

Blue Suede News

Update on Election Voter Information System July 2005

Counties converting to ELVIS

By now you should be aware of the conversion efforts happening in the pilot counties, as well as what is happening in the next round of counties. In past articles, the conversion kickoff meeting and some of the anticipated conversion efforts have been highlighted. Data conversion is typically one of the highest areas of risk when implementing an information technology project. These risks are heightened with this project because there are so many disparate data sources across the state being brought together. These data sources are used for different processes, have different meanings and have specialized functionality that must be consolidated and standardized.

The first eight pilot counties have gone through the data conversion process and have had good experiences. "Our feeling is that the conversion review went very well. We are excited about the process. We were concerned prior to the meeting with the amount of cleanup work that may be required. In actuality, I think it is less than we anticipated," Diane Burnett, Johnson County election manager, said.

As with any data conversion, there are issues that need to be corrected. These corrections are then used as a learning experience for future county conversions. For example, Saline County needed a township modification that was done by Elec-

tion Systems and Software (ES&S) and then used for the next county that went through the process. Once the change was made, ES&S went back into the system and corrected Saline County's data.

"The process of converting our voter database has moved along very efficiently and smoothly. When we first got a look at the converted data I was very impressed with the results. The duplicate check screen will be a great time saver when we all get online. I noticed that township names did not show up on the screens and we mentioned it during a conference call. The ES&S staff took the information and made sure the question was answered quickly. It appears that ES&S is dedicated to doing this right," Don Merriman, Saline County clerk, said.

It is clear that ES&S staff have been diligent to define the county data and to understand its purpose and use. The conversion team has been professional and has communicated well with each county going through the process to ensure the success of not only the pilot conversions but to set the standard for all future county conversion efforts.

"The conversion team has done a great job. We have spoken with them throughout the week and they are very knowledgeable on the data and asked the right questions to make our part easy," Diane Burnett, said.

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It's now or never

Conversion process in full swing

The ELVIS team is working on conversion activities. A preliminary schedule is in the process of being finalized. The first pilot group of eight counties are scheduled to be converted to the new ELVIS system in August! In September, the second pilot group will be converted and conversion will begin in groups for the remaining 90 counties. Each county will receive training approximately one to three weeks before implementation. Detailed training communications will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

Election Systems & Software (ES&S) will convert all the election data it can to the new ELVIS application and attempt to leave no data behind. If any counties store images or signatures, this information will be converted as well if it is provided in a non-proprietary format known as a .TIFF file.

Each of the 15 pilot counties has provided full extracts of the data from their current systems for ES&S analysis, including samples of images and signatures. ES&S has fully analyzed and reviewed the data from the first eight counties and found only minor cleanup needs from the counties for address, zip code, birth date, gender and precinct data. The pilot counties are going through two extract processes to streamline the process for the remaining counties, which will need to submit only a single file extract.

The pilot county conversions are providing ES&S with a template to use in converting all other counties with a similar system. This reusability of the conversion template for counties with like systems is what will allow us to achieve conversion and HAVA compliance by January 1, 2006.

All counties or their vendors will provide a final data extract and ES&S will import

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the data into the ELVIS application and generate reports for review with each county. ES&S will schedule a WebEx teleconference review with each county to discuss the results of the conversion.

For those of you not able to attend the WebEx product overview sessions in April, to access a WebEx conference, you log onto a session by using your Web browser to connect you to your WebEx conference. At the same time, you will call a teleconference number. This tool allows ES&S to launch a test version of the ELVIS application and demonstrate the application or,

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in this case, review the results of the data conversion with you interactively.

During the WebEx session ES&S will review how and where the data was converted in the application. ES&S also will review what areas of cleanup are needed. This cleanup will happen in the new ELVIS application after implementation.

Watch for another article in the near future for more details on cleanup you can do in your county prior to conversion!



What is PKI?

Just when you thought there were no more HAVA ELVIS CVR/EMS project acronyms, here is another - PKI. In 2002, the state of Kansas contracted with VeriSign Corporation to provide Public Key Infrastructure (PKI). PKI provides an important security layer to the ELVIS infrastructure by providing users a digital certificate private "key" that uniquely identifies a user to the ELVIS system. Each user will be issued a key fob device or "token" that will store the digital certificate private key. You cannot enter the ELVIS system without your key fob/certificate. How do you get your ELVIS PKI certificates and key fobs? The Secretary of State will be mailing each CEO an agreement that outlines the responsibilities of "vetting" (verifying each user's identity) and attestation to such and providing the SOS each county's list of users. Information also will be provided on the key fobs and process to download the certificate into the fob. Watch your mailbox (the electronic one) for more information soon.

Featured staff:

Bryan Caskey

If you are looking for an expert in elections, look no further than Bryan Caskey. He started with the Secretary of State's office as an intern in 1990 and has served in his current position as administrative assistant since January 1998. As an administrative assistant, he assists in administering elections by working with candidates, parties, the public and, most importantly, the county election officers.

Bryan graduated from Baker University in 1994 with a degree in political science. He has used his degree to organize elections and now uses it to focus on ELVIS. His official role in the ELVIS project is subject matter expert. Bryan assists the county coordination efforts and works with the functionality and usability of the new system.

His advice to the counties regarding the ELVIS project is simple: "Converting an entire state to one centralized system is a daunting task. Everyone has been extremely helpful thus far, and my advice is to keep up the good work and communication with us and the vendor at every step along the way. Having the knowledge of the steps that are taking place and what the next steps are is vital to the success of the project."

Bryan says despite the challenges and stress that come from his job, he values the relationships and friends he has developed over the years, both in the Secretary of State's office and in each of the county offices.

When Bryan is not at work, he enjoys playing softball, biking, swimming and traveling. He enjoys watching KU sports, the Kansas City Royals and the Kansas City Chiefs. He also likes movies and reading good books.

Bryan was born in Norfolk, Virginia, but grew up in Holton, Kansas, with his mom, dad and sister. He currently lives in Topeka. Bryan's motto for life: "I am a firm believer in finding things that you love to do, and doing them as often as you can."

Q. What is KANWIN?

A. KANWIN (KANsas Wide area Information Network) is a statewide data communications network supporting state and local governments. KANWIN is managed by the Division of Information Systems and Communications (DISC). The infrastructure of KANWIN is composed of a combination of state-owned and commer-

cial copper wire and fiber optic communication lines. The ELVIS project requires that all data be securely transmitted between county election offices and the Topeka data center over the KANWIN network. Currently, not all counties have a KANWIN presence in their network, or bandwidth is too limited for successful ELVIS implementation. The Secretary of State's office is working with DISC to remedy these issues with upcoming infrastructure upgrades.

UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS 2005

July 18 - 22	County user acceptance testing training
July 25 - 29	User acceptance testing
December 11 - 14	Midwest Election Officials Conference in Overland Park