

VR User Group Meeting Agenda
February 2, 2001

Attending: Annette Peters (Rice County); Bill Batchter (for part of meeting); Bradley King (for part of meeting); Irene Meier (Anoka County); Joyce Peterson (Hennepin County); Laurie Braun (Rice County); Linda Becker (Dakota County); Mary Kay Kes (Scott County); Robin Anthony; Dani Connors-Smith (City of Minneapolis)

Meeting agenda is in regular font. Meeting responses are in *italics*.

1. Update on project status

- Surveys sent and due 2/2. Still waiting for about 30.
- Business Process Review Document received and sent back to vendor for rework before review by VR User Group (*hopefully next week*).
- Website created. <http://soshelpdesk.sos.state.mn.us/vrweb/index.htm>. Will become more informative as project evolves.
- *The Voting in the Wrong Precinct letter and Name Change transactions will be converted from Mapper to the new VEMS system.*
- *Robin will communicate need for Internet access to all county Auditors. Will support requirement by reminding them that the Elections statutes, rules and publications are also available via the internet.*

2. Confirm Security Levels Needed:

- System Administrator-Security, data parameters, data backup, etc.
- State Elections-Anything but large print jobs (rosters, etc.)
- State HelpDesk-Anything but setting up Elections and other tasks reserved for Elections Division
- Counties (includes City of Minneapolis)-No access to administration functions, access to add/modify/delete within their county only. Statewide data viewing.
- Cities-View only. *Also include other County departments, such as Sherriff. Need to resolve statutory issue. Would like cities to have access to absentee functions by 2002 elections.*

Group stated that View only access for cities could be done after the initial installation. However, within the first installation, they would like a more restricted access for some county users, such as temporary employees.

3. Roster Printing by Counties-to be or not to be? May require legislative change.

Counties that currently print their own, Anoka and Dakota, want to continue to do so.

They perceive the following benefits:

It allows them to get their rosters done faster which is important so that they can put them in books, label the pages alphabetically, insert a corrections sheet, split the books according to the number of judges that will work in each precinct, and other custom Roster processing in time to deliver the Rosters to the election judges days before the Election. For instance, Hennepin County and Minneapolis allow Election judges to pick up the Rosters the Thursday before the election. Other counties let the cities assemble their own rosters, which also means they need additional time to complete them before the Election.

With regard to the Roster production method utilized during the last Election, the group stated that publishing the printing schedule helped, using overnight delivery helped and not having to pick up the Rosters helped.

Certain precincts may need additional spaces for Election Day registrations in the back of the Rosters, but just how many is difficult to predict.

Overall, the group thought offering the option to print the Rosters in house to the counties would be beneficial.

4. Label printing requirements-confirm and describe.

The counties that have a single wide, roll label printer use the one recommended by the OSS. They are CoStar printers. This will be an additional system functional requirement.

5. System Message Death date of March 1, 2001

The group rejoiced at this prospect. It was agreed that Robin would send an e-mail and a system message communicating this timely demise. However, the group also noted that some counties may object to this because the system is used for counties to communicate with one another. However, with the usage of email, counties can still communicate by creating their own distribution lists. In addition, the SOS office will look at creating a bulletin board that all users could view for messages.

All counties have e-mail except Cottonwood.

6. Review draft training outline (attached).

Rice County and the City of Minneapolis stated that they do not use the Absentee Module in Mapper. Robin responded that it is important that all counties use this so the state can develop accurate statistics. Rice stated that they credit absentee voters' history, but do not give them an "A" to differentiate them from voters that come to the polling place. Robin will add a training module to the overall Elections training to be held in conjunction with the VEMS Basic Training that will include administering absentee voting (such as clarification about what constitutes a Permanent Absentee), printing labels and printing setup.

Minneapolis has three separate methods for processing absentee voter applications.

- *For walk in customers, they are not entered in any system.*

- For applications that are mailed, these 7000 records are entered in an Access database.
- For Health Care centers, they generate lists of voters residing in a health care facility for the judges to use when they go to the facility to collect votes.

Robin will communicate to the counties the importance and process of designating their permanent absentees in Mapper before data conversion. This will be a task for the County VR Liaisons.

The group suggested that OSS clearly communicate WHO should attend all OSS training sessions.

It was suggested that OSS put a cap on the number of attendees a given county could send per training.

It was also suggested that there be some sort of self study training tool made available, such as a videotape or CD-ROM for future VR emergency training if counties would need to be trained in between hands-on training sessions. In addition, system manuals should be available on-line.

THE SOS office will provide ongoing VR training to new staff and new Auditors at least twice per year.

7. Window when Mapper will be View ONLY. Proposed: Start June 4. VEMS will be available as of 6/18.

Issues related to this that were mentioned were based on the assumption that an election could occur immediately before or after that window. And there is no way to guarantee that one will not happen during that time (aside from legislation). There are two types of elections that are of potential concern. The first is questions or referendums. The group felt the timing of these elections could be controlled. The second is citizen petitions. The group felt it would be more difficult to control the timing of these.

The group completely accepted this limitation and agreed that it also meant there should be no elections during that window of time. After discussion several ways to achieve this, they thought it could be done procedurally through communications with other counties, their cities, school boards, etc. They suggested that OSS send a letter asking local election officials (Elections has a list of addresses) to avoid elections during this time period. This would give the City Clerks something to take to their City Councils to support any decisions to delay an election. The Counties also committed to note the "no election window" in their newsletters.

Since the municipalities are required to provide notice of an election 49 days before it is to take place, they could simply ask for a 10-day extension. The group also noted that the odds of having an election during this time period are slim. The worst-case scenario would be the need to fill a vacancy in a congressional seat.

Therefore, the OSS needs to have a Plan B in place to handle these possibilities. The crucial system requirements associated with an election are: The creation of rosters and

the confirmation mailing to 3% of voters within 10 days of the election. They were also concerned about having the time needed to get caught up on the entering of VR cards after production rollout, when they have had no means to enter them for at least a week, but before any rosters need to be produced for elections.

For any Special Elections that happen to occur during the window of time AFTER Basic Training and VEMS installation, but BEFORE Comprehensive Training, the OSS will need to assist that county in using VEMS to conduct the election. The rosters may need to be printed from Mapper before June 4. The 3% mailing may need to be generated manually, which should not be prohibitive, as any election occurring during this time should involve a small number of voters. Then the county will post the voter history in the new VEMS system within 6 weeks of the election.

8. Bar code scanner recommended by CMIS:

Zebra Wedge Wand. Requires no software. Installs between keyboard & computer. Reads CMIS barcodes without any interpretation.

The User Group stated they would like additional information on barcode wands AND guns, such as a list of all supported and the bar code format used.

Question-how does VEMS post voter history manually (without the use of a barcode wand or gun)?

9. Draft legislative language changes regarding protective status (Brad).

Brad King presented proposed clarification of the legislation regarding Protective Orders. It would require that the courts send a copy of all Protective orders for residents of that county to the County Auditor. If registered, that person's name would not appear on any public information lists, but would appear on the roster. However, their address would not. Instead, the phrase "protected status" would appear. The election judges will need to be trained that this person does not need to furnish any proof of their residency within that precinct other than an oath.

The question was raised as to whether a protective order ever lapses. The answer was given that they do not, which has records management implications for the original protective orders.

10. Other

- *Data Conversion from Mapper to VEMS-Monica suggested that the VR User Group could review a list of Mapper fields and their associated VEMS field. They could then identify any potential issues and these would be communicated to all counties for corrective action.*
- *The VEMS system will include local races. This will mean that all elections will need to be entered into VEMS starting in June. All candidates will need to be entered into VEMS at all levels. This functionality will be piloted this fall and implemented by the 2002 Primary and General Elections.*

- *The issue was raised as to whether a voter could have the option to be excluded from mailing lists. The Elections Division staff indicated that this would require legislation, which would be unlikely to pass.*
- *Irene brought up an incident where a registrant was being moved from Ramsey County to Anoka but the record within the VR system was lost. She wondered if this was a countywide or statewide problem. If it has happened to other counties, what did they do? When Paula manually recovered the record, what happened? Is it possible there are more of these records that have not been recovered? If so, it may be necessary to recover them before data conversion is completed.*
- *Alternate Mailing Addresses-When data conversion is done, will the manual override of the city & zip code currently associated with voter records be kept? The group requested a report that would list the mismatches between the zip code and the post office in the alternate mailing address fields. It was suggested that the Working Group discuss policy regarding alternate mailing addresses, since these seem to vary by county.*
- *Anoka County has included Municipal Mail Code in each line of their precinct finder. Will that be included in the conversion?*
- *Erroneously assigned school districts-Some counties have registrants that are in another's school districts. The current system does not require the counties assign school district according to the precinct table. How many of these are there? Since they are not included in the precinct finder, could the purge generate a school district report to identify these?*
- *Linda asked how long they should keep the youth status designation.*
- *It was suggested that Elections check the statute to determine whether or not the courts can use the VR database to create a jury duty list. Elections committed to do so and communicate the results to the users.*
- *The question was raised as to how the new system would handle requests for absentee ballots where the applicant is not a registered voter.*
- *The group also asked for a policy clarification regarding permanent absentees versus permanently permanent absentees.*
- *The group asked that the OSS add the following functional requirement: a means for the system to communicate system issues, such as performance problems, to all users if it affects more than one user.*

Proposed County User Training Outline from CMIS

Pilot Counties Training Class

Class Length: 1 day

Recommended Attendees: Pilot Counties Users

Class Pre-requisite Readings:

Voter Quick Start Guide – Detailed reading of entire manual

Applications Student Guide - Quick survey of the guide

Absentee Applications Student Guide - Quick survey of the guide

Class Topics:

Morning –

Voter system screen and tab navigation and content – 1 hour

Voter registration and absentee application processing – 3 hours

Afternoon –

Report generation, Record Mailings usage and Report Batches (correspondence) processing – 1 hour

Election information viewing and important election concepts (Election Precincts, Contact Lists, etc.) – 1 hour

Recording votes and Record Batches processing – ½hour

Precinct split, block range and district maintenance – 1-1/2 hours

County Basic Training Class

Class Length: ½day

Recommended Attendees: County Users

Class Pre-requisite Readings:

Voter Quick Start Guide – Detailed reading of entire manual

Applications Student Guide - Quick survey of the guide

Absentee Applications Student Guide - Quick survey of the guide

Class Topics:

½Day Session –

Voter system screen and tab navigation and content – 1 hour

Voter registration and absentee application processing – 2 ½hours

Voter system updates and trouble-shooting – ½hour

County Follow-up Training Class

Class Length: 1 day

Recommended Attendees: County Users

Class Pre-requisite Readings and Exercises:

Voter Quick Start Guide – Detailed re-reading of entire manual

Applications Student Guide – Completion of all exercises using the training database

Absentee Applications Student Guide - Completion of all exercises using the training database

Class Topics:

Morning –

Voter registration and absentee application processing review and questions – 2 hours

Report generation, Record Mailings usage and Report Batches (correspondence) processing – 1 hour

Election information viewing and important election concepts (Election Precincts, Contact Lists, etc.) – 1 hour

Afternoon –

Recording votes and Record Batches processing – 1 hour

Precinct split, block range and district maintenance – 2 hours

Voter register and statistical report request procedures – ½hour

General question and answer session – ½hour