RUNBECK
ELECTION SERVICES™

Applying Innovative Software

To Petition Processing

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Introduction

The Need. One of the more tedious, time-consuming and costly tasks that election officials perform is the processing of petitions. The manual processes from counting pages to scanning pages to verifying names and signatures must be completed within a strict timeframe. Cities, counties and states are confronted with this struggle before every election. Because of the serious need for a tool to improve the process and efficiency, our company initiated software development for a petition management system in 2015.

The Spark. This white paper provides an insightful overview of how a recurring challenge of election offices across the country was the catalyst to create an innovative, accurate and auditable petition management solution.

Goals

Every jurisdiction deals with its own rigid election schedule not only directly with voting, but also with petitions prior to the current election. The multiple tedious steps of verifying all elements of petitions, the hiring/training of additional staff, the handling of stacks of petition files and the accurate reporting were key tasks to improve. To become efficient, software was developed to automate the tasks which staff expends most time: a) page and row count b) sampling c) name, address, signature comparison Additionally, the software must work seamlessly with Voter Registration databases to complete comparisons and data exchange. The petition system must comply with a jurisdiction's petition framework (including Candidate, Initiative, Referendum and Recall), so customizing the software for specific needs was crucial.

To-Do List

After working in the election industry for nearly 50 years, our company has had invaluable conversations with jurisdictions nationwide and has listened to what the predominant problems are with processing petitions. Those problems led to the functionalities built into the Petition Management Software and, thus, were converted into solutions:

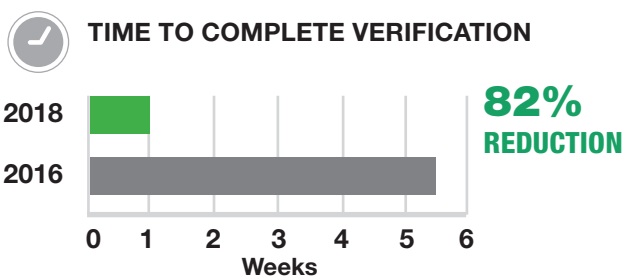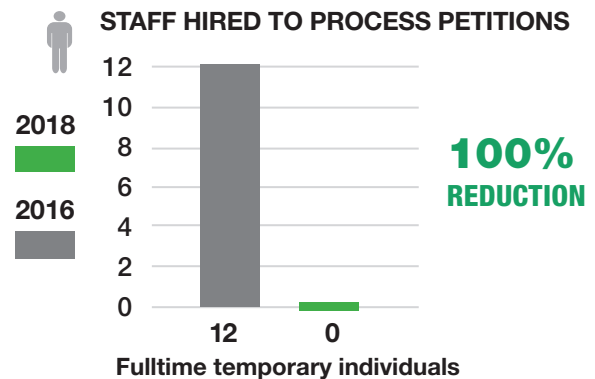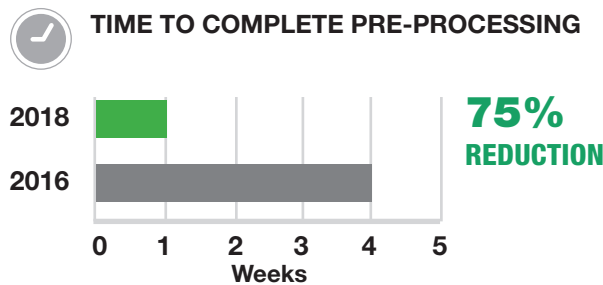| SOFTWARE FUNCTIONALITY	Reduces Time of Processing	Reduces Staff, Supplies and/or Expenses	Increases Transparency	Reduces Extra Work Space
Scanning petitions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Automated row counting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Automated name/address comparison	✓	✓	✓	✓
Automated voter matching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Duplicates signature checking	✓	✓	✓	
Voter Registration integration	✓	✓	✓	
Automated reports, receipts, notices	✓	✓	✓	✓
Custom reporting			✓	
Real time petition processing data	✓	✓	✓	
Easy workflow management	✓	✓	✓	
Reports displayed on-screen	✓			
Reports exported in various file formats	✓			
User audit history—digital chain of custody			✓	
Scanner with Indicia capabilities	✓	✓		

Proven Results

The launch of the Petition Management Software was in May 2018 for Missouri Secretary of State. Our company worked tightly with MO SOS both remote and onsite to customize the software to accomplish their goals. Being cohesive and supportive partners was a pivotal piece to the success. The goal was to create processing efficiencies and also improve transparency and reporting capabilities. Specifically issues to address included:

Issue 1 Build an efficiency to process the expected increase of petitions within the mandatory timeframe regardless of the quantity of petitions submitted.

Issue 2 Build an efficiency to reduce the need to hire and train temporary fulltime staff who would historically manually process the proposed petitions for months.

A Case Study for MO SOS was completed to measure the results of using the Petition Management Software. The results showed that resources were saved on outsourced labor, printing, supplies and postage. The largest benefit was the crucial time saved in all phases of processing.

TIME TO COMPLETE PRE-PROCESSING

2018
2016

0 1 2 3 4 5
Weeks

75% REDUCTION

STAFF HIRED TO PROCESS PETITIONS

2018
2016

12
10
8
6
4
2
0

12   0

Fulltime temporary individuals

100% REDUCTION

TIME TO COMPLETE VERIFICATION

2018
2016

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
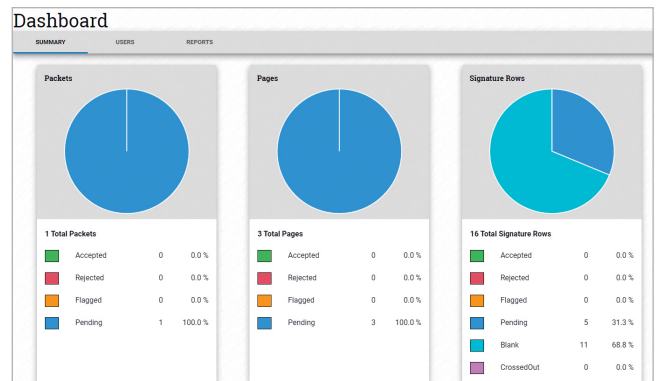Weeks

82% REDUCTION
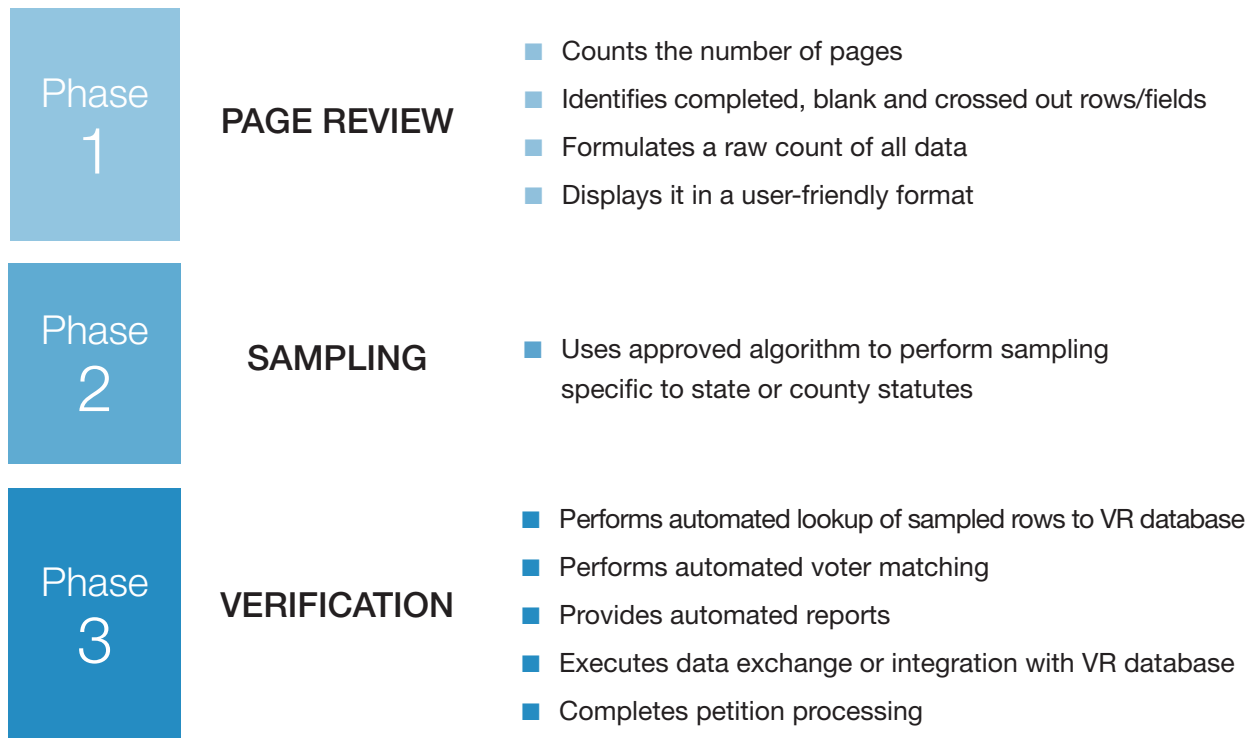
Petition Progress for Partners

Since 2018, the software's capabilities, UI/UX and functionalities have been refined. Five cities, states and the District of Columbia will be using the software. In 2019, the State of Washington implemented it into their VoteWA system. For more info, read the news article "Secretary of State: VoteWA Proves Successful": https://bit.ly/3iMtcbg. Additionally, the City of Boulder, CO, is launching our company's state-of-the-art Online Petition Management System version—a cloud-based system providing a central place to manage petitions. Voter authentication is completed by syncing with the statewide VR database, and voters can easily and securely endorse petitions online. The Online Petition Management System saves massive amount of working hours for jurisdictions while giving voters a portal to be more informed and active in the democratic process.

When a petition is created and its corresponding paperwork is scanned into the system, the software monitors, tracks and verifies it in conjunction with a VR database using the most updated information. Users review and verify pages, validate signatures and conduct sampling. As processing continues, the Petition Management Software provides analyses and display metrics on the Dashboard. Robust reporting and the ability to export petition data to the VR make this a complete solution for petition processing.

Dashboard

| SUMMARY | USERS | REPORTS |

Packets

1 Total Packets

Accepted	0	0.0 %
Rejected	0	0.0 %
Flagged	0	0.0 %
Pending	1	100.0 %

Pages

3 Total Pages

Accepted	0	0.0 %
Rejected	0	0.0 %
Flagged	0	0.0 %
Pending	3	100.0 %

Signature Rows

16 Total Signature Rows

Accepted	0	0.0 %
Rejected	0	0.0 %
Flagged	0	0.0 %
Pending	5	31.3 %
Blank	11	68.8 %
CrossedOut	0	0.0 %

After the petitions are scanned, the Petition Software process works in 3 Phases:

Phase 1

PAGE REVIEW

- Counts the number of pages
- Identifies completed, blank and crossed out rows/fields
- Formulates a raw count of all data
- Displays it in a user-friendly format

Phase 2

SAMPLING

- Uses approved algorithm to perform sampling specific to state or county statutes

Phase 3

VERIFICATION

- Performs automated lookup of sampled rows to VR database
- Performs automated voter matching
- Provides automated reports
- Executes data exchange or integration with VR database
- Completes petition processing

Summary

Petitions will always be an essential step in elections and within Democracy. In order to improve the efficiency and transparency of processing petitions, the elections industry needs advanced and customizable tools that have been proven to work. Vocem Petition Management Software delivers results through automated petition processing that saves jurisdictions time and resources. VR integration, custom reporting and full auditing greatly improve transparency for a trusted petitioning experience. More than ever, voters want to feel confident that their voice is being valued and protected. Vocem assists jurisdictions in accomplishing this service for voters across the nation. For more information on Vocem Petition Management Software, email **info@Runbeck.com**.