Pierce County Facts

- Total Registered Voters in Pierce County (as of 3/4/2009)
  - 441,331 Total Voters
    - 412,993 Active
    - 28,338 Inactive
  - Total Absentee Voters – 78%
    - 320,117 Absentee Voters
    - Approximately 10,000 Military, Overseas and Out of County Voters
  - Total Poll Voters – 22%
    - 92,876
    - 58 Polling locations

How did Pierce County adopt Ranked Choice Voting?

- Pierce County's Charter Commission submitted Charter Amendment No. 3 to the voters to adopt Instant Runoff Voting (IRV)
    - Approved by the voters of Pierce County in November 2006
        - 52.93%
        - Eliminated the Pick-a-Party Primary for these offices

- Required the Pierce County Auditor to implement instant runoff voting for certain county offices by July, 2008
    - Executive   - Sheriff
    - Assessor-Treasurer   - Auditor
    - County Council Members
    - Excludes Judges and Prosecuting Attorney

We changed the nomenclature

- IRV = RCV

- Why?
  - To assist the voter education process
  - More descriptive of how the process works

What were some of the impacts to RCV candidates?

- The political parties chose who could use their party label through internal party rules for the partisan county offices
  - Executive
  - County Council
- All candidates filed nominating petitions with signature of 25 registered voters
- All candidates appeared directly on the General Election ballot
  - No primary was held for these offices

5

How did we implement RCV?

- Hired RCV staff and a consultant to study and develop a project plan

- An internal legal review was conducted of the newly passed amendments and the changes to the charter

- Consulted numerous times with our vendor (Sequoia)
  - Product availability and timeline
  - Software parameters

Blue Ribbon Review Panel

- A Blue Ribbon Review Panel was formed
  - Five meetings were held
  - Provided feedback and input regarding new charter rules and implementation
  - Major topics included:
    - Filing for Office
    - Results Reporting
    - Voting Options
    - Voter Education
  - Presented 11 action items to the County Council

Additional Charter Amendments

- Four additional Charter Amendments were presented to the voters in November 2007

- These amendments sought to clarify the implementation of RCV
  - Ranking of three candidates
  - Minor Party Candidate Filing Requirements
  - Implementation Dates
  - Allowing for the Multiple Elimination of losing candidates
  - Algorithm stops when a candidate has a majority

2008 – A Busy Year
Hurdles Jumped and Major Accomplishments

- Policies, Procedures and Rules Established
  - Nominating Procedures and obtaining permission to use Party Label
  - Filing Procedures
  - Procedures for Write-In candidates
  - Candidate Advancement
  - Multiple Elimination
  - Procedures for RCV Recounts
  - Running the Algorithm and Results Reporting

2008 – A Busy Year
More Hurdles

- Obtained Budget Funding for purchase of software

- Go/No Go Decision by vendor to release RCV Module was made
  - It was a GO!

- Conducted Internal Testing of RCV Tabulation software

2008 – A Busy Year
Another High Hurdle

- Received Emergency/Provisional Certification from the State
  - Still awaiting Federal Certification
  - Product is currently at iBeta

- During certification it was determined that the Polling Place Tabulators (Insights) could not be used:
  - Not robust enough to handle RCV ballot image
  - Would not support multiple precincts
  - Implemented a Central Count procedure for counting of Polling Place ballots
    - Hired 114 Ballot Transporters and Ballot Processors
    - Instituted 24 hour shifts to check in, visually scan and tabulate polling place ballots
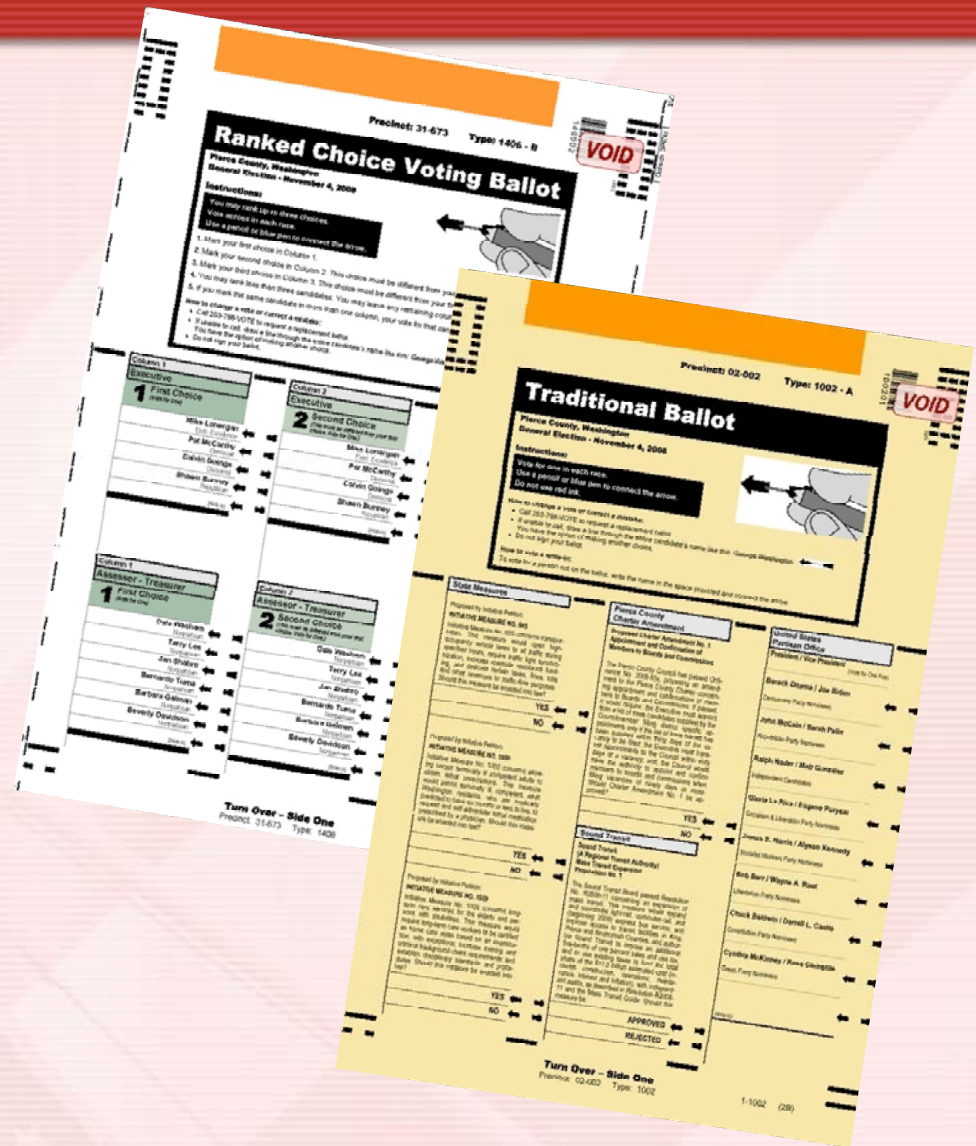
By Filing Week – June 1, 2008
We were ready!

2008 – A Busy Year
The Election Begins – Ballot Design

- Pierce County Voters received two ballot cards

  - Traditional Card
  - RCV Card

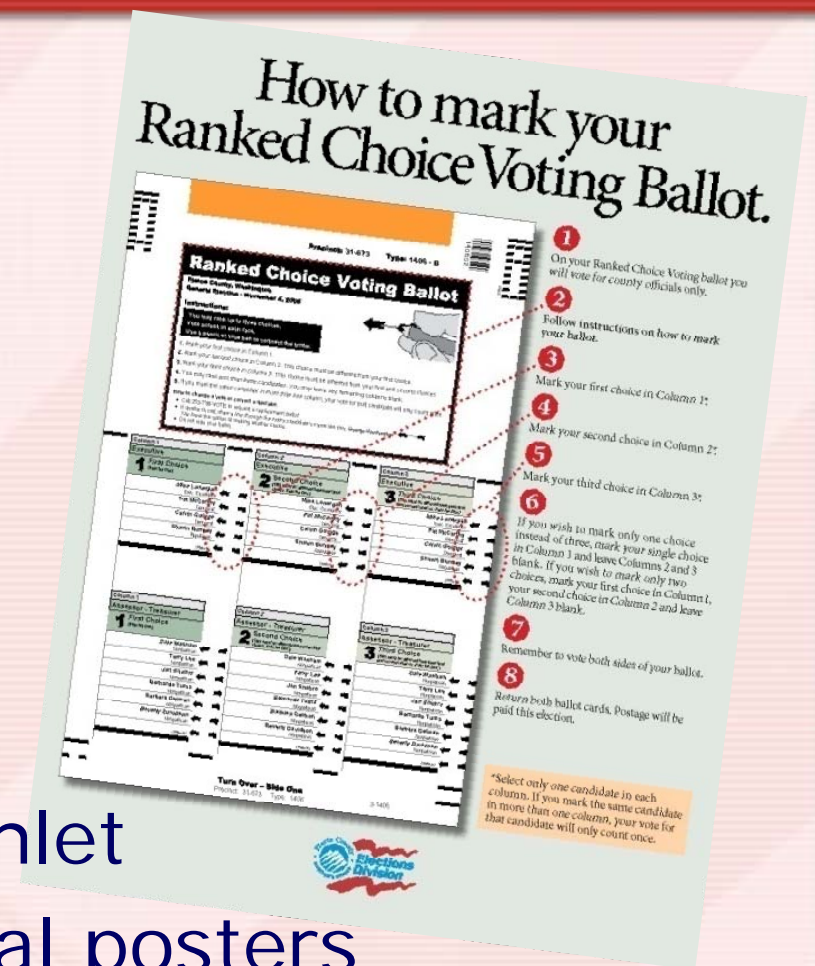- Many hours spent developing instructions and ballot design

Postage Concerns

- The return absentee ballot envelope with two ballots required more than one stamp

- We made the decision to pay return postage

- We did not want an extra stamp to be a deterrent to returning both ballots

How did we educate our voters?

- Enhanced website
- Speakers Bureau
- Two Mailers
  - Postcard
  - Pamphlet
- Billboard
- Ballot insert
- Enhanced Voters' Pamphlet
- Polling place instructional posters
- PSAs on all major networks

Ranked Choice Voting – How does it work?

The Ranked Choice Voting Ballot card allowed voters to rank up to three candidates in each race.

- Executive
- Assessor – Treasurer
- Sheriff
- County Council

How were the RCV ballots tabulated?

- Every first choice vote was counted.

- Any candidate who received a majority (more than 50%) of the first choice votes was declared the winner.

- If no candidate received a majority, a process of eliminating candidates and redistributing 2nd and 3rd choices occurred.

So, how did it work?

- The candidate who received the fewest number of first choice votes was eliminated from the race.

- Next, voters who selected the eliminated candidate as their first choice had their second choice vote transferred and counted.

- Once the votes were transferred and counted, if a candidate received more than 50% of the votes, he or she was declared the winner.

- This process continued until one candidate had a winning majority (over 50%).

How much did it cost?

2008 General Election Costs	$1,664,542
RCV One Time Costs	$857,025
- Software, Education, Equipment	
RCV Ongoing Costs	$769,773
- Printing, Paper, Envelopes, Education, Staff	
RCV Subtotal	$1,626,798
Total Costs	**$3,291,340**

Did voters participate?

Voter Turnout:

Traditional Ballot Cards counted	333,824
RCV Ballot Cards counted	312,771
Total Ballot Cards Counted	**646,595**
Overall Turnout	**81.20%**

Voter Drop-off/Voter Fatigue Stats:

Executive's Race

Voters who didn't return an RCV ballot	21,053
Voters who didn't select a 1st Choice	13,330
Voters who didn't select a 2nd Choice	91,510
Voters who didn't select a 3rd Choice	140,439

Assessor – Treasurer's Race

Voters who didn't return an RCV ballot	21,053
Voters who didn't select a 1st Choice	50,431
Voters who didn't select a 2nd Choice	125,270
Voters who didn't select a 3rd Choice	150,833

Did voters like it?

- We surveyed all voters and 90,738 responded

  - 29,206 **Liked** Ranked Choice Voting
    - 33.98%
  - 56,751 **Didn't Like** Ranked Choice Voting
    - 66.02%
  - 4,781 Undecided/Miscellaneous

Note: Three times the number of voters responded to this survey compared to the 2004 Pick-a-Party primary survey.

Here's a sample of the positive comments…

- "Very clear, Bravo!"
- "It was easy, Thanks."
- "I liked it."
- "Great job."
- "I understood how to vote. Thank you."
- "New ranking method is great."
- "Let's expand it to state races."
- "More Ranked Choice Voting!"

Here's a sample of the negative comments….

- "Leave the ballots alone, why shove this down our throat, why?"
- "Keep the voting simple. Stop trying to fix what isn't broken."
- "Don't waste paper."
- "A useless endeavor and a waste of money."
- "Too complicated."
- "We vote for who we want and these extra votes I believe can only confuse the issue."
- "I'm very confused and I'm 75 years old. Too confusing."
- "I don't like it at all."
- "Traditional ballot is fantastic! What is the purpose and point of voting for 3 candidates? Isn't this an Election? NO Ranked Choice Voting, it seems fishy."

2008 – A Busy Year
The Election is certified

Ranked Choice Voting Results Table

Contest: **County Executive**
Load Type: **Complete**

	Round 1			Round 2			Round 3		
	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer	Votes	%	Transfer
Mike Lonergan	45330	15.15%	-45330	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Pat McCarthy	79235	26.49%	+12973	92208	31.98%	+44138	136346	50.75%	0
Calvin Goings	69052	23.08%	+8375	77427	26.85%	-77427	0	0.00%	0
Shawn Bunney	105057	35.12%	+13633	118690	41.17%	+13602	132292	49.25%	0
Write-In	458	0.15%	-458	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%	0
Exhausted by Over Votes	532		+61	593		+125	718		0
Under Votes	13107		0	13107		0	13107		0
Exhausted Ballots	0		+10746	10746		+19562	30308		0
Continuing Ballots	299132	100.00%		288325	100.00%		268638	100.00%	
TOTAL	312771		0	312771		0	312771		0
REMARKS	*Tie resolved in accordance with election law.								

- Ballot Image Reports were posted to our website with each release of results

The Administration of the Election was a Success!

- Success was predicated on preparation
- We utilized best practices from San Francisco
- The algorithm worked
  - We even ran it on Election Night
  - Results and ballot image reports were posted to our website
- Our overall variance was remarkable
  - 0.000181

But success was not without significant challenges?

- Determined and requested an RCV budget
- Hired two additional staff members
- Hired an Election Consultant
- Spent hundreds of hours and resources to determine the protocols and procedures to implement and carry out Ranked Choice Voting
  - Staff time
  - Citizen input
- Provisional Emergency Certification of Voting System by Secretary of State
  - Central Count – Hired additional staff to transport ballots
  - Hired and trained over 600 staff
- Purchased software and equipment to conduct RCV

And more challenges…

- Confusion with some voters during the Primary and General Elections
  - Voters thought they could vote for two people in the Primary (Top Two)
  - Limited the Voter Education window
- Mailed two ballot cards to every absentee voter
  - Paid return postage to mitigate the need for multiple stamps for return ballots
- Issued two ballot cards to every poll voter
  - Made for longer waits at the polls
- Worked 24 hours per day for one week to tabulate ballots followed by 17 hour days up to certification

  333,824 Traditional Ballots Cast

  312,771 Ranked Choice Voting Ballots Cast

  646,595 Total Ballots Cast
- Election results were released daily, however due to the second ballot card results were delayed because of the sheer volume of ballot cards

Ranked Choice Voting in 2009 and Beyond?

- In January 2009, the Pierce County Council passed a Charter Amendment to repeal Ranked Choice Voting
  - Will appear on 2009 General Election ballot

- One RCV race (Auditor) for a one-year unexpired term will appear on the same ballot

Ranked Choice Voting

Questions and Answers