

A More Efficient, Less Stressful Election Day? Badger Books Pave the Way!



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Demands on municipal staff routinely exceed the time and energy available. Clerks are no exception, whether there is just one (or dare I say) five elections in a year! The training, coordination, and lead-up to an election, Election Day, and post-election responsibilities can be daunting, with little to no time to make changes year to year. Enhancements to WisVote occur routinely but municipal clerks retain the latitude (for good reasons) to determine whether to implement some new technologies locally.

In the case of election processes, many aspects involve repetition. These situations often are candidates for technological application. Specifically, the poll book station (where you state your name, show your acceptable form of voter identification, sign the book, and get the correct ballot) is generally duplicated across wards, districts, and further broken up alphabetically. This process, in paper form, can result in bottlenecks and disparate lines, even when the voter roll is split evenly. In higher turnout elections, long waits at this step are compounded. In 2017, the Wisconsin Elections Commission developed an electronic poll book application and since then the only electronic poll book authorized for use in Wisconsin is the Badger Book. *While electronic, it does not connect to the internet, further ensuring election voter files remain secure.*

Technology and new practices require integration, investment of time, and money. Let's not forget the stress of something new and the nagging voice in our heads saying, "it better be worth it!"

Austyn Zarda, City Clerk, Rhinelander, implemented Badger Books for the first time in the Spring 2023 election as part of a broader rollout in Oneida County. "The Badger Book improves the Election Day experience – voters move through the election stations quicker as the driver's license is scanned with ease for voter verification," he said. "Voter registration also goes quicker, with accuracy from the identification, guaranteed," he added.

Badger Books set to debut in Wauwatosa as electronic poll books gain popularity

Menomonie Council OKs joint purchase of electronic poll books

Kaukauna rolls out electronic poll books for spring election

Electronic Badger Books aim to make voting more efficient in Janesville
Four of the city's busiest polling place will use electronic Badger Books on April 4th.

Wausau to use Badger Books for polling sites on Tuesday

With poll worker numbers declining in recent years, the Badger Book technology allows for the poll book station staffing ratio to be reduced, allowing for staff reallocation to activities such as greeting voters and processing absentee ballots.

At the end of a long Election Day, it is possible to have a single discrepancy sometimes resulting in an hours-long fact-finding, needle-in-a-haystack scenario. Nobody wants to stay late into the night if they could otherwise avoid it. Badger Books maintain records like time and user stamps to quickly identify or avoid discrepancies altogether.

After-election responsibilities are also simpler and less time consuming. "With paper poll books, we have to go line by line to enter absentees and in-person, consuming countless hours. With Badger Books, it is a single upload, in seconds, to WisVote," Zarda said. Voters also get to see their election participation and registration information more quickly in MyVote.