

FILED

JUN - 5 2000

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA *DR*
COUNTY OF TRINITY
BY: DONNA REGNANI, DEPUTY CLERK

TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
1999-2000

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

This report was approved
On May 25, 2000

**1999-2000 TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

PURPOSE:

Members of the Trinity County Grand Jury are normally requested by the County Clerk/Recorder, (Elections Office), to observe the vote counting process.

BACKGROUND:

1999 was the first year for Trinity County to utilize a semi-automated vote counting machine at each precinct. The special all mail election for Lewiston held in July 1999 was the first time the Elections Office used a new automated vote collection, counting, storage and reporting system called the "Accu Vote optical scan system". Subsequently, this new system was used in the most recent two elections.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

Grand Jury members, acting as observers, were present at numerous voting precincts throughout the county in an effort to perform a review of the procedures being followed in conducting elections with the new equipment. This year, members of the Trinity County Grand Jury served as observers of three elections: the special all mail election in Lewiston in July '99, and the November '99 and March 2000 elections. The voting process at the precincts, as well as the counting of absentee ballots at the elections office, were observed. Part of the observation process included the noting of some voter comments as well as the expressed feelings of some of the precinct workers.

FINDING #1:

The past three elections utilized a new ballot format and voting system requiring the retraining of precinct workers. There was no major mishap or any disruption that prevented any qualified voters from voting. The system is designed to connect to a phone jack to transfer the vote count to headquarters. All county precincts delivered their count to the Elections Office within an hour of the closing time of the polls. According to the County Clerk, Trinity County was the first in the state to report final results in the primary election in March 2000. The reporting time will be shortened in future elections, as a phone jack will be installed at the polling place that did not have one.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

The Grand Jury commends the Elections Office for exploring a new time and potentially cost saving voting device; and for achieving, without serious incident, the successful introduction of this new voting process. The Trinity County Grand Jury

appreciates continued actions on the part of County Government to adopt new technology and processes to help make Trinity County more efficient in the 21st century.

FINDING #2:

Precinct worker know-how is basic to the smooth operation of the election process, particularly when new equipment and procedures are introduced. It has been difficult to get some precinct workers to attend training meetings.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

In order to maintain voter secrecy and to make the voting experience more pleasurable, it is recommended that the Elections Office pay particular attention to the training of precinct workers in ballot handling, voter interface and instructions. Paid precinct workers should be required to attend training sessions. Training sessions should be scheduled at times and in locations to minimize inconvenience to trainees.

FINDING #3:

Some precinct workers expressed concern over the lack of apparent response from the Elections Office to their noting of names on the voter lists that were no longer appropriate due to citizens having moved or died. It is recognized that the Elections Office has recently been successful in trimming many names from the old lists.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

The Grand Jury recommends that the Elections Office enhance communication with precinct workers, especially with regard to suggestions that they submit. It is acknowledged that voters cannot be removed from the rolls on the basis of hearsay; however, precinct worker input is deserving of further verification/investigation.

FINDING #4:

Precinct workers would like more interaction with the Elections Office after the elections. A desire to share problems and successes, and to know more about the county's election process and its future plans for upcoming elections was indicated.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

The Grand Jury recommends that the Elections Office consider hosting a post election "Lessons-Learned" meeting to which all election workers from the precincts are invited. This session should be held soon after each election and be used to go over the successes as well as some of the difficulties encountered in conducting the recent election. It would also be an excellent opportunity for the election workers to express their concerns, complaints, compliments, and questions to the Elections Office.

CONCLUSION:

The incorporation of a new voting system presented some challenges that were largely prepared for and met. The Trinity County Grand Jury commends the County Clerk for the efficient manner in which the transition to a new voting system was conducted.

30 - DAY RESPONSE REQUESTED FROM: Trinity County Board of Supervisors;
County Clerk/Recorder.



TRINITY COUNTY

Elections

P.O. Box 1258
Weaverville, CA 96093
Phone: (530) 623-1220
Fax: (530) 623-8398

July 10, 2000

John K. Letton
Superior Court Judge
P.O. Box 1258
Weaverville, CA 96093

RECEIVED
JUL 10 2000
SUPERIOR COURT
JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

Re: Grand Jury Report – Elections Committee

Recommendation #1

We appreciate the comments regarding the use of new technology


Recommendation #2

We agree with the recommendation. We have changed the training methods for the precinct workers. Instead of asking them to attend meetings in Weaverville, the elections staff travels to the precinct for the training. Pole worker attendance at the training sessions is much improved. We expect to expand on this with group training sessions as well to provide exchange between the workers as well as training by election staff.

Recommendation #3

Recommendation #4

The ideas regarding precinct worker communication, and an after election meeting are good ones. We should be able to provide for this kind of meeting in November


Dero Forslund
Trinity County
Clerk Recorder Assessor



TRINITY COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
P.O. Drawer 1613 (530) 623-1217
WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093

Dero B. Forslund, Clerk
Jeannie Nix-Temple, County Administrative Officer

RECEIVED

OCT 27 2000
SUPERIOR COURT
JUDGES CHAMBERS

To: John K. Letton, Superior Court Judge

From: Board of Supervisors

Date: October 25, 2000

RE: 1999-2000 Trinity County Grand Jury Elections Committee Final Report

Finding and Recommendation #1

The Board agrees with and appreciates your observations and comments.

Finding and Recommendation #2

The Board agrees with this recommendation and the County Clerk is implementing your suggested changes.

Finding and Recommendation #3

The Board agrees.

Finding and Recommendation #4

The Board agrees and it is intended that post-election meetings will take place.

DATE: October 9, 2000

APPROVED: Ralph Modine
CHAIRMAN-Board of Supervisors