

# Start Planning Now: Primary Elections Right Around the Corner

With scrutiny over security and accuracy of voting by mail in the most recent elections, it is more important than ever that jurisdictions are prepared and ready to deliver successful, foolproof elections.

Let's take a look at what we have learned and what is to come so jurisdictions can better plan:

## Changes in Voting are Continuing

While some states are restricting voting, most states are expanding access, early voting, extended hours, no excuse mail-in, etc. You need to prepare for the changes and be ready to offer a variety of voting options to meet the new regulations and laws being enacted.

## Accountability at all Levels

Every aspect of the voting process is being analyzed and reviewed to ensure accuracy. Accountability needs to be met at all stages of the process. If you are using multiple partners and processes, achieving accountability at all levels is difficult. In all likelihood, you'll be best served by a single-source election program, whether you are doing ballot production and mailing in-house or relying on a partner.

## Reporting Ensures Transparency

Better reporting will be essential to track and trace exact information on each and every stage of the ballot production, mailing and tabulating process. You should require a real-time reporting methodology for your entire election process. Your process should have a complete audit trail in place that includes checkpoints, verifications, notifications and reports for all significant aspects and milestones of the program. Knowing precisely where components are



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**Robert F. Witko**  
President & CEO of Fort Orange Press

throughout each step of the process will create transparency that keeps all parties informed and up to date, leaving no surprises and ensuring that everyone is accountable for their roles and responsibilities.

## Database Improvements

Improving voter registration data now will help to ensure that any voting by mail will be more accurate. Run your database through CASS and NCOA now and at least quarterly and make updates regularly. If possible, consider an educational/informational marketing push for voter registration.

## Supply Chain Concerns

Issues with paper, envelope and ink supplies have been widespread since the pandemic started and will most likely continue at least into the near future. Inventory your needs for paper and look to purchase required or expected supplies now. Consider warehousing products and supplies or utilizing partners that have an inventory of products available or better access to the supplies needed.

## Automated Production Workflows Ensure Security

If you haven't automated your production process or you are not working with a partner that offers an automated production workflow, you are at risk. Automated workflows provide a higher level of security and ensure a 100% chain of custody of all sensitive data and information. If you integrate scanning and tabulating workflows (and new scanning security offerings) to your entire production workflow, you can have greater assurance of security through the entire election process.

If you are unaware of new scanning technologies, talk to your scanning and tabulat-

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ing partners. Companies like Dominion Voting Systems are offering updated scanning technology and a security ballot paper stock that provides an additional layer of security to the voting-by-mail process.

## Technology to Guarantee Accuracy

New technologies are available to offer more accurate review and verification of information. Data verification software can improve data accuracy and ensure better delivery of mail-in ballots. Technology to assign and read unique barcodes takes

human error out of the production and printing process. When producing mail-in ballots in bulk, intelligent inserters with multi-staged cameras provide the assurance that all information is accurate and all materials are correctly being mailed to each voter.

## Equipment that Improves Efficiencies

If your election responsibility includes printing (and/or mailing) thousands or hundreds of thousands of ballots, you need equipment that ensures output that can meet the stringent timelines and demands of the voting-by-mail process. Speed and accuracy, faster turnarounds and better delivery can only be guaranteed if you have the equipment that can offer these efficiencies.

## Tracking is Essential for Building Confidence

One area that has advanced due to the concern over security and transparency of elections is the ability for election officials and voters to track ballots. For election officials, it is important that they can track all aspects of the printing, mailing and tabulating process.

In addition, and especially after the 2020 election cycle, it is extremely important that voters know that their vote has been counted. Be sure you are using tracking technologies in the upcoming election. It is a relatively easy process that integrates directly with your election website. Allowing voters to log in and see where their ballot is throughout the entire process – including when it has been mailed to them, sent back in the mail stream and received by the election office – is paramount of voter confidence..

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**About the author:** Robert F. Witko is President and CEO of Fort Orange Press in Albany, NY. The company has over 100 years of New York State election printing expertise. To learn more call 800-777-3233 or visit [www.fortorangepress.com/election](http://www.fortorangepress.com/election).