

March 27, 2005

The final meeting of the vote center task force was held on Thursday, March 27, 2005. A summary of the questionnaires was presented and any remaining questions were answered. You can access the summary on our website at <http://car.elpasoco.com/vctaskforce.asp>.

March 10, 2005

The fifth meeting of the vote center task force was held on Thursday, March 10, 2005. The topic of the fifth meeting was the budget for vote centers. We compared the bottom line figure for three different types of elections: vote centers, polling place and mail ballot election. At this time the estimated figures indicate that a vote center election would be the most expensive of the three. At the end of the meeting a questionnaire was distributed to all of the vote center task force members.

The final meeting of the vote center task force is scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2005 at 5:00 pm. It will be held in the Auditorium at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Avenue. At the final meeting we will present a summary of the questionnaires that all of the task force members were asked to complete. All task force meetings are open to the public.

February 24, 2005

The fourth meeting of the vote center task force was held on Thursday, February 24, 2005. The topic of the fourth meeting was connectivity and technology needs for vote centers. John Gardner presented several different options for connecting vote centers. The presentation can be found on our website at <http://car.elpasoco.com/vctaskforce.asp>.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2005 at 5:00 pm. It will be held in the Auditorium at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Avenue. This meeting will focus on the budget for vote centers. All task force meetings are open to the public.

February 10, 2005

The third meeting of the vote center task force was held on Thursday, February 10, 2005. The meeting began with an overview of the Larimer County Vote Center Conference that was held on Tuesday, February 1. The conference detailed every aspect of vote centers including the education of voters, site selection, connectivity/technology, election judges, preparing the vote center for election day, legislative and more. Larimer County had a mock vote center set-up, which enabled those

attending to get a true feel for how the vote center worked. Everybody walked away with a great understanding of vote centers.

The topic for the third meeting was election judges. For a medium sized polling place a minimum of 9 election judges would be needed. We currently have 185 polling places; therefore we would use a minimum of 1,665 election judges per election. For a medium sized vote center a minimum of 23 election judges would be needed. If 30 vote centers were used, we would need a minimum of 690 election judges. It would be a lot easier to recruit and train 690 judges compared to 1,665. With vote centers, each judge would be assigned to one station and would be trained in depth for that station. Along with the judges there would be one supervisor and one troubleshooter at each vote center that would be trained in every area.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 24, 2005 at 5:00 pm. It will be held in the Auditorium at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Avenue. This meeting will focus on the connectivity and technology needs of vote centers. All task force meetings are open to the public.

January 27, 2005

The second meeting of the vote center task force was held on Thursday, January 27, 2005. The pros and cons of vote centers were reviewed and a few more were given. The main topic of the meeting was "Locations of Vote Centers & Site Selection." The election staff has identified 30 areas of El Paso County as "target areas" for vote centers. The task force went through each area and brainstormed different locations within the area that a vote center could be held. The majority of locations were hotels, churches and community centers. The meeting ended with questions and answers regarding vote centers.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2005 at 5:00 pm. It will be held in the Motor Vehicle reception area of Centennial Hall at 200 S. Cascade Avenue. This meeting will focus on election judges and the role they would have in vote centers. All task force meetings are open to the public.

January 13, 2005

The task force met for the first time on Thursday January 13, 2005. One of the topics for the first meeting included a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation outlined the vote center process and Larimer Counties experience with vote centers over the last three elections. The presentation is available for review on our web site at www.car.elpasoco.com/elemain.asp. In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, the task force put together some pro and con ideas, which will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday January 27, 2005 at 5:00pm. It will be held in the Auditorium of Centennial Hall at 200 S. Cascade Ave. The main topic for this meeting will be focusing on possible locations for vote centers within El Paso County. This meeting is open to the public.

Vote Center Organizational Meeting Thursday, January 13, 2005, 5:00 pm Centennial Hall Auditorium

In Attendance Task Force Members: Vickie Brown, Ellen Chestnutt, Charles Conser, Lee Gilbert, Fred Herman, Bob Hughes, Terry Kunkel, Margaret Long, Anna Lopez, Mike Lucas, Ron Miller, Elizabeth Patterson, Carol Pfeffer, H.E. "Cap" Proal, Marcy Pults, Priscilla Rice, Tim O'Brien (for Norm Ridder), Joe Schaefer, Mary Anne Tebedo, Joan Wolford, Ann Oatman-Gardner

Citizens: Ralph Patterson, Cathy Stone, Bob Null, Bob Gardner, Sarah Jack, Jim Mesite

Staff: Bob Balink, Marguerite Duncan, Susan Russo, Liz Olson, Keri Ashley, John Gardner, Mary Bartelson, Angie Leath

Welcome & Introductions

Bob Balink began by welcoming everybody to the meeting and giving a brief overview of what the task force would be responsible for. The task force is composed of a variety of people including election judges, poll watchers, campaign managers, party chairs, special district representatives, concerned citizens, etc. Throughout the next couple of months, the election department staff will be presenting information to the task force on the different components of switching from polling places to vote centers. After reviewing the different aspects of vote centers, the task force will make an informed decision to move forward with vote centers or stick with the traditional polling places. If the task force decides it is a good idea to move forward with vote centers, it will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Power Point Presentation

Liz Olson presented a PowerPoint presentation on Vote Centers that we received from Larimer County. Larimer is the only county in Colorado that uses vote centers. The PowerPoint presentation covered information about El Paso County (number of registered voters, number of precincts, number of ballot styles, etc.), the what/why of vote centers, the Larimer County experience, vote center processes, legislation (CRS 1-5102.7) and geographical maps (density diagrams, target areas, etc.).

Pros & Cons of Vote Centers

Please see attached document for a list of the pros and cons of Vote Centers.

Questions from Task Force

Question – What percentage of voters cast their ballot at the polls compared to Early Voting or Absentee Voting? **Answer** – All of this information can be found in the Election History handout that was given out after the meeting. If you would like to have this emailed to you please let Liz or Keri know. **Question** – Would the County Commissioners have to approve the switch from polling places to vote centers? **Answer** – We feel it is very important to have the support of the BOCC before proceeding with the Vote Center plan, IF that is the recommendation of the task force. **Question** – The statute addresses vote centers, but would it need tweaking for El Paso County. **Answer** – No. Please refer to C.R.S. 1-5-102.7 for further explanation of the legislative requirements regarding vote centers. **Question** – What happens if the computers go down on Election Day? **Answer** – We will have backup computers that can be delivered to any vote center within a short period of time. We will have several computers at each vote center; so one computer going down would not cause a huge delay or inconvenience to the voter. **Question** – What happens if the main computer link fails? **Answer** – We will have a back-up computer link that will work, it just will not be as fast. No data would be lost because it will all be connected to the downtown office.

Comments from Task Force

- Fewer people are voting on Election Day yet we still have to have 185 poll places. Some poll places are extremely busy, while others are very slow and get very few voters.
- We need to keep the young generation interested in voting. Vote Centers would help do this because the younger generation is very interested in technology and new ideas.
- Often times, people's polling places change so much, that they can't remember where to go, so they end up at the wrong polling place, and have to vote a provisional ballot, which often frustrates the voter.

Comments from the Public

- If we had people waiting to vote late into the night in November 04, how can we think that reducing voting places from 181 to 36 is at all workable?
- The Gazette announcement says the county "wants to study the issue to learn whether it would improve the accuracy and fairness of elections." What evidence is there that accuracy and fairness was/is a problem? Is this an issue of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it"?
- As to the expense of having so many polling places: Our right and privilege to vote, our very liberty and freedom is worth \$600K to many (if not most) of us.
- What is the genesis of this entire project?
- Who decided our current system is unsatisfactory?
- Have we considered a "compromise" proposal? Combine 3, 4, or 5 precincts into one, with then one polling place? Folks would still be required to vote at there polling place, retaining geographic familiarity and loyalty, fewer places, etc.
- What happens if you have central computer failure if poll books only accessible by computer?
- How could you have a staff person at each center if you have 30 centers? A limited staff at election department?
- Can we have more than 30 vote centers -or are we limited to one for every 10,000 people?

Comments from Staff

- The number of election judges needed would decrease dramatically, while the skill level and training time would increase. Right now we have to focus on the number of judges and not the quality. With vote centers we could focus more on quality and training because we would have to find and train approximately 500 judges instead of 2,000. This would allow for more control by the elections staff and therefore fewer mistakes.
- We will be splitting precinct this year, which could add 30 to 40 more precincts to find polling places for.

Major Topics for Discussion at Future Task Force Meetings

*These are not listed in any particular order. Except for the location/site selection issue we do not know what order the issues will be addressed.

1. Location/Site Selection

- a. We will be discussing locations/site selection at the meeting on Thursday, January 27, at 5:00 pm, at Centennial Hall.

- 1 Technology/Connectivity
- 2 Budget/Cost
- 3 Election Judges
- 4 Education
- 5 Preparing the Vote Center for Election Day

Please RSVP for Thursday's meeting to Keri or Liz. If anybody has a certain subject that they think needs addressed please contact Keri or Liz and they will put it on the agenda.