

## **I. In Focus This Week**

### **Maricopa County, Ariz. 'lo-jacks' its voting equipment**

*GPS program is designed to keep track of all voting equipment at all times*

By [M. Mindy Moretti](#)

Nowadays you can lo-jack your car, you can lo-jack your children, heck you can even lo-jack your dog so it shouldn't be surprising when the largest county (population) in Arizona decides to lo-jack its voting equipment.

Beginning with a test run during the upcoming school board elections on March 9, [Maricopa County](#) will use [Global Positioning Satellite](#) (GPS) to track all 17,000 pieces of its voting equipment.

According to Tammy Patrick, federal compliance officer in the county's elections division, the [Election Center National Conference](#) in 2009 provided a workshop on [Help America Vote Act](#) (HAVA) auditing which illustrated the necessity of comprehensive documentation and recovery of equipment purchased with HAVA funding.

"It became apparent that it was no longer satisfactory to know that the equipment was scanned in via our bar-coding tracking system at our warehouse on election night," Patrick said. "It was now necessary to know exactly where each of the thousands of pieces of equipment was located for quick retrieval in an audit situation."

Patrick noted that although the county has a well established paper-based chain of custody documentation for each piece of equipment, they wanted to enhance that process in a manner that did not interrupt or complicate established procedures.

The county looked at several potential systems to track its equipment including [radio frequency identification](#) (RFID) which is used by other jurisdictions to track their voting equipment. Patrick said the county chose not to go with RFID because it is transmitting device and that it could connote latent security issues.

"GPS minimizes potential misperceptions that this change bears any security breach implications," Patrick said. "Conversely, it serves as a positive augmentation of existing precautions. We needed a system which was mobile, versatile, with ease of usability in the field."

Although Maricopa County is the only county known to use GPS technology to track its voting equipment some counties do use GPS for other types of tracking. For instance according to Neal Kelley, registrar of voters, [Orange County, Calif.](#) uses GPS technology to track its Rapid Response Teams who work in the field to respond to election operations issues.

With 1,142 precincts and more than 1,000 polling places in Maricopa County, which with 9,226 square miles is larger than 5 states and the District of Columbia, the new GPS program will capture the exact coordinates of all voting equipment and send that information a handheld device so election officials will know exactly where the equipment is located.

It took approximately nine months to implement from start to finish including researching which system to use to implement the program. The county used its internal IT staff to develop the applications and configure the system infrastructure.

The county is spending about \$248,000 of the \$4.3 million in HAVA funds it received last year to implement the new system. The costs include scanning equipment, supplies and programming expenses. Patrick said future costs are unknown at this time but they could include replacing and upgrading equipment.

And in addition to peace of mind of knowing where the equipment is at all times, Patrick said there are some cost savings with the new program.

“Concrete cost savings would be the ability to locate misplaced equipment,” Patrick said. “Intangible savings would be timely resolution of errors which can potentially preclude costly litigation, election challenges, and the erosion of public confidence in the electoral process.”

## II. Election Reform News This Week

- Texas held primaries this week and while overall the voting went [relatively well](#), there were a few issues. Voter turnout in [Collin County](#) was more than twice what officials expected, leading to long lines and a slow count. In [Palo Pinto County](#), ballots intended for the Gordon precinct were received by the Graford precinct. When [Brown County](#) ran out of ballots, emergency ballots were used which can't be run through the optical scan machines and therefore had to be hand counted. In [Hidalgo County](#) election officials had to manually verify total ballots cast after a “misstep” in the vote-tallying procedure sparked late-night confusion in countywide races. The first results in [Angelina County](#) didn't come in until after midnight because, according to county officials, using a dual system of paper and electronic ballots slows the counting process. In [Dallas County](#), last-minute move of a polling place caused confusion amongst voters. [Starr County](#) officials impounded several mail-in ballots after concerns were expressed that they may have been tampered with. And lastly, in [Victoria County](#) 90-year old Val D. Huver lost his bid for re-election as county clerk and will soon end 55 years in the office.
- This week, voters in Burlington, Vt. chose to [eliminate the city's use of instant-runoff voting in local elections](#). The vote in favor of Question No. 5 (to repeal IRV) on the city ballot was 3,972 to 3,669. The IRV system was adopted in 2005 for Burlington mayoral elections and was used in 2006 and 2009. IRV supporter Joan Shannon, D-Ward 5, told the *Burlington Free Press* that the repudiation by Burlington likely means momentum to implement it statewide will falter.
- The Neshoba County, Miss. board of supervisors has approved a U.S. Department of Justice proposal to hire a part-time, six-county regional coordinator to ensure [Choctaw-speaking poll workers](#) are in place for elections. The multi-county agreement involves Neshoba, Leake, Kemper, Newton, Winston and Jones counties and ensures compliance with Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act that addresses minority voters. Under the new proposal, if all six counties participate, each would be responsible for \$3,000 plus some other expenses such as travel and cell phone. County Clerk Patti Duncan Lee told The Neshoba Democrat that the county strives to be in compliance of the Voting Rights act, but ““With the coordinator, we would no longer be in a struggle to find a Choctaw translator for each election. We would have a built-in person to do that and be uniform throughout the Choctaw community. That would be a benefit for Neshoba County.”
- Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signed legislation this week that will [officially move the state's primary](#) to August 10. According to a local television station the legislation was one of the few attempts at election reform in recent years that wasn't bogged down with partisan bickering. “Why were we able to pass this bill unanimously in both the house and the senate?” Sen. Terri Bonoff, D - Minnetonka, one of the authors of the bill said to the local station. “I think it's because we've all come together around our respect and appreciation for the folks who serve us so greatly in the military.” The legislation was introduced to comply with the federal MOVE Act and Pawlenty signed it at a ceremony with National Guard members and veterans.

- A.J. Salazar, director of the [New Mexico Bureau of Elections](#) resigned on Friday, just 10 months into the job. A spokesman for Secretary of State Mary Herrera says Salazar gave no reason for the resignation coming just three months before the state's June primary. According to KTSM, the elections director's job has proved hard to keep filled. Salazar was hired last April to a job that had been vacant since late 2008, when Gerald Gonzalez resigned after three months. Before that, Herrera appointed U.S. Sen. Tom Udall's son-in-law, Jim Noel. He decided against taking the job after Republicans criticized his Udall connection. Herrera's first Elections Bureau director, Daniel Ivey-Soto, retired three months before the June 2008 primary.

### III. Research and Report Summaries

*electionline provides brief summaries of recent research and reports in the field of election administration. Please e-mail links to research to [sgreene@pewtrusts.org](mailto:sgreene@pewtrusts.org).*

[Legislative Action Bulletin](#) – National Conference of State Legislatures, March 2, 2010: This bulletin on state election legislation provides an update on the status of a number of bills including those moving states into compliance with the federal Military and Overseas Voters Empowerment Act passed last year.

[Minnesota's Elections — Transparent, Verifiable, and Accurate](#) - Kathy Bonniel, Associate Director, Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota (CEIMN), Mike Dean, Executive Director, Common Cause Minnesota (CCMN) and Mark Halvorson, Director, Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota, Feb. 25, 2010: This report responds to an October 2009 report from the Center of the American Experiment (CAE), [No Longer a National Model: Fifteen Recommendations for Fixing Minnesota Election Law and Practice](#). The authors fault the CAE report for providing no documentation as well as containing numerous erroneous statements and inaccuracies. CAE's claims, for example, about the rejection rate for military absentee voters are disputed as being overstated. The authors agree that the recount for the 2008 Senate race exposed problems with the state's absentee ballot process but still find that Minnesota's election system is transparent, verifiable and accurate and still a national model.

[2010 Issues in Election Administration: No Match, No Vote](#) – Project Vote, February 2010: This policy paper analyzes the practice of what some have called no match, no vote, where in some states if officials are unable to match the information on a voter's registration application with information in an existing government database, the application is denied. The paper cites research that demonstrates this sort of matching process can be unreliable and can lead to disenfranchisement and recommends best practices including more flexible matching criteria and easy-to-understand correction procedures.

[Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy](#) – Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2010 (Subscription required): The most recent issue includes two articles about lines at polling places, one describing an observational study of lines at the polls in several California counties during the 2008 presidential primary and the other focusing on pre-election litigation before the 2008 presidential election in hopes of preventing lines at the polls.

[Losing Fewer Votes: The Impact of Changing Voting Systems on Residual Votes](#) - Michael J. Hanmer, Won-Ho Park, Michael W. Traugott, Richard G. Niemi, Paul S. Herrnsen, Benjamin B. Bederson and Frederick C. Conrad, *Political Research Quarterly*, March 2010 (Subscription required): The authors examine the effects of changes in voting systems in Florida and Michigan and find that the shift to new voting technology reduced residual votes in both states. The residual vote rate measures the number of ballots for which no valid vote was cast and includes overvotes and undervotes.

[Final Report: Administration of Payments Received Under the Help America Vote Act by the Arkansas Secretary of State, April 16, 2003 through June 30, 2009](#) - U.S. Election Assistance Commission Office of Inspector General, February 2010: In auditing the Arkansas Secretary of State's office use of federal Help America Vote Act money, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission Office of Inspector General found the state has generally accounted for the funds in accordance with requirements. Two exceptions are noted - the lack of personnel certifications and the maintenance of comprehensive equipment inventories.

## IV. Opinion

National: [Voting machine merger](#)

Connecticut: [Vote centers](#)

Florida: [Kathy Dent](#)

Georgia: [Secretary of state, II, III](#)

Indiana: [Vote centers](#); [Election reform](#); [Ballot-box security](#)

Maryland: [Election-day registration](#)

Oregon: [Online voter registration](#)

Vermont: [Overseas voting](#); [Instant-runoff voting, II](#)

*\*\*some sites require registration*

## V. Available Grants

Colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations are eligible to compete for 10 to 15 grants worth up to \$65,000 to recruit students to serve as poll workers during the 2010 mid-term elections. The grant program, known as the [Help America Vote College Program](#), is administered by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), a federal agency established by Congress in 2002 to provide assistance to states in the administration of federal elections. EAC has awarded 72 grants worth a total of \$2.4 million to recruit and train college poll workers since the program was established in 2004. Reports of poll worker shortages are not uncommon during election season.

## VI. Job Opportunities

*All job listings must be received by 12 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday for publication in our Thursday newsletter. Job listings are free but may be edited for length. Whenever possible, include Internet information. Please email job postings to [mmoretti@electionline.org](mailto:mmoretti@electionline.org)*

**Long-term Observer, The Carter Center, Manila** — this long term observer will work in conjunction with our field office director (FOD) and technical expert (TE) to conduct an assessment of the Filipino election technology and its impact on the electoral process. The long term observer will be tasked with completing observation and assessment of the procurement, testing, and use of automated technology in the Philippines, as well as public confidence in this process. Given the small size of this mission, successful applicants will work directly with the FOD and TE and should be self-motivated and have both elections and technology experience. Applicants should be comfortable working in a variety of cultural environments. Spanish and Filipino language skills are not required, but may be considered. This position is based in Manila, Philippines, with occasional travel to other areas of the country. Applicants should be prepared to relocate to the Philippines for the duration of The Carter Center's field presence (March – June, 2010). Accommodation, round-trip travel to Manila, all relevant short-term relocation costs, and a small per diem will be provided by The Carter Center. As a volunteer position, The Carter Center is unable to provide payment for this work, however, successful applicants will be offered a weekly stipend during their tenure. Interested applicants should respond to [aodavis@emory.edu](mailto:aodavis@emory.edu) or (404) 420.3846 with a short cover letter and relevant summary of experience.

**Technical Expert, The Carter Center, Manila** — this technical expert will work in conjunction with our field office director and a limited number of long term observers to conduct an assessment of the Filipino election technology and its impact on the electoral process. The expert will be primarily tasked with ensuring an understanding of security and functionality issues surrounding the use of Optical Mark Recognition machines in the process of vote counting. Successful applicants should have both elections and technology experience, be self-motivated and comfortable working in a variety of cultural environments. Spanish and Filipino language skills are not required, but may be considered. This position is based in Manila, Philippines, with occasional travel to other areas of the country. Applicants should be prepared to relocate to the Philippines for the duration of the Carter Center's field presence (March – June, 2010). Accommodation, round-trip travel to Manila, and all relevant short-term relocation costs will be provided by The Carter Center. Remuneration for this position is based on experience.

Interested applicants should respond to [aodavis@emory.edu](mailto:aodavis@emory.edu) or (404) 420.3846 with a short cover letter and relevant summary of experience.