

## VR User Group Meeting Minutes May 2, 2002

Attendees: Bill Batcher, Linda Becker, Kim Carlson, Michele McNulty, Joann Swanberg, Scott Simmons and Kathy Sibbel (MN OSS); Irene Meier, Gary Poser, Diane Teff (Anoka County); Karen Myers, Patty O'Connor (Blue Earth County); Marie Clare, Mary Schwendig (Dakota County); Dennis Distad (Freeborn County); Michelle DesJardin, (Hennepin County); Renee Coffey (Ramsey County); Annette Peters, Laurie Braun (Rice County); Karen Ruehling (Sibley County); Joan Manthe, Deb Tappe (Waseca County); Tom Ferber, Judy Wertheimer (Washington County); Lucy Botzek, Marge Christiansen (MACO); Pam Fuller (Olmsted County), and Clayton Taylor (election.com)

- **Red – Linda's Responsibility**
- **Orange – Scott's Responsibility**
- **Navy – Michele's Responsibility**
- **Green – Help Desk or Computer Services Responsibility**
- **Royal Blue – VEMS Efficiency List or Recommendation**
- **Purple – Kathy's Responsibility**
- **Pink - VEMS User Group Responsibility**
- **Slate Blue – Future VEMS User Group Discussion**

### Introductions and Agenda Review

Kathy introduced herself and went over the agenda items for the meeting. She also informed the group of the communications standard with election.com. All questions, problems or concerns must go through Kathy and she will then forward them to the appropriate people at election.com. In addition to the minutes and agenda, there were 4 different "lists" that we will be using during and after each meeting. Those lists are as follows:

- Parking Lot = Items that need further discussion, via task force, efficiency list, etc.
- Action Items = Assignments for people in the group including SOS and the county users.
- Meeting Evaluations = Meeting improvements
- Ground Rules = Standards for each meeting

Joann Swanberg introduced herself as the new Help Desk Manager. Joann will be added to the **distribution list** and plans to attend future meetings.

### Follow-up Tasks from April 4 Meeting (Linda)

The majority of the previous agenda items were carried forward to this meeting. **The groups recommendations to election.com in reference to sorting masterlists and "Arial" font will need to be written on the new requirements form and forwarded to election.com.**

### CriMNet (Scott)

Scott gave an overview on CriMNet, which is primarily to deal with felons statewide. Handouts were disbursed containing more information. MN OSS has been given an opportunity to determine how CriMNet can work for the state in regards to accurate, timely felon records and restoration of civil rights. It is often difficult to determine felony convictions. Discretionary decisions should not be a county responsibility. With this in mind Scott asked the group if they were interested in forming a task force to come up with standards that they would like to integrate into the start of this project. Patty O'Connor (Blue Earth), Irene Meier (Anoka), Judy Wertheimer (Washington) and Marge Christensen (MACO) volunteered to be the subcommittee with Scott as the lead person. **Scott will be emailing these people to set up a meeting to get started with recommendations for CriMNet.**

### Redistricting and PVC Printing

1. Redistricting - Approximately 30 counties have completed their Congressional and Legislative changes. The total list for those who have not notified the Secretary of State is 58 counties for the Legislative changes and 35 for the Congressional changes.

**An email will be going out soon to all the counties regarding the Municipalities changes.** Attached to the email will be a county audit checklist, which was distributed to the group for their review. This checklist is to assist the counties with their data cleanup and upcoming redistricting changes.

Renumbering of precincts was brought up and **Scott indicated that MN OSS would be writing up instructions on this procedure.**

Linda explained a little about the Redistricting Utility and the main focus was that when the utility was applied to the live data, then all voters who are not linked to a block range would lose their entire precinct split information.

2. PVC Printing – MN OSS is waiting to hear from InterTech about pricing. When that has been determined, then contracts will be sent out to the counties regarding the PVC information. The counties were asked if it would be possible for them to only queue one batch per week and they were in favor of this. Scott distributed informational documentation regarding the length of characters for each line on the PVC.
3. PVC Billing – Only 14 counties have challenged their PVC billings. The documentation provided by each county has been reviewed. **Scott will make his decision shortly.** It appears that there were 5 standard challenges:
  - PVCs were never received by the voter,
  - Period of when counties were paying and when they were not,
  - No contract,
  - Not billed until PVCs were printed by InterTech,
  - Large volume compared to voter registration statistics.**The group questioned if every county has queued at least one batch in VEMS,** as they may need some assistance.
4. Redistricting PVC – MN OSS will plan in advance when the counties will be sending their redistricting PVCs to be printed. **Kim and Linda will be testing Hennepin County next week and will capture timing statistics.**

#### VEMS User Group Task Forces and Subject Matter Experts

1. Absentee Ballot – The task force has met 3 times in the last month and is very close to finalizing the requirements.
2. Duplicate Voter Records – Reports were distributed to Ramsey, Washington and Crow Wing Counties. The task force will meet before the June 6<sup>th</sup> VEMS User Group Meeting.
3. Election Night Results (ENR) - Communications will be given to the counties on what procedures they will be using. MN OSS has met with ES&S and Global (software resource vendors). They are putting together requirements. The group had several questions:
  - a. **When entering candidate names, are they entered into VEMS and exported to GEMS or vice versa?**
  - b. **MN OSS will also need to determine where the counties will be entering information, whether it will be VEMS or ENR.**
  - c. **Can they obtain a DAILY list of candidates filing at the state?**
  - d. **State results will be displayed to what level? County? City?**
  - e. Several county members (use central count) mentioned that they work directly with Bob Closser and not Doug Sunde. **Michele will need to contact Bob.**

#### VEMS Functionality

1. 7 a.m. Numbers – SLA # 9A & 9B (Michele)
  - a. Sample roster pages were reviewed. The VEMS User Group recommends only precincts and precinct splits statistics broken down on the roster. The totals will reflect the count of voters at the time the roster is printed.
  - b. **The group recommends one more list of GRAND totals for all rosters printed. Clayton understood the process and has requested a mock up of the report. Kathy may have one on hand.**
  - c. Can the 7 a.m. numbers be imported into ENR at the time the roster is produced, without it showing as reported? The group prefers to enter numbers into a blank field rather than proofing and correcting incorrect numbers.
  - d. **Can the counties enter the 7 a.m. numbers into the ENR (website) prior to Election Day?**

- e. **Outstanding Comments and questions from the group from April 4<sup>th</sup> –**
  - i. **When will the 7 a.m. count be done and by whom (county, state)?**
  - ii. **Who is going to coordinate when to run a statistics report? Numbers should match roster.**

2. June 1<sup>st</sup> Numbers – SLA # 9A & 9B (Michele)

- a. The voter count button will be captured by MN OSS at the state level.
- b. MN OSS will achieve the totals.
- c. The group brought to our attention that many of the counties would not be prepared by June 1<sup>st</sup> due to Redistricting. **The group would like to know how to handle this situation. NOTE: The group will need an answer BEFORE the June 6<sup>th</sup> VEMS User Group Meeting.**

Wrong Polling Place Letter

Two samples of the Wrong Polling Place Letter were distributed to the group. A discussion was brought up when reviewing the letter. The group wanted to know if the VEMS system is currently set up to produce this letter only when it is an Election Day registration. The group views an error on Election Day as an administrative error. What Status and Reason Code is given to the voter when the letter is issued? There are situations when the letter is used for purposes outside of Election Day registration.

Clarification: For non-election registrants, we are only alerted to knowing they voted in the wrong place due to returned PVCs, other mail, etc. rather than by entering an election day reg card. A good example of this is sending out PVCs to all registrants when a polling place is changed. If the yellow sticker on a returned PVC shows the person moved in January but we see they voted at the old address in the March township election we should be able to notify them they voted in the wrong polling location.

Counties want the letter to be flexible so it can be used in multiple situations. **Scott will work with Gary Poser and Patty O'Connor to finalize the letter content.**

Auditor's Conference

The Auditor's Conference is scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> in St. Cloud, Minnesota. All but 9 counties have registered. The invitation was directed to county staff only, as limited space is available. Scott indicated that the Cities and Townships are conducting their own conferences. The Elections Division has been invited to participate at the township meetings. **The group requested the dates of the Township meetings from Scott.**

The Elections Division is working on an agenda for the conference. Campaign Manuals will be distributed at the conference. The group suggested that the Metro counties pick their copies up at the Secretary of State's Office. **An email will be forthcoming from the Elections Division in regards to this.**

Training for the city clerks is June 18<sup>th</sup>. Election guides will be coming soon via email. Documents will be available on the website and on CD-rom.

Other Items

1. Name Standards (Hyphen on Voter Registration Applications) –
  - a. Revisited how the old Mapper system required a hyphen and did not allow spaces
  - b. Reviewed documentation from the VEMS Guide, Part 1 on Name Standardization
  - c. DPS states that names must be hyphenated.
  - d. VEMS allows surnames with spaces or hyphens.
  - e. A voter application was processed with only one of the surnames and VEMS returned voters with and without hyphenated names. Also tested surnames with spaces. VEMS did not return the voters with spacing or hyphenated names.
  - f. **Continue to test using "wild cards"**
  - g. **The VEMS User Group along with the Secretary of State's Office will need to make a recommendation.**
2. Voting Equipment Contract Status
  - a. There is one issue remaining for ES&S as far as the contracts issues with grants. This will be determined by the Legislature.
3. Efficiency List

- a. The VEMS Efficiency List has been updated and distributed to Scott and Kathy.
  - b. **Scott, Kathy and Linda** will prioritize all of the issues.
  - c. **Scott and Kathy** will proceed with election.com.
  - d. **Continue to send items to Linda to be added to the Efficiency List.**
  - e. All items on the Efficiency List are to be presented to election.com as a suggestion.
4. Voter Registration Card
    - a. Samples of card stock and language were distributed
    - b. Revisions and corrections were provided to the final layout and language
    - c. TCC is the new vendor producing the VR Cards
  5. Build and RPS in VEMS
    - a. New build will be installed on Tuesday, May 7.
    - b. Build will include:
      - 1) City names appearing more than once in drop down box on the Block Ranges screen - has been corrected.
      - 2) Process for creating ballots error on step 2 of 12 - has been corrected
      - 3) Underage voters (17.5-18 years old) were added as active voters instead of inactive voters - has been corrected.
      - 4) Rosters with voters last names of "Y" and "Z" now appear on separate pages.
      - 5) Additional fields appear in the Election Contest screen. Corrected bug where city names appeared more than once in dropdown box on the Block Ranges screen
  6. System Performance
    - a. The group is concerned with system performance this fall. County users were told in the past that Elections and Profile would be using the same servers. Kim clarified that VEMS has 4 designated "Production" servers which no other application shares.
    - b. Can a stress test be performed? **Kathy and Joann will work together on this.**

#### Open Question & Answer

##### ➤ **Parking Lot**

- Suggestion from MACO on the Wrong Polling Place Letter

##### ➤ **Action Items**

- Scott –
  - Set up CrimNet meeting with Patty, Irene, Judy and Marge
  - Prepare email on municipal redistricting changes
  - Determine PVC billing inquires
  - Set up Wrong Polling Place Letter meeting with Patty and Gary
  - Prepare email to counties in regards to Auditors Conference and handouts to be distributed or picked up
  - Instructions on renumbering precincts
  - Prioritize Efficiency List
- Kathy –
  - Provide mock up report for GRAND totals on roster pages
  - Incomplete redistricting will influence June 1<sup>st</sup> totals
  - Provide recommendation on name standardization
  - Prioritize Efficiency List
  - Work with Joann and Bill to organize a possible stress test
- Linda –
  - Add Joann Swanberg to VEMS distribution list
  - Continue to test "Wild Cards" hyphenated names
  - Determine if every county has queued PVC's since June 1, 2001
  - Test Hennepin County PVC's for redistricting, log statistics
  - Work with Kathy on recommendations from April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Prioritize Efficiency List
- Michele –
  - Contact Bob Closser
  - Review groups comments on Candidate Filing
- VEMS User Group

- Send Linda recommendations for the efficiency list

➤ **Ground Rules**

- Break – One 15 minute break per every 2.5 hours
- Phone calls outside of the room
- Timeliness on returning from breaks
- No sidebar conversations. If you must talk – be very quiet.

➤ **Meeting Evaluation**

1. What did you like about the meeting and want to continue doing?
  - Bring cookies :-)
  - Detailed agenda
  - Persons assigned on the agenda
  - Good handouts
  - Reinforce the items on the Action Items, Parking Lot and Ground Rules lists
2. What didn't you like and want to discontinue doing?
  - Loosen up the timeframes on the agenda. (Be less rigid on keeping time; may need time to discuss items.)
3. What would you like to change for the next meeting?
  - Lengthen the meeting time
  - Bill Batcher to attend the entire meeting to answer technical questions.
  - Have 3 to 4 core items on the agenda, and list smaller items at the end.
  - Have a working lunch, or break for lunch. (The group is willing to pay for their own lunch and keep on working.)
  - E-mail handouts so people can review them before the meeting.
  - Have extra handouts on the table to pick up, instead of passing them out during the meeting.

**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, June 6, 2002  
60 Empire Drive – Board Room on first floor

**[Recommendations to election.com from April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting –](#)**

1. **MasterList**

The VEMS User Group recommends that the MasterList be sorted alphabetically no matter what the status and reason code is.

2. **Roster and Report Font Format**

The VEMS User Group would like to test different fonts used on rosters and all reports. They recommend the "Arial" font, as it is easier to read. Clayton stressed that the third party printer would need to make changes.