

December 12, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee

The Disability Advisory Committee met on December 11, 2006 at the Cowlitz County Administration Building.

Attendees were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor
Sunnie Smith, Disability Resources
Geri Rister, the ARC
Judy Chamberlin, Disability Resources
Carolyn Myers, Elections Deputy
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator

Absent were:

David Lord, WA Protection and Advocacy System (provided comments)
Maurine Coon, LCOD/LCCB (provided comments)
Mike Freeman, National Federation of the Blind
Mary Putka, League of Women Voters
Karla Black, Disability Resources

The Meeting Agenda follows:

- 1- Introductions
- 2- Primary and General Elections
 - What we did
 - What we accomplished
- 3- Office of Secretary of State Actions
- 4- 2007 Election Calendar
- 5- Where do we go from here?
- 6- How can the Office of the Secretary of State help us do our job?

Primary and General Elections.

What we did for the Primary...

Prepared an AutoMARK flyer and placed it on the Cowlitz County Elections website
Sent flyer to Agencies, the Transit Authority, and County Libraries
Included AutoMARK information in voter instructions
Demonstrated the AutoMARK at the County Fair
Received AutoMARK coverage in the Daily News

What we did for the General Election...

Continued actions started for Primary
Included AutoMARK information in Voters Pamphlet
Sent flyer to pharmacies, Division of Vocational Resources, DSHS, and DDD
Sent Public Service Announcements to radio and TV stations, and newspapers
Took AutoMARK to transit center for half a day
Contacted several assisted living homes and offered to bring AutoMARK
Expanded communications with WA county auditors
Gave presentation and demonstrated the AutoMARK to ARC class
Made contact with private organizations, e.g., Independent Associates, that help people with disabilities

What we accomplished...

Cowlitz County. Primary, 1 user of AutoMARK; General Election, 4 users
Received positive feedback from all users
Based on phone calls and other information, began list of other potential users
WA State.
Reported AutoMARK usage improved for most counties. However, details showed counties used the AutoMARK for other than voters with disabilities, e.g., for replacement ballots and other purposes. The counties justified the other use as marketing.

Most counties find the biggest challenge is marketing and getting voters to use the AutoMARK the first time. Once they use it, feedback is good.

Office of the Secretary of State Actions...

David Lord, WA Protection and Advocacy System, is working with the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) on Disability Access. He provided comments on the results of a meeting he attended with OSOS and members of the disabled community on November 27, 2006.

- OSOS is taking on leadership responsibility by engaging staff and providing funds.
- \$1.7M of remaining HAVA funds have been earmarked for improving accessibility of elections for people with disabilities.
- Two members from the disability community will be granted membership on the HAVA Grant Advisory Board (identifying members now).
- In past, OSOS focus has been on encouraging counties to establish Disability Advisory Committees and plans. Future focus will be to help create an effective outreach program.
- OSOS Elections Divisions annual work plans will include strategies and initiatives for making elections more accessible in the context of each program, e.g., training, outreach, policy, legislation, etc. Plans will be discussed/finalized in February 2007.
- OSOS plans to expand grant program to include hardware and outreach programs.
- At the meeting, Russell Kasselmann, OSOS Voter Outreach Coordinator, indicated he planned to prepare model outreach announcements/outreach materials that can be modified by each county.

David mentioned that some counties were working closely together, e.g., Chelan and Douglas. Each county has its own plan, but they have common people on both committees. The two counties took that approach to get more ideas and participation.

2007 Election Calendar...

The committee members reviewed the 2007 elections calendar. The next election dates to focus on are August 21 (Primary) and November 6 (General Election). It is important to keep these dates in mind as we market the AutoMARK.

Where do we go from here?

Maurine Coon stated that blind and disabled voters may find it difficult to keep up with candidates and election issues. They do not want to vote if they are not prepared. Maurine stated that if we help these voters become more knowledgeable of the issues, perhaps through a reading program, they would be more likely to vote. She suggested we work with AARP and the Area Agency on Aging (Mike Reardon, 577-4920). In addition, there was discussion about including audio on the website, possibly using Windows XP or Vista. Someone suggested that the programs might be available for free.

Sunnie Smith suggested that we identify central locations that are frequented by people with disabilities and place an AutoMARK at those sites. Locations discussed by the group are the Senior Center, Medical Facilities, Grocery Stores, Senior Living Homes, etc. Kris Swanson stated that we could list the locations and times the AutoMARK machines would be available in the Voter Pamphlet or Voter Instructions.

The members discussed various options for transporting the AutoMARK to individual voters with disabilities by linking to an organization with a van or vehicle. Organizations mentioned with vans or vehicles were the Library and CAP. The idea is to partner with transportation to make the AutoMARK mobile.

The members discussed mailing lists and recommended that we pursue getting a mailing list for the target audience.

How can the Office of the Secretary of State help us do our job?

Sunnie Smith mentioned that a Portland TV station had an excellent ad during the General Election to market Oregon voter access for people with disabilities. The group suggested advertising on network TV will be more powerful than advertising on local TV. This would be something beneficial to the entire state of Washington and worthy of OSOS funding.

The minutes of this meeting will be sent to all attendees and members. Please pass the minutes on to others that may have an interest.

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