RUNBECK ELECTION SERVICES, INC.

CASE STUDY:
The AgilisDuo™ and
La Plata County, Colorado

APRIL 2019

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Introduction

The State of Colorado became a vote-by-mail state for all of their elections in 2013. La Plata County faced new challenges processing the volume of mail due to the change of an all-mail election and employee resources to handle the larger capacity or returned mail ballots. They were searching for options to expedite their ballot envelope processing and sorting for their election cycle in 2018.

La Plata County has been a Print & Mail partner of Runbeck Election Services since 2013. With a solid working relationship, La Plata looked at what Runbeck currently offered for options such as the Agilis Ballot Sorting System. This System had heftier capabilities than their county needed and it was physically larger than their space could accommodate. La Plata and Runbeck discussed the customization of a version of the AgilisDuo which Runbeck had already developed. With this as the starting point, the AgilisDuo™ Pilot for La Plata County began for the 2018 General Election.

Election Partner Profile

La Plata County, Colorado
Tiffany Parker, County Clerk
Erin Hutchins, Election Administrator
www.co.laplata.co.us

La Plata County stats for 2018
✓ 45,647 registered voters
✓ 28,736 ballots processed in General Election. This included ballots from dropboxes or that were mailed back in.

Equipment Used

Runbeck Election Services' AgilisDuo, a low- to mid-volume mail ballot envelope sorting solution that is a desktop mail scanner. It is ideal for counties with less than 50,000 Registered Voters.

✓ Tabletop model- portable with tech support
✓ Process speeds up to 3,600 per hour/300dpi
✓ Automated image capture
✓ Dimensions: 73" x 23" x 23"
✓ On-screen display to Accept or Challenge

✓ Full audit capabilities
✓ Output images in JPEG or TIFF
✓ Plugs into regular 110v outlet

Problems That Needed Resolutions

La Plata County's Main Obstacles to Resolve

Issue 1. Reduce the bottleneck during elections due to the following necessary processes:
a. Upon receipt of the ballot envelope, they must date stamp the envelope, give credit for the receipt of the envelope packet and pass on to judges for Accept/Challenge verification of the signature.
b. Current Manual SigVer – This process was tedious and time consuming and required multiple touchpoints of physically handling the ballot envelopes. The processing of thousands of vote-by-mail ballots manually was very difficult to complete with mandated deadlines including daily validating and uploading to Colorado's statewide voter registration database, SCORE.

Issue 2. Meet state regulations to scan and crop the signature and upload the signatures into SCORE within 90 days.

Issue 3. Increase overall efficiency. The election cycle involves incredible timely deadlines, so this equired the expense of hiring and training additional election judges.

Issue 4. Find equipment that physically fits within limited office capacity.

Steps to Resolution

La Plata and Runbeck worked together to address these specific election problems which are universal to most small to midsize counties across the U.S. Although Colorado is specifically vote-by-mail, the overall election cycle processes and urgency of deadlines during elections is common. The solutions to La Plata's election challenges could be applicable nationwide.

The AgilisDuo was implemented for La Plata's 2018 General Election. The installation, setup and testing were done by the Runbeck team and La Plata in mid-October 2018. Because this was a Pilot Program, a Runbeck Developer remained onsite for the entire election to closely supervise and problem-solve as needed.

Before and After

BEFORE
- The ballot envelopes were manually counted, batched in 50s and orientated for direction.
- Each ballot envelope barcode was scanned and saved to a file.
- With scanned barcode, SCORE was opened and populated each voter's information.
- The signatures were pulled up and compared manually.
- Judges were present and verified as Accept/Challenge.
- All envelopes were scanned again.
- The signatures are required to be scanned into SCORE within 90 days after election certification.

This process involved many redundant manual steps along with physically handling and moving the ballots for each step.
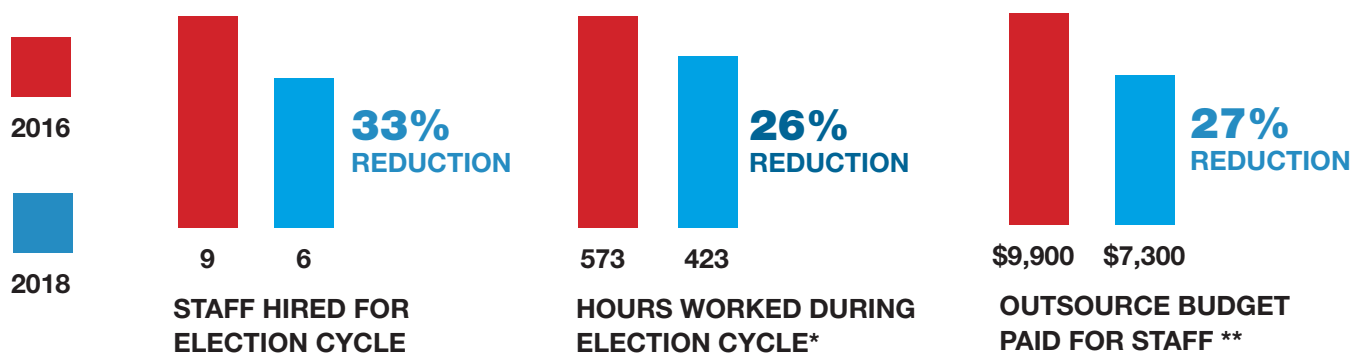
AFTER - *with 2018 use of AgilisDuo*
Note - The AgilisDuo was integrated with Colorado's SCORE database as a part of the installation.
- The ballot envelopes were batched in 50s.
- The AgilisDuo scanned the ballot envelopes and the automated image capture crops each signature on the envelope. The Signature Verification process was done onscreen as a side-by-side comparison and showed the cropped signature from the ballot envelope and the SCORE signature that was automatically populated. The judges chose Accept/Challenge.
- The next signature automatically loaded on the screen and the process continued for all scanned envelopes.
- The voter status data was exported daily and uploaded to SCORE to meet the 90-day requirement. At the conclusion of the election, the ballot envelope images and cropped images were transferred to SCORE seamlessly in minutes.

Results

La Plata was very excited about the results of using the AgilisDuo and had positive results from the first year of implementation. Their numbers prove their increased efficiency:

2016

2018

33% REDUCTION

9   6

STAFF HIRED FOR ELECTION CYCLE

26% REDUCTION

573   423

HOURS WORKED DURING ELECTION CYCLE*

27% REDUCTION

$9,900 $7,300

OUTSOURCE BUDGET PAID FOR STAFF **

* More hours were needed for the initial training of the new AgilisDuo but this will decrease in future years.
** Reflects monetary value commensurate to 2016 wage

> *We accomplished in* **three hours** *what would take us* **three days***. The benefits of this equipment extended not only to our administrative processes, but also positively impacted our election judges on all levels.*
>
> — *Tiffany Parker, County Clerk*

" *This project was very innovative beginning with can we do this, how do we do this and what can we do to make it even better. This process has been successful because of a great partnership and willingness to collaborate.* "

— *Erin Hutchins, Election Administrator*

Summary: Problems and Resolutions

Issue 1. Reduce the bottleneck during elections due to the following necessary processes:

a. Upon receipt of the ballot envelope, they must date stamp, give credit for the receipt and pass on to judges for Accept/Challenge verification.

b. Current Manual SigVer – This process was tedious and time consuming and required multiple touchpoints of physically handling the ballot envelopes. The processing of thousands of vote-by-mail ballots manually was very difficult to complete with mandated deadlines including daily validating and uploading to Colorado's statewide voter registration database, SCORE.

Resolution: *The manual processes and multiple steps of handling the ballot envelopes were greatly reduced with AgilisDuo's automated processes.*

Issue 2. Meet state regulations to scan and crop the signature and upload the signatures into statewide voter registration database within 90 days.

Resolution: *The 90-day requirements were easily met with the one-time image capture and simple daily uploads to SCORE.*

Issue 3. Increase overall efficiency. The election cycle involves incredible timely deadlines, so this required the expense of hiring and training additional election judges.

Resolution: *Working hours, hired staff and budget were reduced.*

Issue 4. Limited office capacity to hold election equipment.

Resolution: *The AgilisDuo's small desktop size conveniently fits in current office space. Because fewer workers are subsequently needed for elections with the AgilisDuo, less office space is utilized.*

ADDED VALUE - Unexpected Internet Outage had no impact on election process

During the processing of ballot envelopes La Plata experienced an internet outage. Historically, this would have greatly impacted their processing and uploading of ballots and caused a greater bottleneck because of the lack of access to SCORE. The AgilisDuo has offline capabilities. The processing continued seamlessly and unaffected by the internet outage. (The networking lives on the county's server to import and export daily.)

The AgilisDuo and Runbeck Election Services — Proven Success for Your County

Headquartered in Phoenix, AZ, Runbeck Election Services successfully innovates the process of producing elections for jurisdictions nationwide. We've expanded from producing local counties' elections to delivering customized election solutions for 24+ million voters. Embodying the spirit of "what is possible", Runbeck developed cutting-edge equipment, software and production methods. Our processes use the latest technologies and draw from nearly five decades of expertise. Operations are completed at our state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly secure facility designed specifically for producing election materials. Runbeck is *America's Election Partner.*

- Print & Mail - Ballot Production Services
- Agilis® Ballot Packet Sorting System - Mid-volume
- AgilisDuo™ Tabletop Ballot Packet Sorting System - Low-volume
- Verus™ & Verus Pro™ Automatic Signature Verification
- Vocem™ Petition Management Software
- Sentio Ballot Printing System® - Bulk and On-demand Printing
- Simulo® UOCAVA EBallot Duplication System
- Novus® Ballot Duplication Software
- Sollus™ - In-house Ballot Printing
- Service - Project & Account Management & Consulting
- Cybersecurity - Guidance, Security, Training and Support

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