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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

June 14, 2012

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FROM: Dean C. Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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VSAP Quarterly Report- 2nd Quarter 2012

The following is the second quarterly update report of 2012, detailing VSAP activities and accomplishments during the period of March 1, 2012- May 31, 2012. These reports are provided to inform your Board and the public on the progress of the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP). This series of quarterly reports is in response to the motion adopted by your Board on September 7, 2010.

During the reporting period, the VSAP continued to work towards the goals of the second phase of the project. In this second phase, the project seeks to 1) identify the voting system model and technical requirements; 2) identify the procurement and development model that the Department will pursue, including funding for system development and implementation. The following are the activities accomplished during this reporting period:

- Open Design Search
- Initiating the Development of a Design Model

Open Design Search

The Open Design Search was an initiative of the project that sought to gather ideas and concepts about how to improve the voting experience. The initiative sought out partnerships and activities that engaged a broad range of experts, designers, and the general public. The Open Design Search included two specific activities: 1) Open Innovation Challenge and 2) Voter Experience Brainstorming Workshops.

The Open Innovation Challenge site had over 91,000 unique visits, and the Brainstorming Workshops engaged approximately 114 participants.

Open Innovation Challenge

In January 2012, the Department partnered with the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) Accessible Voting Technology Initiative (AVTI) and OpenIDEO, to participate in an Open Innovation Challenge. The challenge uses crowdsourcing methods, providing an open online platform for the sharing and developing of ideas and concepts. The public at large was invited to participate in this challenge which aimed to provide new approaches to the County's aging voting system. The voting challenge asked the question "How might we design an accessible election experience for everyone?" and ran from January 24th – March 28th.

The Open Innovation Challenge was funded by a competitive grant received by ITIF from the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (EAC), as part of their Accessible Voting Technology Initiative. The grant seeks to improve accessible voting through the use of technology.

The challenge was managed by OpenIDEO using their "open innovation platform" run by design and innovation firm IDEO. The challenge was open to the public at large and individuals from around the world submitted innovative solutions and concepts around making the voting experience more accessible to everyone. Engaging anyone with an interest and idea in the process, not just election technology experts, provided a process that cultivated design ideas for an innovative voter experience that may not have been envisioned when working with a more traditional model of exclusively working with voting system vendors.

This process resulted in the submission of 154 concpets.

Voter Experience Brainstorming Workshops

The RR/CC launched the second portion of the Open Design Search with a series of workshops which provided for more refined and focused discussions. The workshops continued the open process by engaging stakeholders and gathering additional ideas and concepts that the RR/CC can utilize as it continues envisioning a voting system design. The workshops included different stakeholders and focused on different elements of a voting system.

The RR/CC hosted and/or participated in a total of four workshops. The first workshop was held at the Election Verification Network Annual Conference and focused on discussing important elements for an effective tally system. The RR/CC then held two workshops that gathered RR/CC staff to brainstorm and share their thoughts for the design of an ideal voting system. In addition, RR/CC participated in brainstorming

workshops hosted by the ITIF Accessible Voting Technology Initiative, which also sought to reveal ideas for an improved voting experience.

Workshop participants were led in a moderated discussion to design a more effective voting system and were invited to draw images of their ideal system and/or list features they would like to see incorporated in the new system.

The concepts and ideas gathered from the Open Design Search initiative have provided the overall VSAP project with innovative approaches to how the voting experienced might be improved for voters in Los Angeles County. As we move forward with developing a design and future prototype these ideas will help inform our efforts.

A full report including concepts and ideas gathered in the Open Design Search is available at: http://lavote.net/Voter/VSAP/PDFS/Open_Design_Search_Report.pdf

Developing a Design Model

The Department will move forward by engaging in a deliberative process to identify the desired design and functionalities of our system, utilizing the information and data gathered throughout the course of the project and with ongoing input from the VSAP Advisory Committee and other experts. We seek to participate in a project headed up by the University of South Alabama and the Open Source Digital Voting Foundation, along with a group of renowned academics who will lend their resources and expertise to get us through this process. The group has applied for Election Assistance Commission funding through a sub-grant from the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. Once the design has been identified, we will seek to prototype a system for further testing. We intend to work with the CIO to ensure prototype development and testing meets County standards and our needs.

About the VSAP

Launched in September 2009, the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) was developed by the Department in response to the growing voting system needs and challenges faced by the County. While the County's current voting system has served the voters of Los Angeles County with accuracy and integrity, the design of these systems and the age of their technology do not offer the technical and functional elasticity necessary to continue to accommodate the growing and increasingly diverse electorate.

The size and diversity of Los Angeles County and the limited voting systems market, however, make it almost impossible to reasonably consider a commercial off-the-shelf voting system solution. Any voting system solution will entail a significant development or customization process in order to satisfy the County's needs, General Voting System Principles and technical requirements.

In response to these needs and challenges, the VSAP takes an unprecedented and comprehensive approach at modernizing the County's voting system. The vision of the project is to implement a voting system through a transparent process that takes into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters. The VSAP aims at achieving three goals in this process: 1) give current and future Los Angeles County voters an unprecedented opportunity to participate in the assessment and development process; 2) increase voter confidence in the electoral process through the participatory structure of the project; 3) synthesize public input and research to acquire or develop a new voting system for the County.

Stay Connected

More information regarding the Voting System Assessment Project (VSAP) is available to the public online at www.lavote.net/voter/vsap and on the project's Facebook page. The pages on our website and on Facebook are frequently updated with news and information and are a great way to stay connected with the progress of the project between quarterly reports. We strongly encourage public input throughout the process and look forward to continuing to work with your board on this critical project. If you have any questions please contact Monica Flores, VSAP Project Coordinator at (562) 345-8372 or via email at mflores@rrcc.lacounty.gov.