Los Angeles County **REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK**

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

September 1, 2010

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer

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

Dean C. Logan

REPORT ON BOARD MOTION OF AUGUST 10, 2010—REGARDING OUTREACH EFFORTS TO ENROLL PERMANENT VOTE BY MAIL (PVBM) VOTERS

On August 10, 2010, by motion of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and amended by Supervisor Antonovich, your Board directed the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) to "develop a comprehensive voter outreach and education plan to encourage greater voter participation in the November 2010 General Elections; including specific activities geared towards increasing enrollment of Permanent Vote By Mail (PVBM) voters." The following describes the Department's approach as it relates to outreach and outlines current outreach efforts, as well as, specific activities aimed at increasing PVBM enrollment. In keeping with the direction of the motion, the report presents a plan to be carried out within existing Departmental resources. While no additional funding was identified, the report does provide a number of recommendations requiring additional funding, for your Board to consider.

Background

With 4.3 million registered voters, Los Angeles County is the largest County election jurisdiction in the nation. In addition to its size, the County is also characterized by socioeconomic and racial/ethnic diversity. While these elements make for a vibrant democratic process, they also present a number of challenges when it comes to encouraging eligible citizens to register and vote. For example:

- Despite its large electorate, there are an estimated 1.5 million citizen adults not registered to vote in the County;

- Under the provisions of the federal and state Voting Rights Act, the County currently provides language assistance in six different languages other than English. This underscores the cultural and ethnic diversity the electoral process must bridge to reach all eligible citizens;

- Los Angeles County residents have high rates of mobility. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, on average Los Angeles County residents move every 1.2 years;

The Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) is the chief elections official charged with the effective administration/conduct of Federal, State, and Local elections in Los Angeles County. However, beyond the Department's administrative responsibilities is its responsibility to also ensure that the elections process is accessible to all registered voters in the County through sustained efforts to educate, inform, encourage, and facilitate voter participation by eligible citizens. It is the strong belief of the Department that increased voter participation is founded on an accessible electoral process that eliminates barriers and reduces the effort and resources necessary for an eligible citizen to register and vote. Increased access to the voter registration process, to information about the election, and to the ballot and the options available to vote a ballot are critical to fostering an environment conducive to higher voter participation.

Ongoing Outreach & Education Efforts

A comprehensive voter outreach and education program is viewed as a necessary and critical function of the election administration process in Los Angeles County. The Department maintains a modest yet permanent staffing level devoted to planning and implementing year-round voter outreach and education programs. These efforts sustain our ongoing commitment to fostering a strong culture of voter participation in the County, however, the challenge of scale and dwindling resources can often limit the impact of our efforts.

The following is an outline of a number of activities and programs supported by the Department's Voter Outreach & Education Operations:

1. Online Resources & Social Media

The internet and social media have become a common place and integral part of daily communication for many people. In an effort to adapt elections to fit current lifestyles of our constituents, the Department has and is making a concerted effort to streamline important election information online, including a growing number of election related services:

- Look up voter registration status;
- Complete and download voter registration form;
- Request a Vote by Mail Ballot;
- Track your Vote by Mail Ballot;
- Look up Sample Ballot;

- Find Polling Places;

The online services outlined above provide the public an opportunity to complete important election related transactions; thereby increasing access and removing barriers to the process (see Appendix B).

Social Media tools like Facebook and Twitter have also become core elements of the RR/CC's communication tools. In 2009, the Department launched its Facebook page and a Twitter account. Both are used to provide regular election updates and keep voters within the social network engaged in the electoral process before, up to, and after Election Day.

2. Media Information

The news media continues to be a principle source of information. During every election our Media Information Section prepares a series of press releases covering key information affecting voters in the election. Releases are distributed to all major and local news organizations in the County in an effort to secure earned media coverage of the election and deliver important voter information through the media.

3. Current Programs & Partnerships

The following is a listing of established outreach programs:

Permanent Voter Registration Sites

Access to voter registration is the fundamental first step in the voter participation process. In keeping with the requirements and spirit of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and California Election Code, the RR/CC proactively works to increase access to the voter registration process through its Permanent Voter Registration Site voter registration card distribution program. Currently, the program supports more than 1,200 sites throughout the County, providing sites with voter registration cards regularly. The Voter Registration Cards distributed provide individuals registering to vote the opportunity to request PVBM status.

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) Outreach

As many as 20,000 to 40,000 new citizen candidates attend INS ceremonies each month. The RR/CC and the INS have partnered to assist newly naturalized citizens in registering to vote. We share a common goal in accomplishing a substantial increase in the number of new citizens who take advantage of the opportunity to register to vote. The monthly ceremonies are presided over by the INS Director, a Judge and a Manager from INS/Jury Services. Expanded program efforts have resulted in a **45%** increase in the number of naturalized new citizen registrants processed in comparison to prior years.

State College & University Outreach

Establishes and maintains an interactive communication network system between the RR/CC and school administration officials to get them actively involved with implementing/maintaining a proactive student registration/voter education program.

College/university administrative staff, professors, and student services representatives can provide assistance with the establishment of permanent distribution sites on campus for convenient student access to registration forms and election material. These are also prime locations for conducting voting technology presentations/demonstrations and recruitment of poll workers.

Deputy Registrar Training Certification

Program includes the conduct of training classes prior to peak voter registration periods for Statewide elections. Classes are used as a presentation forum for distributing printed publications and reference material conveying uniform and consistent messages on the importance of properly completing forms. A "Guide to Registering Voters" manual was developed for use during Deputy Registrar Certification Training classes, and certificates are issued to persons upon successful completion of training. Program efforts are directed toward ensuring the integrity of voter registration, VBM and petition drives conducted by political campaigns, advocacy groups, individuals who hire persons to assist with registering voters, distributing Vote By Mail (VBM) applications, and/or circulating petitions for signatures.

Senior Citizen Residential & Recreation Centers

Establishes permanent distribution sites at Senior Citizen Centers, Assisted Living/Residential facilities to provide enhanced, convenient access to voter registration and VBM services and increase efficiency and quality of services to elderly voting population who wish to participate in elections and are most likely to request PVBM status and require assistance with completing voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications.

Military and Overseas Voters

There has been increasing concern nationwide regarding the disenfranchisement of military and overseas voters, their spouses and dependents. Many overseas voters residing abroad have experienced difficulty obtaining election material in time to vote and return voted ballots to be counted. Enhanced system applications and revised procedures/materials were developed for providing out-of-state voters, military personnel and U.S. citizens residing overseas with improved, convenient on-line access to voter registration and VBM application services. Uniformed Services notices regarding available Military and Out Of Country Voting services are posted at 100 recruitment/enlistment sites and all 108 U.S. passport acceptance locations in the County, and also published in U.S. passport agency newsletter.

November 2010 Voter Outreach & Education Activities

The Department intends to continue its efforts and conduct a comprehensive voter outreach and education effort for the November 2010 General Election, within existing Departmental resources. Our overall outreach strategy for this election will continue and expand ongoing activities, detailed above, with an emphasis on pursuing greater collaboration with community partners.

The table below provides an outline of the current outreach plan:

Voter Registration		**Sept. 15 to Oct. 18**
Permanent Voter Registration Sites	• Conduct outreach to existing sites to provide additional Voter Registration Cards • Provide sites with additional voter information materials • Recruit additional sites	More than 1,200 active permanent sites.
Temporary Community Voter Registration Sites	• Work with community partners to recruit local sites within communities to provide voter registration cards and election information up until the Close of Registration	Recruitment target: 25 sites
Deputy Registrar Trainings	• Conduct Deputy Registrar Trainings to facilitate voter registration drives.	Target: 25-35 trainings
Vote by Mail (VBM)		**Oct. 4 to Oct. 26**
	• Recruit permanent voter registration sites to provide Vote By Mail information. • Recruit temporary community voter registration sites to also provide VBM information • See table below "Proposed PVBM Outreach Activities..."	
Election Day		**Oct. 25 to Nov. 2**
	• Promote online resources (e.g. Sample Ballot Look Up, Polling Place Locator) • Sample Ballot Review • Distribute Easy Voter Guides • Intense earned media • Utilize Facebook and Twitter to post final reminders before Election Day	
Media Outreach		**Sept 15 to Nov. 2**
	• Voter Information Press Releases - Sample Ballot Mailing –	Press Releases: 5

	Start of Vote By Mail period (w/ PVBM promotion) - Last Day to Request VBM - Close of Registration deadline - "What Voters Need to Know" (FAQs) - Election Day Poll Hours and Final Reminders	
	• Op-Eds to encourage voter participation and enhance voter confidence in the process	Op-Ed: 2
	• Produce Radio Public Service Announcements (15-30 sec) for release to the media - Countdown to election, reminding voters of key dates and steps to register and vote	PSA's: 4-5
	• Video Blogs to educate voters on how their vote is processed and protected	Video Blogs: 4
Community Outreach		**Ongoing to Nov. 2**
	• Team of six outreach staff will identify and attend local, regional, and Countywide events/fairs to conduct direct voter outreach and education • Collaborate with Board of Supervisors Offices and other local jurisdictions to coordinate and/or identify additional events • Seek out community meetings and events to conduct voter information and education presentations	Target: 50-80 events

Activities to Encourage Greater PVBM Enrollment

The use of Vote By Mail ballots has steadily increased in Los Angeles County over the past decade, growing from 543,143 in 2000 to 810,222 in 2008. In the November 2008 Presidential Election more than 810,222 Vote by Mail ballots were cast; the largest number of VBM ballots cast in a single County.

Since 2002, when California allowed any registered voter to request PVBM status, the number of registered voters with PVBM status has similarly increased. As of June 2010 more than half a million registered voters (606,668) are PVBM voters; accounting for 14% of the County's total electorate.

The following table outlines a number of activities the RR/CC plans to conduct utilizing existing resources within the Department for the November 2, 2010 General Elections.

Proposed PVBM Outreach Activities: November 2, 2010 General Elections			
Activity	**Detail**	**Timeframe**	**Cost**
PVBM Request on Official Sample Ballot	Revise Vote by Mail ballot request on back cover of the Official Sample Ballot to include a "check box" that allows voter to request PVBM status. A Sample Ballot booklet is mailed to every registered voter in the County.	Completed (see Appendix C)	N/A
Email Blast	Coordinate email message promoting PVBM to registered voters with emails on file who do not currently have PVBM status. A universe of 491,362 registered voters has been identified.	Sept. 20, 2010 to Sept. 24, 2010	N/A
Informational Page in Officials Sample Ballot	Print a full page promoting VBM and PVBM. To appear in all Official Sample Ballot booklets.	Completed (see Appendix A)	N/A
Press Releases	Remind voter of PVBM status in regularly scheduled VBM period media release.	October 2010	N/A
Community Outreach Promotion	Promote PVBM during outreach events.	Sept. 2010 to Nov. 2010 (ongoing thereafter)	N/A
Online Resources	Promote online resources to apply for a regular VBM ballot online or download PVBM application.	October 2010	N/A
Voter Registration	Emphasize PVBM status request	September to	N/A

Card	option (Q 15) on Voter Registration Card during voter registration drives and in Deputy Registrar Trainings.	October 2010	

Additional Recommendations

In accordance with the spirit of your motion the outreach activities detailed above are all to be funded with existing resources within the Department. However, there are a number of additional activities that could help enhance our efforts that your Board should consider. The following recommendations range in the amount of funding necessary to implement:

1. Exportable Widgets: The development of widget applications that could be exported to other websites (e.g. Board Offices, county departments, other government agencies, and community partners) so that voters could directly access important forms or transact requests such as verifying their voter registration status or requesting a Vote By Mail ballot from their first point of contact with information about the election would greatly enhance our reach and the public's access to our election services.

Widget Topics: • Verify Voter Registration • Request a VBM ballot • Track your VBM ballot • Find your polling place • Look up your Sample Ballot	Timeline: 2-3 wks development	Estimated Costs: $5,000 - $10,000

2. Direct Mailing: Send a direct mailing to registered voters in the County who voted a regular Vote By Mail ballot in the November 2008 Presidential Election and are not currently PVBM voters. Approximate universe identified for the mailing is 439,303. The mailing would provide registered voters with information about PVBM status and applications to request PVBM ballot. The following mailing scenarios below outline estimated costs (see Appendix E for detailed estimate). The estimate assumes householding the universe identified to reduce the size of the mailing down to approximately 370,000 and thereby reduce costs.

Scenario A Simple mailing with no Business Return Mail (BRM) service (no return postage paid)	$ 120,361
Scenario B Postcard request with BRM service (return postage paid)	$ 254,671
Scenario C	$316,720

Letter sized mailing with BRM service and return envelope provided	

3. Media campaign: Los Angeles County is a media driven market. Because of its size and demographic as well as geographic diversity, effective countywide outreach efforts that are truly to scale must incorporate a coordinated media outreach strategy. In particular for elections, media sources like television, radio, and online print continue to be a primary source voters turn to during election time. The Department has been working to develop strategic relationships with local media partners in the County in order to develop and implement comprehensive and substantive media campaigns that go beyond simple ads and to seek out a deeper commitment from the stations and their talent. In 2008, the Department implemented this media campaign model with a great deal of success, earning national recognition as an innovative best practice by the National Association of Counties (NACO). Attached is a **power point presentation** that provides a general overview of the breadth and depth of our efforts. Currently, the Department is unable to continue to expand on this model due to a lack of funding. Efforts in 2008 were funded using one-time federal funds from the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). Remaining HAVA funding is not authorized for use in ongoing outreach efforts. Cost for a comprehensive campaign effort can range from $500,000 to $2 million.

Conclusion

It is the strong belief of the Department that a comprehensive and sustained voter outreach and education program is not only necessary but critical to strengthening the County's democratic processes through increased voter participation. Over the past three decades, voter turnout in Los Angeles County, as in much of the state, has been declining; especially in Primary and Off-Year Elections. Declining from 53% turnout in the 1982 Statewide Primary to just 23% in this past June 8, 2010 Statewide Direct Primary Election.

Although the RR/CC currently maintains a fairly comprehensive voter outreach and education program on a year round basis, more investment is needed to substantively tackle the issue of declining voter participation. This is particularly true for a County like Los Angeles, covering 4,000 square miles, serving 4.3 million registered voters, and a jurisdiction with a highly mobile and diverse population. The Department looks forward to working with your Board and our Community Partners to help strengthen the County's democratic process through greater voter participation.

APPENDIX A

Vote By Mail

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN VOTE AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 4th THIS ELECTION

HERE'S HOW:

1. **Apply Online** - An online Vote By Mail application for Los Angeles County is available via the ***Electronic Vote By Mail Application*** on ***lavote.net.*** (Los Angeles County Residents only)

2. **Use Your Sample Ballot** - A printed Vote By Mail application is included on the back cover page of this Official Sample Ballot Booklet.

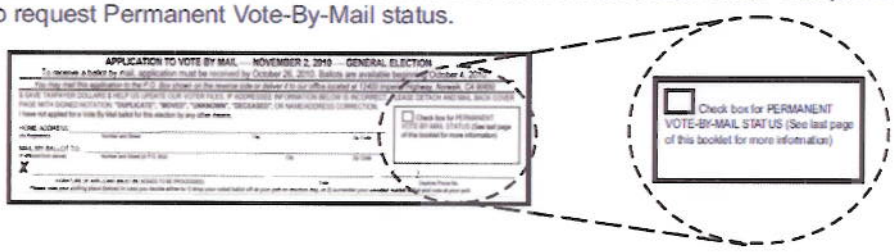
3. **Apply By Mail** - Written requests submitted for a Vote By Mail ballot must include:
   - Voters home address
   - Voters signature
   - Address where Vote By Mail ballot is to be sent

   Send to: REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK
   P.O. BOX 30450, LOS ANGELES, CA 90030-0450

4. **Apply In Person** - Visit the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk headquarters at: ***12400 Imperial Highway, Room 3002, Norwalk, CA 90650***

WANT TO VOTE BY MAIL EVERY ELECTION?
BE A PERMANENT VOTE-BY-MAIL VOTER

California law also allows any registered voter to become a permanent Vote-By-Mail voter. Visit ***www.lavote.net*** or check the box on the back cover of this Sample Ballot to request Permanent Vote-By-Mail status.



IMPORTANT NOTICE!
To be counted, all Vote By Mail ballots must be received by the Registrar's office by 8 pm on Election Day, November 2, 2010.

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APPENDIX B

Online Services

www.lavote.net

IT'S FAST, EASY, AND CONVENIENT!

Quick Links:

- Apply to be a pollworker
- Register to vote
- Verify voter registration status
- Request a Vote By Mail ballot and check status of VBM ballot
- View your sample ballot
- Locate your polling place
- Find election results
- Apply for marriage license or obtain applications of Birth, Death and Marriage Records

RSS Feed - Press Releases

Become a fan on ***Facebook***

Follow us on ***Twitter***

Available Videos on ***Youtube***

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APPENDIX C

APPLICATION TO VOTE BY MAIL — NOVEMBER 2, 2010 — GENERAL ELECTION

To receive a ballot by mail, application must be received by October 26, 2010. Ballots are available beginning October 4, 2010.

You may mail this application to the P.O. Box shown on the reverse side or deliver it to our office located at 12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650

$ SAVE TAXPAYER DOLLARS $ HELP US UPDATE OUR VOTER FILES. IF ADDRESSEE INFORMATION BELOW IS INCORRECT, PLEASE DETACH AND MAIL BACK COVER PAGE WITH SIGNED NOTATION: **"DUPLICATE", "MOVED", "UNKNOWN", "DECEASED"**, OR NAME/ADDRESS CORRECTION.

I have not applied for a Vote By Mail ballot for this election by any other means.

☐ Check box for PERMANENT VOTE BY MAIL STATUS (See last page of this booklet for more information)

HOME ADDRESS: _____
(As Registered) Number and Street City Zip Code

MAIL MY BALLOT TO: _____
(If different from above) Number and Street (or P.O. Box) City Zip Code

X _____ _____ ( )_____
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (MUST BE SIGNED TO BE PROCESSED) Date Daytime Phone No

Please note your polling place (below) in case you decide either to 1) drop your voted ballot off at your poll on election day, or 2) surrender your unvoted mailed ballot and vote at your poll.

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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
P.O. Box 30450
Los Angeles, CA 90030-0450

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

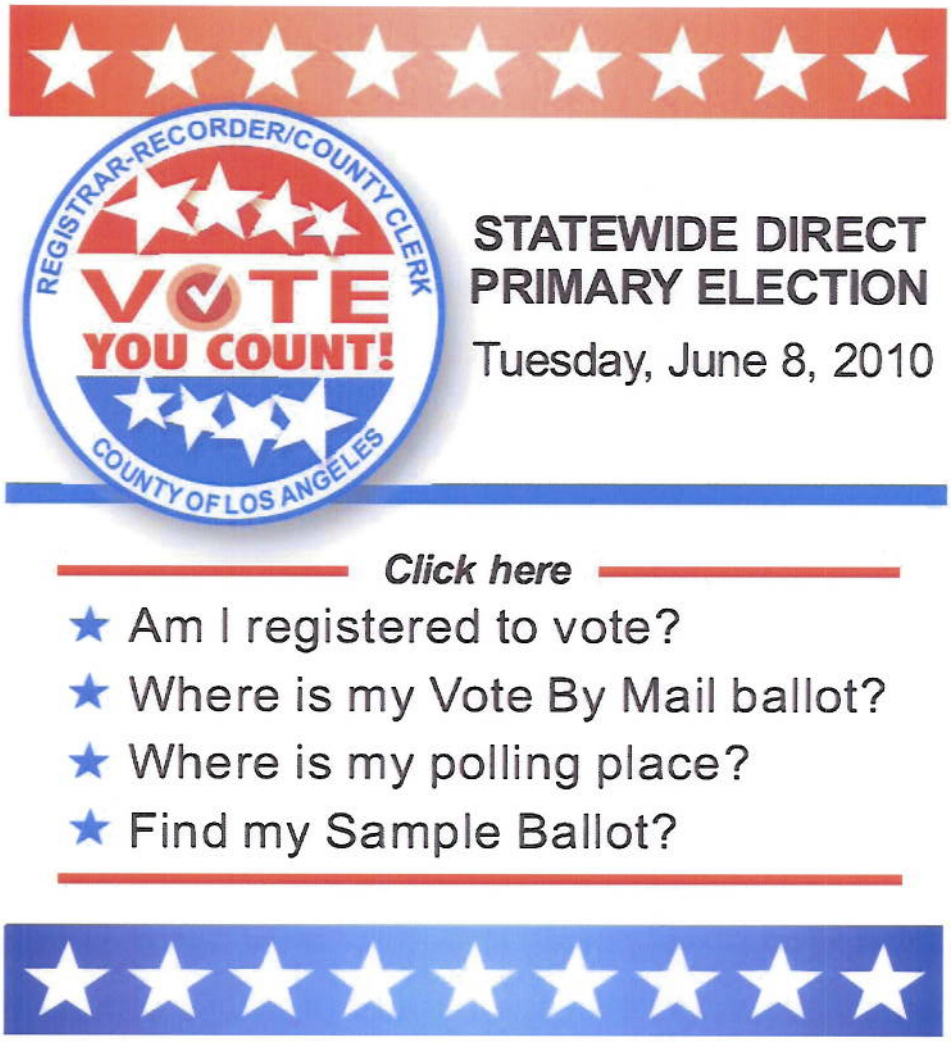
OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL
Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LOS ANGELES
COUNTY REGISTRAR-
RECORDER/COUNTY
CLERK

POLLS OPEN FROM 7 A.M. TO 8 P.M.
YOUR POLLING PLACE IS:

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE WIDGET



APPENDIX E

PVBM SOLICITATION MATERIAL COST ESTIMATE
November 2, 2010 General Election

Project Categories	Cost Per Letter	Scenario A No Return Paid Postage Included	Scenario B BRM Postcard Included	Scenario C BRM Envelope Included
Postage - Outgoing 3rd Class	$ 0.100	$ 37,000.00	$ 37,000.00	$ 37,000.00
Envelope #10 - Outgoing	$ 0.025	$ 9,361.00	$ 9,361.00	$ 9,361.00
Letter - Paper and Ink (Printed In-House)	$ 0.150	$ 55,500.00	$ 55,500.00	$ 55,500.00
Letter - Business Reply Mail (BRM) Postage	$ 0.523	N/A	N/A	$ 193,510.00
Postcard - Paper and Ink (Printed In-House)	$ 0.05	$ 18,500.00	$ 18,500.00	N/A
Postcard- BRM Postage	$ 0.36	N/A	$ 134,310.00	N/A
Envelope #9 - BRM (Return Envelope)	$ 0.058	N/A	N/A	$ 21,349.00
Mailing Services (Folding, Addressing, Inserting and PO Delivery)	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Total Project Cost		**$ 120,361.00**	**$ 254,671.00**	**$ 316,720.00**