



Election Administration Recommendations for Coconino County, AZ

Future of Elections Committee, September 2017

COCONINO COUNTY COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF ELECTIONS

Dear Voters of Coconino County

The Committee on the Future of Elections in Coconino County is pleased to present this report with our recommendations regarding election administration. Coconino County Recorder Patty Hansen assembled this committee with the directive to review, analyze, evaluate and make recommendations on the replacement of aging ballot counting and voting equipment. During our examination and study, the committee also evaluated election administration processes in the county.

The Committee was concerned, most of all, with maintaining voter confidence in the county's ability to conduct fair, accurate and secure elections. Toward this end, we strongly endorse the goals of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Help America Vote Act of 2001 to ensure that all voters are treated equitably regardless of race, minority language status, age and/or physical capabilities. We continue to be fully compliant with federal law requiring Coconino County to equip each voting location with at least one election device that meets Americans for Disability Act (ADA) standards for use by people with limited physical abilities. We are also compliant with federal law requiring that Coconino County have election technology available at every polling location to assist voting by Spanish and Navajo language speakers.

After many hours of deliberation and review, Committee recommendations endorse a method of voting that is convenient, cost effective, and has the potential for increasing voter participation.

The recommendations included in this report are unanimously endorsed by Committee members.

Committee on the Future of Elections in Coconino County

INTRODUCTION

Coconino County's voting equipment is aging, and now lies outside its projected lifespan. This fact makes the county's voting equipment and elections more broadly vulnerable to failure and potential breaches of security. The hardware and software are no longer supported by vendors and reliant upon the functioning of an obsolete server.

The voting equipment currently in use by Coconino County was purchased in 2003 and the accessible touch screen voting equipment was purchased in 2006 with federal funds provided by the Help America Vote Act of 2001 (HAVA). The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) recommends that voting equipment be replaced every ten years. The Arizona State Election Procedures manual also instructs counties to replace their equipment every 10 years. Thus, Coconino County is currently out of compliance with these recommendations.

Coconino County started to plan for replacing voting equipment several years ago by establishing a voting equipment replacement fund. The Board of Supervisors established this fund with a 50 cent per registered voter fee charged to jurisdictions participating in an election administered by the county. Currently, the county has set aside \$383,000 in the voting equipment replacement fund to purchase new equipment. There are no additional federal or state funds available to help subsidize equipment purchases at this time.

CURRENT ELECTION PROCESSES AND TRENDS IN COCONINO COUNTY

Coconino County is currently divided into 71 election precincts. Thirty-eight precincts are in the greater Flagstaff area and 33 precincts lie outside of the Flagstaff area. In the 2016 General Election, the county consolidated these precincts into 61 polling locations.

Delivery of equipment to the polling locations requires the rental of 11 trucks. Outside of Flagstaff, polling locations are divided into six delivery routes and election equipment is brought to polling locations by Coconino County Public Works personnel. Personnel from Coconino County's Facilities Department deliver equipment to the Flagstaff area locations. Equipment is delivered to Havasupai (Precinct 60) by helicopter. Forest Lakes (Precinct 53) equipment is delivered by the Election Day Technician.

During the last three Presidential General Elections (2016, 2012, 2008), overall voter turnout in Coconino County stood consistently at about 75% of registered voters (see Figure 1). In General Elections, voters are increasingly choosing to cast their ballots early (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Percentage of Voter Turnout, Coconino County

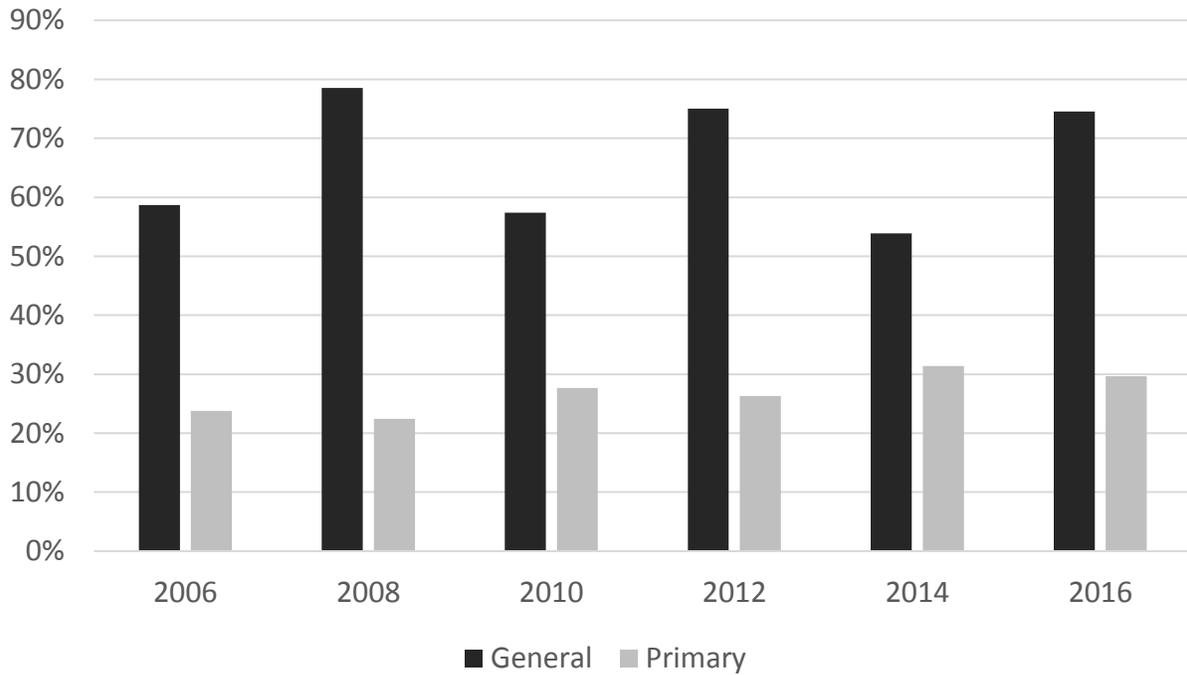
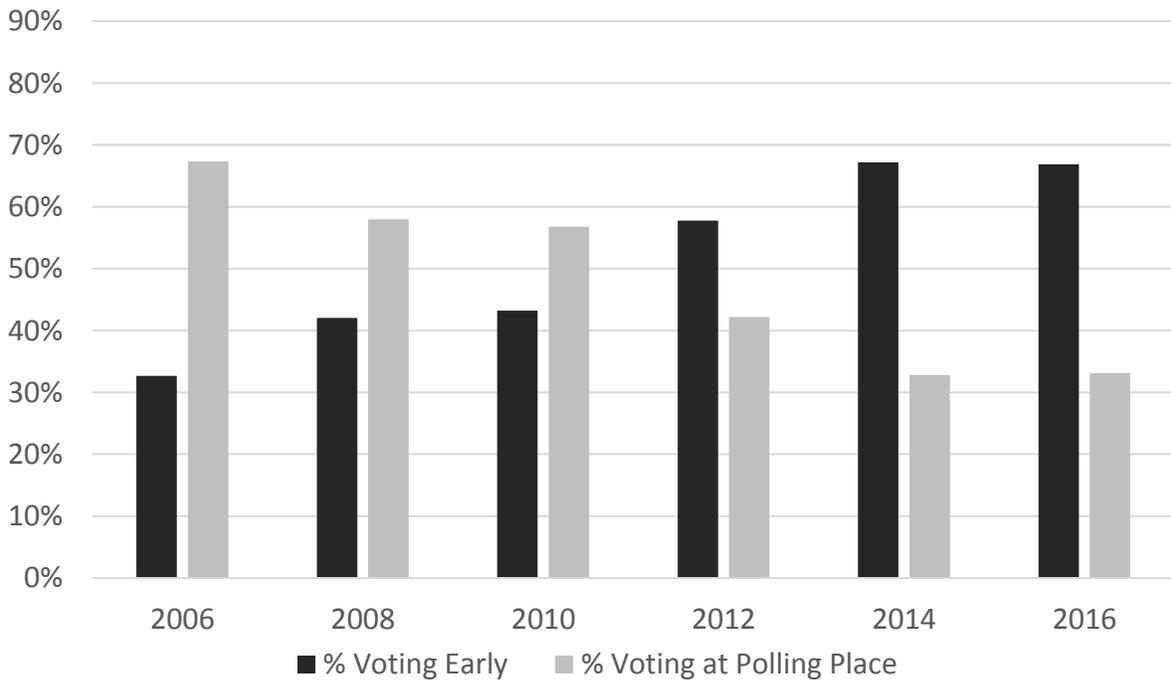


Figure 2: Preferred Voting Method, Coconino County



PROBLEM DEFINITION

Aging and Outdated Equipment and Technology

Current Coconino County election equipment was purchased with federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funding. Central Count (2) machines, GEMS Software, and Precinct Tabulators (99 ACCUVOTE units) were purchased in 2003 for a total cost of \$676,452 and first used in the 2004 presidential election. ADA compliant voting devices (106 TSX units) were purchased for a total cost of \$512,610 and first used in 2006. One hundred EA Tablets electronic pollbooks (e-pollbooks) were purchased for \$159,898 and first used in 2014.

The GEMS software only runs on a computer server using the Microsoft 2000 operating system. The memory cards for the voting equipment are no longer manufactured, and it is difficult or impossible to upgrade the operating system and get replacement parts for the server. The initial estimated lifespan of this equipment was 10 years. This equipment has now been in use in Coconino County for 13 years. Continued use of this equipment runs the risk of failure and breach of security in the near future.

The current equipment uses analog telephone lines for transmitting election results to the County Recorder's Office on Election Day. Fewer and fewer polling locations have analog lines available because telephone systems have been switched to digital or voice over internet protocol (VOIP) formats.

The county is starting to experience voting equipment failures on Election Day. While these failures have not put election outcomes in jeopardy, they are disturbing for election board workers and worrisome for the general public.

Challenges of Conducting Elections in Coconino County

Coconino County is the largest county geographically in Arizona and the second largest county in geographic size in the continental United States. Encompassing 18,661 square miles, this county is larger than nine states. The Grand Canyon divides the county from east to west in the northern portion, and the county includes one precinct (Havasupai) located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon which is only accessible by foot, horseback or helicopter. The residential population of Coconino County is 134,421 people, according to 2010 Census figures. 82,092 county residents are registered to vote as of July 2017. The voter population is dispersed throughout the county, requiring a multitude of rural election precincts. The technological infrastructure in rural precincts, including cell phone service, wifi service, and even electricity is unreliable and, sometimes, nonexistent. In some elections, weather has impeded voting and impacted the ability to return completed ballots to the County Recorder's Office located in Flagstaff on election night.

Challenges to conducting polling place elections in Coconino County include recruiting qualified poll workers and finding suitable polling locations. In the 2016 General Election, the county utilized 470 poll workers. The County Elections Office found it extremely difficult to recruit the necessary number of people required to run the election. Arizona Election Law requires poll workers to work the entire Election Day, and as the county population ages, fewer people are willing and able to work a 15-hour election day.

During the 2016 General Election, some polling locations were undergoing renovation and were unavailable for use during the election cycle. In one location, a local elementary school, parents approached the Assistant Superintendent of Flagstaff Unified School District and requested that the school no longer be used as a polling place. Parents were concerned about the security of the school and safety of their children. The number of facilities available for use as polling locations throughout the county continues to decrease.

In conclusion, elections in Coconino County are experiencing the following challenges:

- Aging, outdated voting equipment;
- Large capital expenses associated with purchasing new equipment;
- Geographic size of county making equipment deliveries challenging;
- Rural distribution of the population;
- Limited technological infrastructure at rural polling locations;
- Difficulty recruiting qualified poll workers; and
- Declining availability of locations to serve as polling places.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The County Recorder's Office appointed a committee in early 2017 to help review, analyze, evaluate and make recommendations regarding the purchase of new voting equipment. The Committee was also tasked with reviewing election administration procedures that would improve and hopefully expand the methods that voters could use to cast ballots. It was important that Committee members be generally familiar with election administration, and the cultural and geographic diversity of county voters.

Committee Membership

Byron Browning, Coconino County Public Works department. Byron has over 30 years of experience involved with many aspects of the conduct of elections in the county. He brings a great depth in knowledge of the northern portion of the county through many years of overseeing the delivery of election supplies to the rural parts of the county, working as an Election Troubleshooter and Election Day Technician in Page and on the Navajo Nation.

Lindsay Daley, Executive Assistant to County Supervisor Matt Ryan. Lindsay was a supervisor in the County Recorder's Office for several years. She is a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator through the Elections Center and Auburn University's Master in Public Administration Program. She is also very familiar with the southern part of the county through her work in Supervisor Ryan's Office.

Patty Garcia, Chair of the Coconino County Community College District Governing Board. Patty is a native of Flagstaff and has been actively involved in the Flagstaff Community as a graduate of the Flagstaff Leadership Program, Flagstaff 20/20 Vision Task Force Member, United Way Board Member and Past President, Coconino County Planning & Zoning Commission, and has served on many other boards and commissions.

Candy Owens, Former Coconino County Recorder. Candy served as County Recorder from January 1993 to December 2012. She has worked in the field of voter registration and election administration for over 35 years. She oversaw the successful implementation of the current voting equipment.

Steve Peru, President and CEO of United Way of Northern Arizona, Former Coconino County Manager. Steve has a thorough and deep understanding of the county. During his employment with Coconino County, he served as the County Elections Administrator and worked as a Troubleshooter and Election Day Technician at polling places on the Navajo Reservation. He is extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of Coconino County.

Stacy Saltzburg, Deputy City Clerk for Flagstaff. Stacy has an in-depth knowledge of the conduct of elections in the City of Flagstaff and the laws that govern municipal elections through her years of service with the city. She is an Arizona Certified Elections officer and a Certified Municipal Election Official.

Frederic Solop, Professor of Politics and International Affairs, University of Northern Arizona. Fred holds a PhD and MA in Political Science from Rutgers University, and BA from Pennsylvania State University. He has authored many publications covering local, state, national and international politics. He is frequently called upon by organizations and the media to provide political analysis and information.

Coconino County Recorder's personnel assisting committee members are: County Recorder Patty Hansen, Elections Administrator Mark Mayrand, Chief Deputy Recorder Donna Casner, and Training and Communications Coordinator Alyssa McKinley.

Meeting Dates and Equipment Demonstrations

2017 Meeting Dates: April 1, April 22, May 6, May 25, June 29, August 10, September 7

Vendor Demonstrations: On June 17, 2017, Unisyn Voting Solutions and Election Systems and Software (ES&S) demonstrated their voting equipment options to the Committee. Both voting equipment vendors are certified by the Federal Election Assistance Commission and the Arizona Secretary of State's Office. While each vendor has a slightly different product offering they both demonstrated:

- ADA compliant touch screen ballot marking devices;
- Precinct tabulator, which is primarily used to count paper ballots at a precinct on election day; and
- Central ballot counting equipment with the capability of counting all ballots for an election in one location.

VALUES IDENTIFIED

The Coconino County Election Committee engaged in a brainstorming exercise whereby underlying values driving committee preferences were identified and loosely prioritized. The result of the exercise was a list of important values committee members considered

when weighing options for conducting elections in the county. These values are interconnected, and while no one election system maximizes all of these values, the Coconino County Election Committee sought to make recommendations that promote all of these values. The prioritized list of values follows:

Primary Values

1. Voter Confidence (PV1)

The Coconino County election system must promote confidence in elections as an important error-free mechanism for selecting public officials. Voters must understand that all votes are counted regardless of whether the votes are cast early, cast from abroad, or cast on Election Day.

2. Equity/Fairness (PV2)

It is important to promote an understanding of election systems as fundamentally fair and equitable with all voters having an equivalent voice in the system, regardless of economic resources, race, minority language status, age and/or physical capabilities. This value is sometimes referred to as 'one person one vote'.

3. Security (PV3)

The county election system must be secure from tampering, hacking by external forces, equipment failure, and accidental loss of information. The risk of problems occurring can be minimized through a variety of best practices including repeatedly backing up information, having redundant information systems with paper backup records, and utilizing pre-printed ballots in addition to using printers to produce ballots on demand. Security is also promoted through using updated technology for maintaining voter registration rolls, casting and counting votes, and transporting ballots across the county.

4. Minimizing Pre-Election Work (PV4)

Election administration is complex and difficult with over 660 variations on the standard ballot made available to county voters in any election. Elections are also administered by a bevy of poll workers staffing every precinct in the county. Risks of election problems can be lowered by minimizing pre-election work for staff. Early e-pollbook updating, for example, minimizes the risk of problems occurring at a later time. In addition, extensive training is required for poll workers and all election workers. The job of poll workers should be simplified whenever possible.

5. Independence from Vendor (PV5)

County elections are conducted using equipment obtained from vendors approved by the State of Arizona. While vendors offer a variety of behind the scenes services (ballots can be programmed by vendors, for example), in Coconino County we value maximizing independence from vendors whenever possible. Risks of election failure can be reduced by having trained county staff program ballots, update e-pollbooks, and provide internal support for equipment during elections.

Secondary Values

- 1. Promoting Ease of Voting (QR codes, speed, voter center convenience) (SV1)**

The Coconino County Election Committee is interested in expanding election participation in the county, and believes this can be achieved, in part, by making voting easier and more convenient. New technologies can be integrated into the system to the extent that voters are comfortable using those technologies and they make the voting experience speedier (e.g., use of QR codes to identify voters and facilitate the voting process, reminding voters to cast a ballot through text messaging).
- 2. Minimizing Cost (SV2)**

Committee members are well aware that elections are equipment dependent activities and the equipment necessary to run elections is expensive to purchase, operate, and maintain. At the same time, Coconino County funds are limited. It is important to have the equipment necessary to conduct elections properly at a reasonable, manageable cost. This suggests the importance of considering alternative funding arrangements including renting and leasing equipment, in addition to purchasing new equipment outright.
- 3. Election Night Results Reporting (SV3)**

Elections in Coconino County involve many people running for office and ballot questions that affect a variety of interests throughout the county. With great anticipation, it is important that election outcomes be reported accurately within a reasonable timeframe.
- 4. Minimizing Dependence on Technology (SV4)**

Technology is changing rapidly and while technology can be employed to assist voting, technology is limited and fallible. We do not want to be overly dependent upon technology lest we risk an election process that is unsecure and subject to catastrophic failure.
- 5. Paying Attention to Future Trends in Voting (SV5)**

Election administration is a rapidly growing field, and with 50 states and 3,007 counties acting as laboratories of democracy, rapid changes can occur. Changes in ballot-by-mail, early voting, and vote centers are examples of ideas changing the field of election administration. It is incumbent upon Coconino County election officials to pay attention to future trends in voting and to be sure county elections are up to date in all aspects of administration.
- 6. Rural vs. Urban Approach (hybrid models or precinct-based voting) (SV6)**

Coconino County is the second largest county in the country. The county encompasses both urban and rural areas. Each type of area presents its own set of unique challenges. For example, precincts are smaller and contiguous in urban areas, while precincts in rural areas are quite large and sparsely populated. The Coconino County election system needs to meet the needs of both urban and rural residents.

7. Minority Languages (SV7)

According to 2016 Census Bureau data, 24 percent of people living in Coconino County speak a language other than English at home. The predominant languages other than English are Spanish and Navajo. All election precincts in Coconino County need to be equipped with technology that facilitate voting by Spanish and Navajo language speakers.

8. Minimize Number of Poll Workers Needed (SV8)

Every election precinct in the county needs to be staffed by poll workers who are recruited and trained each election cycle. Over time, county election administrators are noting the increasing difficulty of recruiting and retaining poll workers. One way for the Coconino County election system to accommodate this situation is to minimize the number of poll workers needed to staff election precincts. Related to this, the election system should be designed to minimize equipment operating error by poll workers.

OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

I. Procedural Options

The committee considered four options for organizing election administration in Coconino County. The intent was to first identify a desirable way of organizing elections in Coconino County, and to then consider equipment that best realizes the merits of the desirable option. The four options considered were precinct-based voting, vote centers, a hybrid option and exclusive ballot-by-mail.

Option One: Precinct-Based Voting (keep current system)

Coconino County currently uses a precinct-based voting structure. Coconino County is broken down into 71 voting precincts with 61 polling locations. Many precincts have their own polling location however, nine polling locations service more than one precinct. Voters are able to vote at their assigned polling place. Should the voter go to the wrong polling place they are redirected to the correct polling location.

There are advantages to precinct-based voting. It is the structure that is most familiar to the voters (**PV1**). Coconino County has used this structure for many years and voters are comfortable knowing the location of their polling sites. Additionally, voters in urban areas can usually walk to their assigned polling place (**SV1**). Urban precincts are often smaller in area but more highly concentrated with voters allowing polling places to be fairly close in proximity to where people live.

With voters being assigned to precincts, election officials know how many registered voters there are per precinct and can accurately estimate the maximum number of voters that will show up to vote at a polling place. This allows election officials to place the appropriate equipment at each polling place to accommodate the number of voters with printed ballots (**PV4**).

There are disadvantages to precinct-based voting as well. A large number of poll workers are needed (**SV8**). With at least six poll workers needed at each polling location, 470 workers are required to cover all 61 polling locations in Coconino County. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find workers to fill this requirement. In addition to finding poll workers, it has become more difficult to identify suitable polling locations over time. Polling places must be ADA compliant, have adequate space for voters and equipment and adequate parking to support the precinct population. Many places that have been used in the past have become unavailable due to liability and security concerns as well as the content of campaign activity on Election Day.

Option Two: Vote Centers

Vote center voting allows any registered voter in Coconino County to vote at any vote center location regardless of where the voter lives (**SV1**). Voter information is accessed electronically and updated using e-pollbooks (across all voting locations via internet connection) instantly (**SV5**). Based on the voter's information they are given the appropriate ballot for their election precinct. Ballots can be either pre-printed, printed through Ballot-On-Demand printers, a combination of the two, or made available on a touchscreen ballot marking device. Electronic records would indicate if the voter had already voted at another location or by mail (**PV2**). Vote centers can be located in convenient locations throughout the county making it easy for all voters to vote where they work, shop, or visit. The biggest advantage of vote centers is that voters can vote at any location.

Vote centers require larger facilities and increased parking, but significantly reduce the number of required polling locations. This equates to a reduction in demand for poll workers and equipment, as well as reduced supply delivery costs (**SV2, SV8**).

There are disadvantages to the vote center model. The biggest disadvantage is that it would be a change to the current system. Change is hard for many people and change needs to be managed appropriately and effectively (**PV1**). Another big disadvantage is that the vote centers require wifi capability to ensure that the e-pollbooks are connected and instantly updated with voter activity (**PV3, SV4**). With the number of remote and rural areas in Coconino County, many areas do not have access to wifi or the internet (**SV6**). Without the ability to update voter activity instantly, it is impossible to determine if a voter has already voted elsewhere.

Other disadvantages to vote centers include not knowing how many voters can or will show up at each voting location; finding locations large enough to accommodate the required volume of equipment and voters; and a need to not make voters drive unreasonably long distances to arrive at a vote center.

Option Three: Hybrid Model

A hybrid model is the combination of precinct-based voting and vote centers (**SV6**). Understanding some of the challenges Coconino County faces with being such a large, rural county with areas of limited technology, the committee considered the creation of a hybrid voting model. This would include vote centers in the more urban areas of the

county and precinct based voting in more remote, rural areas. Voters living in or near the urban areas would be able to vote at any vote center location and voters who live within identified rural/remote precincts would continue to vote at a designated polling place. This model does not require all polling places to be connected by wifi. The polling places that have limited or no wifi access could still operate as a stand-alone precinct. The connected polling places would share updated information in real time allowing any voter to vote in that location. The e-pollbooks would indicate if an early ballot had been received, the voter voted at another vote center, or the voter is required to vote at a particular precinct.

The advantages and disadvantages of the hybrid model are identical to those of the vote centers only with a few deviations. The hybrid model would blend the unique needs of Coconino County's rural and remote areas with the needs of urban areas, and it would also result in a voting model that is not uniform for all voters since some can vote at a vote center and others have to vote at an assigned polling place. This could lead to confusion or distrust (**PV1, PV2**).

Option Four: Exclusive Ballot-by-Mail

The ballot-by-mail option was eliminated early in the process because ballot-by-mail voting for state and federal elections is not currently allowed. Cities and other municipalities can choose to have ballot-by-mail elections, but current state law prohibits exclusive ballot-by-mail elections countywide.

II. Equipment Options

There are two types of new ballot tabulation equipment certified for use in Arizona.

Option One: Precinct Count Ballot Tabulation

Precinct count ballot tabulation equipment is similar to what is currently used in the county. Voters insert completed ballots into a ballot tabulator at the voting locations on Election Day. Results are stored on a memory device and have to be delivered to the election server where the voting location results are uploaded and aggregated.

Option Two: Central Count Tabulation

Voters place their completed ballots into a locked ballot box at the voting locations on Election Day. After the polls close on election night, the ballots are brought to a central location and run through the ballot tabulation equipment. The equipment is connected to the election server, which tabulates the results.

Ballot tabulation equipment certified in Arizona is not capable of transmitting election results by modem. Election night results will be available much later than has been possible with the current equipment.

III. Funding Options

The committee evaluated two funding options for acquiring voting equipment: full purchase of new equipment and leasing equipment for a defined length of time. As with the voting options there are advantages and disadvantages to each option.

Full equipment purchase requires all funding to be available up front. It would be a one-time purchase with a set cost for ongoing maintenance. This can make budgeting for elections much easier. The equipment would be fully owned and operated by Coconino County offering a greater level of control by election administrators. By owning the equipment, election officials and workers are able to learn and become proficient in using the equipment providing ongoing consistency of election administration. On the other hand, full purchase commits the county to the equipment for a long period of time irrespective of future changes in technology. Over time equipment ages, maintenance costs increase, and support becomes more limited. The average lifespan for voting equipment is ten years. With full purchase of new equipment, the county will be faced with the same situation of having to replace voting equipment at a large cost in the near future.

Equipment leasing involves the use of selected equipment at a set cost for a select period of time. This method offers consistency in budgeting as the cost is evenly spread throughout the term of the lease. Unlike full purchase, leasing costs can be spread over time in smaller amounts. As mentioned, voting equipment ages quickly and becomes costly to maintain. By leasing election equipment, the county gets the benefit of utilizing current technology for the term of the lease. When the term is over the county can choose to continue with the current equipment through a new lease or purchase agreement, upgrade to new equipment through lease or purchase, or move to another vendor. The county would maintain control over how to manage the use of the equipment. Leasing allows a longer period of time for election officials and workers to become proficient in using the equipment aiding in consistency and training as they maintain control of the equipment during the term of the lease.

HOW OTHER ARIZONA COUNTIES HAVE HANDLED SIMILAR CHALLENGES

In the 2016 General Election, seven Arizona counties utilized a precinct-based voting system, where county residents vote at specific precincts using an appropriate ballot. Four Arizona counties used a “vote center” based voting system. In this system, a county resident could go to any polling location and receive an appropriate ballot for where they resided on Election Day and lawfully cast their ballot. The vote center model required internet connectivity so that voter history was updated and shared across voting locations and a voter was not able to vote more than once. Four Arizona counties used a “hybrid” voting system, which comprised some combination of vote centers and precinct-specific voting locations. In support of these options, 11 of 15 Arizona counties recently acquired new election equipment.

Precinct Voting	Vote Centers	Hybrid
Apache	Cochise	Gila
Coconino	Navajo	Graham
La Paz	Yavapai	Greenlee
Maricopa	Yuma	Santa Cruz
Mohave		
Pima		
Pinal		

Cochise County recently implemented a vote center model. The county accomplishes this by sending out multiple ADA compliant ballot marking devices to each of 18 vote centers (representing 49 precincts). Every voter utilizes the ADA compliant ballot marking touch screen device (that contains all ballot styles of the 49 precincts) to mark their ballot choices. When the voter finishes making selections, they press print and the voter's choices are printed on the ballot stock. The ballot is fed into a precinct ballot tabulator, which records the votes.

Navajo County has 14 precincts and utilizes 40 polling locations. They implemented a vote center model in 2016. The county uses a central count ballot tabulator to count their ballots so all ballots are returned to Election Central in Holbrook on election night.

Gila County moved from 33 precincts/voting locations to a hybrid model consisting of five urban vote centers and 11 precinct specific polling sites. Any registered voter in the county can vote at any vote center. For the precinct specific polling sites, only voters registered in those precincts are allowed to vote at these sites.

The county uses a central count ballot tabulator to count their ballots so all ballots are returned to Election Central in Globe on election night.

Yavapai County moved from 90 precincts with 90 polling locations to 45 precincts with 29 vote centers in 2014. Their vote centers consist of two super urban sites, 17 urban sites, and 10 rural sites. The county uses central count ballot tabulators to count their ballots so all ballots are returned to Election Central in Prescott on election night.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Procedural Processes

The Committee recommends a two stage, hybrid voting model that will include both vote centers and precinct-based polling places. The model will be evaluated after Stage One to address any complications as well as build upon its successes as Stage Two is implemented.

Stage One would maintain precinct orientation, but with consolidated precincts and the implementation of two vote centers in Flagstaff and one in Tuba City. Voters will be notified of their precinct polling place as well as the option to vote at one of the three vote centers. The vote centers will allow an additional option for voters who may prefer voting outside of their precinct for convenience. Due to the technological challenges mentioned earlier, voters in some precincts may be redirected to their assigned polling place or required to vote a provisional ballot. There are only a few precincts with these limitations, most of which are in rural, outlying areas.

The committee believes that Stage One implementation would lead to a decrease in provisional ballots being cast since voters will have the option of voting outside of their assigned precinct polling place with the vote centers.

Stage Two would increase the number of vote centers in Flagstaff and add vote centers to other areas throughout the county. A minimum number of precincts will be maintained in the outlying areas to address the technological challenges that exist throughout the county. An evaluation of Stage One will identify weaknesses in the model that will need further improvement. Additional assistance in determining the location of additional vote centers will be utilized on an as needed basis.

Equipment Selection

The committee believes that both the central count and precinct count ballot tabulation systems will meet the requirements of the recommended hybrid option.

Equipment Funding

Given the great expense for replacing all equipment and the committee recommendation for phasing in this hybrid model, the committee recommends investigating alternative funding methods including options to lease equipment, at least until the completion of Stage One recommendations and an evaluation of the successes and challenges of introducing a hybrid voting strategy.

Secondary Recommendations

Voter education will be vital to the success of the hybrid model in Coconino County. There will need to be a large education campaign to not only inform voters about the vote centers and the convenience they offer, but also to educate about the multiple options available to cast a ballot. Education is also important to ensure voter confidence in the process.

The committee discussed other ideas regarding elections and voter turnout. As a way to improve voter turnout and to remind voters about important election dates and deadlines, it has been suggested that text messaging be used to notify voters who make their mobile phone numbers available to Coconino County Election officials. Mobile technology is so widely used as the public's main communication tool, being able to reach voters with current technology can be very useful. This suggestion allows voters to elect to receive text messages and provide an appropriate number when registering to vote. Current registered voters could simply update their registration to be included in the program.

The trend of ballot-by-mail is becoming more popular every election cycle and it is now shown to be the preferred method of voting by a majority of the voters in Arizona. Voting by mail is both convenient and economical, and is something that should be encouraged in the future. The Committee discussed the importance of continuing to educate voters about voting by mail, and encourage them to utilize the service for casting a ballot. The committee also recommends advocating for a ballot-by-mail election model if and when the opportunity to do so arises.

Another recommendation from the committee is the idea of declaring Election Day a holiday, particularly for the area schools and government facilities. This would encourage more participation in the election process, as well as increase the availability of locations to be repurposed as vote centers and precinct voting locations.

APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** - prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities. The Department of Justice (DOJ) published the ADA Standards for Accessible Design in September 2010. Polling place sites and voting equipment comply with this act.
- **Ballot-On-Demand (BOD) Printer** - a ballot printing system that allows election workers to print a voter's ballot at the voting location.
- **Central Tabulator/Central Count** - vote scanning equipment with the capability of scanning all ballot styles generated for an election. At minimum, all returned early ballots are processed through central count machines.
- **Election Central** - refers to a central location, which contains central count tabulation equipment and is where voted ballots are returned to be tabulated on election night.
- **Electronic Pollbooks** – (also known as e-pollbooks) are a combination of hardware and software that contains voter registration information for an election and usually are used to replace paper-based rosters and registers. The capabilities of the e-pollbooks include voter look-up, verification, precinct assignment, ballot assignment, voter history, and other functions.

- **GEMS Software** - is a Microsoft Windows®-based election management and tabulation system. It allows election staff to completely control every step of the election process, from ballot layout to election reporting in one application.
- **Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002** - was passed to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process. HAVA addresses improvements to voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 election.
- **Precinct-Based Election Administration** - voter information by precinct is easily obtained and allows for improved planning when conducting a polling place election. Knowing the number of registered voters by precinct and the number of voters who requested an early ballot for that precinct, helps ensure that the appropriate number of ballots are ordered and delivered. The risk of running out of ballots on Election Day is greatly reduced with precinct-based election administration.
- **Precinct Tabulator** - a precinct vote scanner and vote tabulator, which is primarily used to accumulate votes for paper ballots at a precinct on Election Day.
- **QR Code** - (Quick Response Code) consists of black squares arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device such as a camera.
- **Touchscreen Voting Device** – a voting machine that allows voters to cast their votes by touching a computerized screen.
- **TSX Units** - a voting machine that automatically records and stores encrypted ballot information and election results. The machine provides the voter a touch screen to vote on and meets ADA requirements for accessibility.
- **Vote Center** - a polling location in which any voter may receive an appropriate ballot for that voter on Election Day and lawfully cast their ballot. This setup requires internet connectivity so that voter history can be updated real time and shared across voting locations so a voter does not vote more than once.
- **Voting Rights Act of 1965** – federal legislation that prohibits racial discrimination in voting. The Act contains provisions that regulate election administration from imposing any voting law that results in discrimination against racial or language minorities.