

## Alternative Format Ballot (HTML) Generator

OakTree Digital has delivered an Alternative Format Ballot product and process to the Oregon Secretary of State's office which used it successfully for the 2008 Oregon Primary.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 included provisions to ensure that voters with disabilities are provided the opportunity to vote privately and independently and have equal access to the process. Oregon's HAVA officer contracted with OakTree Digital to deliver a conversion application to convert election data from Saber Software's Oregon Centralized Voter Registration (OCVR\*) system to W3C compliant HTML coding.

OakTree's Alternative Format Ballot (AFB) is designed to work alongside Oregon's vote by mail process to enable individuals with disabilities, including non-visual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired to vote in much the same manner as all Oregon Voters: independently and privately from home, or another place of the voters' choosing.

OakTree's AFB leverages W3C Accessibility Guidelines for HTML coding, a computer with a JAWS or ZoomText browser or an Intellikey pad for accessibility, and a printer. With this equipment a person with a disability can access and mark their ballot, print and verify the ballot.

A voter who is blind is able to verify the printed ballot is marked correctly by using a scanner and screen reader. The AFB can, upon request, be sent directly to the voter who has the necessary technology at home to be able to complete the ballot.

"The Oregon AFB allows people who, for whatever reason, are unable to mark a printed ballot to be able to vote privately and

independently from the privacy of their own homes" says Gene Newton, Oregon's HAVA Program Officer. "The AFB moves vote by mail into the 21st century for voters with disabilities."

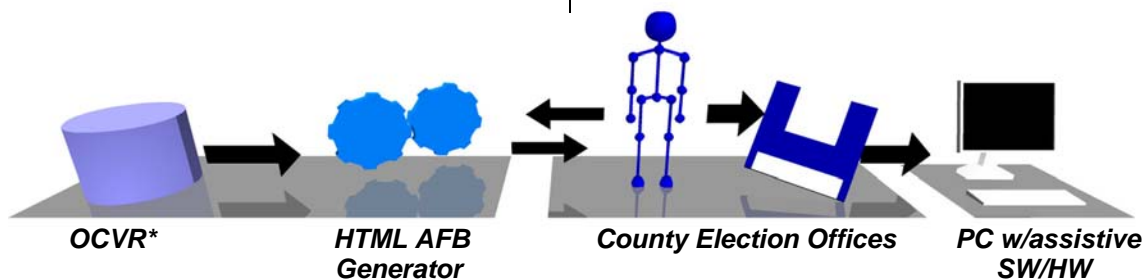
With OakTree's product, county election officials now have an easy-to-use conversion application that lets them create the AFB quickly and accurately. The conversion application uses the ballot definition data county election officials have already entered into the Oregon Centralized Voter Registration system. Thus, the AFB is created using the same basic data that is used to create the printed ballots that are mailed to all registered voters.

So far, end user feedback has validated the process: "The AFB has given me the ability to do something I've never been able to do in my 18 years of being a registered voter--it has provided me the opportunity to mark my ballot privately and independently", says Angel Hale, a Salem business owner who has been completely unsighted since 1986.

Additionally, OakTree has provided a training module (on-line and in print) to train the state-wide election officials on how to create the AFB including data import, ballot generation, ballot management, ballot distribution, and the preparation of ballot packages.

Oregon has once again proven its "pioneer" image by leading the nation in providing a 21st Century solution to accessibility to voting for people with disabilities in a vote by mail environment.

More importantly, the availability of the AFB solution ensures privacy and independence for many voters with disabilities other than sight.



\*OCVR based on Electus Software from Saber Software