



IN-PLANT PRINTING AND MAILING ASSOCIATION

# INSIDEDGE

A Newsletter for In-House Printing and Mailing Professionals

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## Over 47,000 Election Ballots Blanket Boise's Print Shop



*Pictured Top L-R: Sylvia Marmon, Mary Schuelke, Ryan Butler, Camille Wight.  
Bottom L-R: Stephanie Skupien, Randy Brown, Helen Jones*

The City of Boise's Central Services Office recently became the second printer (first in-plant) in the entire state of Idaho certified to print optical scan ballots.

"As a result, we were able to print the ballots for the upcoming municipal election in November," shares Supervisor Sylvia Marmon. The Boise in-plant just finished producing 47,500 ballots for 81 precincts, in blocks ranging from 250 to 1400 ballots per precinct. All of the ballots had to be serial-numbered, perforated, stapled, and shrink-wrapped, as well as some scored and/or folded for absentee and early voting.

**“After the printing started, the tricky part came when two candidates dropped out of the race,” she explains. Lines had to be manually-drawn through the names on those ballots that had already been printed. Before the job was completed, every surface of the in-plant was blanketed with ballots. “We had to account for every ballot as it passed through our shop.”**



**The production of election ballots is just one job in 4000 produced annually by this 6.5 person print and mail team which proudly celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month. While the mailroom began the operation around 1863, it wasn't until October 1969 that printing was introduced with the arrival of an offset duplicator.**

**“I think we're pretty typical of a municipality in-plant,” shares Marmon, whose staff has on average 27 years of experience within the graphics industry. “We serve many diverse departments including police and fire, wastewater treatment plants, parks and libraries, airport and bus services, as well as all the usual clerical/office settings.”**

**Possibly the most unique facet of the operation may be the building in which they are located, the site of a former brothel which later became a brewery because an artesian well (currently capped) rests beneath the building. “Now our building is heated by geothermal energy.”\***



**Always in search of greater efficiencies, in June 2008 Central Services launched Visual Print Leader, print management software. “It's made a big improvement in job estimating. We now have more than a year's job history in the system, which really**

**makes searching and re-ordering easy.” Even though they still maintain four years of hard-copy requisitions, they are referring to them less and less.**

**In September 2008 they also acquired two new Savin 1106EX black and white printers, along with an upgrade to their MicroPress server. “They're been great work-horses for us. The MicroPress has some really powerful features that make my electronic printing technician's job easier.” Other equipment includes a Heidelberg GTO52Z, three HP color laser printers, and two Canon 8500's that aren't used a lot, but have some specific jobs run on them monthly.**

Like many shops, the sluggish economy has had an impact on their day to day operations. "Our customers have definitely cut back on their printing requests, and some have utilized their internal copiers more than they should."



To combat the dip in volume, they launched an aggressive marketing campaign, with new brochures, fliers and handouts. They routinely send monthly e-mail blasts, and post coupons on their website which is continually updated to attract customers. "We tell our customers we can do it all," explains Marmon. "We want them to come to us no matter how big or small their job is. We have developed a network of vendors to whom we outsource the projects we can't do in-house."

The mailing side of the operation is equally focused on the needs of customers, managing approximately 30-35,000 outgoing and 30-35,000 pieces of incoming mail monthly. They anticipate purchasing a new mailing machine next October.

Marmon also emphasizes that they are fortunate to be included in the local school district's Community Based Employment Training program, which provides one or two students to the in-plant each quarter, who help in the bindery as a credit class. Having participated in the program for almost 13 years, working with 88 student helpers, Marmon encourages readers to check with their local school districts to see if similar programs are available.

To find out more about the Community Based Employment Training program, visit [http://www.boiseschools.org/specialed/trans\\_cbet.html](http://www.boiseschools.org/specialed/trans_cbet.html)

***\*Geothermal Heating in Boise***

*Administered by the Boise Public Works Department, the largest direct-use system in the United States supplies energy-efficient heat to over 55 businesses in the downtown core area. Direct-use systems not only provide heat to buildings, but also provide hot water for recreation (developed hot springs resorts), greenhouses (heating), and aquaculture (raising warm-water fish and aquatic plants). The City of Boise injects 100% of the water back into the aquifer.*