

**Jefferson County, KY
County Clerk-Board of Elections
"Voter Information on the Web"**

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Jefferson County, Kentucky, Voter Information on the Web

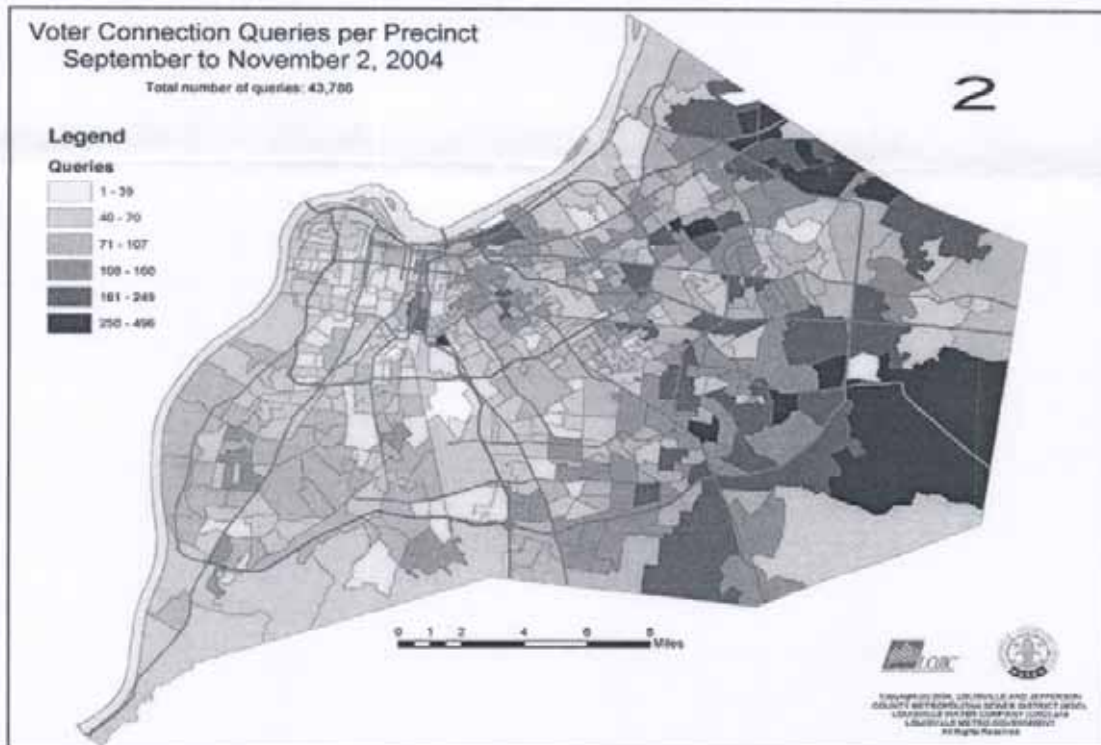
While the 2004 presidential race created more than the usual stress and scrutiny, it was not the only election the Jefferson County Board of Elections staff had to deal with. Local ballots for the 2004 elections included hotly contested races for U.S. Congress, state legislature, the local board of education, and several judicial seats. There were also 83 local suburban cities with races on the 2004 ballot.

The board of elections wanted to develop alternative ways of getting more timely information out to voters using local data from the Louisville and Jefferson County Information Consortium (LOJIC) GIS. LOJIC is a partnership between the Louisville Metro Government, Louisville Water Company, Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator, and Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District.

A longtime user of ArcInfo and ArcGIS, the Board of Elections maintains spatial databases of 506 local precincts, 143 political jurisdictions, and 271 polling locations in the community's shared LOJIC GIS. The wealth of other spatial data from LOJIC, including local site addresses and streets, combined with the capabilities of ArcIMS allowed the creation of a simple tool to provide voter information and site maps through the Internet. Voter Connection is available at www.lojic.org and provides interactive access to Jefferson County polling locations; site maps; and lists of local, state, and federal officials based on any local address. Voter Connection was enhanced for the 2004 election to include 279 jurisdiction-specific ballot styles to allow citizens to preview ballots and candidate names before going to the polls.

Sample ballots were also available for viewing. Because of the large number of suburban city races on the ballot, 279 unique ballots were used throughout the county. Precincts were again used to find the correct ballot for an entered address. Because these ballots look similar to the actual ballots used, many citizens found this addition extremely useful.

Voter Connection had more than 43,000 successful queries from September through the November 2, 2004, election, and usage logs indicated that voters in every precinct accessed the tool. In the end, local voter turnout was higher than usual as 71 percent of the nearly 500,000 registered voters in Jefferson County came to the polls.



Map showing the number of address queries per precinct from September to Election Day 2004. This will be useful in defining focus areas to encourage increased voting participation.

Links to Voter Connection appeared on the Web sites of every major media outlet, as well as the Web sites of the County Clerk Bobbie Holsclaw, Louisville Metro Government, the Kentucky Secretary of State, and several candidates. It was also heavily publicized on the local public affairs cable channel.

Bobbie Holsclaw, Chairperson of the Jefferson County Board of Elections, stated that among the main benefits of this project was a reduction of

incoming calls for polling site information and a large increase in available information for voters to access before going to the polls. The hope is to see an eventual relaxation of the state requirement for printed advertising of the ballot each election. This cost the Board over \$64,000 for the 2004 election.

For more information about Voter Connection, contact Shawn Merrick, information systems manager, Jefferson County Board of Elections (e-mail: smerrick@jeffersoncountyclerk.org, tel.: 502-574-6113); Lisa Kraft, mapping and statistical coordinator, Jefferson County Board of Elections (e-mail: lkraft@jeffersoncountyclerk.org, tel.: 502-574-8284); or Jane Poole, GIS products specialist, LOJIC (e-mail: poole@lojic.org, tel.: 502-540-6435). Voter Connection can be found at www.lojic.org/apps/voter/index.cfm.