

**MARIN COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS  
ELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Marin County Registrar of Voters formed the Election Advisory Committee in July 2006. Its purpose is to provide advice and recommendations to the Registrar of Voters on voter participation and election integrity issues in Marin County. The Advisory Committee advocates for all voters, and provides a link between the voting public and the Registrar of Voters. The Committee advises the Registrar of Voters to ensure that every voter has the opportunity to vote knowledgeably, safely and effectively.

This Annual Report includes Committee recommendations and actions taken by the Elections Department from January 1, 2014-December 31, 2014. The period covered in this report includes the following elections in 2014: April 8 Special Election, May 6 Special Vote-by-Mail Election, June 3 Statewide Primary Election, and November 4 General Election.

The Registrar of Voters thanks the Election Advisory Committee members for their dedication to improving the election process in Marin County and for its valuable feedback to the Elections Office in 2014. Through its recommendations and feedback, the Election Advisory Committee has enhanced the election process for the benefit of all voters in Marin County.

The public is welcome to attend Advisory Committee meetings which take place on the third Friday of most months from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in Room 324A of the Marin Civic Center in San Rafael. In January, the Elections Department posts the Committee's annual meeting schedule on its website at [www.marinvotes.org](http://www.marinvotes.org). A membership application is also on the website. For more information about the Election Advisory Committee, contact Lynda Roberts, Registrar of Voters, by calling 415-473-6401, or emailing [lroberts@marincounty.org](mailto:lroberts@marincounty.org).

**MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee met in January, February, March, April, July, August, September, and December. The annual schedule and meeting minutes are posted on the Elections Department website ([www.marinvotes.org](http://www.marinvotes.org)).

Members who attended the meetings in 2014:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Area of County</b>
Esther Beirne	San Rafael
Greg Brockbank	San Rafael
Ericka Omena Erickson	Novato
Veda Florez	Novato
Barbara Gaman	Inverness

Bonnie Glaser	Mill Valley & Corte Madera
Marcia Hagen	Fairfax
Ora Hatheway	Mill Valley
Morgan Kelley	San Rafael
Mark Kyle	San Rafael
Anne Layzer	Mill Valley
Jeanne Leoncini	San Rafael
Sean Peisert	San Rafael
Robert Richard	Larkspur
Maddy Ruvolo	San Rafael
Steve Silberstein	Belvedere
Cat Woods	Novato

Members of the Election Advisory Committee come from different cities and towns in Marin County and belong to different political parties. They have diverse backgrounds in business, politics, academics, labor, law, government and non-profit organizations, and possess different points of view about elections issues. They share an interest in transparent, fair, and honest elections and in making sure that all voters have the opportunity to register and vote.

Two new members joined the committee in 2014. Ora Hatheway, whose interest is in voter outreach services to low income and non-English speaking residents, joined the Committee beginning with the March meeting. Maddy Ruvolo, who works for Marin Center for Independent Living and is interested in voter outreach and education for people with disabilities, joined the Committee beginning with the December meeting. The Marin Center for Independent Living is located in San Rafael, but services are available to people living throughout the county.

### **CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP**

The Registrar of Voters, Elaine Ginnold, retired in July of 2014, and Lynda Roberts was appointed as her successor. Prior to coming to Marin County, Ms. Roberts worked in Mono County, California, for seven years as the Clerk-Recorder, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, and Registrar of Voters. She previously worked in the development office for a college prep school in Hawaii; worked in the Political Science Department at the University of Utah, where she earned a Master of Public Administration degree; and started her career in public service working for Salt Lake City municipal government, first in the personnel department and then as assistant city clerk, which is where she obtained her first experience managing elections.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The proposed goals for 2014 addressed 1) voter outreach and education; 2) poll worker recruitment and training; 3) communication; and 4) election integrity and voter confidence. The following outline summarizes the **Goals Accomplished**, **Goals in Progress**, and **Goals Waiting for Action**. Details about each goal are provided on pages 5-12.

## **Goals Accomplished**

### Goal 1: Voter outreach and education

- Ballot drop-off box at the Civic Center for June and November elections
- Six-day event promoting National Voter Registration Day
- Outreach to residential care facilities
- Outreach to colleges and high school government classes
- Announced results of Survey of Voters with Disabilities
- Participated at Accessibility Forum
- Outreach to limited-English voters
- Saturday office hours prior to the election
- Provided voter registration and education services in the Canal District, Marin City, and Novato
- Over 1,500 voter registration forms distributed throughout the County by League of Women Voters
- Smart Voter link added to department website
- Provided registration and voting information to residents of public housing
- Educated voters about their option to vote by mail

### Goal 2: Poll worker recruitment and training

- Focused efforts in West Marin to increase number of poll workers and provide training locally
- Increased number of poll workers by promoting clerks to deputies, and hiring new applicants as clerks
- Increased poll worker stipend
- Provided forms to poll workers on Election Day to give Elections Office feedback regarding supplies or polling place problems

### Goal 3: Communication

- Revised voter information materials to provide better clarity
- Invited Disability Rights California to train staff members and rovers
- Mobile website allowed voters to access election information using their Smart Phone
- Redesigned website to offer more voter self-service options

### Goal 4: Election integrity and voter confidence

- Started process to identify features of a new voting system
- Guest speakers presented information about aspects of voting systems
- Registrar and staff members attended a demonstration of a new voting system
- New vote-by-mail sorting/signature verification machine was installed for November election

## **Goals in Progress**

### Goal 1: Voter outreach and education

- Report describing the socio-demographic profile of Marin non-registered voters

### Goal 2: Poll worker recruitment and training

- Ongoing recruitment efforts: mail postcards to voters in targeted neighborhoods; publish recruitment notice in County FYI newsletter to recruit county employees; post sign-up sheets at the elections office and each polling place to recruit voters from within the community; publish notice in Voter Information Pamphlet; in-person request to students at Tomales High School
- Upgrade cell phones used by poll workers and rovers
- Include training at poll worker classes to increase awareness when assisting voters with disabilities

### Goal 3: Communication

- Website improvements providing access to voter information under a one-stop dashboard, including access to map with polling place look-up feature

### Goal 4: Election integrity and voter confidence

- Review ballot counting at polling places vs. ballot counting at central location
- Continued development of voting system features list and creation of RFP

## **Goals Waiting for Action**

### Goal 1: Voter outreach and education

- Consider developing a survey for residents of public housing to assess their understanding of the mechanics of registering and voting

### Goal 2: Poll worker recruitment and training

- For Election Day troubleshooters, consider upgrading to Smart Phones for “hands free” communication while driving
- Distribute surveys at poll worker training classes to solicit feedback about making improvements
- Set up call bells at every poll site that may be difficult for voters with physical disabilities
- As laws or polling place procedures change, revise poll worker training manuals using plain language so that instructions are clear and concise

### Goal 3: Communication

- Ability for voters to opt-out of receiving a printed sample ballot booklet

### Goal 4: Election integrity and voter confidence

- Purchase of new voting system

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES REPORT FOR 2014

The Committee recommended keeping the same goals from 2013, and suggested additional objectives for 2014.

- **Goal 1: Voter outreach and education**
  - Additional objectives: Educate voters about their option to vote by mail; inform voters that they can track their ballots to make sure the Elections Office has received them.
- **Goal 2: Poll worker recruitment and training**
  - Additional objective: Develop effective methods for recruiting poll workers.
- **Goal 3: Communication**
- **Goal 4: Election integrity and voter confidence**

In addition to the specific objectives listed in the tables on pages 8-12, the Elections Department took the following actions to promote outreach, education, and communication.

## **Voter Outreach and Education**

- Ballot drop-off box at Civic Center  
In 2013, the Civic Center Conservancy Commission approved the Department's request to put a mail ballot drop box outside of the Civic Center. This service will continue, and the box will be at the main entrance to the Civic Center 7 days before every major election.
- Ballot drop-off locations for the May 6, 2014, Special Vote-by-Mail Election  
The election was held for the Novato Unified and the Reed Union school districts. The Elections office provided two Election Day ballot drop-off locations: One in Tiburon Town Hall for the Reed Union School district; one at the United Methodist Church in Novato.

Drop-off locations are not required in mail-only elections, so this practice will be re-evaluated for future mail-only elections since voters in the May election were confused. They expected the drop-off site to be like a polling place where they could obtain a replacement ballot and vote on site.

- National Voter Registration Day  
Veda Florez organized a six-day event to promote National Voter Registration Day and encourage voter registration. Tables were set up at 13 locations throughout the County from September 20-25, and nearly 100 people registered to vote. These

locations included Health and Human Services in Lucas Valley, Wellness Campus in San Rafael, Center for Independent Living, Dominican University, Novato Lucky Store, Marin Mart Market in Larkspur, Safeway at Corte Madera, Novato Farmers' Market, San Rafael Farmers' Market, Marin City Mall, Canal Welcome Center Sunday Market, Mi Pueblo Market in San Rafael, and Novato Health Center.

Ms. Florez partnered with the Young Democrats, Latino Environmental Forum-Latino Marin, League of Women Voters of Marin County, the Center for Independent Living, and Dominican University. The Elections Department provided tables, chairs, decorations, brochures and supplies. The Registrar of Voters put out a news release on August 22 (*Marin Prepares for National Voter Registration Day*), and again on September 18 (*Get Ready to Vote!*). Ericka Erickson, with Marin Grassroots in 2014, added a social link to [rockthevote.org](http://rockthevote.org).

The Registrar and the Registration Coordinator visited four sites on September 23: Health and Human Services in Lucas Valley, Center for Independent Living, Dominican University and the Wellness Campus in San Rafael. Prior to National Voter Registration Day, several postings were made on the Department's Facebook page to advertise the event.

- Residential Care Facilities

Continuing the effort started in 2013, the Registration Coordinator mailed letters in August of 2014 to the activity directors of residential care facilities. The letter notified them about the November 4, 2014, election and offered voter registration services to eligible persons in the facility. Between September 15 and November 3, the Registrar and Registration Coordinator were invited to visit four residential care facilities and assist with voter registration.

- Survey of Voters with Disabilities

Professor Elizabeth Bergman conducted a survey of voters with disabilities and produced a report in December 2013. In March 2014, the Registrar put out a news release announcing the results of the survey.

- Accessibility Forum

In September, the Registrar participated in a forum to raise awareness about voting options for people with disabilities. The presentation included a demonstration of the accessible voting equipment and curbside voting call bell.

- Spanish-language Voters

For both the June and November elections, the Registrar mailed voting guides and facsimile ballots to voters who requested materials in Spanish.

- Extended Office Hours

In an effort to provide additional convenience to voters, the Registrar's office was open for four hours on the Saturday prior to the Election. A press release provided information about the extended hours.

## **Communication**

- Written Materials

The Election Advisory Committee reviewed many pages of the sample ballot booklets for both the June and November elections, and provided suggestions to clarify the language. Their review included instructions for vote-by-mail voters, the vote-by-mail application, language in the Top Two Primary information page, and the notice to promote advantages of working at the polls. They also reviewed and gave feedback about draft press releases.

- Voters with Disabilities

The Registrar invited representatives from Disability Rights California to give a presentation at the training for department staff members and Election Day rovers.

**The tables on the following pages list Objectives, Action, and Outcome for each of the four goals.**

**Goal I: Voter Outreach and Education.** Maintain Marin County’s current high level of voter participation. The survey of Marin County nonvoters, conducted by Professor Elizabeth Bergman after the 2012 Primary election, found that low income, youth and minority voters in Marin County expressed a lack of understanding of the mechanics of voting (when elections take place, where to vote, how to mark a ballot, how to find out about candidates). Focus in 2014 was on using effective methods to educate young, low income and minority language voters on the mechanics of voting.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>Partner with nonprofit organizations, such as Marin Grassroots, to provide voter education to target populations including youth, homeless, minority language and low-income voters.</p>	<p>Contracted with Marin Grassroots to provide voter outreach and education.</p> <p>Contracted with Marin League of Women Voters to distribute voter registration forms.</p> <p>Arranged with Smart Voter to provide polling place and sample ballot look-up on Elections website.</p>	<p>Marin Grassroots provided voter registration and education services targeting low-income voters and potential voters in primarily three neighborhoods—Canal District of San Rafael, Marin City, and Novato. Services included promotion of information through social media, distribution of materials to local non-profits, and hosting information booths at community events.</p> <p>Between January and June 2014, the League of Women Voters distributed 785 voter registration forms to 12 different locations throughout the County. Between July and December 2014, they distributed another 785 forms to locations throughout the County. In addition to various cities and towns, locations included the REST program for the homeless, and various retirement communities.</p> <p>Smart Voter helps voters find their polling places and become familiar with the contests and candidates on their ballots.</p>
<p>Reach out to high school students through their government teachers. Provide voter registration information and offer training on the mechanics of registering and voting. Include Marin Community College and Dominican University in outreach efforts.</p>	<p>Mailed voter registration forms and a flyer listing the state races and propositions and local races and measures that were on the November ballot, to the government teachers in 26 high schools and 4 community colleges. The cover letter encouraged teachers to have their students register to vote and offered a visit from the Elections Department</p>	<p>Prior to the June 3<sup>rd</sup> election, the Registrar of Voters visited Tomales High School civics class to present information about the mechanics of registering and voting. Prior to the November 4<sup>th</sup> election, the Registrar visited Tomales High School civics class and gave a presentation about voting. The Registration Coordinator gave a hands-on demonstration about completing the voter registration form.</p>

	to talk about voting.	
Study the demographics of eligible but non-registered residents of Marin to learn about who they are and where they live in order to target outreach programs to them. Mail registration forms to them.	The Registrar obtained information from Political Data company who provided data about Marin voting-aged citizens who are not registered to vote.	The Registrar retained Dr. Elizabeth Bergman to analyze the data and write a report describing the socio-demographic profile of Marin non-registrants. Requested variables include age, gender, race/ethnicity, address, party/ideology, income and education. The report is expected to be completed by June of 2015.
Provide registration and voting information to residents of public housing. Consider developing a survey to assess their understanding of the mechanics of registering and voting.	Committee Member Ora Hatheway took voter registration cards and pamphlets (in different languages) to St. Vincent DePaul, Ritter House, and several senior housing complexes.	Three people registered to vote, and three people signed up to work as poll workers. A Marin City resident worked at a polling place in San Rafael with Ms. Hatheway, which resulted in a positive experience for both the poll worker and voters.
Educate voters about their option to vote by mail. Inform voters that they can track their ballots to make sure the Elections Office has received them.	Included information in sample ballot booklets and on the website.	Sample ballot booklets for both the June and November elections included a page titled <i>Voting by Mail</i> . References to voting by mail were also found on the front cover, and on the pages titled <i>Common Voter Questions</i> and <i>Voters with Access or Language Needs</i> . In addition, the back cover included an application for a mail ballot. A link to information and a featured video about voting by mail are found on the home page of the Elections Department website. The website also includes an online application. As part of the normal registration procedure, department staff sends newly-registered voters an application to become a permanent vote-by-mail voter if they have not selected this option.

**Goal 2: Poll worker recruiting and training:**

Implement poll worker recruiting methods that maintain current high level of poll worker participation. Continually update and review poll worker training methods and materials.

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<p>Identify/develop effective methods for recruiting new poll workers.</p>	<p>Mailed cards to all households in West Marin to inform voters of the need for poll workers; put out a news release on March 31. A news release was put out on May 13 calling for poll workers for the June Primary.</p> <p>Held a pilot poll worker training class at the Dance Palace in Pt. Reyes Station for the June Primary so West Marin poll workers did not have to travel to San Rafael.</p> <p>For the June election, promoted clerks to deputies and hired people who had not been selected before but had previously expressed an interest.</p> <p>Prior to the November election, increased the poll worker stipend by \$25 so the new rates became \$175-\$250 for Chief Inspector; \$150 for Deputy Inspector; \$125 for Clerk.</p>	<p>Received one response from the mailing, and one response from an article published in the Pt. Reyes Light.</p> <p>The pilot training program in West Marin received very positive feedback, and the training for the November election was also held at the same location. This will be an ongoing practice.</p> <p>By promoting clerks to deputies and backfilling from a pool of new applications, there were enough poll workers for the June election. There are now approximately 100 new people who have been trained as clerks.</p> <p>A press release, Facebook post and article in the Marin IJ promoted the raise in the poll worker stipend. A notice was also published in the November sample ballot booklet announcing the need for poll workers and listing the new stipend amounts.</p>

**Goal 3: Communication**

Continue to review and update the website to improve services to the public.

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
Provide online voter information pamphlet and opt-out of paper subscription service. Enhance website by providing a map feature with the polling place look-up service.	Worked with Information Services and Technology Department to develop enhancements by offering an online voter information pamphlet with a feature to opt-out of paper, and offering a map on the polling place look-up feature.	The basic electronic structure is in place, and features will be added pending integration with DFM Election Management System software. Using existing components on the website, Phase I will be to locate all available look-up features under a one-stop dashboard. Phase II will include adding the map feature, and Phase III will complete the full opt-out feature.
Develop new ways to use email and social media to communicate with voters.	As a result of work done in 2013 with the Information Services and Technology Department, redesigned the Elections website to offer more voter self-service options.	Voters were able to apply for a mail ballot online and access their Voter Information Pamphlet online at <a href="http://www.marinvotes.org">www.marinvotes.org</a> . A mobile website allowed voters to get election information using their Smart Phone, including sample ballot and polling place location. The mobile website was used in both the June and November 2014 elections. Creation of the mobile website is labor and time intensive, so Elections Department staff members are working with the IST Department to simplify the creation of the mobile website.

**Goal 4: Election Integrity and Voter Confidence:**

Identify practices that enhance the integrity of the voting process and increase voter confidence.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION	OUTCOME
<p>Identify features that are important to have in a new voting system.</p>	<p>Several voting systems are going through the Federal and State certification process. The Election Advisory Committee began to identify desired features of a new voting system at their January, February, April and July meetings. Some members provided feedback via email and through a written survey. Part of the discussion included the idea of counting ballots at a central location (i.e. the Elections Office), rather than having a counting machine at each polling place.</p> <p>Committee Member Sean Peisert and a research team will be looking at processes involved in counting ballots at polling places vs. counting ballots at a central location, and will compare Marin and Yolo Counties.</p>	<p>Steve Chessin, President of Californians for Electoral Reform, gave a presentation on proportional voting at the January meeting. Mr. Chessin recommended that the RFP for a new voting system include the capacity to count ballots used with alternative voting options.</p> <p>Registrar and staff members saw a demonstration of the Dominion Voting System in Alameda County on February 13. The ballot layout and central count system looked promising, but the precinct scanner is large and bulky. This system is being reviewed for certification by the Secretary of State's office.</p> <p>At the September meeting, Brent Turner, Secretary of California Association of Voting Officials, gave a presentation about open software systems using off-the-shelf technology.</p> <p>In July, the retiring Registrar and newly-appointed Registrar met with Dr. Peisert's research team to provide information about election processes. At the September meeting of the Advisory Committee, Dr. Peisert gave a presentation about the research project.</p>
<p>Upgrade signature verification and sorting equipment to process Vote by Mail ballots more efficiently.</p>	<p>Elections Department purchased a new sorting machine with integrated signature verification software.</p>	<p>The equipment was installed prior to the November 4, 2014, Statewide General Election. Training took place during the first two weeks of October. With this first use of the new equipment, staff members were able to process more ballots in less time, and reduced the number of days required for processing by one day.</p>