

Preparations for the Election: Findings

1. Voting machines were delivered to the 53 precincts with security seals intact.
Agree.
2. Inspectors are responsible for picking up all Election Day material for their precincts, except for the machines, from the Elections Office prior to Election Day.
Agree.
3. Due to accidents and illness, several poll workers had to be replaced on or shortly before the day of the election. In spite of this, the Elections Office was able to find enough replacement poll workers to fully staff each precinct.
Agree.
4. Last minute replacements resulted in some poll workers having minimal or no training.
Agree.
5. Several polling places had students as poll workers; they performed well and were particularly effective with the voting machines.
Agree.
6. Two polling places were staffed with community organizations: The Grey Goose was staffed by the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) serving in their second election, and the American Legion Women's Auxiliary staffed the Rough & Ready Firehouse for their first election.
Agree.

Preparations for Elections: Recommendations

1. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should work to increase the pool of back up Inspectors and Judges to provide adequate, trained poll workers in case of cancellations.
The recommendation has been implemented.
Nevada County Elections had a much larger list of back up Poll Workers for the May Statewide Special Election, and required these workers to attend the training sessions. However, due to dropouts, many of these back up workers were called to serve in precincts prior to Election Day, once again leaving few trained workers available for Election Day vacancies. Even after implementing the Grand Jury's recommendation, the Elections Office still had difficulty finding qualified replacements for Poll Workers who dropped out on Election Day. This issue has less to do with the size of the back up worker pool than the fact that after making a commitment to serve as a Poll Worker, people quit, not understanding the effect that their decision has on the Elections Office, their fellow workers, and the conduct of elections in Nevada County. Finding

qualified and dedicated poll workers is a statewide and national issue. We are very concerned about this as the average age of our 300 poll workers is 72 years. Every county in the state is constantly looking for ways to increase their poll worker pool, including Nevada County.

2. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should work to increase the recruitment efforts in high schools and Sierra College to interest more students in participating in the election as poll workers.

The recommendation has been implemented.

Nevada County Elections continues to improve its high school student recruitment program, and is currently working to partner with Sierra Community College on recruiting and training Student Poll Workers.

3. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should look into expanding the use of organized community groups for the purpose of staffing a precinct with qualified poll workers.

The recommendation has been implemented.

Nevada County Elections has already begun to create and implement an extensive outreach program to local groups who may be interested in staffing polling places.

Training: Findings

1. The Elections Office provides a variety of training and tools for workers:
Machine operations
Procedures
On-line training
Official Precinct Board Manual
Opening/Closing Procedures Flip Chart
Agree.
2. A very high percentage of poll workers interviewed had positive comments about the quality and effectiveness of the training for this election.
Agree.
3. Some poll workers did not attend any training for this election.
Agree.
4. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) did not allow compensation for training.
Partially disagree.
The current Board of Supervisor's resolution authorizing poll worker pay does not address compensation for training.
4. Some volunteers reported that insufficient time was allocated in the equipment sessions to allow enough "hands-on" practice with the machines.
Agree.

5. Inspectors have numerous duties and responsibilities beyond those of Judges, both prior to and on Election Day.

Agree.

6. Despite additional duties and responsibilities, Inspectors receive no specialized training to cover these.

Partially disagree.

While Judges and Inspectors receive the same training, the training is geared more toward Inspectors and covers all their job duties. Instead, the Judges are receiving specialized training beyond what their job actually requires.

Training: Recommendations

1. The Nevada County Board of Supervisors should support additional compensation for mandatory training.

The recommendation requires additional analysis.

As Clerk-Recorder I have always maintained that Poll Workers in Nevada County and across the state deserve far more compensation than they are currently getting. Their job is complex, and requires dedication, knowledge of voting laws and they are required to attend several training sessions prior to each Election Day. However, given current budget constraints the Elections Office must balance the desire to increase Poll Worker compensation with our commitment to fiscal responsibility. A preliminary survey shows that many surrounding counties pay Poll Workers for attending training classes (up to \$40 for a class), and if Nevada County were to pay \$10 for each training session a Poll Worker attends, this would bring us more in line with Poll Worker compensation in surrounding counties. Our office will conduct an in-depth study of Poll Worker compensation in surrounding counties and make a recommendation to the board on this matter prior to December 31, 2009.

2. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should direct staff to arrange training to allow more time for “hands-on” machine experience for the poll workers.

The recommendation has already been implemented.

In the May Statewide Special Election, Poll Workers were given the option of attending an additional equipment lab session that allowed students who needed or wanted additional hands-on time with the Hart Voting Machines the chance to further familiarize themselves with and practice procedures on the equipment. No Poll Workers attended.

3. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should direct staff to provide separate training for Inspectors to include their additional responsibilities.

The recommendation will not be implemented at the present time.

The Poll Worker curriculum in Nevada County is primarily targeted toward Inspectors. At this time, all the information an Inspector needs to perform his or her job duties are covered in the class; a Judge taking the same class is receiving training beyond his or her job duties. In past elections, the office attempted to offer separate trainings for new Poll Workers and experienced

Poll Workers, but found that Poll Workers attended the class that fit their schedule and not their experience level.

Polling Places: Findings

1. At least three polling places were not in compliance with the guidelines for accessibility established by the Secretary of State under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), for example, thresholds exceeded ½” in height, making wheel chair access difficult.

Agree.

My office has been working in partnership with FREED ever since I took office to resolve any ADA issues at polling locations. In conjunction with FREED, an accessibility study has begun, outlining the ADA needs, if any, for each of the polling places in Nevada County. We are now looking for funding to make each of our sites ADA compliant. This year, we received a \$145,200 HAVA VOTE grant to complete our surveys and resolve any ADA issues.

2. Poll workers were instructed to provide “curbside” service for voters with disabilities who were unable to enter the polling place.

Agree.

3. Some polling places have convenience limitations, e.g., lack of heat, equipment in the way, muddy parking lots, lack of snow removal equipment, etc.

Agree.

4. Two polling places, serving four precincts, were located in establishments which were selling alcoholic beverages during part of the election period. There was not the required separation described in State Code Section 12288.

Agree.

This issue has been solved. See recommendation #2.

5. Personnel in the Elections Office were aware that they were not in compliance with the State Code, and were actively seeking replacement polling places for those polling places located in bars.

Agree.

6. As of the date of this report, one of these polling places has been replaced and another has been reconfigured to meet State Code requirements. A third, although it did not serve alcohol during election hours, has been replaced to avoid the perception of impropriety.

Agree.

7. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder estimates the cost of processing a ballot cast at a polling place to be \$14.00 vs. \$7.25 for a vote-by-mail ballot.

Agree.

8. The Elections Office is aware of the problem of accessibility in some of the polling places, and is pursuing the possibility of providing portable wheelchair ramps and other ADA mitigation supplies.

Agree.

Polling Places: Recommendations

1. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should direct staff to continue to seek to remedy accessibility issues where they exist.

The recommendation has been implemented..

The Nevada County Elections Office has received a HAVA VOTE Grant in the amount of \$145,200 to survey polling places for accessibility, purchase mitigation supplies, and upgrade training materials. The Elections Office will continue conducting surveys of the remaining polling places throughout the summer and fall and hopes to have all polling place accessibility issues solved in time for the June 8, 2010 Primary Election.

2. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should continue to make every reasonable effort to secure polling places which are in compliant with State Code Section 12288 regarding polls located in bars.

The recommendation has been implemented.

In the May Statewide Special Election, no bar or location where there was dispensation of alcohol was used as a Polling Place.

Field Election Deputy System (FED): Findings

1. In most cases, the FED responded within 30 minutes of being contacted.

Agree.

2. There were eleven FEDS in the November election.

Agree.

3. In a number of areas, there was either no cell service/land line at the poll location, or the FED was in a location where he/she had no cell service.

Agree.

4. The Elections Office was aware of the potential cell phone problem prior to the election, and had established procedures to deal with this issue.

Agree.

Field Election Deputy System (FED): Recommendations

1. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should continue the FED system.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Elections Office has no plans to discontinue use of the FED Program.

2. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should consider reducing the number of polling places assigned to each FED where telephone coverage is spotty or not available.

This recommendation will not be implemented because reducing polling places in areas without coverage would eliminate service to some areas.

Unfortunately due to the rural nature of the county, most territories have several areas where there is no cell phone reception. Before each election, FED territories are redrawn, and this recommendation will be taken into consideration, however, once again given the rural nature of the county, the Nevada County Elections Office would be unable to implement this recommendation to everyone's satisfaction.

3. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should investigate the use of supplemental communication methods.

This recommendation will not be implemented because the reasonable solution is what we already have in place.

Switching to another cell phone service provider would create blind spots in other areas. Whenever possible, the Elections Office attempts to find multiple ways to contact a polling place, including board member cell phones, land lines at the facility, etc. Supplemental communication methods likely would result in the same communication issues that the office currently encounters on Election Day.

Findings: Election Day

1. In the majority of precincts, poll workers experienced no difficulty with overall operations.
Agree.
2. Minor equipment problems were experienced in approximately one third of the precincts during set up or closing. Most problems were resolved by rebooting the equipment or jiggling the electrical connections.
Agree.
3. The majority of polling places completed the closing procedures without calls to the Elections Office for assistance.
Agree.
4. A few poll workers did call for assistance and had their questions resolved.
Agree.
5. Security procedures are in place for both opening and closing of each polling place.
Agree.
6. Written procedures exist, and are followed, to assure security of electronic and written ballots.
Agree.
7. Some poll workers experienced confusion when voters from a nearby vote-by-mail precinct, whose name was not on that precinct's roster, wanted to cast a ballot in person and did not have their vote-by-mail ballot.
Agree.

8. In the November 2008 election, 56,177 votes were cast, representing approximately 88% of Nevada County's registered voters. Approximately 70% (39,454) of the votes cast were vote-by mail.
Agree.

Election Pay: Recommendation

1. The Nevada County Clerk Recorder should direct staff to include additional time in the training for dealing with all types of voters not listed on the precinct roster.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Elections Office continues to cover how to handle all types of voters in Poll Worker training. Although Poll Workers have always had the tools in their training manual and have received this information in training, the Elections Office made this information more explicit and added additional tools to the Poll Worker supplies to eliminate confusion about how to process voters not on the roster.