

Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Debrief

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Recap

- Roger Parent passed away on November 29, 2016 creating a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly
- Writ of election issued on February 3, 2017
- Advance voting held February 24 to 28
- Election day on March 2
- Final count conducted on March 14
- Writ returned on March 25



Final Results

Ryan Meili, N.D.P. – 2,723

Brent Penner, Saskatchewan Party – 2,004

Darrin Lamoureux, Liberal Party – 183

David Prokopchuk, P.C. Party – 64

Shawn Setyo, Green Party – 53



Numbers

- Estimated eligible voters in Saskatoon Meewasin = 12,700
- Registered voters as of February 21, 2017 = 12,121
 - 95.44 percent of eligible voters registered in advance of event (does not include registrations taken at the time of voting)
- Total votes cast = 5,036
 - 1,736 advance votes (34.5 percent)
 - 101 absentee votes
 - 31 homebound votes

Meewasin Turnout

Constituency	Event	% of Registered Voters who Voted	% of Eligible Voters who Voted
Saskatoon Meewasin	2017 By-Election	41.55%	39.7%
	2016 General Election	57.6%	55.3%

Historical

Constituency	Event	% of Registered Voters who Voted
Lloydminster	2014 By-Election	40%
	2011 General Election	40%
Saskatoon Northwest	2010 By-Election	56%
	2007 General Election	81%
Regina Douglas Park	2009 By-Election	62%
	2007 General Election	84%
Saskatoon Riversdale	2009 By-Election	56%
	2007 General Election	75%

Discussion

What do you think about high advance voting numbers?

- What do you think the impact is on...
 - Political parties?
 - Candidates?
 - Elections Saskatchewan?
 - Poll workers?
 - Media?

What do you think about voter turnout overall?

Innovations

- By-elections are often the only time for an election management body to test new ways of serving stakeholders more effectively
 - Introducing new processes and procedures during a general election is not ideal but sometimes unavoidable
- By-Election Communique dated January 27, 2017 included initial list of planned innovations

Planned Innovations

1. Pilot electronic registration at Personal Care Homes
2. Pilot a “common auditor”
3. Pilot e-transfer to pay election workers
4. Test a Parallel Process for e-poll books at advance polls
5. Pilot technology to confirm residency at the hospital poll
6. Pilot fabric ballot boxes for mobile polls

Voter Registration

- Permanent register allowed for extremely high voter registration numbers (95 percent+)
 - Eliminated need to conduct any door-to-door enumeration activities
- Analyzed constituency and identified several areas with low registration and/or high turnover
 - residential addresses in these areas received a mail out with information on how to register
 - Also targeted student housing (SK Polytech) in the constituency
 - Received registration response from 5.4 percent for first group of residential addresses and 6.4 percent for the SK Polytech category

Personal Care Home Voter Registration (Innovation #1)

- Piloted a new approach
- Registration teams were provided with laptops and portable printers
- Residents who were not already registered were registered
- All residents received VICs immediately
- Very well received by voters and staff in personal care homes as well as by registration team
- Alleviates issues of managing mail delivery to these facilities
- Very successful and will be implemented for all events going forward

Relationship with RPPs and Candidates

- Built on relationships developed between ESK and RPPs over the past few years
- ESK was confident that any issues raised would be dealt with quickly and professionally by RPPs
- Very few issues overall – those that were raised were similar to those raised during the GE
- Candidate representatives and their rights and responsibilities at the polls continues to be an issue and we need to find better ways of education both the representatives and election workers

Election Expense Returns

- Significant effort put into improving guides for business managers and auditors
- Created a sample guide with complete documentation and posted on ESK website
- Updated forms to simplify and clarify
- Provided two email reminders with tips and suggestions to business managers
- Impact of this effort is still unknown as candidate election expense returns have just been received

Election Expense Returns – Audit (Innovation #2)

- Legislation requires all election expense returns to be audited
- Experience from the past two GEs has been that these audits are not providing value
 - 24 percent (65 of 268) candidate returns from the past GE were “nil”
 - Another 16 percent (44 of 268) had combined donations/expenses of less than \$2,500
 - \$177,000 spent reimbursing for audit of candidate returns during last GE
- One idea for the by-election was to identify and train a common auditor who would develop expertise which would result in better quality audits
- This was not implemented and we will continue to pursue solutions

Election Worker Payroll (Innovation #3)

- Currently all election workers are paid by cheque
- Many issues with workers receiving their cheques:
 - undeliverable mail
 - workers moving and not providing forwarding address
 - incorrect spelling of names, etc.
- Potential solution was offering the option to be paid by e-transfer
- Were not able to update systems and put processes in place in time for the by-election but are currently testing e-transfer files with our bank and payroll provider
- Will be offered to workers for next event

Discussion

What were your experiences as registered political parties during the Meewasin by-election?

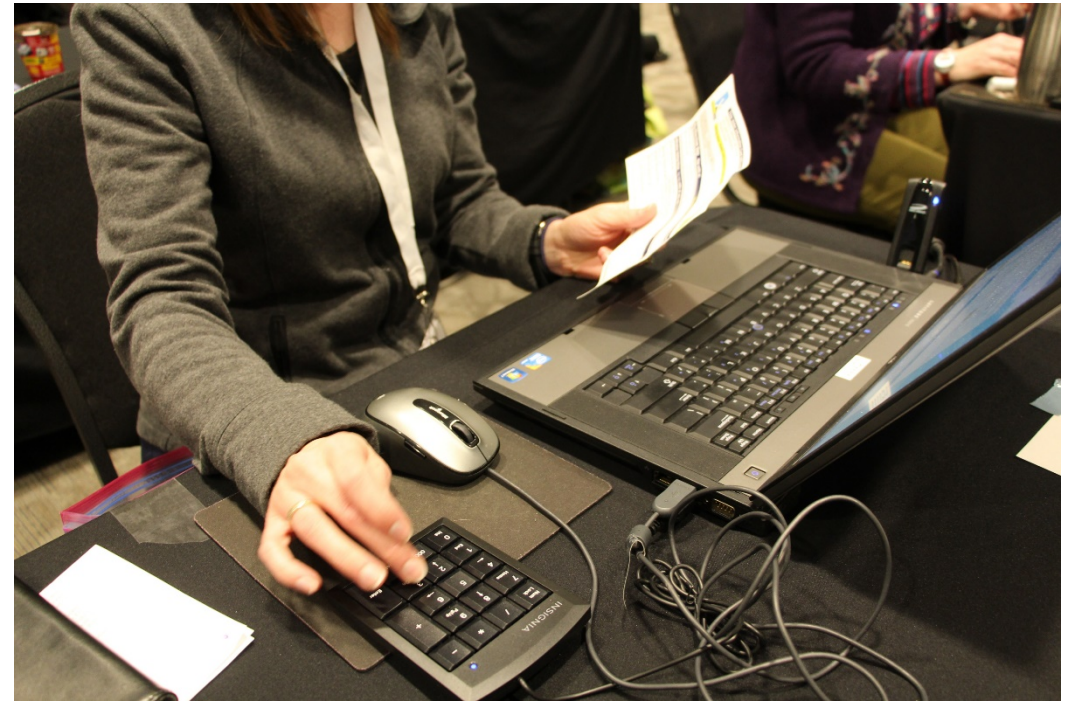
How would you describe the working relationship between our offices?

Did you have any specific concerns or issues you want to see addressed?

Operational Overview

- Experienced RO and EC in place although uncertainty surrounding date caused difficulties
- Difficulty securing polling locations also due to uncertainty surrounding dates
- Continued to experience significant poll worker turnover – may be the “new normal”
- Processes surrounding homebound voting need work
 - Clarification of roles – ESK vs. RPPs
 - Counting homebound votes

E-poll Books (Innovation #4)



E-poll Books

- Tested electronic poll books at both advance poll locations
- Was a parallel process and paper poll books were the “real” record
- Successful first test of e-poll book application – more accurate, much quicker and more efficient
- Advance poll voter strike off was immediate which would eliminate the need for workers to spend hours every night crossing off names
- Positive reviews from workers and voters
- Important proof of concept

Other Innovations (Innovation #5 and #6)

- Using technology to confirm residency in hospital polls was piloted by providing teams with laptops and portable data sticks
 - Overall worked well as it eliminated the need for workers to search for addresses in the Directory of Communities
 - Issues with data sticks losing connectivity so may train workers on how to use their own smart phones to perform the same task
- Fabric ballot boxes much easier for election workers to carry in and out of mobile polls and homebound voting locations

Discussion

What innovation items should be considered in future by-elections?

What potential innovations are most important to you as registered political parties?

By-Election Readiness

- ESK is prepared to run a by-election as needed until August 4, 2019, the legislated deadline
- Lockdown date of June 30, 2017 has been set
 - Any by-election between June 30, 2017 and a yet to be determined future date will be run using currently defined processes
 - Allows for disciplined planning
 - Ensures an election management body can administer a by-election while maintaining focus on core tasks of closing out previous election and preparing for the next

Questions?