to time spent out of the office by the Registrar who is very involved in both state and national organizations. This participation has potential to enhance the VRE through her exposure to practices from election offices across the nation and her opportunity to bring "professional practices" back to Sacramento for implementation. Additionally, her role as co-chair of the Legislative Committee of the California Association of Clerks and Elections Officials provides the office with insight into important legislative and regulatory issues as well as a heads up concerning potential new requirements for elections officials.

That being said, these duties do take a considerable amount of time and, given the current office climate, recent turnover of staff, and the need to establish more consistent policies and procedures (business rules), this time away from the office or time spent

working for these organizations may contribute to what appears to be a generalized sense that the office lacks a clearly articulated vision of its mission and of each employee's place in accomplishing that mission.

Third, it appears from the interviews that the Assistant Registrar is viewed by some employees as being distant, prone to micro-management, and, at times, punitive, in particular, when dealing with problems between people or programs. Managers have to manage, they can't be best friends with persons they may have to discipline. But they can create an atmosphere of open communication, with clear expectations, identification of strengths and weaknesses, coaching and encouraging for improvement, and understood benefits or consequences of resulting actions. It might be appropriate for an outside person or organization to facilitate a process to improve communication, teamwork, and employee morale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify and install a Critical Events Calendar with the functionality described above. This may be purchased or could be developed in conjunction with DTech. Development by DTech would have the advantage that support for the system would be in-house.

- Develop a Strategic Plan for the office that sets out its vision, mission and goals. This Strategic Plan should form the basis for efforts to improve programs and services and to obtain necessary assistance or funding for implementation, and should be developed with active participation by the County Executive office, Human Resources, and DTech.

- Develop a 5-Year Elections Operation Plan that addresses office operations and administration, including staffing, resource management, technology, business continuity, and contingency planning.

5. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, TRAINING, AND RECRUITMENT

One of the most critical functions performed by VRE is proofing of election materials to ensure completeness and accuracy. Interviews with staff, as well as the Registrar and Assistant Registrar, however, indicate that this is an area of weakness for the department.

Errors or omissions made in the proofing process can be costly to remedy, and expose the VRE and the county to negative media attention. Current practice involves the bulk of proofing performed by temporary help (temps) supervised by a permanent employee. Effort is made to pair temps with permanent staff but management indicates that the proofing process is an "add on" to current duties and permanent staff are "busy with their

own programs" at times when proofing is underway. The Assistant Registrar oversees the process and indicated that a variety of methods from other counties have been tried to improve the proofing process but that, given current resources, it is unclear how to improve.

The 2008 Performance Review identified proofing as a major vulnerability and detailed actions to improve the process, including: (1) adopting enhanced proofing and quality control procedures; (2) using permanent staff to conduct some or all of the proofing; (3) maintaining, using, and regularly updating a checklist with affirmative sign-off at each step, and; (4) seeking professional training for permanent staff.

In response, VRE implemented temporary procedures, including a checklist, for the upcoming election and for future elections, requested funding for a position with primary responsibility for oversight of the proofing process, including attending training classes, providing training to permanent staff, on-site inspection of printing vendors during the printing process and oversight of the process in the office. The request for a Senior Election Assistant, with a $67,000 price tag, was denied.

VRE has recently brought in a professional proofing company for an all-day training of all permanent staff.

Several interviewees also indicated a desire for additional training, both to improve their current work and also to enhance their opportunity for professional advancement. VRE programs generally have very few staff and a program to cross-train employees would both provide a pool of trained personnel to help across program lines as well as reduce vulnerability to unexpected program demands or employee circumstances.

Campaign Services staff indicate a desire for additional training on practices and procedures from the Fair Political Practices Commission.

Staff indicated that several office functions, including the procedure for recruiting poll workers generally and minority language poll workers specifically, could be significantly improved through use of social media. It was stated by staff that current county policy prohibits prevents VRE from using social media. Inquiries to the County Executive office, however, contradict this statement: the county has guidelines for the use of social media that appear to permit VRE to make use of this communication tool.

Staff also indicated that recruiting state and county workers to assist as poll workers on Election Day could enhance election administration. It was stated by staff that current state and county policies permitting employees to work as poll workers are restrictive insofar as the worker's supervisor is required to approve the employee's absence for Election Day and for training classes. The County Employees as Volunteer Poll Workers Program, as set forth in County Personnel Ordinance 2.78.777, and a similar state program specified in section 19844.7 of the California Government Code, both recognize the importance of providing an opportunity for government employees to work as poll

workers and indicate that employees who volunteer to serve as poll workers are eligible for their regular salary plus whatever stipend is provided by VRE. Both do, however, also require the approval of the employee's supervisor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reprioritize proofing as an essential, rather than an "add on" procedure. Current practice is to have temporary employees conduct much of the proofing process supervised by a permanent employee. At the same time, permanent staff members are assigned to outreach duties. While outreach is important, this prioritization should be reversed.

- VRE should obtain proofing procedures from other jurisdictions, review them and create business rules and procedures similar in detail and form (e.g. flow charts). Examples of proofing procedures from other jurisdictions are included in Appendix 2.

- VRE should establish a goal for all programs wherein any document submitted by a city or other jurisdiction be returned, time available, to the jurisdiction for final proofing and sign-off before printing.

- Contract with a professional proofing firm to be on-site during proofing times.

- Consider contracting with outside persons or organizations, such as former English teachers with membership in the California Retired Teachers Association, for assistance with proofing.

- VRE should revisit its determination that county policy prohibits the use of social media, obtain a copy of the guidelines and develop procedures and business rules for VRE programs accordingly. If data or statistics are required to gain permission to use this technology staff should consult with other counties that are currently using social media.

- VRE should request that the County Executive remind all county departments that the Board of Supervisors has determined that "a vital interest is served by encouraging county employees to volunteer as poll workers" and encourage approval of employee applications to volunteer.

- VRE should consider contacting both county and state retiree programs and request to communicate with these retired employees through newsletters or other communication tools used by these organizations.

6. COMMUNICATION

A large segment of staff indicated they would appreciate more and meaningful communication related to their work. A regular schedule of meetings is one key method for communication and in the case of VRE, seems to be either intermittent or, at least to some, is perceived to be ineffective.

Regular (weekly) meetings of the Registrar and the Assistant Registrar with program managers is common practice in election offices and contributes to an atmosphere of shared information and vision for the office. These meetings should be agendized, conducted efficiently and be substantive. Typically, the Registrar reports on issues from the Board of Supervisors, the Legislature, or other outside sources, and offers managers the opportunity to raise issues concerning their programs. Meeting minutes are available to all staff and agendas should include "old business" as accountability that assigned tasks have been accomplished. This accountability and continuous improvement of office programs and practices can also benefit from use of a Critical Events Calendar as a tool to organize discussion at these meetings.

In some interviews, the meetings between the Registrar, Assistant Registrar and managers, when they occurred, were characterized as unproductive often involving finger pointing and gossip in place of useful discussion. One person characterized the meetings as "no praise, just pointing out mistakes."

Line staff also indicated some frustration with office communication. Although some managers regularly meet with their program staff, interviewees also expressed a desire to have more direct communication with the Registrar and Assistant Registrar indicating that it would benefit the office if the Registrar and Assistant Registrar gathered input not just from the managers.

Both the Registrar and the Assistant Registrar indicated that they hold regular meetings with managers and less frequently with all staff.

Notably, most of the VRE managers expressed an uncertainty as to the vision and mission of the office. This related directly back to the reorganization of office duties and the rise of "silos" among programs.

Interviews with city clerks also raised the issue of communication. Though most indicated they were aware of the workshops offered by VRE prior to major elections this was not true in all cases.

In more than one case city clerks spoke about the difference in their relationship with VRE pre and post office reorganization, stating that the prior incumbent Campaign Service's Manager had been in the position for years, was in regular contact with them, was proactive in helping them if there was a problem and was able to "speak for the office" on issues as they arose. All city clerks indicated that current staff is responsive, informed and helpful and understand that it takes time to build relationships with new staff when replacing someone with whom they had worked for years. All clerks

interviewed expressed confidence in current staff, though more than one did indicate that, contrary to past practice, their calls to VRE were at times forwarded to the Assistant Registrar or Registrar and what they most wanted in a relationship with current staff was a "primary point of contact" that is able to speak with the authority of the office.

Communication to and from DTech was also brought up in interviews as a problem area. There is a residue of bad feelings over the removal of personnel from VRE to work at the downtown location. This manifests in the following ways.

One, it appears to some VRE staff that although this reorganization was carried out in response to county policy, the Registrar and Assistant Registrar continue to resent the loss of direct-report employees and this resentment is felt by DTech and adversely affects cooperation between the two departments. The Registrar and Assistant Registrar acknowledge the resentment, indicate it is not personal, but rather reflects perceived constraints on VRE's ability to perform necessary election related tasks.

Two, at least one VRE manager expressed, quite forcibly, frustration that an embedded employee was not responsive to requests to perform VRE work, instead, indicating that work and projects were only to be assigned by DTech.

It should be said that the overwhelming majority of comments concerning most embedded staff were positive indicating that requests for work were responded to quickly and professionally, often going above and beyond what was required. None of those interviewed pointed to a program failure that resulted from the reorganization of IT staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should implement weekly and effective meetings with managers and supervisory staff.

- The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should also formalize regular communication with line staff.

- Although VRE relations with city clerks appear to be positive, relationships with these stakeholders are of critical importance and efforts should be made to increase contact with and confidence between stakeholders and staff.

- The Registrar and Assistant Registrar should bury the hatchet with DTech, the consolidation of IT staff and the removal of staff from VRE is a done deal. The job now is to create a strong and positive relationship that benefits VRE in both the long and short term. Roles and responsibilities should be discussed and clearly established, including the need for VRE to have some level of supervisory control over embedded DTech employees in order to improve office operations and accountability.

Staffing And Funding

1. STAFFING LEVELS

Interviews with staff brought to light several perceived problems with staffing levels and job descriptions.

In general, there is a widely shared perception within VRE that there is not enough staff to do the required work of the department, that the county has been largely unresponsive to requests to increase staffing levels or to purchase technology that would increase efficiency, and current job descriptions inhibit VRE's ability to recruit and retain staff.

Based on our review and information received from other jurisdictions, staffing levels at VRE are not out of line with similar departments and efforts to improve should focus on how to better utilize current staff and improve technology in office functions. Development of a Strategic Plan, as recommended, would include documentation of workload to support requests for personnel or equipment.

Information provided by VRE indicates that the department requested, but was denied, the following:

FY 2013 - 2014

- One Senior Election Assistant to help with Voter Registration, additionally serving as lead worker support for 30+ temporary staff during elections and petition processing. Voter registration has increased significantly with the advent of online registration.

- Two Election Assistants to assist with MOVE Act compliance and Vote By Mail. Absentee voting has increased from approximately 20 percent of votes cast in 2004 to more than 60 percent in 2014. The positions would also assist with processing Conditional Voter Registrations.

FY 2014 - 2015

- One Election Assistant to assist with online voter registration, implementation of the VoteCal program involving registration to vote at the Department of Motor Vehicle, and Conditional Voter Registrations.

- One Election Assistant to assist with Vote by Mail, MOVE Act compliance, and Conditional Voter Registration. Absentee voting has increased from approximately 20 percent of votes cast in 2004 to more than 60 percent in 2014. The positions would also assist with processing Conditional Voter Registrations.

- One Administrative Services Officer for the Voting Systems and Technology Section to backfill duties left unsupported as a result of the IT consolidation.

A request made for one Election Assistant in the 2015-2016 budget was approved. The request was for assistance with Vote By Mail.

Additionally, requests for funds to purchase Automated Signature Recognition capability were not successful. This functionality can significantly reduce the time required for verification of petitions signatures without loss of accuracy.

The requests for additional staff positions originated from managers and employees indicating that their workload was increasing and more staff was needed to perform program duties. Without knowing how the requests were supported or why they were denied, we can say that interviews uncovered a sense of futility in terms of asking for more help as well as a feeling that VRE was not important to county decision makers.

A variety of exterior factors may have affected hiring decisions, including the 2008 financial downturn, the state's decision to not fully fund local mandates, and decisions related to Help America Vote Act funding by the Secretary of State.

2. TEMPORARY HELP

VRE is very dependent on temporary help, "temps," particularly at election time when the office receives increases in the number of voter registrations, requests for absentee ballots, documents that need to be proofed and signatures to verify on petitions seeking to qualify measures for the ballot.

Reliance on temporary help can have both benefits and drawbacks. Benefits include that temps can be hired at a relatively low cost for a defined period of time. Also, it is possible to identify temps who quickly and efficiently perform the work they are assigned and bring these persons back to meet future needs. Temps that appear to have required skills and attitude can be targeted as potential permanent employees. A substantial number of current employees were first hired as temps.

Drawbacks from reliance on temps include that they: require training; need more supervision; may not feel as attached to the expected quality of work as a permanent employee and make more errors.

Interviews with staff indicate a perception that while many temps prove to be valuable and some return for future elections, reliance on temps for some critical office functions, particularly as conditions change due to legislation affecting office business practices, may need to be augmented by addition of permanent staff.

3. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Several interviewees indicated that deficiencies in job descriptions and promotional opportunities are impediments to both recruitment and retention. Examples cited in interviews include:

- It was stated that the job qualifications for the Election Assistant position require experience with elections. This is an entry-level position and there are very few election offices where an applicant might have obtained this experience. As a result, "temps" are often hired in place of recruitment from outside.

- Salary levels of VRE positions are not competitive with those of other departments or counties that require similar skills.

- The promotional ladder (Election Assistant – Senior Election Assistant – Election Supervisor – Election Manager) has too few rungs to assist with employee recruitment and retention. It was suggested that each current level be modified to include steps, such as EA 1, EA 2 for expanded promotional opportunities.

- The limited number of positions in each VRE program makes it difficult to cross-train, train employees as backups, and prepare employees to advance into higher levels of responsibility as an element of succession planning.

- VRE job specifications are narrow and specific to elections and do not transfer easily to opportunities in other county department s (e.g Election Assistant to Office Assistant).

- Salary level and narrowness of job descriptions has resulted in an inability to fill important positions in IT and Campaign Services.

- The need for all VRE job descriptions to specifically include reference to technical knowledge and skills.

The 2008 Performance Review included several suggested actions relating to VRE staffing levels and job specifications. Specifically, the report to the Board of Supervisors indicated that;

> The Board of Supervisors should consider a comprehensive review of positions, job qualifications and job descriptions to determine if "classifications, salary levels, benefits, and opportunities for advancement are sufficient to recruit and retain staff, including providing redundancy or qualified back up for critical positions. This review should address the issue of technological changes in the election process, as well as enable independence from vendors, and permit VRE to take advantage of the Internet and other tools to provide information and services to the county."

VRE indicates that this review did not happen, or was hampered by obstacles outside the control of VRE. There may be issues related to Human Resources policies and other requirements that need to be addressed in order for this review to take place.

4. FRONT COUNTER

Staffing of the front counter is a source of tension in the office. The front counter is primarily the responsibility of staff from Campaign Services with some assistance from other programs. Staff at the front counter currently handle a wide variety of routine tasks, including opening and closing doors to the office each day, answering the phones, signing in temps and providing badges, distributing incoming mail, responding to requests for maps, collection and deposit of funds received, greeting anyone who comes to the counter, and responding to whatever request is made and other similar tasks.

Inquiries indicate that assignment of front counter duties to the Campaign Services staff is not so much an intentional decision as it is just "the way it has always been done."

A front office staff with accountability to the Assistant Registrar and independent of any of the programs would free up time for program staff to focus on their duties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Completion of a Strategic Plan to determine, among other things, adequacy of current staffing levels and the potential need for additional personnel.
- Review of VRE job descriptions, recruitment and retention issues, and succession planning.
- Evaluation and determination of how best to staff the front counter.

Technology

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The Registrar and Assistant Registrar indicate that the current voting system is out of date, cumbersome and expensive to use, and needs to be replaced. A major problem is that pending state legislation creates significant uncertainty about what equipment to purchase. VRE indicates that adding to this uncertainty is the expense involved in vendors certifying new equipment and reluctance to seek certification of upgrades to old equipment. Staff also indicates that the prior Secretary of State was very slow in securing timely certification of voting equipment and this contributes to current uncertainty of what options will be available and when.

The Registrar indicates that the result of this uncertainty is that VRE will continue in the short term to rely on the old voting system and use patches and workarounds where necessary to bridge to a time when options are more clear. In addition, there may be some equipment available on the market from counties purchasing new systems. This could provide a relatively low cost security against failure of current equipment as well as providing extra capacity. This interim strategy of effectively treading water, of course, involves some risk.

VRE staff also indicates that they sought approval for funds to purchase and implement Automatic Signature Verification software to streamline processing of vote by mail ballots. These requests were not successful. The benefits and efficiencies gained in other jurisdictions that have implemented Automated Signature Verification include reduced reliance on temporary staff, faster ballot processing, and increased accuracy.

This subject will be discussed in more detail in Part III of this report: THE FUTURE.

Interviews indicated that VRE does not have access to some current technology, which could be of material assistance to its mission. For example, social media such as Twitter and Facebook offer significant opportunities to improve voter registration, outreach and poll worker recruitment, not to mention providing the public with information concerning all office programs on a medium that is used by increasing numbers of citizens. Staff prepared an analysis of the advantages of social media for these purposes but indicate that this form of communication is not condoned under current county policy. Consultants determined, however, that the county does not prohibit the use of social media by its departments, and that there are guidelines for its use. Documentation of the benefits of using social media is available from other counties where social media is currently being utilized.

As previously noted, VRE has successfully made a long list of forms and documents available to the public online, including a Candidate Guide, numerous "How to" booklets, Procedures for Initiatives and Referenda, Election Observer Rules, a Map Request Form, Positions Up for Election, an Index of Elected Officials, Online Campaign Disclosure and many others.

In addition, many "fillable" forms will be available for the June 7, 2016 election, including: Ballot Argument Signature Statement, Rebuttal Argument Alternate Signer Authorization, Ballot Designation Worksheet, Code of Fair Campaign Practices, Candidate Statement forms, and a Letter of Authorization for Nomination Documents.

Accessibility to these forms and documents online is a significant service for VRE customers since it replaces the need for a personal visit to the elections office.

Interviewees indicate that Sacramento County is one of only a few elections offices in the state that does not have a fully paperless system for candidates to file contribution and expenditure reports. Staff indicates they would like to also have this capability, and

that the county has authorized electronic filing through the NetFile program but that candidates still have to bring hard copy, with a signature, to the office. Some candidates apparently continue to file paper reports, arguing that why should they file online when they still have to bring in hard copy. The information on hard copy is much less accessible to the public. Staff has to make a copy and charge the customer. VRE has asked the Board of Supervisors to permit full online filing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Funds should be provided to VRE to purchase software for Automated Signature Verification.

- Given the potentially critical vulnerability of equipment failure during an election, and recognizing the uncertain climate surrounding decisions to purchase new voting systems, funds should also be provided to VRE to purchase backup equipment on the market from jurisdictions upgrading their equipment.

- VRE should, in accordance with its Strategic Plan, analyze the potential use of social media for purposes spanning all VRE programs and implement this technology according to county guidelines.

- VRE should continue to assess options for new voting equipment.

- VRE should invite DTech personnel to any demonstration of new equipment and involve that office in its efforts to pursue technology improvements generally.

- VRE should continue to pursue online filing of candidate contribution and expenditure reports by all candidates.

SECTION 3: THE FUTURE

Contents

• Recommendations

Introduction

IN ADDITION TO A REVIEW OF PAST PROBLEMS AND EXAMINATION OF PRESENT PRACTICES, CONTRACTOR WAS ASKED TO PRODUCE A "ROAD MAP TO THE FUTURE" THAT DESCRIBES NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF A VOTER REGISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS OFFICE THAT EXEMPLIFIES EXCELLENCE OF ADMINISTRATION OF ITS MISSION AND VISION.

The future is unpredictable; one cannot just google a set of directions to a destination this complex. But there are certain characteristics that can combine to increase the likelihood that Sacramento VRE can become an office nationally recognized for its leadership in providing the "infrastructure of democracy" that undergirds our system of government.

It is the intention of this section to identify, in aspirational terms, some of those characteristics.

Elements Of Excellence

1. ■ LEADERSHIP

First among qualities that will define the future of elections in Sacramento is leadership. And this starts at the top. The County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive and staff in that office can set the tone for the future by publicly articulating that the election process is the mechanism by which the consent of the governed is given by the people and invested in those elected to serve the people.

County leaders can elevate public awareness and appreciation of the importance of the "infrastructure of democracy" and secure the resources and people to implement the vision and mission.

Similarly, leadership of the VRE, specifically the positions of Registrar and Assistant Registrar, is critical. Persons selected for these positions should have strong leadership skills and be able to inspire staff to foster innovation, provide superior customer service, and establish a culture of continuous improvement.

VRE staff should also feature strong managers capable of motivating staff to a high level of efficiency, innovation and service. All VRE staff should have, at minimum, a user's level of knowledge of available technologies, the ability to understand and incorporate emerging technologies into VRE programs and discernment of which technologies are appropriate to providing better service to VRE customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the elections process in Sacramento County include formalized cooperation (e.g. formation of a team) between the board of supervisors, the County Executive Office, the Registrar of Voters, the Department of Information Technology, Human Resources, and Office of Financial Management to construct a Strategic Plan and a process for short- and long term improvements towards excellence.

- The work plan and performance measurement tools for the Registrar and Assistant Registrar should include consideration of demonstrated leadership and the ability to inspire staff to implement the department's vision and mission. These characteristics should be included in recruitment materials for Registrar and Assistant Registrar.

- The work plan and performance measurement tools for the Registrar and Assistant Registrar should reinforce and reflect the incumbent's understanding of the importance of efficiency and customer service in obtaining and keeping the trust and confidence of the public.

- Recruitment and retention of VRE staff should also take into account, in addition to other considerations, innovation, creativity, technical ability and a willingness to work in a team environment.

2. INNOVATION

VRE should always be looking forward towards how to do things better. An official culture of *continuous improvement* coupled to the tools and discipline to identify and analyze risk versus benefit and execute around innovation will be important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Governments can be stodgy and slow moving. Innovation within a department of government requires permission to staff to think outside the box. Employees at all levels should be encouraged to bring ideas for improvement forward. Successful

identification and implementation of innovative ideas should be one metric used for salary increase and promotional decisions.

- Many, if not most, of the innovations to the elections process will involve technology. The relationship between VRE and IT should be characterized as "joined at the hip," mutually defining goals and cooperating to accomplish those goals.

- A sage once opined that, "I never learned anything sitting at my desk." VRE should aggressively, methodically, and in line with its Strategic Plan, pursue training opportunities for staff at all levels.

- Similarly, the elections community across the United States incudes many people and jurisdictions that are also striving towards excellence. VRE staff should be encouraged to visit model jurisdictions and attend meetings and conferences where discussion about new practices, methods and equipment take place.

3. CHANGE CONTROL

An emphasis on innovation might appear to undermine long-term planning to implement a vision and mission over a number of years, but this is not necessarily so. Strategic planning and operational planning are necessary and important for determining resources and personnel requirements. VRE should embed into its DNA an awareness that change may be required to respond to new law or regulation. Or most notably, the pace of change in technology is increasing, and with these advances come new opportunities to provide election services to voters, candidates and other stakeholders. Not to mention the potential for obsolescence or diminution of a technology's utility for election purposes either through advancement of an alternate technology or a lack of support from the vendor. VRE should strive to be nimble, flexible; avoiding entrenched "we've always done it that way" attitudes, always looking forward for ways to improve, and minimizing commitments or sunk costs that constrain adaptation to new circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decisions to obtain new voting systems or other equipment that requires substantial investment should include evaluation of long-term costs and vulnerabilities. In particular, consideration should be given to a vendor's commitment to upgrading equipment in response to defects, changes in law, or version changes of software not under the vendor's control.

- The county might give consideration to development, either on its own, as is the case with Los Angeles County, or via a consortium of election jurisdictions to develop and use a voting system that is accurate, fair, reliable, meets federal and state requirement and the maintenance of which is performed internally or through the consortium. Such a system could be intentionally designed to be relatively low cost and flexible to change.

- VRE , in partnership with the County Executive Office, Fiscal Services and Human Resources, and the Department of Technology should develop a Strategic Plan that details budgetary, equipment, and personnel needs with a five-year horizon. It should also include a longer-term view –-- perhaps 10 years --- that, without budgetary details, establishes a vision for the office in the future. This document should be updated annually to maintain its reach five and ten years into the future.

4. TECHNOLOGY

Innovation, change control, continuous improvement, office administration and customer service are likely to be heavily influenced by changes in technology. One has only to think back a few years (for example, the iPhone was introduced in 2007 and the Internet was fully commercialized in 1995) to understand that looking even a few years into the future is more than a little difficult.

However, there are technologies, or uses of technologies, that are either currently available or will be in the near future.

Utilization of those technologies currently available, as well as identifying emerging opportunities, will require strong involvement by IT staff as well as knowledge and skills on VRE staff.

Examples of currently available technologies include: Automated Signature Verification for mail ballots; electronic poll books to manage voting on Election Day; online filing of candidate contribution and expenditure reports; software for a Critical Events Calendar to
improve office-and-program-management: and-social-media such as Facebook and Twitter   to improve a variety of election related activities, including recruitment of poll workers, outreach to voters, and communication with voters and media.

These technologies can be purchased now and have the potential to increase productivity, offset the need for additional employees, enhance customer service and reduce costs.

The VRE is also considering investment in a new voting system but is currently stymied by multiple factors. One, legislation is pending at the state capitol that would establish Vote Centers as an alternative to a system of widely distributed neighborhood polling places. If the law goes into effect and is implemented in Sacramento County, it is envisioned that approximately 50 Vote Centers could replace more than 500 polling places. All voters would receive a mail ballot and could drop off their voted ballot at these Vote Centers. Or go to the Vote Center anytime during a period of days up to and including Election Day and vote the ballot appropriate for their residence address.

Should the state adopt this new voting practice, its implementation in Sacramento County would have a dramatic effect on all aspects of VRE operations. Just one example: Precinct Operations. Fewer polling places would have to be identified, but that smaller number would have to be in larger facilities to accommodate a greater number of voters. The locations would also be required to accommodate significantly more parking and take place in buildings where voting would be possible and permitted continuously over a period of many days. The number of absentee ballots to be processed would increase.

VRE has stated that its current voting system, purchased in 2004, is old and vulnerable to failure. Information provided to the consultants indicates that the United States Election Assistance Commission estimates a useful life of approximately 10 years for this voting system. Among deficiencies cited by staff are that the ballot layout process is difficult, complicated, and costs the county $70,000 each election, whereas the experience in one Colorado County is that newer systems are so easy to use that ballot layout can be done inhouse. Also, the current system is limited in terms of accessibility to voters with disabilities and their ability to cast a secret ballot.

Another variable is the uncertainty in the process by which potential voting systems are certified for use in California. This is a slow, cumbersome, technical and expensive process and to date some of the potential voting systems that could be used in California have not received certification.

Most significantly for this discussion, a decision as to which voting system to purchase to replace the current system is highly dependent on whether the Vote Center proposal is adopted and implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- VRE, with IT assistance, and in partnership with the County Executive Office, should include analysis of those technologies currently available in development of the

Strategic Plan for VRE. Those technologies or applications that meet the requirement of the Strategic Plan should be approved for funding by the county.

- If the county decides to purchase a new voting system, the choice of hardware and software will have long-term implications for the future. This choice should be made after due consideration and consultation regarding the characteristics of excellence cited above.

Appendices

The appendices for this report can be found on a flash drive. The amount of material was too voluminous to reproduce.

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE FLASH DRIVE

1	California New and Pending Election Law
2	Professional Practices
3	Interviews
4	Permanent Employees Questionnaire
5	City Clerks Questionnaire
6	Former Employees Questionnaires
7	School and Special Districts Questionnaires
8	Media Letter and Questionnaire
9	Los Angeles County Strategic Plan
10	Contra Costa County Reference Materials
11	Clark County Reference Materials
12	Multnomah County Reference Materials
13	Pierce County Reference Materials
14	Ventura County Reference Materials
15	Colorado Reference Materials
16	Arapahoe County Reference Materials
17	City/County Denver Reference Materials