

2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ALL EYES FOCUSED ON PHILADELPHIA

The world watched the OPEX® Model 72™ crush
Philly's ballot opening challenges

OPEX®

// THE BACKGROUND

COVID-19 restrictions pushed the 2020 Pennsylvania Primary from April to June. By the time June 2020 rolled around, the presidential candidates had mostly been decided before Philadelphia had a chance to vote. Even so, Philadelphia saw 174,000 mail-in ballots in the June primary. To put this in perspective, in the 2016 Presidential Election, Philadelphia received only 15,000 mail-in ballots.

Two envelope slicers were purchased to help automate the mail opening process. It still took 11 days to open the 174,000 ballots. Philadelphia Election Officials immediately knew this approach wouldn't be adequate to handle the huge increase in mail-in ballots they anticipated seeing in the rapidly approaching general election.

// THE CHALLENGE

Other Pennsylvania state election officials were encouraging Philadelphia to purchase more scanners, but the Deputy City Commissioner and Chief Deputy Commissioner quickly realized in the primary that they had their greatest pinch point at opening and extracting secrecy envelopes and ballots. Pennsylvania is one of the few states in the 2020 election that mandated that ballots could not be processed until Election Day. Since they were expecting the volume of mail-in ballots to double, they knew they needed to do something different. After speaking with large counties across the U.S., it became clear that OPEX's Model 72 ballot extractor was the gold standard and the next step for Philadelphia in mail opening automation.

// KEY CHALLENGES



**THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FUELED A
MAIL-IN BALLOT SURGE**



**CONCERNS OF BEING ABLE TO
OPEN BALLOT ENVELOPES IN A
TIMELY MANNER**



**BALLOTS CANNOT BE PROCESSED
UNTIL ELECTION DAY**

// KEY RESULTS

750K

ENVELOPES OPENED IN THE
2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

5

DAYS TO PROCESS
ALL BALLOTS

200K

VOTERS WHO HAVE CHOSEN
VOTE-BY-MAIL AS PREFERRED
METHOD

// THE SOLUTION

As news crews descended on Philadelphia, the world watched Philadelphia process its ballots. Mail-in ballots accounted for fifty percent of the total received, or approximately 374,000 ballots. Because Pennsylvania has an inner (secrecy) envelope as well as an outer envelope that requires opening, the total number of envelopes that needed to be “quickly” opened and extracted actually numbered 750,000! To achieve this very challenging objective, Philadelphia county utilized 22 Model 72 ballot extractors.

If not for the addition of the OPEX Model 72 ballot extractors, Philadelphia would have needed a minimum of 110 volunteers, working nearly a month, to manually open the ballots. With the results of the election dependent upon the outcome in Philadelphia, it was imperative that these ballots be processed quickly. Because of the Model 72s, all ballots were processed in five days!

The **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION** came down to how **PHILADELPHIA** voted.

Keeping the country waiting a month for results would have been a PR nightmare.

// THE FUTURE

Over 200,000 voters have chosen vote-by-mail as their preferred method of voting and Philadelphia expects that number to increase in the coming years. With critical gubernatorial and Senate races in 2022, Philadelphia expects high turnout and continued growth in vote-by-mail.

The OPEX® Model 7™ is **NEXT GENERATION** for opening and extracting ballots. Contact us to hear more about this and other **ELECTION SUCCESS STORIES**.

OPEX®

HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT US. // digitizeyourdocuments.com // info@opex.com