

# Yavapai County Recorder enhances integrity of vote-by-mail process with Relia-Vote Rival inserting solution.

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## Client profile

### Yavapai County Recorder

[yavapai.us/](http://yavapai.us/)

- Small- to mid-size county located in the state of Arizona; county seat is Prescott
- Holds minimum of two elections annually and up to four, with mail-outs ranging from 5,000 to 104,000
- 80 percent of county's 125,000 registered voters take advantage of the early voting and vote-by-mail processes

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## Closing the loop on ballot integrity

When legislation enacting the Permanent Early Voter List passed in 2008, the existing vote-by-mail process exploded as voters raced to take advantage of the convenience. Yavapai County Recorder, a small- to mid-volume county, had already been using the Pitney Bowes Relia-Vote™ solution and a Series 8 inserter to help automate the ballot process for itself and surrounding jurisdictions. Historically the county held at least two elections a year. However, the county will conduct five elections in 2016. The growth of the number of vote-by-mail participants, the increase in elections, and the approaching end-of-life of the Series 8 inserter caused Yavapai County Recorder election officials to look for a more comprehensive solution.

*"We got our brand new Rival™ equipment, hired a brand new vote-by-mail technician, and still were able to put out three times the ballots in a day as we did with our old Series 8. It's only onward and upward from here."*

—Leslie Hoffman, Yavapai County Recorder

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## Business challenge

Like many counties, the Yavapai County Recorder faces challenges incumbent with the electoral process. Legislative action mandated that all ballots be sent to voters on the same day. While that has since been changed to three days, the initial requirement was exacerbated by space restraints and security issues. Leslie Hoffman, Yavapai County Recorder, recalls that "going through our Board for

budgeting was one of our big challenges. We were at end-of-life with the old machine and technology had grown so much." The Series 8 inserter, while automated, required physically scanning a barcode after all the ballots were assembled and before printing the envelope. This required a larger staff and created the potential for errors.

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## Technology used

- Relia-Vote™ Rival™ Productivity Inserting solution
- Voter file preparation software

*"We trust in the equipment and are able to be sincere to our voters, and they appreciate it as well, knowing that we do everything in-house."*

— Leslie Hoffman, Yavapai County Recorder

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## Solution

Working with Pitney Bowes, Hoffman and her team made the case for newer and faster equipment designed to handle the greater demand. Recognizing the benefits, the Board of Supervisors completely supported the acquisition. The Relia-Vote Rival Productivity inserting system looks at the ballot type as the first step to assembly, insertion, sealing, weighing, printing voter ID information, repeat scanning and, finally, mailing. Updated software features make the entire process more efficient, enabling the county to prepare and mail triple the number of ballots in a day than the previous equipment.

The Rival inserter has the capability of processing up to 10,000 cycles per hour based on specific application requirements. Ballot packages require variable processing times. The high integrity software allows accurate tracking throughout the entire process.

## Benefits

"We got our brand new piece of equipment, hired a brand new vote-by-mail technician, and still were able to put out three times the ballots in a day as we did with our old Series 8," enthuses Hoffman. "So it's only onward and upward from here."

Hoffman reels off tangible benefits, starting with the control and integrity it provides. "If my voters call to say they didn't get their ballot, I don't have to call someone to ask if it went out. I can tell those people honestly that I know exactly what's happening." The solution allows the officials to drill down into a specific ballot and validate where, when and how each piece was processed and exactly what is in the envelope.

"So it's hands-on," said Hoffman. "We trust in the equipment and are able to be sincere to our voters, and they appreciate it as well, knowing that we do everything in-house."

The high speed processing also meets the statutory guidelines requiring that the ballots be mailed in a certain time period.

Hoffman cites reduction in hard costs as immediate benefits. In anticipation of the new equipment, the county changed its mail-out envelopes, reducing the cost of the envelope packages by 50 percent. Because it is simpler and faster to operate, less staff is required. And features such as knowing and validating the correct weight of each envelope have improved the efficiency and accuracy of the process.

Armed with such tangible benefits as the integrity and cost-savings, Hoffman plans to ask the board to allocate budget for a comparable inbound solution from Pitney Bowes, including a sorter that would enable the county to obtain larger postage discounts. The sorter would also automate the validation, date and time-stamping, opening the envelopes and verifying signatures.

Hoffman cites working with Pitney Bowes as a major benefit. "It took a little more than three years to get budget approval for this solution," she says, "and Pitney Bowes was there a hundred percent of the time. We were completely confident in them. The machine was completed and delivered ahead of schedule. And then it was up and running. And they were there from start to finish."



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