



CASE STUDY: FLOYD COUNTY, INDIANA

Floyd County Constituents Vote 'Yes' to Vote Centers



ABOUT FLOYD COUNTY

Floyd County has a population of just over 75,000. The county seat is New Albany. Floyd County is part of the Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN Metropolitan Statistical Area. The county has 57,614 registered voters in 60 precincts.

“We chose RBM because of the reliability of their election equipment and e-poll books and the experience they have in running successful elections.”

– Linda Moeller
Floyd County Clerk

SITUATION

Floyd County voters will no longer have to travel to their assigned precincts to cast a ballot. Beginning with the 2014 elections, the county will have its new vote centers, which will allow county residents to vote at any location.

Earlier this year, faced with replacing old equipment to the tune of more than \$500,000, Floyd County Clerk Linda Moeller decided to explore available options for improving election efficiencies, including the opportunity of switching to vote centers. According to The Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute report, vote centers would produce significant savings for all counties that implemented them and give local election officials more flexibility to anticipate voter turnout and deploy staff more effectively. The report also finds that implementation of vote centers could significantly reduce the number of voting machines necessary to conduct an efficient election, thus further reducing the election costs to counties — both immediately and long-term. These were all very compelling reasons for moving in the direction of vote centers.

While the county liked the idea of saving money by adopting the vote center methodology, its primary responsibility was to its voters. To that end, Floyd County gauged public interest by forming a diversified study group that included voters, County Commissioners, County Council Members, poll workers, and disabled individuals. The county also held a series of public meetings to ensure people had a chance to get their opinions heard and questions answered. One of those meetings included an evening at the high school, where vendors selling e-books and vote center solutions set up for a mini “show and tell.” Everyone attending got hands-on experience with the equipment and was given a chance to provide feedback on the machines.

The Floyd County Election Board, County Commissioners and County Council approved the switch to vote centers on October 10, 2010 during an election board meeting.

SOLUTION & RESULTS

Floyd County began working with RBM during the 2012 General Election when they did the ballot layout and printing of an estimated 40,000 ballots. RBM Consulting is a leading election solutions provider, managed service provider, and trusted advisor to state, county and city election officials. As a full-service solutions provider, RBM offers tailored election solutions including voting equipment, the most experienced and dedicated staff, and a broad range of all other election services.

continued



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By cutting the number of locations where voting takes place, officials can reduce the amount of poll workers and potentially save on machine costs. It is estimated that Floyd County will save more than \$25,000.

– 2010 Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute Report

RBM has built its business to serve Elections Jurisdictions. The RBM team understands the elections process and has grown the company to provide the most efficient, cost-effective services to its customers. While RBM's reliability and election equipment were key reasons for choosing RBM, it was the company's unique partnership approach and experience in running successful elections that won the County over — RBM was a proven partner in election administration.

Floyd County uses RBM for a complete election solution and recently purchased election machines and e-poll books from the company. Election services contracted through RBM include ballot printing, software coding, logic and accuracy testing support and election day/post-election-day support. Floyd County initially chose RBM for ballot printing based on better pricing, faster service and service quality. Looking forward, RBM and Floyd County will work together to switch over to vote centers in time for the 2014 elections.

One benefit of vote centers, according to the state, is that they allow election officials to control costs. For example, by cutting the number of locations where voting takes place, officials can reduce the amount of poll workers and potentially save on machine costs. It is estimated that Floyd County will save more than \$25,000. But the biggest benefit, according to Moeller, will be voter convenience. Voters can cast their ballots at any county location instead of just their neighborhood precinct.

And then there's the replacing of the old Eagle equipment originally purchased in 1999. The new equipment will positively impact the administration of elections, making it faster and easier with the current technology, ensuring safe and secure elections. The electronic poll books will enable the county to plan elections better, reduce the cost of Election Day operations and greatly reduce post-election administration. The electronic record stored on the e-book provides real-time voter activity, which is useful for identifying peak activity at particular locations for staffing planning. In addition, the e-books instantly update voter registration records, a task that previously took many hours of staff time to enter information by hand.

Floyd County, like other jurisdictions, faces the challenge of accommodating voters at the least expense. According to statistics provided by The Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, the estimated cost per vote will go down by roughly 35% (Precincts low/high: \$2.01/\$8.09; Vote Centers low/high: \$1.31/\$5.25). Because of the increased efficiencies the voting centers will bring to the county, the same number of voters can be served equally well with fewer machines and less overhead.