AK EPWG 11/14 Mtg Notes

Attendees

- Josie Bahnke
- Phone
  - Libby Bakalar, LAW
  - Calvin Zuelow, Office of Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins
  - Kacie Paxton, Ketchikan Borough Clerk
  - John Lindback
  - Robin Renfroe, Doyon Limited (Fairbanks)
  - Marna Sanford, Tanana Chiefs Conference
  - State Sen. Gary Stevens, Kodiak
  - James Brooks, Juneau Empire
  - Edie Grunwald, Candidate for Lt. Gov. (R)
- In Person
  - Evan Anderson, The Alaska Center
  - Jim Chaliak, DOE Language Program Coodinator
  - Jake Matilsky, Center for Secure and Modern Elections
  - Virgene Hanna, ISER
  - Indra Arriaga, DOE Language Compliance
  - Sharee Nole, Dominion Voting Systems
  - Dana LaTour, Dominion Voting Systems & fmr. DOE Deputy Director
  - Shelly Growden, Ret. DOE
  - Cindy Allred, ANCSA Regional Association & Get Out the Native Vote
  - Joelle Hall, AFL-CIO
  - Shane Hamlin, ERIC
  - Jacob Kipp, CEIR
  - David Becker, CEIR
  - Lori Strickler, City of Bethel Clerk
  - Beverly Christie, USPS
  - Tito Tungul, USPS
  - Roy Mitchell, Div. of Reg. & Community Affairs
  - Julie Husmann, DOE
  - Laurie Wilson, Region 1 Elections Office
  - Jeremy Johnson, DOE Fairbanks
  - Carol Thompson, DOE
  - Claire Richardson, Lt. Gov. Chief of Staff
  - Kristie Smithers, AK Association of Municipal Clerks
  - Debra Marlar, AK Association of Municipal Clerks & Kodiak City Clerk
  - Barbara Jones, MOA Clerk
  - Johni Blankenship, Kenai Peninsula Borough Clerk

- ○ Natalie Landreth, NARF

Welcome

PFD Update
- PFD Auto Voter Registration
- Top priority
- Passed in Nov. 2016
- Two directions tackled: technical and communications
- Check 2017 Fiscal & Policy Challenges Report for specifics
- Oct. 31 - first round of mailers sent out (for opt out)
  - ○ 25, 789 Alaskans received opt out
  - ○ 50,395 change of address mailers sent out
- Only covers PFD applications from 3/1-3/31 (law went into effect 3/1)
  - ○ 158,000 Alaskans applied in this timeframe
  - ○ ~66% received mailer
- Mailer recipients have 30 days to contact DOE or send back opt out mailer
- ~$500k in first year (cost contained; original est. was ~$900k)
- Laurie (Region 1 Elections)
  - ○ Mailer informs that PFD app info will be used to update registration or register unless voter informs of desire to opt out
  - ○ Undeliverable addresses still added to voter register, but not mailed voter reg card
  - ○ No party affiliation on PFD app; auto reg as UNDECLARED
  - ○ Not included:
    - ◆ individuals who don't meet qualification criteria (minors, non-citizens, moral turpitude felonies)
- Challenges
  - ○ costs (implementation)
  - ○ data not matching well (~20,000 will need to be manually updated/ processed)
    - ◆ DOE system inadequate and info voters are providing on PFD app is not always good
    - ◆ Shelly
      - ◆ want DOE system to automatically update records upon import
      - ◆ PFD app allows free-form data entry for address (not, e.g., split into street number, name, etc.)
      - ◆ DOE has specific/limited address library (composed of registered voters)
      - ◆ Full PFD app period would yield ~500,000 new records
        - ◆ based on ~20k kicked out for ~75k mailers, approx. 130,000 kicked out in normal year(would need to be manually processed)

- ◆ Reason for data being kicked out
  - ◆ city name spelled wrong (every address is tied to city in DOE system)
  - ◆ street name wrong
  - ◆ street type omitted or wrong
  - ◆ apartment number omitted
  - ◆ DOE only supports 1 middle name; PFD allows any number of names
- ◆ Problem: bad/incomplete PFD data may replace acceptable DOE data
  - ◆ PFD data is being DIRECTLY IMPORTED into DOE
- ◆ Shane - ERIC can help with this problem
- ◆ John Lindback - ERIC helped Oregon with same issue exporting DMV data to Oregon elections database
- ◆ Barbara Jones
  - ◆ Why direct data import?
  - ◆ Why no CASS address standardization?
  - ◆ No statutory requirement for direct import of data?
- ◆ Answer from Shelly
  - ◆ No GIS system, just have DOE address library (only registered voters)
  - ◆ Possible that there is no direct import requirement

Cyber Security
- ● National View (David)
  - ○ Intel Community: consensus that Russia attempted to interfere in US elections (incl. attempt to gain access to election systems, particularly registration databases)
  - ○ Many states' "doorknobs rattled" (bad actors attempted to access election systems in a very basic way; looking for systems with minimal security)
    - ◆ Only incident where registration data was accessed was in Illinois
  - ○ Likely Russian goal? Undermine elections/sow distrust (rather than seeking specific election outcome)
  - ○ 2016 Election was highly investigated - high degree of confidence that votes were count as cast
  - ○ Facts to realize
    - ◆ The threat is real - bad actors are seeking to interfere with our elections, need to be prepared
    - ◆ Fed. & States are talking more than ever - DHS critical infrastructure has given way to greater info sharing
    - ◆ States are auditing their own systems for vulnerabilities
  - ○ Consider two factors for security:

- keeping threats out (building virtual wall)
- mitigating risk if bad actor gains access (e.g., maintaining voter registration database backups)
  - Primary reason states aren't moving faster on security issues? Funding
  - Important to inform voters that voting systems not online?
    - Yes, important to educate voters about what you're doing
    - Also, be proactive about informing voters before they ask - not enough to tell people we're doing the job of security
  - Are states devoting more time to communicating w/ voters about security?
  - Best practices?
    - Maintain a rational media narrative: there's a real threat, but no reason to believe that vote totals were altered
    - Inform voters proactively (try to get ahead of media stories, not react to them)
    - Update security management plans
- Alaska (Josie)
  - last election cycle was a challenge
  - voting system in AK is secure, not connected to internet
  - Only two things on the internet: website and voter registration management
    - for voter reg. database, DOE has conducted cyber hygiene testing and added methods for detecting improper activity
  - FAQ about cyber security on the website
  - New OIT connection to DOE
    - focusing on continuity of operations plan (how communicate between OIT, Gov., and DOE)
  - Election security study is also on website
    - includes detailed chain of custody
  - David: election security is always changing; no one is ever completely secure

Denver Trip/Alt. Ballot Delivery Options
- See EPWG Fact-Finding Denver Colorado (much of what was discussed here is in the handout)
- Current system life is ending (next 2-4 years)
- Potential options
  - suggested hybrid system: by-mail ballots and vote centers
- Met w/ Denver County & CO state
- *Discusses CO transition to modern system of vote by mail w/ vote centers*
- *Discussing all the neat things that CO has money to pay for* (e.g., Ballot Trace app, automatic signature verification system, envelope rapid extraction machine, significant social media presence, auto responder for election day

questions)
- Questions
  - Risk Assessment question (risk limiting audits)
    - ◆ compares limited sample of ballot images to ensure accuracy of counts (algorithm determines size of sample)
  - David: people like receiving ballot in mail but returning in person (Denver really thought about this)
  - Some concern about bipartisan election judges (keep public processes public, nonpartisan)

Legal Update
- 4 ballot measure applications, 3 certified, 1 not certified (measure not certified was subsequently challenged)
- Alaska Dem. Party challenge law that anyone who runs in party primary must be a party member (challenged on basis that violates 1st Am. association)
- Circulation of Initiative Petitions (9th Cir. - not constitutional for AK citizen petition circulator requirement)

Language Summit
- 3/19-20, day 1 informative, day 2 hands-on training
- Bring together stakeholders to talk about language accessibility
- What does Alaska do next?
  - If it doesn't work for rural Alaska, it doesn't work at all
  - ISER research will ensure that new options work for rural
- ISER research challenges
  - survey questions
    - ◆ looking at universal delivery methods and how they would be accepted
    - ◆ looking at registered voters, ask how they feel, what they see as challenges, etc.
  - cost
    - ◆ geographic selection factors into this
    - ◆ looking for resources
- Virgene Hanna, ISER:
  - looking for representative sample of rural voters (thus not using focus groups)
  - providing realistic information about options/scenarios that the state may be looking at
    - ◆ Another person cautioned about making it sound too much like the state is definitively heading in a certain direction so that rural voters don't feel pressured to say they *don't* like the current way of doing things (which they may actually like)
  - there will be a review committee for questions

ERIC Update (Shane Hamlin)
- quick ERIC background info
- since 2012, identified:
    - 7.6 million records in need of updating
    - 30 million eligible but not registered
        - 5.7 million of these individuals now active voters
- AK joined in 2016
    - sent eligible but not registered mailing last year
    - Now
        - working w/ DOE to prep list maintenance mailings (~94,000 updates, mostly in-state & out-of-state movers)
            - working to validate data before further action
- Other states on horizon
    - Florida (very close, legislation pending)
        - would likely lock down many more Atlantic seaboard states
    - Also in talks: Arizona, Missouri, Vermont, Iowa
    - Before June 30, 2018, likely have between 2-4 new member states

Maintaining Momentum into 2018
- David: Draft report 6 pages, summarizing efforts/ideas with recommendations/conclusions at the end
    - Goal: draft beginning of next year, next meeting early in Spring
- When are we going to have an opportunity to interface with municipalities to discuss with them about the way they conduct elections?
    - Specific concern: complementary (integratabtle) and non-complementary systems & how affects path forward
    - David: envisioned report as 35k foot view
        - ideal to have deep integration of state and municipal systems (including tech, processes, etc.), not necessarily in this report though
- Who is the target audience?
    - David: policymakers and major stakeholders, including municipalities
    - Question: next thing policymakers going to ask is what does my city clerk think about this & how does this relate to *my* election at the city-level
        - policymakers will not move forward until know this info
        - David: can this be part of the plan moving forward? That is, a step that includes engaging the municipal clerks to work out an implementation plan?
- The Report
    - Aspirational
    - Have a goal date
    - In interim (after Report but before goal date), create detailed plan by some mid-date

- Content
  - Main part: alternative ballot delivery
    - mail ballot delivery to everyone
    - substantial in-person voting options tailored to unique needs of communities across the state
      - NOT defining exactly what that looks like right now (that's the detailed plan portion)
- Feedback
  - incorporate before finalizing the initial, aspirational report
  - a lot of the harder questions come in the next phase, which looks at the details of how to make it happen
- Concern: clerks use state's equipment, trying to decide whether they need to set aside money to purchase equipment or will use state's equipment
  - Josie: 20 year old system that needs to be replaced; number of voters voting alt. method (like absentee, vote by mail, etc.)]
    - DOE is running 4 "different" elections at once: precinct election day, early voting absentee, absentee by mail, UOCAVA voting
  - David: if municipalities need certainly w/r/t tech direction (due to obsolete systems at state level), should there be a specific date established for when the state will decide on the tech it will acquire so that municipalities can decide whether to go the direction of Anchorage and source their own tech or continue to rely on the state?
    - Figure out how long the clerks can make the current tech work
  - Another concern: municipality assembly members are making the appropriation decision at the local level; need info to bring to them in order to get their buy in
- Josie: what direction are we going in?
  - Natalie: rural Alaskans hate vote by mail; need a place where they can pick up ballots
    - USPS told that ballots are *not* postmarked when picked up and normal mail is third in priority for delivery (after people and luggage)
    - David: vote center is, by definition, a place where you can get your ballot (not just drop box)
      - may have ballot on demand printing or pre-printed supply
      - can<u>not</u> rely on mail in rural areas
      - need flexibility for number of vote centers per geographic area (not based on population b/c giant area may not have many voters)
  - Johni Blankenship, Kenai Peninsula Borough Clerk
    - have 6 precincts that are strictly by mail
    - have some on and some off road system

- ◆ absentee voting station in each of those stations
- ◆ can vote a ballot if didn't get one; can drop off a ballot
  - ◆ David:
    - ◆ Non negotiable
      - ◆ allow obtain relevant ballot
      - ◆ staff able to process people to allow voter to get and vote ballot
    - ◆ Variable
      - ◆ number of sites
      - ◆ where located
      - ◆ hours open
    - ◆ Also
      - ◆ voters can vote at *any* vote center
- ○ How are votes counted from vote centers in, e.g., off road system locations?
  - ◆ ballots sent into DOE for signature verification (same as what happens for absentee ballots right now)
  - ◆ ballots can be sent in periodically rather than all at once
  - ◆ local counting is eliminated
- ○ Any other input from anyone that hasn't had the chance to speak
  - ◆ Rural AK
    - ◆ ISER research will be helpful
    - ◆ be aware of how they vote (e.g., death in community can shut down absentee voting centers, lose ability to early vote)
  - ◆ Addressing costs
    - ◆ may be too early to identify specific cost savings (need more data)
      - ◆ though will be very important to getting buy in
    - ◆ Develop cost measuring template
      - ◆ determine how to measure using standardized method
      - ◆ ask what factors are creating cost savings
      - ◆ likely fall on clerks/municipalities to develop this template
    - ◆ Important cost considerations
      - ◆ capital acquisition costs
      - ◆ cost of machines/tech
      - ◆ cost to train/deploy
      - ◆ cost avoidance vs cost savings
- ○ Strong preference: one, <u>unified</u> experience for voters (even if on different tech)
  - ◆ but also want single option for tech (sourced from the state)
  - ◆ streamline: appearance of ballot, voting process, etc. – stays constant even if tech changes
  - ◆ keep as seamless as possible from the perspective of the voters

- - - - options are the same for every single election over time
  - Other things to include on Report
    - Timeline for state taking action (when can municipalities expect changes)
      - i.e., timeline for goal of creating single, unified voting experience
      - this will be an aspirational timeline