Putting the Voter First

VCA LITE IN SHASTA COUNTY
CATHY DARLING ALLEN, CLERK/ROV
Background

Who I am

- County Clerk/RoV since 2004
- Most of my work experience prior to government was customer service focused
- Customer service is very important to me, & my staff do an excellent job of bringing that to the customer experience every day

Customer experience

My office gets

- thank you cards
- flowers
- chocolates, cookies, donuts
- other expressions of appreciation from our customers

I have to give all credit to my staff for that. I share this to demonstrate that we focus on customer service in general and for voters especially as a part of our office culture. This is a perfect fit for VCA activities, from my point of view.
Shasta County

Average age of a voter in Shasta County: 61.5

Shasta County covers 3,847 square miles

Parties

- Reps
- Dems
- NPP
- Other

46,730
23,248
6,853
25,619

23,248
VCA in Shasta County

- Shasta County economics
- 102,000 registered voters
- 72,325 of those are permanent vote by mail
- 4,000 or so are in all mail precincts

We are already serving the majority of our voters as mail ballot voters, so adopting those pieces of the VCA we can, only makes sense for us.
Provisional Hotline

- EC 3015 was amended in SB 286, and chaptered October, 2017.
- Shasta County implemented a new voting system in 2018, so we decided not to make major procedural changes in the primary.
- At the General election in November 2018 we implemented the Provisional Hotline for the first time.

- Poll worker training and election day procedures updated.
- Included instructions for vote by mail voters who appear in person at their correct polling place but...
- Didn’t bring their ballot with them.
- Poll workers called in to verify that ballot had not been voted.
- We voided the issued ballot immediately in our EMS.
Ancillary benefit: administrative economy

Provisional ballots are expensive; they have to be handled one at a time and individually evaluated.

Provisionals in General Elections – Shasta

- Nov 2012: 2467
- Nov 2014: 892
- Nov 2016: 1641
- Nov 2018: 673

- Provisional voters
- Prov VBM not Returned
1,700 phone calls answered

- Each of the phone calls answered on the hotline represents:
  - A voter who didn’t have to complete a provisional envelope
  - A voter who didn’t have to complete a new voter registration card
  - A voter who got to vote a regular ballot at the precinct – the reason they appeared that day
  - A member of the public approached their government and got the service they were looking for, right away, that minute

This photo was taken at 7:41pm Election Night
Ballot drop boxes

- In 2012 we sent this to voters
Drop Boxes 2018

- November 2018 we mailed this insert to 76,334 voters
Ballot drop boxes in 2019

- Nine locations
- All open longer than poll hours up to and including Election Day
- Our goal was to meet voters where they are
- Additional bonus: help mitigate costs of return postage for voters, and now (with legislative changes) for us
Drop Box Locations 2019
Ballots returned in drop boxes

Drop Box Usage

Drop Box Usage as a % of turnout

Nov 2012 | Nov 2014 | Nov 2016 | Nov 2018
---------|---------|---------|---------

0.00%   | 5.00%   | 10.00%  | 15.00%  | 20.00%  | 25.00%  |
Early voting in office

- 2018 was the first time we tracked early voting and have actively promoted it.

- We are currently crafting language to encourage vote by mail voters who wish to, to bring their ballots to the office and run through the accessible ballot scanner.
Conditional Voter Registration & Voting

- Allows us to serve voters better by allowing us to count votes for those who failed to register before the E-15 deadline
- Removes the previous barrier of obtaining a court order to have your ballot counted
- Allows voters who have had a less-than-optimal DMV voter registration experience to have their ballots count

The CVR VIP Room
(thanks to Monterey County for the inspiration and cool name)
In November 2018, 417 Shasta County voters had their ballots count.

In the past, those voters would have been provisional voters and their status might not have been validated, and their vote might not have been counted.
Statewide VCA benefit to voters – being able to drop off ballots at any polling place
My amazing team in ugly sweaters