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## E-Voting FAQs



### Q. Who provides online voting services?

**A.** CMA provides e-voting through arrangement with a vendor who specializes in this service. Our staff has evaluated a number of vendors. We found that Strateja-XL (Votehoanow.com) provides excellent personal service, compatibility with CMA systems and a competitive price. CMA staff work on your behalf to fulfill all set-up and communications as needed.

### Q. What is the price to run an HOA election using e-voting?

**A.** According to [VoteHOANow.com](http://VoteHOANow.com), there is a one-time charge for set-up, plus pricing for the election according to the number of voters. A commitment for multiple elections saves on the cost of set-up.

**Annual Voting.** Includes a personalized voting website, unlimited use of elections, surveys, and mass email messaging. Homeowner information is retained on the vendor's server in your own database. Voting records and homeowner data is kept as long as the service is retained by the HOA.

**Single Election Pricing.** The vendor deletes all homeowner information and voting records one week after the election ends. CMA retains elections records. A new set-up and fee are required for any future elections.

Your association manager can obtain a

## CMA'S LEADERSHIP ADVISOR



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### Special Edition on Electronic Voting



## Why Are HOAs Adopting Online Voting?

*Judi M. Phares, President and CEO, RTI/Community Management Associates, Inc.*

HOAs in Texas are allowed to use e-voting to augment proxy, absentee and in-person voting. With more owners choosing to use on-line services such as paying assessments or viewing their violations, boards can offer on-line voting for elections and surveys as a cost-effective option which members increasingly prefer.

CMA is committed to offering convenient technological solutions to boards and homeowners. We're delighted to help clients learn from the experience of a forward-looking association which rolled out e-voting earlier this year and reaped the rewards!

Sincerely,

**Judi M. Phares**, CMCA®, PCAM® Publisher



## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Make Quorum, Collect Votes, Win Converts! How Stonebridge Ranch Succeeded with E-Voting

Annual meeting season has arrived, and HOA boards are wrestling with the perennial challenge of achieving quorum.

Stonebridge Ranch Community Association (SRCA) in McKinney illustrates how boards are embracing e-voting to engage owners and side-step the attendance hurdle. The community's March annual meeting offered e-voting for the board election and quorum count. Here's how the move to electronic ballots won the day.

A community of more than 9,000 homes with an onsite staff, SRCA found that offering on-line voting to elect new board members had many desirable outcomes. More than 50% of the votes received were on-line ballots, as were more than 60% of the votes for Quorum.



quote for your association based on your needs.

**Q. Our owners' vote is based on their property value. How do you handle this?**

**A.** This is referred to as weighted voting. You would supply VHN a two column spreadsheet: One column would be the registration codes and the second column would be the weight. These numbers can be fractional, for example weights can be 1.459 or 3 or 23. This is also used when one person or company owns multiple properties.

**Q. What if some owners don't have a computer or internet access?**

**A.** Traditional paper, proxy and absentee ballots can also be provided by mail or at the annual meeting.

## Did you know?

According to [Internet World Stats](#) more than 78% of the US population has internet access.



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[Marilyn Dunsworth](#)

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## Association Manager Michael Lesku enumerated more great results:

1. **Timely:** The community avoided the last minute drill to canvass door-to-door to round up proxy votes on the day of the meeting. They achieved quorum four days before the meeting.
2. **Multi-media communications prompts:** Communications directed owners to the association website, which linked owners to the online polling site. SRCA used a combination of specific print and e-mail reminders, its print newsletter and the association website to draw in more owners to vote.
3. **Secure and accurate:** Voting was secured through use of a unique individual ID number. Votes were tallied and documented in a spreadsheet report, which could be reconciled with votes cast in person at the annual meeting and by proxy.
4. **Increased community involvement and owner awareness:** More owners chose to e-vote after viewing the candidate profiles on-line, compared with simply voting by proxy to let board members select new board members. This resulted in more owners being aware of the board candidates and becoming "virtually" involved in community governance.
5. **Real time tracking and reporting:** Reports pulled throughout the 3-week polling period showed that voting spiked immediately following e-mail reminders. E-voting was cut off 72 hours prior to the meeting, but voting was still available for proxy, absentee and in-person ballots.
6. **Cost-effective:** Compared with the cost to set up e-voting, the potential savings were significant. The costs to reconvene a meeting, such as postage to send out a notice and ballots, and rent for a meeting space, can be substantial. The expense to reconvene a meeting, in the case of SRCA, is upwards of \$20k.

"Our homeowners and board members were pleased with our e-voting experience, and we'll definitely use it again for next year's election," said SRCA Board President Jon Dell'Antonia. SRCA implemented e-voting with advice from their legal counsel to ensure they complied with criteria established by Texas statute.

A leading management company for HOAs, CMA offers convenient technology solutions to boards and homeowners. For more information, contact your association manager.

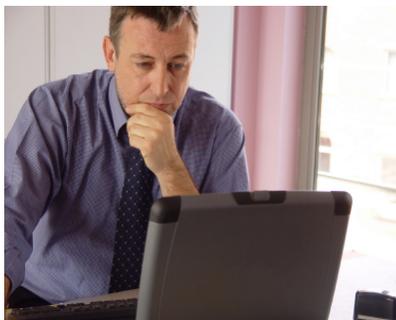


## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

### Why More HOAs are Adopting E-Voting

by Scott McKeel, President and CEO, Strateja XL, Inc.

When my company started providing online voting to HOAs in 2007, only Oregon, Virginia and Delaware allowed community associations to elect their boards by e-voting. More recently, we've seen demand growing as a number of



states -- Maryland, South Carolina, Minnesota, Washington, Nevada and Texas -- passed bills allowing HOAs to offer electronic voting to their members. California and New Jersey are considering similar bills.

A groundswell of demand has followed these legislative and technology trends. Most of that is because many more people are looking at what technology can do for HOAs. For example, our company website traffic has increased about 1000% when comparing January 1 to March 31 2009 to the same period this year.

As is typical with new technology, board and managers were slow to adopt it, as they just weren't sure what to do with it yet. This reminds me of the web environment for online applications in 1994, when I started a web design and application company.

#### Business owners regularly asked me:

- Why would we need email, we have a FAX machine?
- Why would we ever need a website?
- And now, why should our HOA adopt electronic voting?

Both board members and managers like using e-voting to conduct business of the association for several reasons:

- E-Voting increases participation and is often the key factor in making quorum. In some cases HOAs that haven't made quorum in years break that losing streak in their first year.

- E-Voting saves time. It takes minutes to set up an election and load voter data, but the real time-saver is in counting ballots, because you don't have to. Results are tabulated as soon as votes are cast. They are 100% accurate; recounting is unnecessary.
- E-Voting is more secure than conventional voting. Despite what you may have seen in the movies, it's very difficult for someone to actually hack into a well-protected system and do harm. On the other hand, most HOA ballots or proxy forms are easily duplicated and anybody that can drive to Fed Ex/Kinkos could do just that.

Homeowners really like the convenience of voting online too. They can do it from anywhere, in a car, in a bar, over coffee at Starbucks, at work, home or on vacation and via computer or smart phone, tablet or laptop. It only takes a couple of minutes.

Generally speaking people are expecting more and more services to be available online or by phone app. It's the world we live in today. It won't be long before voting online will become the norm. After all, how many people do you know that don't have an email address?



**Scott McKeel** is president and CEO of Strateja-XL , Inc., established in 2000. The company offers the Vote HOA Now application for electronic voting, which is being used by HOAs across the country. More information about e-voting can be found on the company's website, [www.votehoanow.com](http://www.votehoanow.com).

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