

Forsyth County, GA  
Director of Elections  
"Forsyth County Electronic Poll  
Book Program"

# Forsyth County Electronic Poll Book Program

**Gary J. Smith**  
**Director of Elections**  
**Forsyth County Georgia**

In August of 2003, we presented to the Secretary of State's office a request to use laptop computers to help reduce the time spent looking up a voter with the paper Voter List. Our proposal was to place laptop computers in each of our voting precincts with a copy of the voter list as a backup.

In our earlier project, we used borrowed older model laptop computers from the school system and things did not work as well as we hoped. We then spent some money on new laptops and improved the lookup process on the computers with information provided by poll worker feedback. We have used the laptop system in every subsequent election with tremendous success and some bonus results we did not initially plan on.

## Statement of Need

Forsyth County is located 50 miles north of Atlanta, Georgia and is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. This growth pattern has created a burden for the county infrastructure because of the significant increase in the registration of voters and subsequent numbers who vote. While demand via increased voter participation has increased, our resources both human and financial have not kept up. With necessity the mother to invention and adversity the mother to progress, it was clearly time to become both inventive and progressive. Our office was committed to providing a level of quality voter participation as efficiently and expeditiously as possible while maintaining resources to existing levels.

## Goals

- Ability to look up/authorize a voter in under 10 seconds
- Decrease time to close elections
- Decrease poll workers by 40% (state target of 1 poll worker/150 voters)
- Eliminate need for manual paper voter list
- Decrease effort to assign voter credit
- Eliminate numbered list
- Reduce number of phone calls to election office
- Increase % of young people to 30% of all poll workers
- Utilize standard nonproprietary hardware

## Project Description

Our staff developed a program in conjunction with our IT department utilizing a software program developed by Expressive Images (© 2005) and the state database. All information was included on this database except the social security number. The only voter information that was shown on the lookup however was the name, address, date of birth and registration number. The program allowed the capability to view individual precincts for faster lookup or to switch to the entire county to find a voter that may have been in the wrong precinct. Information was also added to the program to allow determination of voter eligibility such as identification required or a previous absentee vote. Also included were party choice in the case of a primary and district designation. (**Attachment #1**)

Report features were added to enable balancing from several viewpoints - date, hour, party and name of the individual. Numbered reports were automatically generated and needs only to be downloaded and printed after the election, which saved us many weeks of work.

The individual laptops were configured identically with certain features disabled to prevent tampering. They were then loaded with the developed program and latest database sent from the state.

All information from absentee voting and advanced voting was done on the laptop so consolidation of votes prior to Election Day was already represented on the individual laptops sent to the precincts. The loading of this consolidated database was done on Friday evening, after the close of advanced voting, to all laptops going out to the precincts. Each laptop was then set to an individual precinct listing and labeled along with its carrying case with the appropriate precinct information. Laptops were also set up for tech support and troubleshooting. The poll workers simply picked up their laptop when they picked up their supplies, which was usually on Sunday before the election. The last remaining day of absentee voting was done using a laptop as well. A query was run on votes per precinct for that day and emailed to the appropriate poll manager on the Monday night before Election Day for update to their laptop.

Voting occurred on Election Day in the usual manner with the exception that the paper list was replaced by the laptop, which eliminated a laborious task during election day. **(Attachment #2)** There was no need for the manual numbered list saving the human resource expense of at least one person per precinct. The tally at the end of the night was also automatically calculated eliminating the need for totaling the paper Voter List. Poll workers were encouraged to balance as they went along during the day as the process was as easy as clicking a button on a report feature. Unpleasant "off balance" surprises were detoured before the fact.

The day after the election all the laptops were downloaded, backup performed, numbered lists printed and a consolidated database produced for sending back to the state for credit for voting.

Poll workers were trained on the operation of the laptop with in-house tech support if needed. Travel techs were equipped with backup laptops if necessary. First Vote high school students were utilized very effectively at each precinct as laptop. The utilization of technology and student participation has made it "cool to vote" in Forsyth County. **(Attachment #3)**

### Conclusion

All of the aforementioned goals were achieved and then some. The time spent to lookup a voter was reduced to just a few seconds with greater accuracy and verifiable accountability. Stress was reduced both at the polls and in the election office as poll workers were able to answer questions and direct lost voters without calling the office. In short we were able to vote more voters in less time with fewer workers than ever before. An added advantage that we did not anticipate beforehand was flexibility. To be able to dispatch an extra laptop for an additional lookup station at the precinct proved invaluable during a couple of unexpected crunch times. This measure was also utilized during advanced voting as extra lookup stations were set up as needed.

The Electronic Poll Book Program established a positive partnership between our regular poll workers and our student poll workers, relieved stress for all concerned, pleased our voters by minimizing wait time and provided easy access to crucial data for further study. It has proven to be effective, easy to use and cost saving while making a lot of people happy along the way. **(Attachment #4)** includes statistics on the average number of voters per poll worker within 10 counties in Georgia. Forsyth County has approximately 40% fewer poll workers than the average in our surrounding counties as they say, "the proof is in the pudding". This reduction in poll workers has helped us to justify the expenditure for our program. The best comment returned from one of our voters was *"I love the progress I see in Forsyth. A great place to live"*.



# Reports Available

Regular Voters  
 Registered Absentee Voters  
 Registered Absentee Voters

RESIDENTIAL REFERENCE IDENTITY  
 LOCAL INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY  
 GENERAL INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY

who submit in the Independent Party  
 in the 2004 Precinct of Forsyth County, Georgia, to be

Held on the 15th Day of July, 2005

### NUMBERED LIST OF VOTERS

NO	NAME OF VOTER	NO	NAME OF VOTER
1	1827 WINTERBROOK WIFE 182071820	28	1838 ALMER, SCOTT 48810820
2	1838 ALLEN, LINDA 20503420	29	1839 ALLEN, DAVID 48810820
3	1838 ALKONSO, JENNIFER 20194120	30	1838 KULLINS, ASHLEY 51992720
4	1838 ALPHRETT, MARVA 28410920	31	1838 MALLINS, KENNETH 21208820
5	1838 ALPHRETT, MARVA 28410920	32	1838 MALLINS, MARGARET 6038620
6	1838 ALLEN, JILL 20372120	33	1838 MALLINS, MARY 51848120
7	1840 ALLEN, ROBERT 28504720	34	1838 MALLINS, KIMBERLY 102475820
8	1840 ALLEN, TERESA 82914720	35	1838 MURDOCK, CHARLENE 82288720
9	1840 JOLIFF, PAUL 34808820	36	1838 MURKETT, ALAN 28751120

### Voting By Hour

Precinct: Forsyth 2004  
 Period: Day Total: 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000

Hour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
18	000000	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	000004	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

February 9, 2005

Forsyth County

# Statistics

	Registered Voters	Voting Machines	Poll workers	Voters/ machine	Voters/ poll worker	Machine +/-	Poll Worker +/-
Fulton	448,299	2,182	2,635	205	170	(154)	(308)
DeKalb	346,044	2,692	2,000	129	173 est poll workers	889	(272)
Cobb	338,042	1,946	2,800	174	121 est poll workers	184	581
Gwinnett	298,803	1,381	2,000	216	149 est poll workers	(176)	38
Clayton	107,599	455	660	236	163	(106)	(46)
Cherokee	89,178	571	575	156	155	106	(10)
Henry	81,425	396	448	206	182	(28)	(87)
<b>Forsyth</b>	<b>75,017</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>(183)</b>
Fayette	61,105	287	447	213	137	(31)	46
Douglas	43,551	227	360	192	121	0	74
			<b>Average</b>	192	152		

Forsyth has the highest ratio of voters per poll worker by more than 40%