

VR User Group Meeting Notes
January 3, 2002

Attendees: Bill Batcher, Linda Becker, Kim Carlson Randall Cutting, Brad King, Mike McCarthy, Michele McNulty (MN OSS); Diane Teff, Gary Poser, Irene Meier (Anoka County); Karen Myers, Patty O'Connor (Blue Earth County); Morlie Weldon, Mary Schwendig (Dakota County); Patti Hansen (Hennepin County); Renee Coffey (Ramsey County); Laurie Braun (Rice County); Mary Kay Kes (Scott County); Deb Tappe, (Waseca County); and Tom Ferber (Washington County)

- **Red – Linda's Responsibility**
- **Royal Blue – VEMS Efficiency List**
- **Green – Help Desk or Computer Services Responsibility**
- **Purple – Randall's Responsibility (Redistricting)**
- **Pink - VEMS User Group Responsibility**
- **Slate Blue – Future VEMS User Group Discussion**

Bills Outstanding Issues

1. **Email response testing**
Email responses – Bill is working with Intertech right now to see where the points are that email has to go through to see where the delays are. This has been a reoccurring problem with this. Another state agency is having the same problem.
2. Citrix version upgrade
Working and testing on this next level. Right now it is on hold due to Profile because of the imaging and scanning that is involved with this. Bill would like to roll this out as soon as possible because of load balancing, print drivers and other issues that are very beneficial to everyone. Counties need to upgrade ICA client on each PC when the Citrix version upgrade is implemented.
3. DPS paper copies
DPS paper copies are handled through our mailroom. Sandy sorts through them and sends them out right away.
4. Hennepin County's Duplicate PVC's
Bill indicated that they couldn't get the source down as to why they were getting this. Linda thought they it was maybe a production end where they were printed twice. The Production team is doing a better job tracking and monitoring the queued jobs.

Linda's Outstanding Issues

1. Registration Date vs. Application Date
Linda has observed that the application date and registration date is the same as the election. There were questions on DPS - app date is the transfer date so when you do an F6 you can't tell where the earlier registration date. **The counties agree that they would like to propose to election.com that the registration date and application date fields be listed on the F6 screen when searching for a duplicate voter record.**
2. Purge – Registration Date within the County
When a voter within the county moves inside the county the registration date didn't change. After testing this recently, it has been discovered that the date does change. The application was modified with the Oct 17th version. (Anoka County found around 1,000 voters whose date didn't change - the last being changed on October 18th when we finished entering cards prior to printing rosters. We are assuming this version was installed in production on Friday eve, Oct. 19th).
3. Inactive Record check using F6; ability to find and update cancelled records –
VEMS should find and update cancelled voter records either within the county or throughout the state. The voter record will be marked Re-Activated.
4. Moved Out Report -
The group wanted instructions for producing a "moved out report." Linda has drafted the instructions as a VEMS tip and it will be sent out to the county's after the group reviews it

for accuracy and clarity.

Annual Purge and UPDATE

1. Dates – The annual purge will take place on Friday, February 8th at 5 p.m. and commence on or before Friday, February 15th. The instructions below are following the guidelines for the purge from **previous years**.
2. Testing – The group is concerned if testing will be done before it is done in the live data. Before the testing can take place, all voter records must reflect the date last voted. Election.com is working on completing this task, then several counties will be asked to test the data and complete the purge process to ensure its accuracy.
3. Steps –
 - a. Changing the election dates from 01/01/2000 etc. to actual election dates for regularly scheduled elections.
 - b. Replace missing voter history for several counties ie: Washington
 - c. The Purge is processed as a Group Voter Change. However, at this time it is not a statewide function so the Computer Services Division would need to do this county by county. So with the assistance of election.com the Computer Services Division will be going “under the hood” and completing the Group Voter Change method on a statewide level instead of county by county. I have recommended that they use the following sort criteria:

Voter Item:	Starting With:	Ending With:	Exclude:
Date Registered (D)		12-31-1997	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Date Voted (D)		12-31-1997	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voter Status (T)	Cancelled	Cancelled	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Voter Status Reason (T)	Inactive - Challenged - Fe	Inactive - Challenged - Fe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Voter Status Reason (T)	Inactive - Challenged - Gu	Inactive - Challenged - Gu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

All voters matching the above criteria will have the following items changed on their record: Hide Item Choices

Change	Voter Status (T)	to	Cancelled	Clear Criteria
Change	Voter Status Reason (T)	to	Cancel - Purged	Clear Changes
Change		to		

Voter Change Options Make Changes Cancel

4. Duplicate Voter Records Utility – Linda recently found out from election.com that this utility would not be released until December. Election.com had indicated in a previous phone conversation that the county would have the choice to either merge or not to merge the affected voter records.

NOTE: In the meantime, when processing a voter registration card and you find a duplicate voter record when completing the F6 function. Look at both records to confirm it is the same person. If the voter is in another county, move that record to yours. If both of them are within your county, update one of them. Make a photocopy of the voter registration card and a screen print of the duplicate records. Keep the printout and photocopy in a file. Once the utility has been implemented you will have the documentation necessary to merge the records.

5. Reports – The group wants to make sure that there is a printout or report that will provide them with a list of purged voters. It is uncertain which report will be used because in the past, the counties received their lists in different formats and sort options. The Voter Listing by Precinct Split is one of the reports being discussed. Another is a master list. If the report is printed off the statewide functions only the “Master list” is an option. If the reports are run county by county, then we have more options.

election.com Contract

1. The group asked Brad what the verdict was for a contract with election.com. Brad indicated that the contract problems would be taken care of before the purge.
2. Brad commented that our office is negotiations with election.com, one of the items being negotiated is to provide internal training for the Help Desk and Elections Division.

Township Elections

1. County Audit List - Linda indicated that there are numerous counties that basically haven't even signed on to VEMS. We would like to conduct a county audit to evaluate the progress the counties have made in cleaning up their data. We tried to compile a list of items to look at during the audit. Here is a brief list:
 - County Profile Updated
 - Block Ranges – removal of the word “City” or “Township” from the city field
 - Precinct Finders –
 - Polling Places – listed, identified, addressed, contact information and linked
 - Block Range Utility and Cities/Street Utilities ran
 - Number of Voters without a precinct split
2. Buddy System – The Help Desk has seen an increase in phone calls and emails. An idea came up to assist both the Help Desk and the county VEMS users is to create a County Buddy System. Every county would be asked if they want to participate. For those counties wanting to participate they would be assigned to a county that could teach them how to do functions in VEMS such as: Group Voter Changes, correcting or adding street block ranges, fixing voter records, etc. It was felt that two heads are better than one and the county's would learn from each other and possibly assist them with tips and techniques that they use for completing their day to day activities.
3. ENRR Form Notification - There are definitely mixed opinions on when this form should or should not be required and the information it discloses. **The group was asked to bring in samples of what they have used in the past.** The group will review all avenues, make a final recommendation and if necessary create a new ENRR Form.
4. Election Review – The election division is in the process of reviewing the setup in each county that will conduct a township election. Many of the counties did not realize that they need to enter EVERY election into VEMS. Reminder: Within the county, only ONE election needs to be set up that includes ALL of the townships.

Practice

1. The group asked Bill when the Practice database would be available for them to use. Bill stated it would be back online by Monday, January 7, 2002. NOTE: Practice was back up on Friday, January 4th. YAHOO!!!

Precinct Caucuses

1. Locations - Currently, when looking at a voters record, the “normal” polling place is displayed along with that for an upcoming election. **VEMS is only displaying the first party caucus (alphabetically) and not all 4 major parties locations, this has been reported to election.com as a future fix in their application.**
2. Set up - In VEMS, each party is set up as an election. Republican is one election, DFL is another one, etc. You CAN NOT set them up under one election. The rationale is this, when assigning active districts within the contest, the precinct or precinct splits are listed only once. Once you

have assigned them to the Republican party, there isn't another listing to assign it to the DFL, Green or Independence Parties.

Once one of the caucuses is set up, the counties will be able to model the remaining 3 caucuses to obtain the same results.

3. Reports - Reports are the same as elections
4. SOS Web Site – Bill doesn't think that they will be able to post the caucus locations on the SOS web site due to budget constraints. The VEMS User Group wants to know how our office is planning on handling the incoming phone calls from voters wanting to know where their caucuses are going to be held? It was suggested that maybe the League of Women Voters or the Campaign Finance would fund the caucuses on the web page. **Bill is going to talk with some folks but says that he wouldn't be the one to do the notification.**

UPDATE NOTE: The Secretary of State's Office will not be posting the caucus locations to their web site. If you enter the information into VEMS your county will be able to produce reports for your office and have the capability of modeling them for 2004. Linda is working on instructions for setting up Caucuses in VEMS and will distribute them to the county's next week.

Redistricting in VEMS (Randall Cutting)

Randall indicated he was here to ask questions and gather information on redistricting

1. Renumbering scheme - Will all numbers be redone like they were 10 years ago?
Randall suggested changing the 3 digit MCD code in VEMS to a 5 digit census code. Unfortunately, VEMS only allows a 14 digit code (precinct split). If the change were to be made every screen and report in VEMS that displays the Precinct Split number would need to be redesigned and formatted. This is not an option for apparent reasons.

Several members of the VEMS User Group stated that this would be the time to renumber all of the precincts in the state because of the mix up that the counties are already faced with. It was suggested when renumbering the precincts to add more space in between them, especially at the end. The underlying problem occurs when the cities add additional precincts but the precinct numbers are not spaced enough apart to accommodate the growth.

2. Unorganized Townships and Naming Conventions – Randall clarified that there are only Unorganized Territories. This doesn't appear to be of concern and an unorganized territory may have a combined name and they do not need to be separated with new MCD codes.
3. Other:
Redistricting database – The group indicated that they would like an additional database just used for redistricting. All of the changes would be made in the redistricting database and converted to the production database when confirmed. It was also indicated that a county could have an election after redistricting had started and this would be a way of conducting the election and still continuing on with redistricting. **The group has numerous questions on how redistricting is going to be completed. Linda has asked Randall to come prepared to discuss redistricting at the February and March meetings.**

Redistricting PVC's – **What would the PVC's look like with this redistricting?**

Would the school district be able to send out their notifications through the counties like the other ways that they send out?

Some counties sent out their own postcards. Will this be a possibility?

If we send out PVC's, are you going to be stopping the regular ones so we can then send out the redistricting.

Additional Questions: **Who is going to be assigning the definitions in the set districts?** The group stated if they could get this information from the cities then they could get started right away.

State Contract on Election Equipment Update (Mike McCarthy)

Mike stated that the state is open to more than one vendor but at least one vendor.

Other Issues

1. PVC's – The vendor that was producing our postcard PVC's quit on us. Murriel has been working furiously to find a printing company. **NOTE: A new print shop has been found and postcards are being mailed.**
2. 7 a.m. totals - The 7 a.m. totals “are critical when school election is held in conjunction with a city/township election and precincts are split by school districts. Will be critical for State Primary and State General Elections. **Capturing and reflecting the 7 a.m. totals will be discussed by the group at a future meeting.**
3. VEMS User Group meeting frequency and length of meeting
The group decided that they would like to continue to meet only once a month but to extend the hours from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. In addition, they would like to have a working lunch and have agreed to pay for their lunches when attending the meeting. **Linda will work with Nancy Breems to find a deli or restaurant that will service the needs of the group.**
4. Passwords and Signons –
 - a. The group was questioning the password changing on the system. It wasn't that the people were typing in their password wrong 3 times, it was only once. **Bill is sending out a survey to each county in regards to who really needs a user id.**
 - b. Renee would like to know if that it's a budget issue with the State, would they like to pay for them. Bill indicated that it's not only a VEMS issue but also a NT issue. Gary asked about changing the VEMS passwords – **Bill will look into it.**
 - c. Number of users – is it going to increase? How many is each county going to be getting?
5. NumLock Issue - Diane was wondering if someone isn't signed on for a while if they are automatically locked out. Num's lock – doesn't work with 95 upgraded to 2000. It works fine for computers that are purchased with 2000 installed from the factory. **Bills team will need to look into this.**
6. Irene indicated that the **street name dropdown doesn't appear to work. The name isn't completing when it's typed in. Sent to the helpdesk and didn't get a response back from them.**
7. Printing Issues
 - a. Diane was asking about the printing issues, for example the label printers. Doesn't think that there are **printer drivers loaded for the label printers. We asked election.com to return Anoka County's printer and we will do some internal testing before returning the printer to them.**
 - b. Morli indicates that Dakota can only print from Voyageur. **Bill will look into it.**
8. Tour of Empire Facility

February's agenda will be sent out on Monday

March Meeting:

Clayton Taylor from election.com will be here for the March 7th meeting.