

## Flip the Camera: Tell Your Own Story

Washoe County, Nevada

*#Relentless Creativity*

Population: 430,000

### Innovation

#### Criteria:

- Initiative fundamentally changed a process, product or service (fundamental)

OR

- Initiative builds upon existing knowledge to improve a product, process or service (incremental)
- The initiative substantially stretched the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.

### Describe Your Innovation

*(When and how did this innovation get started? Do also detail how the program or policy innovative, how it has changed previous processes, products, or services, and how it has substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.)*

Where are the results? That's the ONLY question people have during election night – and making those results available to the public in every way possible is the mission of the Washoe County Communications Division. Election night coverage is something that everyone wants access to, and not just through their local TV news channels. On that night, we have the information everyone wants from our Registrar of Voters Office. As a government entity, we pride ourselves on the fact that we present election results in an efficient and non-partisan way. The two things the public needs from an election: transparency and trust. In being as transparent as possible to our taxpayers, we decided to produce live coverage of our election night results from the time when the polls closed, until the last precinct results were posted for unofficial, final results. (Election results are final after the Board of Commission declares a canvass of the vote). For years, Washoe County has done extensive planning for media relations for election coverages through press conferences, media availabilities and handing out results sheets as they come off the printer on election night. What we were missing was giving the results directly to the public, live, as they are tallied in the Registrar of Voters Office. On June 12, 2018, we changed that narrative and broadcast the entire process for the Primary Election: from the 79 polling locations in 558 precincts that were closed at 7 p.m., until the last precinct results came in. We've now flipped the camera, and scripts, on the way we tell our own story during election night here at Washoe County, Nevada.

## Collaboration

### Criteria:

- Initiative demonstrated engaging stakeholders both internal and external.
- Initiative demonstrated high performance teaming, breaking down internal silos.
- Strategic partnerships and or community networks were developed as a result of the initiative

In less than 200 words, what individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? What strategic partnerships and/or community networks, if any, were developed?

Nancy Leuenhagen, Washoe County Communications Director

Mark and Dana Hatjacks, Owner SoSuTV Communications Division, Washoe County

If a private consultant was used please describe in detail their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. Maintain a 100 word maximum.

N/A

## Significance

### Criteria:

- Initiative addresses an area of concern for the majority of local government organizations.
- Initiative can serve as a model and replicated in other jurisdictions.

Please describe the extent to which you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please also provide verification of the replication.

Creating an in house studio is replicable in any jurisdiction, as most (if not all) broadcast their meetings from either a live stream and/or a control room from their chambers where public meetings are held. Funding for these areas can be found in Capital Improvement, and in our case, franchise fees from Charter Communications for our Public Education Government Channel (PEG). If there is existing equipment to broadcast or stream a live meeting it can be enhanced and/or eventually replaced. With a switcher and a few cables, you can transform what you are already doing into an avenue to stream live content about your government organization. If there isn't existing equipment, the good news is, thanks to technology, it's now a lot smaller and often cheaper than it used to be.

## Effectiveness

### Criteria:

- Initiative addresses a community or organization need.
- Initiative has achieved tangible results.
- Initiative improved the organizational culture or the traditional approach to problem solving.
- Initiative has received recognition for its achievements, i.e. independent evaluation, national recognition, local press, etc.

**Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain?**

Many of the obstacles we encountered on this project came from the physical location of where we decided to place the studio. We needed to be close enough to our TV control room near the Washoe County Commission Chambers, and, remain on the 1st floor of our Administrative Complex Building A, which is the same building that houses the chambers. This is why it's so important to work with your own organizations facilities staff, and technology services team, as both need to be involved in the decision to where to locate the studio.

**What outcomes did this program or policy have? Could you share one or two objective measures that demonstrate these outcomes? Ultimately, how did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment?**

Evaluation/Results: As a first-time initiative to webcast an election, we successfully had a live feed the entire evening and attracted viewers.

- YouTube: Through use of YouTube for the webcast, we garnered 1,000 unique views of the live stream.
- Awareness & attitude: Awareness was achieved by the public watching the webcast directly or by viewing our promotion of the webcast on our website and social media channels.

Video Metrics for You Tube

- Total: 1,000 views of webcast on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt9FnKVEKa0>

Video Metrics for Social Media (only posts with link to webcast on Primary Election Day)

Facebook (1 post with webcast link):

- People reached: 832
- Clicks to watch video: 70 Intense planning occurred leading up to this webcast with Register of Voters staff, Technology Services (TS), Washoe311 customer service center, our contracted video vendor SoSu TV (WCTV), and our communications team. It also included SoSu TV working with our TS staff to secure infrastructure to allow live cameras in the Results Tally Area, and in our Washoe County TV (WCTV) studio – giving us the capability to switch live cameras back and forth from each room. Because cameras, cables and live coverage had never been done in these areas before, our advanced research and planning helped us identify areas that needed reinforcing i.e.: extra cables, camera angles, lighting, and identifying and fixing dead zones for streaming capabilities.

Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage.

Media Coverage (All with shots of WCTV Media Studio): This is a small sample of coverage from our Primary Election night. The RGJ link includes our live coverage from the WCTV studio where our election night results were broadcast:

- Reno Gazette Journal: <https://www.rgj.com/videos/news/2018/08/24/washoe-registrar-voters-address-voting-machine-problems-following-2018-primary-election/1086541002/>
- Ch. 2 KTVN (11pm): Election Night: Registrar of Voters: <http://www.ktvn.com/clip/14417531/11-pm-registrar-of-voters>
- Ch. 2 KTVN (7 pm): Election Night Voting Machines <http://www.ktvn.com/clip/14416928/7-pm-registrar-of-voters>

## Presentation

Criteria:

- Presentation will be delivered by a team.
- Presentation will be highly interactive and engaging.

## Example Social Media Post

Why is the comms. team wiped? They just streamed a produced live webcast of #PrimaryElection night to 1,000 viewers & conducted three press conferences all from their multi-purpose WCTV Studio #LocalGovImpacts #WashoeImpacts

**Please write an abstract or short description for your innovation that would make conference attendees say "Well, I need to attend this session!"**

One of my favorite things about going to a conference is to become inspired and learn to improve on best practices for government communications. Our session 'Flip the Camera: Tell Your Own Story' is a way for attendees to think differently about the ability to broadcast something other than a public meeting. Our example is election results, but you don't have to stop there. Our studio is also used for press conferences, producing executive staff videos for employees, unveiling new programs and departments within an organization, not to mention the ability to broadcast directly to constituents during crisis. Before the studio was complete, Washoe County had an area in the county which experienced severe, closed basin flooding. We needed a place to hold press conferences, and record them for playback, allowing citizens to hear what our subject matter experts had to say during this very crucial time period. Instead, we relied on the media to report our press conference, which was then chopped up into soundbites. Had we done these updates from our TV studio and recorded them, we could've replayed it and had it live on our website for citizens who wanted and/or needed more information.

**How will you make the session creative and unique?- How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?- Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.- What will attendees be able to have as an actionable "takeaway" from the session?**

Creative is what we do! Our communications division is an awarding-winning team, who will use the best of our visual videos and photos to create a fantastic presentation. In addition to a great marketing team, Dana, Mark and I have spent a combined 30 years in television broadcasting. Group activities could include putting people on camera to tell their own story, and/or mocking up a studio to show what little space and equipment is needed. Actionable takeaways will include learning how to produce, short, concise and good messaging, whether you have a TV studio or not.

**Anything else you would like to add?**

The key objective of the webcast was to provide real-time results tally and updates to the public on Primary Election night. As a first time initiative we had two questions: 1) can we provide content and go live for the entire evening, and 2) will people watch. The answers to both, were 'yes'.

While we strived to produce an organized, scheduled broadcast, we also knew we couldn't fill every minute with custom content. However, during an election night we knew that having a window into our Tally Results Area at the Registrar of Voters Office would be compelling enough to keep an audience's attention. We knew it wouldn't be a broadcast that was viewed from beginning to end, however, our metrics showed that citizens tuned in and came back throughout the night.