



# **From Blaze to Praise**

**STAN STANART**

**Harris County Clerk & Chief Elections Official**

**The November 2010 Election**

# HARRIS COUNTY TEXAS



# Harris County Texas

**Third largest county in the nation.**

## Ten Most Populous Counties: 2000 to 2010

[www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/pl94-171.pdf)

County	Population	
	2000	2010
<b>MOST POPULOUS</b>		
Los Angeles, CA . . . . .	9,519,338	9,818,605
Cook, IL . . . . .	5,376,741	5,194,675
Harris, TX . . . . .	3,400,578	<b>4,092,459</b>
Maricopa, AZ . . . . .	3,072,149	3,817,117
San Diego, CA . . . . .	2,813,833	3,095,313
Orange, CA . . . . .	2,846,289	3,010,232
Kings, NY . . . . .	2,465,326	2,504,700
Miami-Dade, FL . . . . .	2,253,362	2,496,435
Dallas, TX . . . . .	2,218,899	2,368,139
Queens, NY . . . . .	2,229,379	2,230,722

<sup>1</sup> Among counties with Census 2000 populations of 10,000 or more.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census and Census 2000.



# **Harris County, Texas Election Technology Center**



**Houses the election machines and equipment  
to conduct elections..**

**August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**67 days before the**  
**November 2, 2010**  
**Election**



GREG HURST

LEN CANNON

5:59 93°

11 NEWS

# The Blaze

**As a result, the conduct of the Nov. 2010 election in Harris County was placed in doubt.**

**The New York Times**

**Politics**

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION

## Houston Scrambles After Blaze That Destroyed Voting Machines



Brett Coomer/Houston Chronicle, Via Associated Press

Houston firefighters poured water on the smoldering shell of a warehouse that caught fire around 4 a.m. on Aug. 27.



# THE PROMPT RESPONSE

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CARRY  
ON**



**As the fire raged, the County Clerk assured the public that there was nothing to worry about, stating that “County’s leaders would pull together” to overcome the catastrophe.**

Election officials stay optimistic, even after fire destroys Harris Co. voting equipment



# County clerk's office plans for election despite fire

Friday, August 27, 2010



**Before the end of the catastrophic day, via the broadcast media, the elections office made sure that the public knew that Harris County would *“have a timely election.”***

# Harris County assures voting will be smooth after fire destroys machines



**Other top  
County officials  
echoed the  
County Clerk's  
sentiments.**

**JUDGE ED EMMETT**  
HARRIS COUNTY

CAMPAIGN '10



8:00 91°



# HARRIS COUNTY VOWS ELECTION INTEGRITY IN POST DISASTER ELECTION PLAN

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## Harris County officials vow election integrity after fire



Posted: Saturday, September 11, 2010 12:00 am | Updated: 12:16 am, Sun Nov 21, 2010.

By ED EMMETT and BEVERLY KAUFMAN For The Citizen | 0 comments



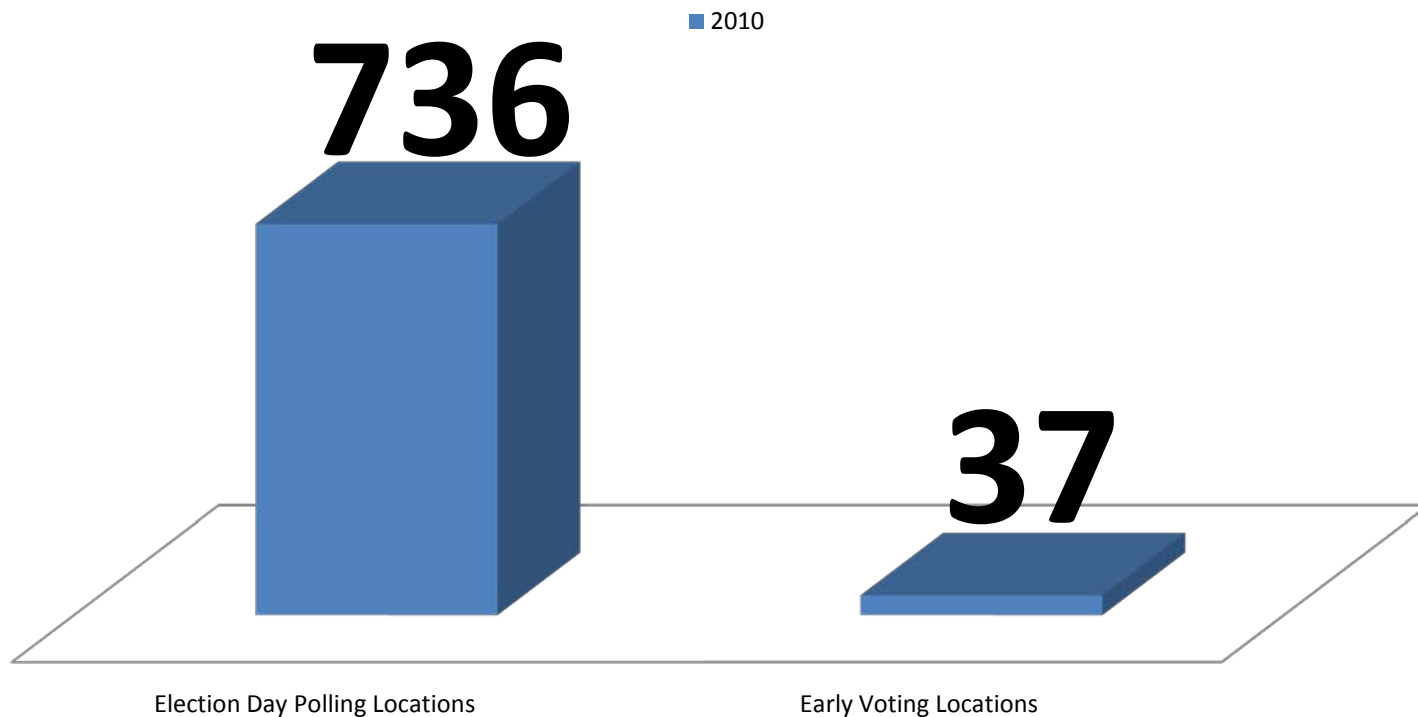
ABC-13  
Harris County lost 10,000 voting machines in the election warehouse fire.  
ap

It's generally accepted that the wheels of government turn slowly, but — as with all conventional wisdom — there are frequent exceptions to the rule.

On Aug. 30, just three days after a large fire destroyed the building that housed all 10,000 of Harris County's voting machines, Commissioners Court met in emergency session to approve a plan for the conduct of the Nov. 2 general election. That plan, devised by County Clerk Beverly Kaufman with input from her staff and other officials, had to be enacted quickly to be able to conduct the election in accordance with the election

# The number of Pre-disaster Early Voting and Election Day polling locations would remain the same.

## Harris County Plan for Early Voting and Election Day Polling locations before and after Disaster



# The election would comply with state and federal voting laws



Photograph of President Lyndon Johnson Signs the Voting Rights Act as Martin Luther King, Jr., with Other Civil Rights Leaders in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, DC, 08/06/1965

**Including,  
making sure  
all voting sites  
were HAVA  
compliant.**







**And, all voters would be provided fair and equal access to voting process.**

# ASSESSING THE LOSS



# Harris County's inventory of election equipment totaled over 16,000 voting and support units.



**Including,  
7,190  
eSlate  
electronic  
voting  
machines**



# 1,650 Disabled Access Units (DAU)



# 2,870 Judge Booth Controls (JBC)



# 360 PCs/Laptops, 220 printers, 120 card swipes readers, 50 modems



**900 cell phones**

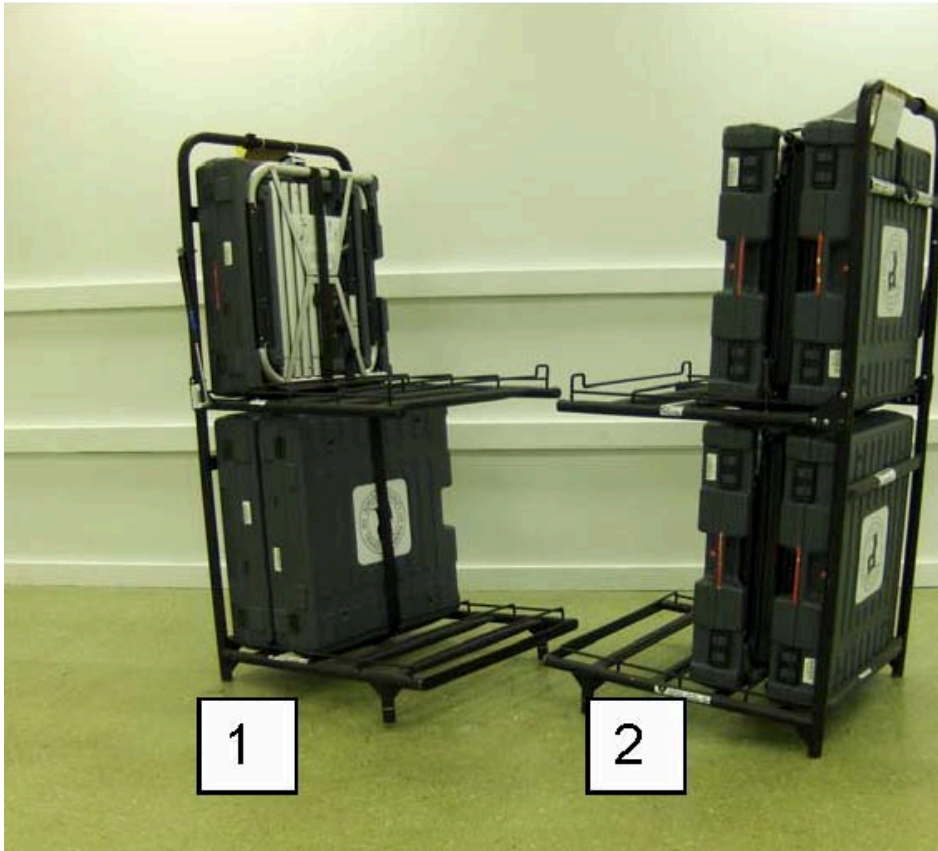


**150 hand scanners**





# 80 delivery carts, pallet jacks, copiers and other tools used in the conduct of an election



# First Read

from  NBC NEWS

The first place for key political news and analysis from the NBC News Political Unit

27

Aug

2010

4:58pm, EDT

## All of Houston voting machines destroyed in fire

**The fire destroyed the county's election center and reduced its inventory of election equipment to virtually zero.**



**The estimated “total loss was valued at about \$40 million.”**



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122 Comments



168

## Warehouse blaze still a mystery

Officials still investigating cause of fire that destroyed voting devices

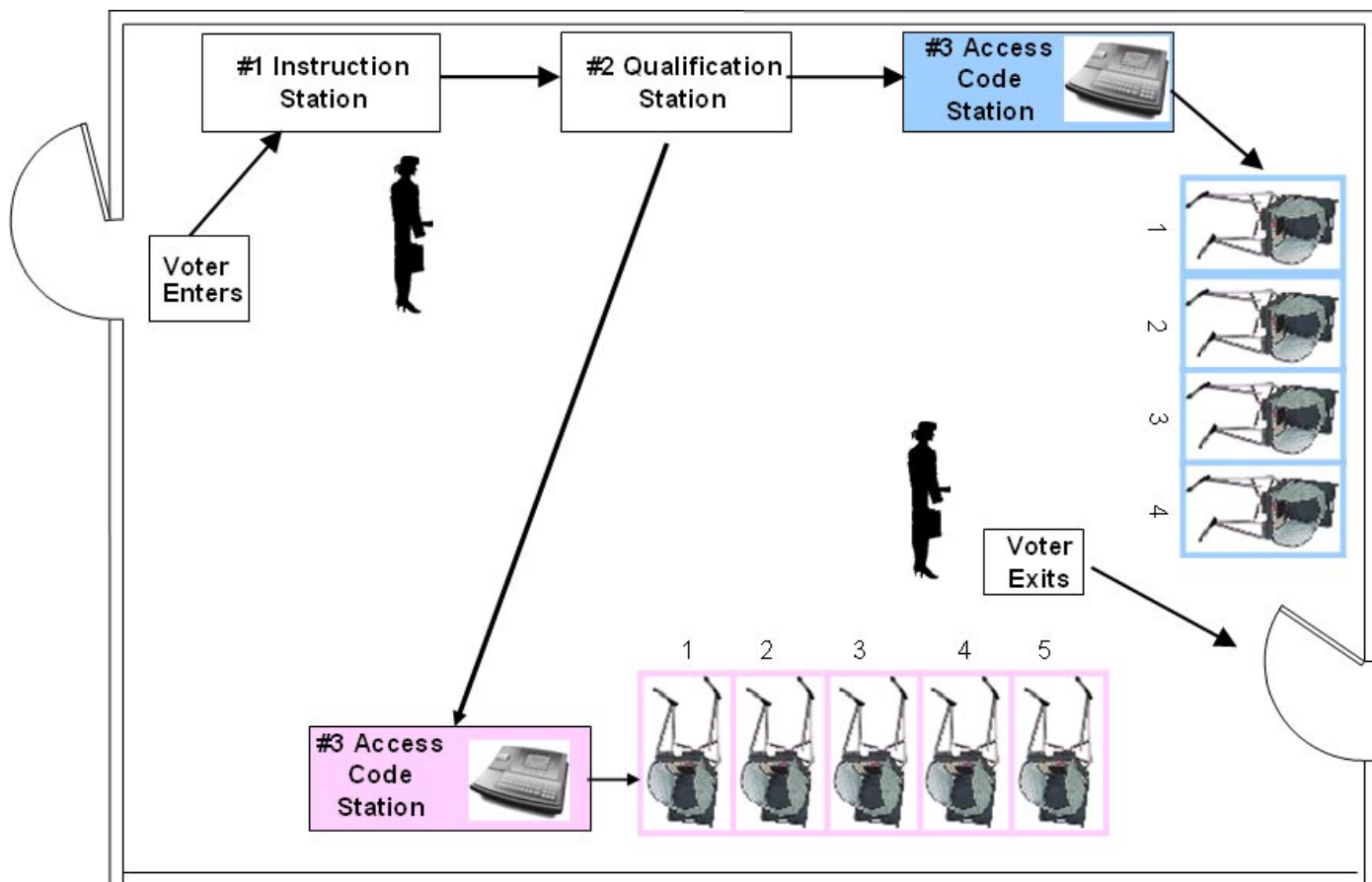
By PAIGE HEWITT  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE  
Aug. 29, 2010, 7:59AM

The total loss was valued at about \$40 million — \$30 million in voting equipment and \$10 million for the building, said Kaufman.

# THE CHALLENGE



**As chief elections officer of the county, the County Clerk faced the monumental challenge of rebuilding the County's voting infrastructure.**



**KHOU.com**  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

**51 days before early  
voting began**



**KHOU.com**  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

and 67 days before  
Election Day



**The catastrophe must be addressed before dealing with its consequences.**



- ✓ Make sure key county staff is on-site to deal with the immediate consequences of the disaster
- ✓ Make sure important political leaders are personally informed about incident



# Once the best course is determined recovery can begin.

- ✓ Department head must conduct prompt assessment of agency's capacity to function
- ✓ Set parameters for the post-disaster election
- ✓ Meet with election personnel to outline and designate tasks
- ✓ Meet with the election equipment vendor
- ✓ Prepare Needs Assessment Report
- ✓ Prepare and Review Post-Disaster Election Plan

# After a disaster, the workload increases.

- ✓ Submit necessary Post-Disaster Reports to Commissioners Court
- ✓ Coordinate crucial activities of recovery team
- ✓ Find a Temporary Workspace
- ✓ Secure Borrowed Equipment
- ✓ Test and Prepare Equipment
- ✓ Additional Training
- ✓ Distribution of Election Supplies
- ✓ Election Night Activities

# THE ELECTION PLAN



# Three days after the fire, the County Clerk submitted an emergency election plan for the conduct of the Nov. 2 General Election.

Monday, August 30, 2010



**The plan called for the continued use of the eSlate electronic voting system as the principal method of voting.**



## Harris County officials remain confident in voting systems despite destructive fire

By Molly Ryan

Wednesday, 08 September 2010

**The plan also called for making paper ballots available to voters on Election Day.**



72 Comments



40

## **Voters will be able to choose: Paper or eSlate**

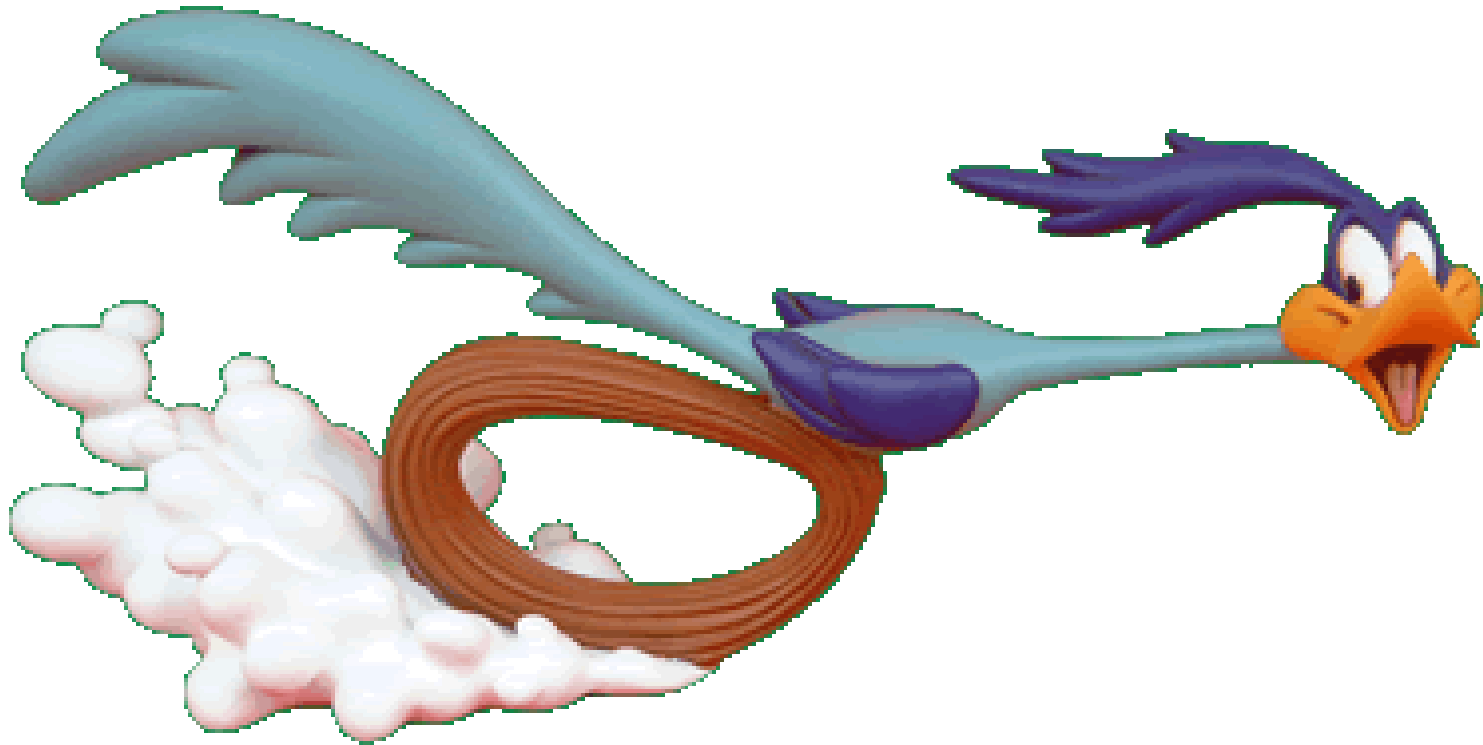
**In wake of fire, Harris County plans hybrid balloting system on Nov. 2**

By CHRIS MORAN  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Sept. 4, 2010, 7:16AM

Voters will have the option of casting a paper ballot in the Nov. 2 general election

**Most importantly, the plan called for the speedy acquisition, by loan or purchase, of the election equipment needed to conduct a timely election.**



# The Clerk's Plan was approved.



## Harris County commissioners OK emergency voting machines plan after fire destroyed equipment

Monday, Aug 30, 2010, 05:26PM CST

1 comments

Add comment



By Lee Ann O'Neal



Harris County officials will purchase and borrow voting machines after the Commissioners Court approved a plan to do "any and all things necessary and convenient" to be prepared to hold the November election.

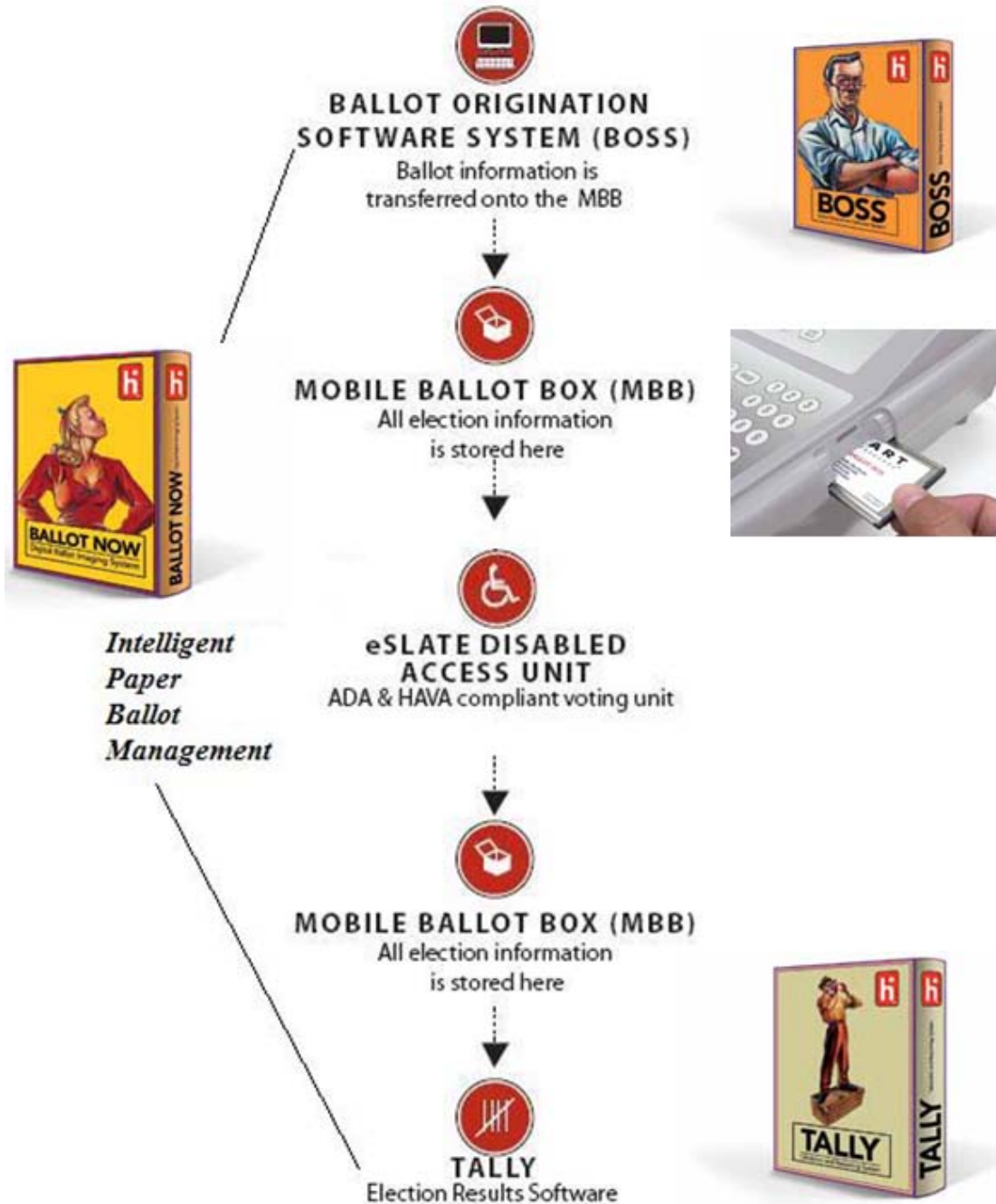
The commissioners unanimously approved the order this afternoon, lifting the usual competitive bidding requirements that would govern the purchase of machines and authorizing county officials to make deals with other local governments to borrow from their stock. The measure was amended to specify that the county would seek **eSlate machines** like those destroyed Friday in a fire.



# WHY USE THE PRE-DISASTER VOTING EQUIPMENT?



**The eSlate is compatible with the expensive Ballot Management Technology software that survived the fire and is used in the administration of Absentee Ballots and tabulating votes.**



**The eSlate voting system had been used in Houston since 2001 and Countywide since 2002.  
It is familiar to voters.**



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## County introduces electronic machines

JOHN WILLIAMS, Houston Chronicle Political Writer Staff

SAT 10/20/2001 Houston Chronicle, Section A, Page 31 Metfront, 3 STAR Edition

**Insurance covered the costs of replacing the voting equipment.**



**No time to certify a different method of voting.**



# Candidates' supported the plan



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## Houston Politics

Blogging City Hall and Harris County government with the Chronicle staff

### Candidate on buying new voting machines

Republican candidate [Stan Stanart](#) said he has no objection to Kaufman buying new machines on her way out the door.

"Ours are proven, the current ones from [Hart \(InterCivic\)](#). People in Harris County are comfortable on those. They know how they work," Stanart said. There is a big learning curve in getting voters accustomed to a new set of machines, Stanart said, so he supports replacing the voting machines with the same brand.

**More importantly, the use of the eSlate and paper ballot system used in absentee voting averted any legal issues which the county may have had to face by introducing unfamiliar voting equipment.**



# KEYS TO POST DISASTER ELECTION PLAN





# Anticipate equipment need



## Harris County bracing for higher-than-usual voter turnout



# Borrow voting equipment



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## Alternative voting options considered in wake of fire

by khou.com staff

khou.com

Posted on August 27, 2010 at 11:51 PM

Updated Friday, Aug 27 at 11:55 PM

HOUSTON -- After a devastating fire, the race is on to figure out how Harris County will run an election that's two months away.

**Hopefully the election equipment vendor has the capacity to manufacture lots of voting machines**



# Encourage Absentee and Early Voting



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## HARRIS COUNTY CLERK TO VOTERS: VOTE EARLY!

BY NAACPHOU, ON SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2010

From Harris County Clerk's Office: "on Friday, August 27, 2010, we experienced a devastating loss of our eSlate election equipment in a fire that destroyed our warehouse... We strongly encourage voters to cast their ballot during the Early Voting period beginning Monday, October 18 and ending Friday, October 29 or thru ballot by mail..." Source: <http://www.harrisvotes.com/>

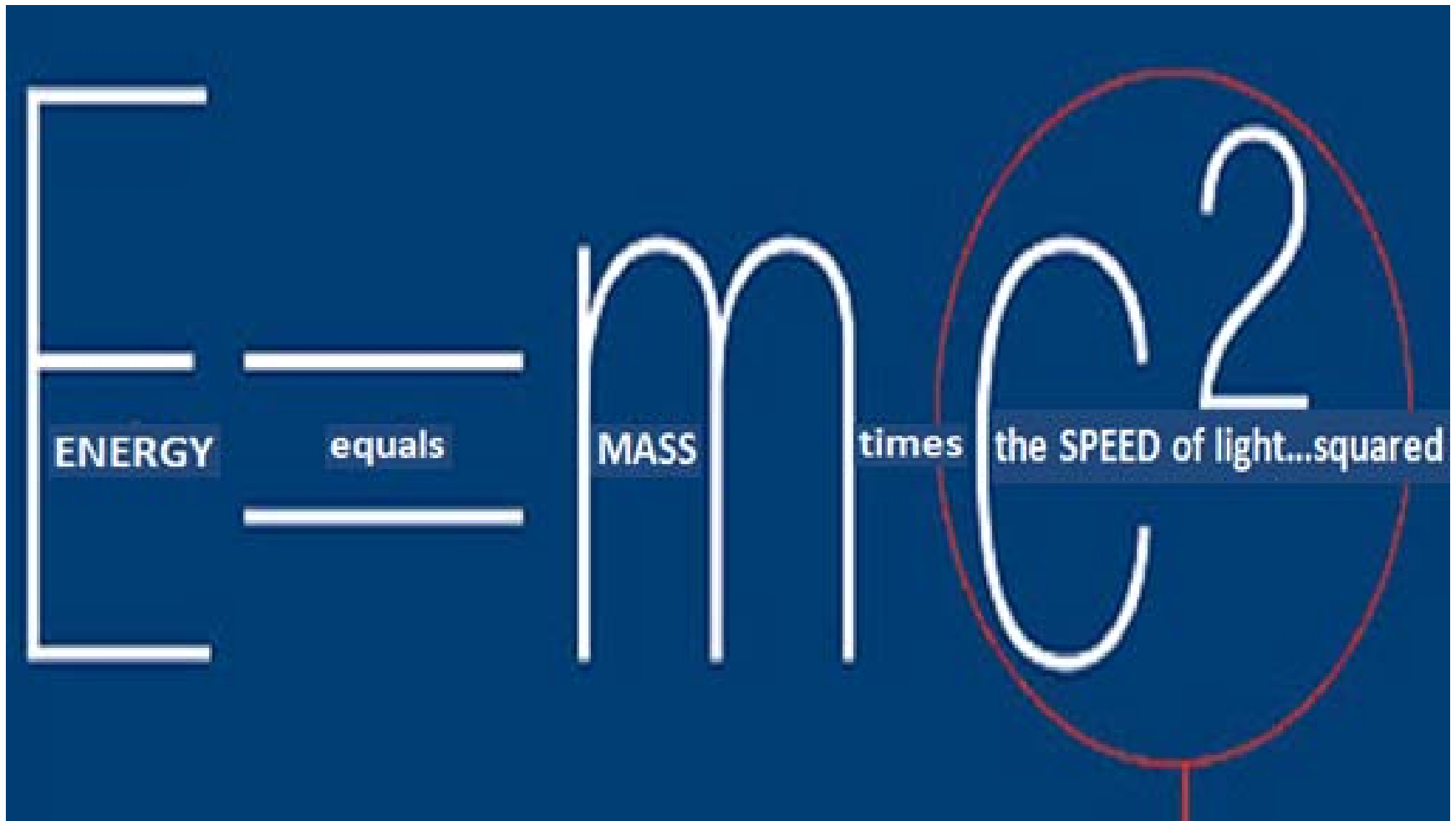
**Enact emergency election plan quickly to ensure compliance with the state and federal election calendar.**



# Well-organized speedy teamwork



# ELEMENTS IMPORTANT TO HARRIS COUNTY'S RECOVERY



# Election equipment will be stored at Reliant Arena

Tuesday, September 14, 2010



HOUSTON -- Reliant Arena will be the temporary warehouse for Harris County voting equipment.

**Quickly finding and readying a temporary location from where Harris County could gear-up for the election.**





**Swift execution of inter-local cooperation agreements between Harris County and various counties for loan of voting equipment.**



**Harris County clerk asks to borrow election equipment in wake of fire**

khou.com

Posted on September 3, 2010 at 6:13 PM

## Voting Booths Arrive



September 20, 2010

by: Bill Stamps

The first truck of voting equipment loaned to Harris County has arrived. has more. A number of neighboring counties are pitching in to help after a fire destroyed all of Harris County's voting machines.

**Prompt and secure delivery of borrowed, purchased and leased voting equipment**



# Election Day Equipment ready for Delivery to Precincts!



10/19/2010

# Election Judge JBCs, paper ballots, poll books and supplies ready for pickup!



# THE RESULTS OF HARRIS COUNTY'S PLAN TO OBTAIN VOTING EQUIPMENT



# County geared up for election with donated machines



Posted: Monday, September 20, 2010 12:00 am | Updated: 11:59 pm, Sat Nov 20, 2010.

**Overall, 11 counties provided 384 JBCs, 1009 eSlates and 266 eSlate DAUs. The vast majority of the equipment was obtained about a month after the fire.**

STEVE MARK

A relieved Harris County Clerk Beverly Kaufman stands with replacement equipment for Harris County's general election.

ap

**In addition, other non-eSlate counties provided 1,675 ballot boxes with locks and keys and 4,175 voting booths to make the implementation of the paper ballot option on Election Day possible**



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## Bexar offers old voting equipment to fire-stricken county

By John W. Gonzalez

Published 10:17 p.m., Tuesday, August 31, 2010



Bexar County elections officials extended a helping hand Tuesday to counterparts in Houston, where a warehouse fire destroyed most of Harris County's voting equipment last week.

## Suntron Corporation, Hart InterCivic Complete Voting Machines for Harris County's 2010 General Election

Marketwire News Releases

Published: 11/01/10 05:00 AM EDT

4,800 New Voting Machines Delivered On-Time Following Devastating August Warehouse Fire



**Election equipment vendor Hart InterCivic worked around the clock to deliver new equipment on time for election**

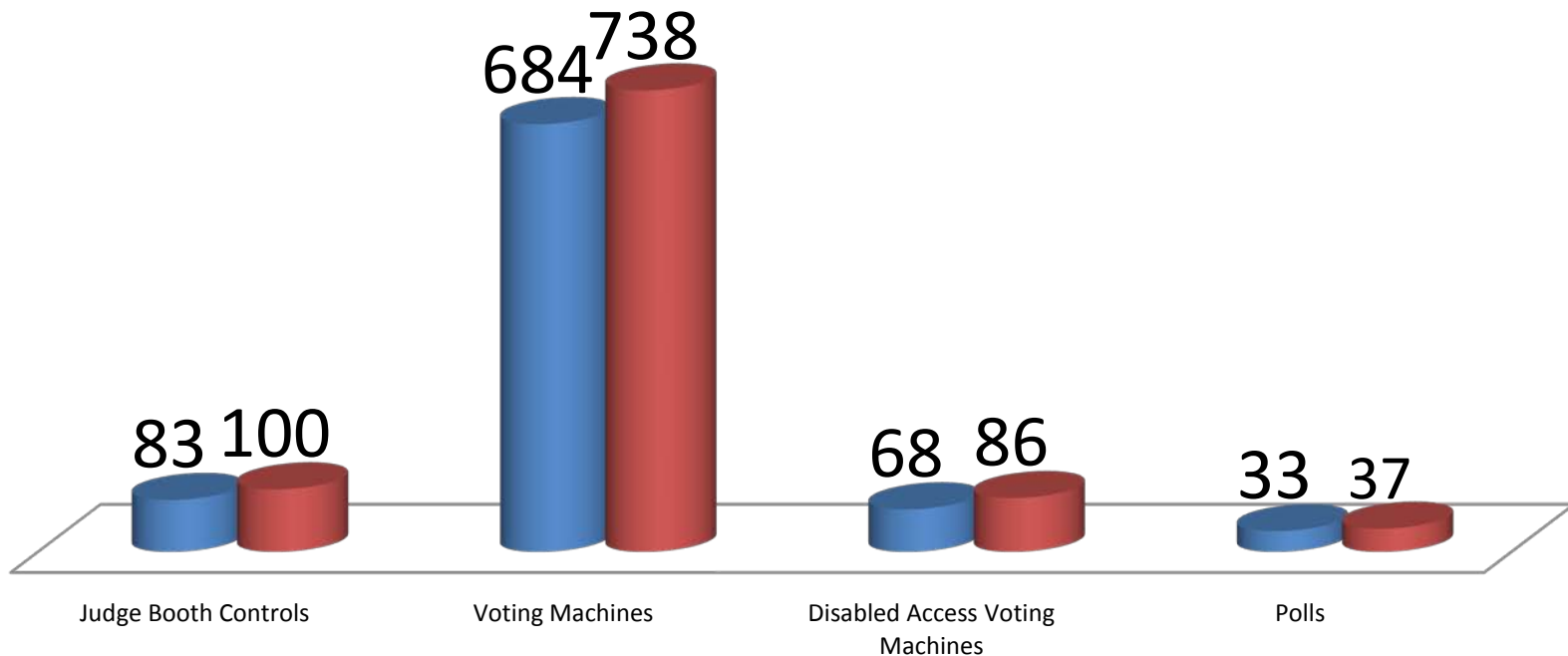


**Quick, efficient and smart implementation of a post-disaster emergency election plan by the Harris County Clerk's office ensured a legal election in Harris County.**



# The deployment of voting equipment in Harris County during the early voting period in the 2010 election was equal to the 2006 mid-term election.

- Nov. 2006 Early Voting Period
- Nov. 2010 Early Voting Period



**The use of electronic voting machines and paper ballots and privacy booths provided Harris County voters virtually the same number of election day voting booths per a poll as in the previous mid-term election.**

	Polling Locations	Judge Booth Controls	Voting Machines	Disabled Access Voting Machines	Paper Ballots	Paper Ballot Privacy Booths	Total Voting Booths Available Per a Poll
<b>Nov. 2006 Election Day Equipment Allocation</b>	731	1,462	5,461	731	0	0	<b>8.4</b>
<b>Nov. 2010 Election Day Equipment Allocation</b>	736	1,472	3,791	736	610,000	933	<b>7.4</b>

# Harris County met the challenge of replacing the lost voting equipment.



feel something

kuhf houston public radio



## Elections Officials Say They're Ready



November 1, 2010

by: **Bill Stamps**

Thousands of Houstonians are expected to head to the polls tomorrow. Harris County Elections officials aren't expecting any problems, but say they're prepared for whatever might arise. Bill Stamps spoke with County Clerk Beverly Kaufman who is presiding over her last election.

listen now:

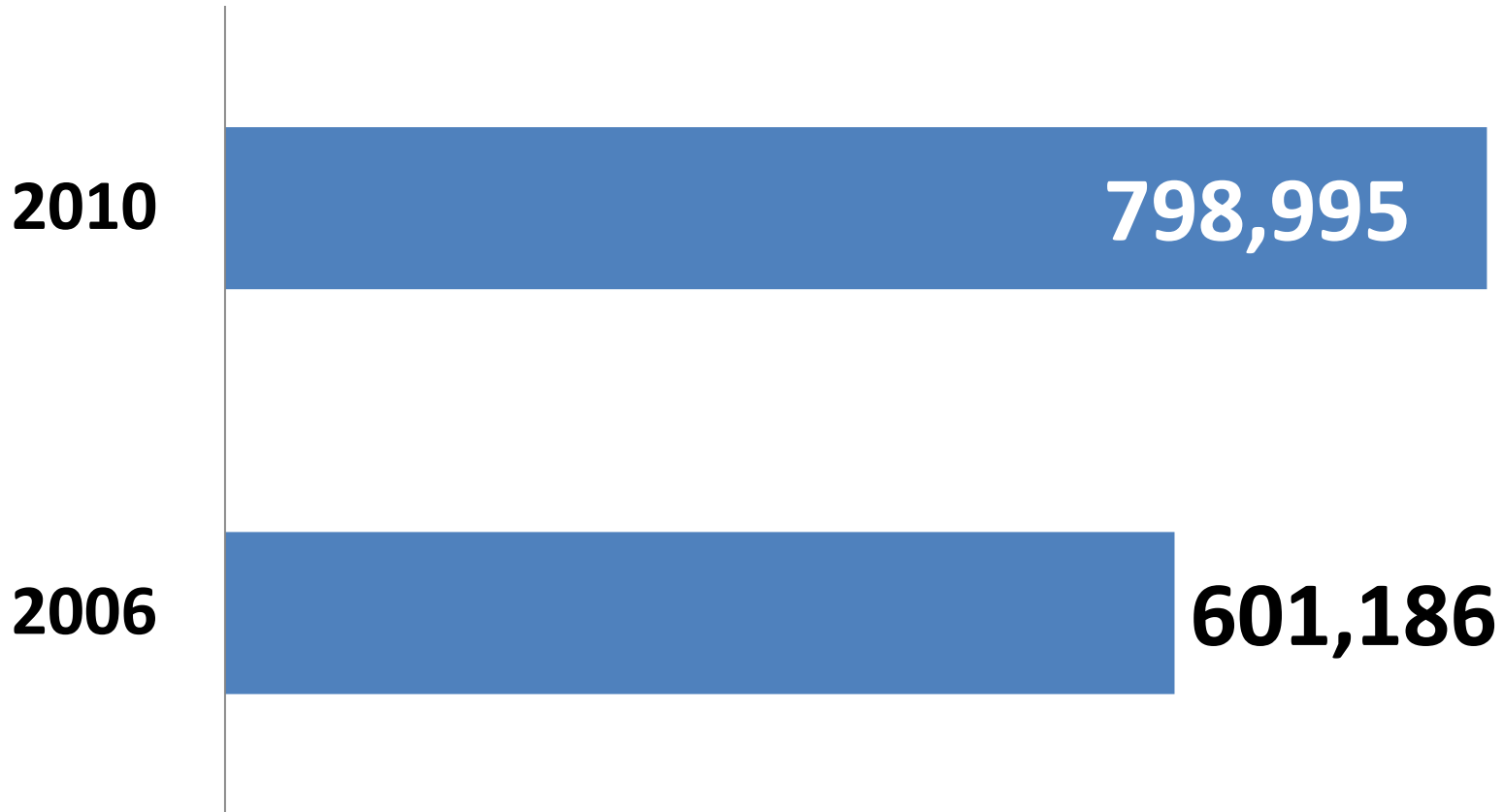


# THE RESULTS

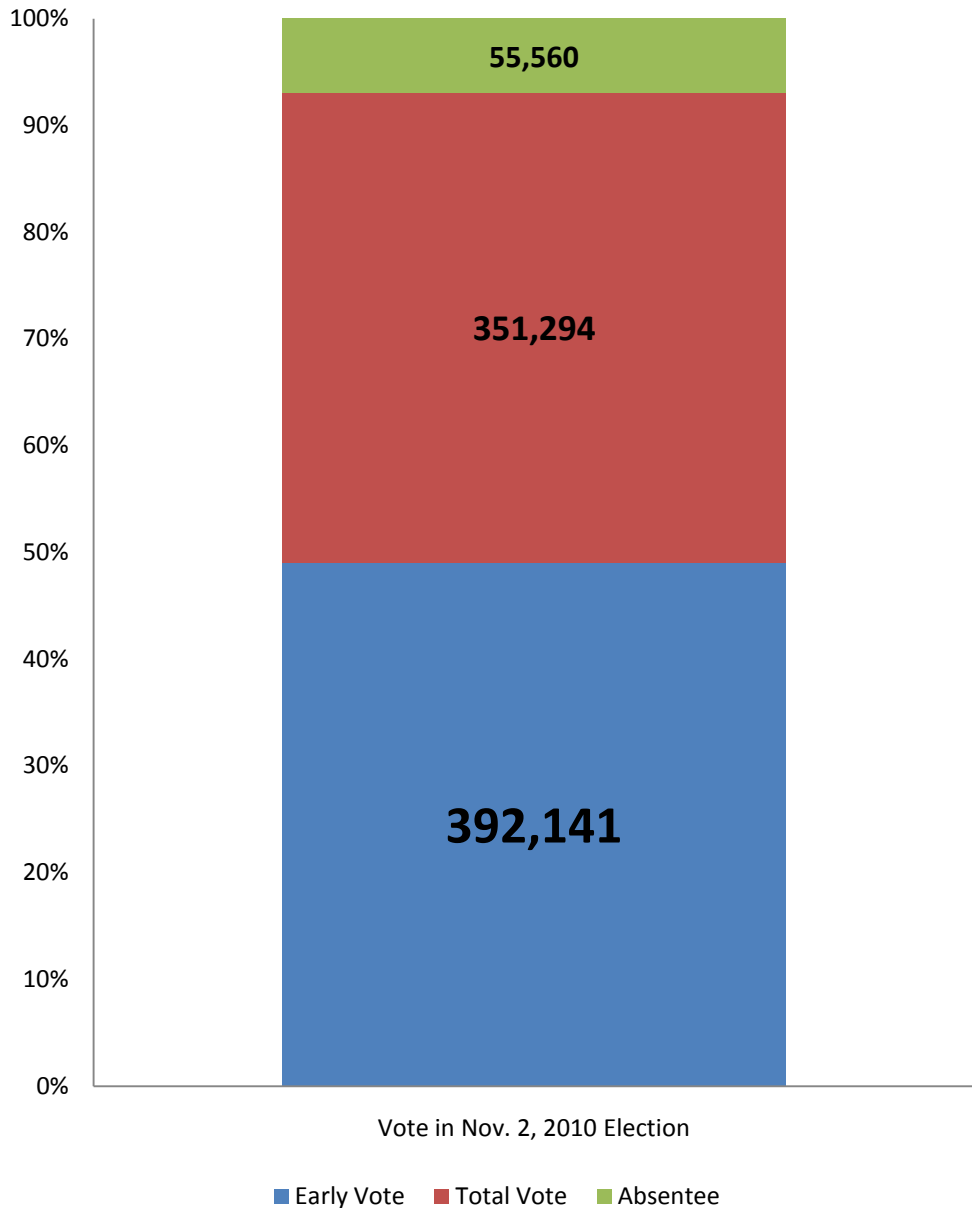


**In the 2010 mid-term election in Harris County, the vote was up 33 percent compared to 2006.**

**Vote in last two mid-term elections in Harris County**



**Approximately half of the 798,995 voters who participated in the 2010 midterm election in Harris County opted to vote during the early voting period.**



**The early voting result underlines the importance of the County Clerk's office emphasis to conduct early voting in manner which was familiar to voters.**

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

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## Harris County breaks early-voting records for non-presidential election year





**On Election Day, the eSlate electronic voting system was the principal method of voting in Harris County. Still, paper ballots were also deployed at every poll, but only 9,634 voters (2.8%) chose to vote via the paper option.**






# THE PRAISE: PUBLIC ACCOLADES



# Local compliments for chief election officer of Harris County.

 **chron** | Editorial

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 2 Comments  Recommend  4

## Job well done: Veteran Harris County Clerk Kaufman retires after a crowning achievement

Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle  
Jan. 5. 2011. 7:40PM



# From Blaze to Praise



## THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

2010

Voting Officials Delivered Despite Losing Machines

by Julian Aquilar | 11/3/2010

**Statewide acknowledgement of meeting the challenge of affording timely and equal access to the voting process to Harris County's 1.9 million registered voters.**

## **A Disaster can bring about reflection.**

- ✓ Staff experienced in emergency management can facilitate recovery
- ✓ Precautionary work measures minimize the impact of a disaster
- ✓ Budget constraints impact a County's ability to protect voting equipment from disaster
- ✓ Nothing can be done to entirely eliminate the perils posed by unpredictable factors
- ✓ County Judges and Commissioners can be counted on to act in the public's best interest
- ✓ When a catastrophe strikes, Texans are always ready and willing to help.

# Conclusion

- ✓ Approximately 800,000 individuals voted in the Nov. 2, 2010 election in Harris County. Half of those persons voted during the early voting period.
- ✓ The majority of the voting equipment during the conduct of early voting was borrowed.
- ✓ Overall, almost 30 percent of voting machines used in Harris County during the conduct of the Nov. 2, 2010 election were provided by other counties.

Thanks to sister counties and our vendor Hart InterCivic, Harris County went ...

## From Blaze to Praise