




MEMORANDUM

Date: August 31, 2022

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Preliminary Information in Response to the Request for an Update on the 2022 Primary Election After-Action Report**

At the August 15, Board meeting, the Board requested an after-action report on the 2022 Primary Election due in October to the Board. In the interim, Supervisor Scott has placed the item on the Board's September 6, agenda for a status update. In short, the Elections Department had begun reviewing information based on their preliminary observations before and after the Primary election. Comments received after the election reflected much of what Elections expected. This memorandum addresses information currently available from Elections while they continue to work on the more detailed report for the Board and the Elections Integrity Commission. The after-action report will be finalized and provided to the EIC at their September 16, meeting followed by transmittal to the Board on or before October 4.

Overview

As previously stated, the Elections Department successfully deployed the use of Vote Centers in the Primary for the first time in Pima County. The e-pollbooks and ballot-on-demand printers performed well and with minimal disruptions in the majority of the 129 Vote Centers, with most locations experiencing only a few quickly remedied issues. Evaluations are still being conducted. The County hired over 1,700 temporary aides and workers for the Primary Election. They all performed well and admirably in a new system and with new equipment.

Overall, the response from poll workers and the public regarding Vote Centers and the e-pollbooks was very positive. Poll workers commented that they found the new system to be an improvement from 2020 and that e-pollbooks allowed for a faster and smoother process. Many added that the e-pollbooks were simple and easy to use and worked very well. Several poll workers also noted that voters appreciated the convenience of vote centers and the ability to vote at any location. There were few complaints about the new Vote Center locations from voters, and accessibility to Vote Centers did not appear to be an issue. Location complaints were generally limited to a specific room in a location being somewhat difficult for voters to find, such as a gym at a school, but very few complaints from voters about the locations themselves.

While there were some issues with the new technology, the problems were easily resolved in most cases. Typically, these issues were temporary and could be fixed simply by logging off/back on to the e-pollbooks, entering the correct login information or resetting printer connections. Additionally, most situations were resolved quickly for issues requiring a troubleshooter or hotline support. The most common observation from poll workers regarding

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the e-pollbooks was that they needed more of them or expected to need more of them for the General Election, which is great feedback.

Two EIC Commissioners provided feedback at their last meeting. One stated that the Democratic party had observers at both the Recorder's and Elections Offices and that all of them reported back that they were very impressed with the process. The other Commissioner commented that she worked 16 hours at a Vote Center in Oro Valley that serviced over 1,000 voters on Election Day. She stated the training she received was thorough and included access to try out all equipment; there were no glitches in the process and stock was on hand and replenished several times; the printer went down only once for 5 minutes at the most, but was quickly resolved; wait times were not bad given the volume of voters processed there; and said the process was very smooth from beginning to the end.

We strived for close to perfect, error-free outcomes, but recognize it is not always possible, and some areas of concern were identified that need improvement relating to equipment, human error, logistics and supplies. Below is some preliminary information on some of these.

Vote Centers Supplies

Most of the delays experienced on Election Day resulted from a printing and supply chain issue. One of the problems encountered early on Election Day was the lack of provisional ballot envelopes at some Vote Centers. Additionally, one Vote Center, Kirk Bear Canyon Library, ran out of ballot stock in the middle of the day. The center had to close for two hours. I understand the inspector made the decision to offer and direct voters to a nearby location instead of having them wait. The inspector also sent a poll worker to support the nearby Vote Center 62 - Morris K. Udall Regional Center to assist with the increased volume of voters. It was the appropriate decision considering the volume of voters. Many voters chose to vote at the Udall site, but some decided to wait for the vote center to reopen, where a very long line was observed. Once reopened, voters were processed and the line moved quickly. The redirection of voters to another available close voting site was possible due to the Vote Center model. However, a two-hour wait for ballot stock is unacceptable. The Elections Department is evaluating this issue and establishing a plan to address them.

Equipment

Elections staff and poll workers noted that most of the equipment issues that occurred were associated with the ballot-on-demand printers. During the election and after, Elections staff heard that some Vote Centers could not connect the e-pollbooks to the printer, or the printer would not print a ballot. It was found that the folding tables bowed under the weight of the printers, and that adjusting to a flat surface allowed them to work properly. The problem was resolved quickly after adjusting the printers. Other printer issues required taking them offline to troubleshoot the problem or replacing the affected printer. The call center was able to resolve most of the issues over the phone. Issues relating to e-pollbooks were mostly due to user error, however, the equipment and system are being reviewed. Better training and support will be provided prior to the General election.

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Ballots

Elections staff observed some confusion from poll workers and voters on the different types of ballots issued. One EIC Commissioner noted at their last meeting examples where a few poll workers were not clear on how and what party ballot to issue a voter registered as an Independent. There are several different ballots provided, which include sample ballots, early ballots, provisional ballots and Federal ballots. Please note that party ballots are only an issue during Primary Elections. The different ballots are issued for different reasons and under different circumstances as briefly shown below.

Ballots	Purpose/Use
Sample Ballots	The 2019 Elections Procedures Manual (EPM) requires posting at least two sample ballots of each style for each polling location. However, the EPM removes the posting requirement for Vote Centers if the vote center can print sample ballots upon request (EPM). Sample ballots mailed to voters were in the same format as the actual ballots. Sample ballots sent to Vote Centers, however, did not mirror the actual ballot format. The Elections Department is exploring options for posting the 1,800 different sample ballots at each of the 129 vote centers for the November General Election.
Early Ballots	Early ballots are those mailed to voters that registered to be on the Pima County Active Early Voting List (AEVL). Voters registered on the early voting list and issued an early ballot that choose to instead vote at a Vote Center on Election Day must vote a provisional ballot to ensure that a duplicate has not been cast.
Provisional Ballots	Provisional ballots are issued to voters when there is a question about their voter registration. The e-pollbooks download the Recorder's voter database. A provisional ballot will be issued when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a voter's name does not appear on the e-pollbook - the voter's information changed but was not updated in their voter registration information, - the voter requests a different party ballot than their registered political party, - the voter was issued an early ballot.
Federal Ballots	Federal Only ballots are issued to voters flagged with a federal or national designation by the Recorder's office. A Federal Only ballot lists candidates for federal offices for the current election year. A Federal Only voter, also known as a National voter, is an eligible voter who has not provided the Recorder's office with the appropriate proof of citizenship that qualifies them to vote a full Arizona Ballot.

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Improvements to training will be key in addressing these issues and will be provided prior to the General Election. These training improvements will be outlined in the final after-action report.

In regard to provisional ballots, after polls close, the registration status of each provisional voter must be determined and voter identity verified by the Recorder's office. This contributes to delays in posting results. Voter trends can change from election to election. Elections received about 19,000 early ballots that were dropped off at Vote Centers for the 2022 Primary Election. Additionally, of the 4,127 provisional ballots cast on Election Day, 90% of those were due to registered early voters who did not vote their early ballot and instead cast their vote in person at a vote center. In 2020, the pandemic drove some of the trend in that Early Ballots mailed increased and the number of provisional ballots cast in person decreased compared to the 2018 election. Information we have seen online and in the news regarding voting by mail can influence these trends.

The number of provisional ballots cast that are associated with early ballots cannot be projected by Elections as it is driven by voter behavior. Recently passed legislation regarding early ballots, will impact provisional ballot numbers as early voters will now be allowed to surrender their early ballot at a voting location and cast a regular ballot, instead of a provisional ballot. This will reduce the number of provisional ballots cast on Election Day. Elections will work with Communications to make available some educational materials for the public on the AEVL, early and provisional ballots, how to register on the list, and how to be removed from the early voting list.

Additional Preliminary Information

On Election night, 10 Vote Centers were brought to Ms. Hargrove's attention regarding discrepancies with counts at particular Vote Centers. Attached is a spreadsheet showing ballot activity at these 10 Vote Centers. It should be noted that as with every election, there are minor procedural discrepancies at polling places by poll workers. Vote Centers are no different and these are not unusual. These were pulled based on the Official Ballot Reports for these showing the number of ballots counted as written by inspectors did not match the number of ballots scanned. Some inspectors did not realize these reports are required to be submitted and will be contacted by Elections. One Commissioner stated at the last EIC meeting that she was there on election night until the end, along with Ms. Hargrove, and observed that every time the computer count differed from the count on the report, every one of them was investigated. She noted there were several precincts where solutions were not available and those were all investigated the next day and resolved satisfactorily. The Commissioner commented that some of it was due to inspector fatigue, where they found counting was not always accurate or inputted correctly in the report. She stated she was very confident in this process.

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What is important to note is that none of this led to any votes not being counted. The Elections Department is using this assessment to reinforce procedural training for poll workers and Vote Center inspectors to make improvements and revisions as necessary to minimize discrepancies in the General Election.

The preliminary information provided above is by no means all-inclusive. The final after action report is being prepared and will be available by the allotted timeframes. As discussed, the report will include the assessment on expectations and outcomes, more details to the issues mentioned above, responses to the additional EIC and Board submitted questions, including the emails and calls provided by Supervisor Christy's office, and the identified alternatives and solutions.

Attachment

c: Elections Integrity Commission Members
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Constance Hargrove, Director, Pima County Elections
Diana Durazo, Senior Advisor, Pima County Administrator's Office

Attachment

**Pima County Elections
August 2, 2022
Election Night Audit**

Vote Center #	Vote Center Location	Official Ballot Report	Number of Voters on the Pollbook	Number of Actual Ballots Cast	Explanation of Discrepancies
					<i>Information is taken from the Official Ballot Report completed by the Election Board to accounts for the day's events. Some election boards did not complete the forms correctly.</i>
16	Canoa Ranch Recreation Center	170	163	161	Inspector did not understand how to complete the form. He had no explanation for the discrepancy.
54	Eckstrom-Columbus Library	410	401	392	They were rushed at the night's end and believe she added the spoiled ballots to the regular ballot count. Vote Center also processed provisional ballots as regular ballots in the e-pollbook. No other explanation for the discrepancy.
55	Kirk-Bear Canyon Library	718	620	611	The inspector confirmed they added all spoiled, conditional, and provisional ballots to the ballot count. VC issued 103 but only checked in 93 provisionals. 10 Provisionals checked in as regular voters. provisionals, 2 conditional, and they spoiled 4 ballots.
62	Morris K. Udall Regional Center	578	587	588	Vote Center transposed the numbers and did not realize the discrepancy. No explanation was provided.
69	Orange Grove Mobile Estates	223	235	234	The vote center incorrectly counted the regular ballots and processed a provisional ballot as a regular ballot in the e-pollbook.
71	Oro Valley Country Club	129	135	133	The vote center incorrectly counted the regular ballots at the night's end. Pollworkers checked in two provisional voters as regular voters.
81	Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church & School	291	296	297	No explanation was provided for the discrepancy in the pollbook and ballot count.
100	AUSD-Richard Wilson K-8	197	198	195	The vote center did not reissue 2 spoiled ballots.
112	Valencia Branch Public Library	Blank	124	124	The Vote Center did not fill in the information on the form. No discrepancy in the pollbook and ballot count.
114	VUSD – Cienega High School	338	354	350	The Vote Center incorrectly counted the regular ballots. They also checked in provisional voters as regular voters.