

Quest's FirstTuesday® solution helps successful vote center pilot



Success of vote center pilot proves that FirstTuesday was built to address needs well into the future.

A successful pilot of vote centers in Indiana provides more evidence that Quest Information Systems' (Quest) FirstTuesday® solution not only answers to HAVA mandates, but also addresses future needs. FirstTuesday was the foundation solution on which Quest developed Indiana's new Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS).

FirstTuesday played a major role in supporting the vote center pilots in Wayne County, Indiana, by supplying data extracts and barcoding capabilities to record vote history in SVRS. Quest's foresight to develop a solution with future-oriented information technologies and with components to easily interface to other systems made a significant impact.

The vote center pilot

Vote centers replace traditional, assigned precinct polling places that have been in place for more than 100 years. Instead, they give voters the choice of where to vote. Vote centers address the State of Indiana's desire to discover and implement more innovative and efficient ways to vote. Having them equates to lower costs and taxpayer savings as they significantly reduce the number voting locations and workers required to operate the precincts. Wayne County, the first in Indiana to test the concept, successfully completed a pilot during the May primaries.

Wayne County established four Vote Centers in the City of Richmond, each located in an easily accessible and highly visible area central to voters. The county calls the concept "vote as you live," meaning voters can select one of the centers most convenient to *how* they live rather than *where* they live. If it's better for a person to vote on their lunch break, for example, they can select a center close to their employer. In the traditional setting, they would typically follow the trend of waiting in long lines to vote before or after work. With vote centers, voting lines are reduced because people have greater flexibility to vote at more times of the day.

The technology

The concept is made possible by a combination of the State's comprehensive voter registration/election management system, electronic poll books and Quest's election industry consultants. The electronic poll books are connected to the county election board office via a secure line and updated in real-time. This way, the system acknowledges a person's vote as soon as they cast it, preventing them from voting

multiple times. Not only does this totally remove costs associated with printing and managing paper books, the technology increases the efficiency of managing the polling process.

Utilizing a data extract from the FirstTuesday® system, the Wayne County Election Board created post cards that were mailed to each registered voter with the following information: voter's name, address, a bar code and the locations of all vote centers in the county. On Election Day, voters were checked in electronically with either the bar code on the postcard or their photo identification. Once the system confirmed the person hadn't cast their vote, they continued the process using the same electronic voting machines from prior elections. The electronic poll books helped ensure voters only voted once. The database captured the voter history for each voter including arrival time, vote center, republican or democratic primary, as well as any attempts to vote at additional centers. After the election, Wayne County used the barcode on the postcards to record the voter's history in the SVRS.

The role of Quest and FirstTuesday®

Quest's election industry consultants, with over 50 years of experience, understood the potential needs of election systems over the next several years. Their expertise helped position FirstTuesday for incorporation of new technologies. FirstTuesday's future-oriented information technologies and interfacing capabilities allowed the integration of the electronic poll book system with SVRS. As Quest's election and government industry consultants continue to assess emerging trends and changing needs for integrated solutions, new features and enhancements will be implemented.

Quest developed FirstTuesday based upon a proven approach of services-on-software standards, mainstream technologies and according to best practices in the software development industry. This approach utilizes a base solution which delivers all common functionality required under HAVA for each jurisdiction, including basic voter list management, as well as the additional functions required by each jurisdiction at the state or local level. As a result, it can be easily supported and customized as well as seamlessly integrated with other systems.

FirstTuesday specifically addresses the requirements and challenges of HAVA. It also provides a comprehensive set of functions and capabilities to facilitate efficient management of the voter registration process. The technical architecture of the solution addresses the unique challenges of centrally managing voter registration data to make vote centers and other future innovations possible.

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