

Blue Suede News

Update on ELECTION Voter Information System August 2005

Counties training on ELVIS

One of the next major initiatives in the Election Voter Information System (ELVIS) project is training. Training began on August 1 for pilot counties that will be involved with User Acceptance Testing (see UAT article on page 3). The training classes will be held in two locations. One class will be held in Topeka at the InfiniTec facility, and the other class will be in Wichita at the Sedgwick County Technology Training Center. Each trainee will have access to a computer, bar code wand, printer and scanner in order to be trained on all features that ELVIS has to offer. Training manuals will be provided for each trainee to use during class and to keep for future reference.

Each training session will be five days. The first and second days of training will focus on signing on and accessing ELVIS, the basics of ELVIS, using a statewide system, processing voter registration applications, printing and job processing, NVRA processing, and searching and scanning records. Each chapter or segment of training will consist of instructor-led training, hands-on for users and reviews to assess understanding of the system. After each training segment review, trainees should be able to perform those tasks in which they were trained. If not, the instructor will review until everyone is satisfied, before proceeding to the next topic.

The third and fourth days of training will focus more on election management. Topics will include setting up elections, staffing elections, advance voter management, processing elections, petition management and public service requests (reports that customers tend to ask for on a regular basis, such

as walking lists). Again, instructors will lead trainees through each training segment, allow for hands-on and then review for understanding.

The last day of training is dedicated to system administration. Topics will include managing security and user roles, system parameters and tables (those settings that will be used on a regular basis, such as defining political parties used in Kansas), political subdivisions, setting up notices, labels and viewing activities, street file management, NVRA statistical reporting and customer support.

Early reports on Tuesday of this week at training indicate that counties like the new application. InfiniTec is providing the training staff and they are doing a great job. County officials are finding the training to be very beneficial and helpful in learning the new system. The new application is receiving good reviews so far. We will keep you updated as we hear more from counties in the coming months on the new application.

Training is a very critical aspect to the success of the ELVIS project. Please make every effort to attend your assigned training session. This will ensure your understanding of the new system and also will ensure the project schedule stays on track. With your hard work and participation in training, we know ELVIS will be a huge success for many years to come.

IN THE SPOT LIGHT

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A message from Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh...

The ELVIS project is well underway and we are on track for the January 2006 implementation date. We have encountered a few hurdles along the way, but that is to be expected with a project of this magnitude. I am pleased with the progress of the ELVIS project thus far.

To date, 13 of 15 pilot counties have completed their first test conversion and viewed their data as it will appear in the new system. This process has been well received and successful. Any issues raised during conversion with the pilot counties will be used to better the process for future county conversions.

Pilot counties also have begun training on the new system. The first round of counties convened this week in Wichita and Topeka. This is one of the most important elements to the success of the ELVIS system. We need all county election officials to fully understand and have a good comfort level with the new system. Each participant will have access to a computer, bar code wand, printer and scanner in order to be trained on all features of the system. It is important to attend the training in person.

Another critical component of this project is user acceptance testing. This process will verify that the system is functioning properly to HAVA standards in phase I and later that it meets Kansas requirements in phase II. Testing will allow us to make changes if we determine the system does not stand up to our requirements.

It is important that we understand that the ELVIS system will be implemented in phases. Kansas contracted for ELVIS to meet the requirements of HAVA by having a central voter registration system by January 2006. In addition, we are requiring an election management component to be a part of this system. I expect ELVIS to be used to conduct the 2006 elections. It initially will

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not include all the bells and whistles, but will once full implementation takes place prior to the August primary election.

I am convinced the new ELVIS system will be one of the finest voter registration and election management systems in the country. Many states will look to Kansas as they continue to implement the requirements of HAVA. Thank you for your patience and your commitment to making this a successful project.

Sincerely,

RON THORNBURGH
Secretary of State

Testing ELVIS

User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

You may be wondering what exactly is User Acceptance Testing? User Acceptance Testing (UAT) is used to verify that a technology solution, such as ELVIS, is functioning properly, and meets the requirements of the customer.

Beginning the week of August 15, pilot counties and state users will begin testing ELVIS. The UAT plan will outline very specific testing that the users will perform. Testing will include basic functions, such as signing on the system, navigating the system, searching records, clicking drop-down menus to ensure every component works properly and other basic tasks.

The testing will get increasingly more stringent and detailed. Users will begin testing functions, such as adding records, deleting records, run-

ning and deleting reports, setting up and managing elections, mass printing of poll books to test how system performs with multiple counties printing at the same time and other complex tasks.

During testing, any anomalies will be tracked and reported back to Elections Systems & Software in order to devise a plan of action to address each issue. ES&S will then make necessary programming or other changes to correct the issue and testing will again be performed to verify that the changes were effective.

Testing will be held in Topeka the week of August 8 at the InfiniTec facility. Two additional weeks of testing will occur the weeks of August 22 and 29 and will be performed from pilot county and state offices. Testing the system is another critical task being done to ensure the success of the ELVIS project.

Featured staff:

Mary Hill

If you are looking for someone who knows a little something about ELVIS, that person is Mary Hill. Mary started in the Secretary of State's office in April 2004. She serves as the project manager for ELVIS. She wishes all of you could have a chance to be the project manager, if even for a day. Mary works with everyone on the project from both the business side and the technical side. She finds new challenges every day and believes if she has the right attitude that she will always have choices and opportunities to learn something. Because the project moves so fast she gets the opportunity to accomplish something every day. Mary also gets the opportunity to see the state's, the counties', and the vendor's accomplishments and watch us all move forward together.

Her advice to the counties regarding the ELVIS project is to ask questions, and lots of them. She suggests counties ask us or ask the pilot counties, but if there is a question, ask someone. She says we will all learn something from your questions.

Mary has a bachelor's degree in computer science and computer information systems. She has worked in both the private and public sector as an information technology director and information technology project manager for more than 12 years. Mary recently applied to the University of Kansas to begin a master's in business administration program in the spring of 2006.

When Mary is not at work she likes to fish, read, visit with girlfriends, and play poker. She also enjoys listening to her oldest son talk about how much he loves college and her youngest son talk about everything.

Mary was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, and moved to Kansas in 1984.

Q. Will a PC, printer, bar code reader and scanner that is not listed on the list recommended by ES&S work with ELVIS?

A. ES&S provided a list of “recommended” hardware, which includes tested equipment that will work with ELVIS, and that they will support. You may use other hardware not listed, but the only way to ensure it will work is to connect it to the system and test it. If you learn it doesn’t work, you may need to purchase equipment based on recommendations.

Q. Can I attend part of the training and not all five days?

A. It is necessary for at least one person from your office to attend the entire training session. If you have staff that would like to attend only a few days of the training, you may do that; the only requirement is that they must start on Monday and attend each day until they have completed the desired sessions. Each training topic will build on previous topics, so it is important that they attend consecutive sessions.

UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS 2005

December 11 - 14 Midwest Election Officials Conference in Overland Park