

2010

Nuts and Bolts!

A PRECINCT COMMITTEE MEMBERS' GUIDE
TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL ELECTION

Organize the whole state—so everyone will be brought to the polls. Divide the county into small districts & appoint in each a sub-committee. Make a perfect list of all the voters & ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote. Keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters & have them talked to by those in whom they have the most confidence... And on Election Day, see that everyone is brought to the polls!

—Abraham Lincoln



Republican Party of Florida

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AN OVERVIEW: THE COUNTY REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In Florida, The County Republican Executive Committee is the grassroots of the political party organization. Precinct committee members are elected directly by Republican voters in each precinct every two years and represent these voters on the County Executive Committee. The precinct committee members on the REC in turn elect the County Chairman and other committee officers. The County REC Chairman has the overall responsibility for the Party's day-by-day operation with support and guidance from the State Committeeman and State Committeewoman.

DUTIES OF COUNTY REC MEMBERS

At a minimum, a precinct REC Member should...

- **Attend all REC meetings**, participate in sub-committee meetings as appropriate and perform all statutory and by-law duties (e.g. filling vacancies in elected county offices).

As a leader of the Republican Party, a member of the REC has certain duties. In most counties, the RECs normally meet once a month. The first meeting following the primary election is the organizational meeting when the County REC Chairman and other officers are elected.

- **Maintain a precinct organization** and advise the Chairman of potential projects and concerns of voters in the precinct.
- **Assist, as appropriate, in fundraising activities.** Although a County Finance Committee raises money for the County REC and its candidates, there may be times when a REC Member's assistance is sought. Whether it is attending the Lincoln Day Dinner, summer picnic or fall rally, all the projects planned and work done by the Finance Committee will be of little value unless events are supported by the "party regulars."
- **Encourage poll workers, precinct captains and all registered Republicans in the precinct to participate in Republican activities...** such as the county organization, local GOP clubs—Florida Federation of Republican Women, Young Republicans, etc. Participate in voter registration events, phone banks, volunteer recruitment efforts, door-to-door, and work with RPOF Regional Field Coordinator on other activities and events.
- **Show support and enthusiasm for the Party and encourage Republicans in precincts to become active on a year-round basis.**

SUMMARY

- Attend all REC Meetings
- Maintain a strong and winning Precinct Organization
- Support Party Functions
- Work Voter Registration Events, Phone Banks, and Door-to-Door activities
- Encourage participation by Republicans in your precinct and county

NOTES:

ORGANIZING THE PRECINCT—YOU GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY

The most important thing to know in order to “one-up” the loyal opposition is this—you gotta know the territory.

As a precinct leader, you are the identified Republican Party “salesman” in your neighborhood, precinct, and community. So as you organize your precinct, “knowing the territory” applies as you “sell” our Republican candidates.

Knowing your precinct is simply knowing what’s going on in your neighborhood.

- **What issues are important to your neighbors?**
- **How often do they vote?**
- **Can they be persuaded to vote via Absentee Ballot? Early Vote?**

The purpose of this Nuts & Bolts Manual is to provide you with basic information and guidelines you can modify and adapt to the makeup of your individual precinct. This manual is divided into sections, with each section containing “**Must Do**” and “**Take The Extra Step**” suggestions.

If you accomplish the “**Must Do**” guidelines, you will have organized your precinct in a way that you will make a difference for our Victory efforts and on Election Day. If you “**Take The Extra Step,**” you will be well on your way toward making your precinct one of the best in the state!

ORGANIZING THE PRECINCT

MUST DO

GOAL: Your goal is to increase the share of the vote for GOP candidates through voter registration and voter identification. As you increase the share of the vote for GOP candidates you also need to **maximize the Republican vote**, which could make the margin of difference in the overall election.

GETTING THE LAY OF THE LAND

You already know a lot about your precinct, but it's not hard to learn more. Use your relationship with your RPOF Regional Field Coordinator. Your Field Coordinator should be able to supply you with a list of registered voters by street. Using these tools, take a closer look at your precinct:

- **Geographic Data:** Note where new subdivisions are being developed; identify any retirement communities which might be sources for absentee voters; are there major shopping districts where you might be able to distribute campaign literature?
- **Economic and Social Data:** Analyze who lives in your precinct: What types of occupations and incomes are represented (Snowbirds, white or blue collar workers etc.)? Are the residents in your precinct primarily homeowners or renters? Do a majority of your constituents live on farms, in subdivisions, apartments, or single family homes? Are any ethnic groups represented? Is there a mix of any or all of these?
- **Political Data:** After you become familiar with the geographic and social makeup of your precinct, try to ascertain its political demography from voter lists you obtained from your County Chair or RPOF Field Coordinator.
 - Do particular streets, housing developments or apartments have a high, low or average percentage of registered voters?
 - Do any of these neighborhoods within your precinct have a majority of registered Republicans or Democrats, or are most people "Independents"?
 - How did your precinct break down in 2004 and 2006, and 2008?
- **Voter Lists/Phone Numbers:** Once you have familiarized yourself with your voter list, obtain a walk list and phone list of RPOF GOTV voters in your precinct. Put together a list of volunteer prospects to help with Victory Programs in 2010. This job will be work well done for use during All-Star Saturdays, Super Saturday, M*A*S*H Attacks and other activities and events throughout the election process.

THE RESULT: Having analyzed the geographic, economic, social and political demography of your precinct you should now have a good feel for it. If you have questions or difficulty in establishing this information and need help, contact your County Chair or your RPOF Regional Field Coordinator. Your Field Coordinator can help you determine how many Republican votes you will need in your precinct on Election Day.

SUMMARY

- Ask your County Chair, RPOF Field Coordinator or consult VoterVault for a current list of registered voters and a map of your precinct.
- Analyze the voter list for geographic, economic, social and political data.
- Look up the phone numbers of the registered Republicans to get them involved with the Victory Programs.

NOTES:

MAKE YOUR JOB EASIER: GET SOME HELP

MUST DO

GOAL: Now that you have a general picture of whom the people in your precinct are and how they are likely to vote, it's time to set a real goal:

- To locate Republican-leaning residents and ensure that they are registered to vote.
- To guarantee all Republicans vote on Election Day.

RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

To make your job easier, you need to get some help. While it may seem difficult at first to recruit good workers, you will find a few die-hard Republicans who will be happy to lend a hand.

Call your County Chair or RPOF Regional Field Coordinator to gain access to volunteer lists. Other sources include people who have worked for individual candidates in their campaigns. And don't overlook your personal friends – and their children. Look for people who have been registered Republicans for a long time; young people who are new to the political process and want to become involved in it; retired people who are looking for a way to fill their time and to stay active in the community.

One of the best ways to organize your precinct is to recruit one or more “neighborhood” leaders whose responsibilities should include:

- Keep an eye out for new neighbors who lean Republican, and get them registered to vote.
- Talk to their neighbors to find out what they think about the candidates and to determine if the Democrats are organizing any activities in the precinct.
- Make sure people who travel for their jobs get absentee ballots.
- Help find phone bank and yard sign locations.
- Go door-to-door and distribute literature for RPOF Victory Programs.
- Notify you of important events such as church suppers, neighborhood street parties, important ball games, etc.
- Telephone registered Republicans and the GOTV Universe urging them to vote for your candidates. People who might not be physically able to go door-to-door may be happy to telephone their neighbors.

None of these activities involve a great deal of time – they are basically “over the back fence gossip” – but if accomplished, they can make a difference between winning and losing.

TYPES OF VOTER CONTACT ACTIVITY

TYPE	IMPACT	TARGETING	COST	RESOURCES
Lit Drop	Low	Some	Low	People, Time
Yard Signs	Low	None	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Newsletters	High	Great	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Billboards	Medium	Little	High	Money
Door to Door	High	Great	Low	People, Time
Coffees	Medium	Great	Moderate	Time, Money
Town Halls	High	Great	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Shopping Center	Low	Little	Moderate	People, Time
Street Tours	Low	Little	Moderate	People, Time
Events/Booth	Medium	Some	Moderate	People, Time, Money
Rallies	High	Great	High	People, Time, Money
Precinct Walk	High	Great	Low	People, Time, Money
Phones	High	Great	Low	People, Time, Money
TV	High	Great	High	Money
Radio	High	Great	High	Money
Direct Mail	High	Great	High	Money

SUMMARY

- Recruit volunteers from registered Republicans, friends, neighbors, workers from candidates' campaigns, county volunteer files
- Tell your volunteers in advance what you want them to do
- Engage volunteers in Voter Registration, Voter Identification, Volunteer Recruitment, Phone Banks, and Door to Door. Sign them up to be a Poll Watcher, volunteer for Absentee Ballot and Early Vote work, become a GOTV Volunteer, and work for the 72 Hour Program.

NOTES:

TAKE THE EXTRA STEP...

VOTER IDENTIFICATION & VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

It is always a good idea to conduct Voter Identification and Voter Registration Drives in your precinct. While we have discussed the steps in identifying potential Republican voters, an Identification Survey will allow you to “microtarget” and identify those voters who are staunch Republicans or who might be persuaded to vote for Republican candidates. A survey will also help you identify people who may have special needs (absentee ballots, transportation difficulties, etc).

HERE’S HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL:

To begin, contact your County Chair or RPOF Field Coordinator for assistance in obtaining an up-to-date printout of the precinct’s “voter walking list” and a supply of the materials you will need to register voters. Assemble kits for each volunteer.

Volunteers: The most important ingredient to a successful door-to-door survey is having enough people to do the job and do it right. To be successful, you will need to hold a short training session to explain the canvass and hand out the individual kits. During the training session:

- Explain what is to be accomplished and how to fill out the cards, voter registration applications, bubble sheets, etc.
- Go over the Survey/Script so that people become familiar with it enough that they will not need to read it.
- Send your walkers out in “teams” of 2 or 3—Driver and Walkers.

A few helpful tips for callers and walkers:

- Call at homes between 10:00 AM and 9:00 PM.
- Conduct the interview at the door, not inside the house.
- Be brief and be a good listener. Be prepared to answer questions (Where do I vote? When is the election?)
- NEVER get into arguments or make derogatory remarks about Democrat candidates. Don't make statements you can't prove.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION SURVEY SCRIPT

All volunteers should be briefed on their "pitch" prior to getting involved with grassroots activities. Here is a sample script, which can be adapted to your own precinct.

"Hello, is _____ available? My name is _____ and I'm a local volunteer for the McCain campaign. Do you generally consider yourself a Republican or a Democrat? (If the respondent is a Democrat, thank them pleasantly and then terminate the interview. If the respondent is a Republican, continue):

1. "Are you registered to vote?" (If the person is not registered, offer to register them right now).
2. "Are there any other residents in your home of voting age?"
3. "Will anyone in your residence require an absentee or military ballot or assistance in voting?"
4. "Would you be willing to assist the Republican Party of Florida as a volunteer?"

Thank the person for their time.

POST-SURVEY FOLLOW THROUGH

After the precinct survey is complete, and volunteers have returned, note any special information. If there are completed Voter Registration Forms, be sure to get them to the Supervisor of Elections within 10 days, as it is your legal responsibility to do so.

KEEPING IN TOUCH...HAVE SOME FUN!

A chance meeting in the grocer, at church or a ballgame, or an occasional phone call will usually be sufficient. Or you might want to have a get-together or house party for the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, just to let your volunteers know they are part of an important, organization of like-minded people. Now that you have a precinct structure in place, you may wish to capitalize on it by doing a couple of things during the summer and fall to increase Republican identity and activity in your precinct and solidify the base GOP vote. Make it FUN to be a Republican in your precinct. For example, ***Plan A Party!*** Most people are friendly and enjoy meeting new neighbors. They also like to know the people they vote for, whether candidates or officeholders.

You need not plan an elaborate or expensive function...a late afternoon ice cream social or early evening beer-and-brats supper with a specific time limit will appeal to most people.

SUMMARY

- Organize your materials
- Recruit and train your volunteers
- Plan your social event like you would plan a private party in your home
- Contact candidates and officeholders well in advance with the date of your event
- Recruit volunteers to help get a respectable turnout
- Pay attention to protocol: know who the candidates, officeholders and other dignitaries are, so you can make introductions go smoothly.

NOTES:

GOTV— GET OUT THE VOTE ACTIVITIES

MUST DO

If you have done the basic “must do” work in your precinct during the spring and summer, you should now be in excellent shape for the most important part of your job as a precinct committee member: Getting the Republican vote out!

DOOR-TO-DOOR & LITERATURE DROPS

One of the most universal campaign techniques is “door-to-door.” Candidates count on volunteers to help them get their message to voters. While many counties mail candidate information and slate cards to voters in their GOTV universe, door knocking is without a doubt an extremely effective reinforcement of the GOP slate card. Door knocking has extra the advantage of providing additional information on the candidates’ experience and programs. Therefore, getting this job done is probably the most important single thing you can do.

Volunteers:

If you have not asked anyone to help you in your precinct up to this point, now is the time to get some help in two major areas:

- **Preparing the literature for distribution**
- **Taking it Door-To-Door.** This can be accomplished by your cadre of precinct volunteers. If you cannot get the help you need, consider enlisting TARs, Boy or Girl Scouts or other young people.

Stuffing Party: After you have gathered all the campaign material from the county and candidates, call on your booth workers and precinct volunteers and ask them to help you stuff the bags. This is best done at a central location in one session, if at all possible.

Maps: Working with your RPOF Regional Field Coordinator, be sure you have the most recent map of your precinct showing all the streets in it. A week or so before the day of the literature distribution, make copies of smaller sections of the maps and mark them with highlighter so your door-to-door volunteers will know exactly the territory they are supposed to cover. Make enough copies so each volunteer has one.

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

On the day of the literature drop have the volunteers meet in a central location for their supplies: the map of the area they are to cover and enough stuffed plastic bags or door-hangers so they don’t run out.

After your troops are in the field, you or another volunteer familiar with the precinct should drive around, making sure everyone has plenty of supplies and to see that no one has any problems.

After the drop is completed, check with each volunteer to be sure they covered their assigned areas and ask them if they had enough literature. Keep a record of the amount of literature each volunteer used in a specific area to help you make a more accurate count for next time.

SUMMARY

- Contact your County Headquarters or RPOF Regional Victory Office and candidates for door-to-door materials several weeks in advance of the election
- Recruit volunteers for stuffing and literature distribution the weekend before the election
- Prepare maps for each volunteer so each home receives material
- At the end of the literature drop, check to be sure all assigned areas were covered

NOTES:

NO PRIZE – JUST THE THRILL OF VICTORY!!

Throughout this manual, we have emphasized the importance of:

- Knowing your precinct;
- Organizing your precinct by creating a plan to maximize the Republican voter turnout;
- Carrying out that plan.

No manual can prepare you for every situation. Things may not work out in “real life” as well as they sound on paper. You may not be able to finish all the work that needs to be done, keep at first, you may have a hard time recruiting volunteers. **But if you have tried to accomplish just a few of the “MUST DO” activities we have described, you will have made a difference.**

REMEMBER: You are part of a large and important organization. The Republican Party of Florida and your local REC place a very high value on the work you do in your precinct and your county. **And we hope on Election Night, when you check the returns in your precinct, you will know the thrill of victory!**

ONE VOTE DOES COUNT!

The enormous power of just one single vote has often been demonstrated throughout history. The course of nations has been changed because one important vote was cast...or not cast.

You may think that one vote, cast among thousands or millions in a county, state or federal election, cannot possibly count.

But one vote may swing an entire precinct into a candidate's column. And, it is often at the precinct level where elections are won or lost.

One Vote...decided that Americans would speak English rather than German.

One Vote...made Texas part of the U.S.

One Vote...saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.

One Vote...elected Rutherford B. Hayes President, and the man in the Electoral College who cast that vote was an Indiana Congressman elected by one vote.

One Vote...made Adolph Hitler head of the Nazi Party.

One Vote...Does it count?