

Attachment A

Elevate VBM Sorter Proposal



BLUECREST

From Data Through Delivery

Elevate VBM Sorter Proposal

Submitted to:

Santa Barbara County

Presented on:

January 30, 2026

Prepared by:

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*All information contained in this document is considered
proprietary and confidential*

March 11 2025

Martin Cobos
Santa Barbara County Elections
4440-A Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Mr. Cobos:

We are pleased to offer this proposal for our **Elevate™** Vote by Mail (VBM) sorting system.

This scalable solution is designed to help manage your increasing mail ballot volumes while laying the foundation to expand the functionality and capabilities for future elections.

BlueCrest (formerly Pitney Bowes Document Messaging Technology) has a long history of industry-leading, high-speed sorting equipment for various applications across several decades. We have been a leader in the VBM sorter space market for the past 20+ years. In 2021, BlueCrest acquired Fluence Automation, the leading sorter and VBM technology provider in the U.S. Together, we offer a combination of technology, experience and support that is unmatched in the industry:

- We developed and installed the first automated sorting solutions for mail balloting in 2003 for Orange County, CA and have numerous patents on this technology.
- We now have over 80 jurisdictions across the country using BlueCrest technology for their mail ballots (20+ of which are in California), ranging in size from 15,000 to 6 million ballots per election.
- BlueCrest technology touched almost 50 million mail ballots in the 2024 general election.

While there are other vendors who offer mail ballot systems, no one has the history, experience, or track record of BlueCrest in this market. This experience means that you are partnering with more than just a technology provider- rather you are continuing to invest in a Vote by Mail partner. We are the only company whose products are supported by a nationwide service network of full-time employees with experience supporting critical production equipment such as mail ballot sorters. This enables us to provide same day, onsite response in most cases with a qualified, factory trained service technician, when required. Additionally, our service team helps you prepare for each election.

Again, thank you so much for the consideration and opportunity to provide you information on our solutions. Please let us know if you have any questions on the contents or solution.

Sincerely,



Val Guyett

bluecrestinc.com | a: 37 Executive Dr, Danbury, CT 06810

CC: Craig Chapel

Elevate Sorter

Election offices are being asked to process more mail in ballots than ever before, and that has now been accelerated with the legislative changes brought on by COVID-19 pandemic and continues to expand nationwide. These return ballots must also be processed in a short time frame depending on the processing window and timing of the ballots being returned. This requirement creates the need for high-speed sorters that can achieve greater throughputs in a shorter amount of time while maintaining integrity in the process.

BlueCrest has several options for our customer's sorting needs. Based on your specific request, we believe our Elevate is the most effective solution for your operation. This solution will accomplish everything that you are looking to do today and allow for growth or changes in the future.



The highlights of the Elevate Sorter are:

- Single vendor comprehensive solution providing you with full sorting functionality.
- Elevate sorting system with a throughput of up to 18,000- 20,000 pieces/hour.
- Modular and ergonomic bin sections available in one or two tier and single or double-sided.
- Self-contained, highly configurable bins with as few as 4 or as many 128 bins per sorter.
- Industry Leading BCR & MLOCR Technology.
- A state-of-the-art, controlled gap, friction feeder that results in the highest throughput in its class, without losing the integrity of the mail processed. This reduces unnecessary stoppages and maximizes up-time.
- Bins are close to the operator, allowing a single person to efficiently sweep the bins while running the feeder.
- Simple to use, meaning minimal user training required.

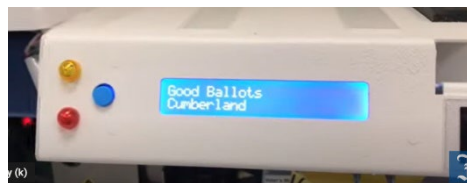
System Configuration and Options:

- **Elevate™** small footprint front-end with a processing speed of **18,000 envelopes/hour** for #10 envelopes, including a friction feeding mechanism to handle a wide range of letter mail.
- **X-Class bins**- Our proposal includes 8 single side sorting bins. Additional bin sections can be added in the future if needed.
- **Front side MMT SABRE® VBM** can read barcodes and capturing signatures at high speed, enabling on screen matching of signatures against those in the VR System. Note: Back cameras can be added for those wishing to image the postmark side of the envelope.
- **(Optional) Backside Camera** can image the backside of the envelope to capture the full image of the return ballot including the postmark and date from USPS.
- **Inkjet endorsement printer:** prints a time and date stamp, as well as the return source, on each received piece. This feature uses ink cartridges to simplify maintenance and replacement
- **(Optional) Automated Signature Verification (ASV):** If this option is selected, the system can perform automated signature verification concurrent with other sorting tasks, maximizing the overall performance possible, without any drop in throughput. We have proven installations with inline ASV since 2007.
- **Integrity package:** This consists of a **doubles detector** and a **thickness detector** as described below:
 - **Doubles detector:** This device is located below the mail path and will analyze an image of the edge of the envelope to identify any envelopes that are stuck together. Any such double feeds will be sorted to the reject bin to ensure that the second envelope is separated and processed correctly.
 - **Thickness detector:** A laser-based thickness detector to identify envelopes that are too thick or too thin, and therefore may have the incorrect number of ballots. Common scenarios that contribute to these conditions are members of a household putting all their ballots into one envelope, and a voter forgetting to include the ballot when sealing the envelope. The thickness detector will outsort these envelopes to the reject bin, so that they can be investigated and correctly handled.

X-Class Modular Sort Bins

The Elevate's bin sorting system is modular and provides exceptional productivity and increased efficiency in a space-saving design. Available in one or two-tier designs for the Elevate, the system can be readily reconfigured to adapt to changes to operational needs. We are proposing a single sided 12 bin, configuration that provides sorting capability in a very compact design. Some of the key features include:

- Indicators at each bin (and a display above the machine) notify operators when the bins are nearly full and completely full.
- Integrated bin displays provide easy identification of the accounts in the bin and minimize sweeping errors.
- Operators are located adjacent to the first bins. This allows the operator to identify miss-fed quickly and easily and out of scheme mail. Additionally, it allows the operator to efficiently sweep the machine of finished mail.
- Uni-Directional transport the time from feeding until it reaches the bin. This lessens the opportunity to jam and reduces the amount of mail on the track in the event of a jam.
- Down-Stream Diverts deflect mail into a bin seamlessly, avoiding hard impacts which can lead to jams and mutilated mail.
- The removable bins also provide easy access to electronic components for routine and emergency maintenance.
- Integrated bin displays provide easy identification of the accounts in the bin and minimize sweeping errors.
- Below-bin tray drawers allow operators to comfortably sweep mail from bins into trays. Ergonomic design reduces workloads for the operator and eliminates need for tablespace to stage mail during processing.



Service and Support

Operator Training

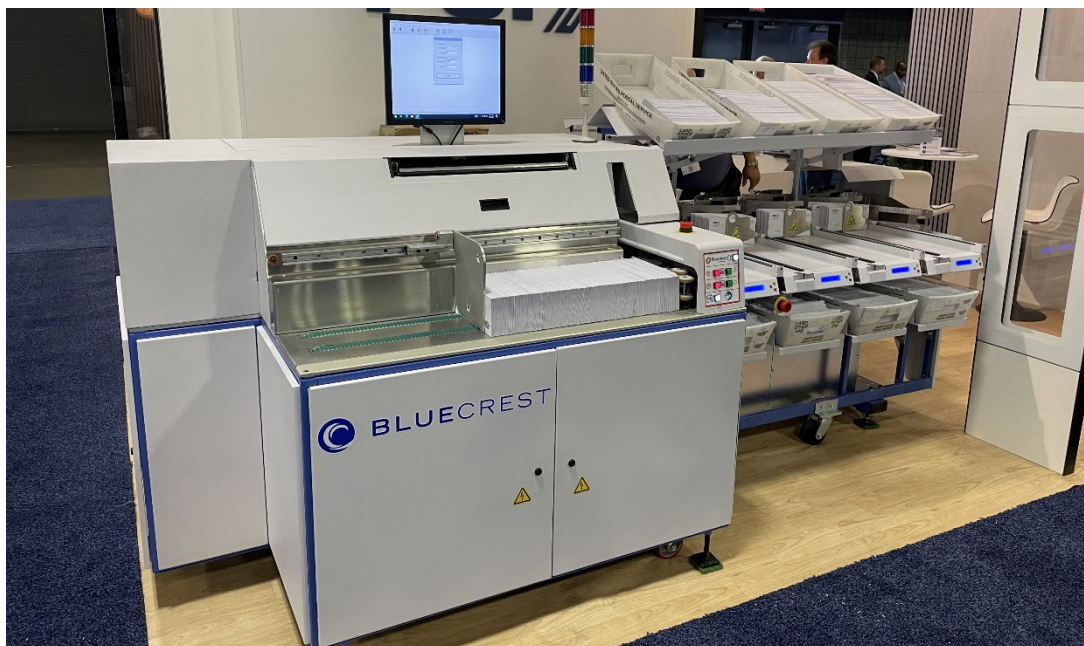
One session of operator training is provided free of charge for up to four operators for each system at the time of installation. This training covers the operation, use, configuration, and normal daily operator maintenance of the systems, as well as applicable health and safety issues.

The operator training will cover routine tasks such as paper loading/unloading, recovery from product jams, setup, and adjustments. The training will occur during normal business hours (8:30 AM to 5:00 PM). All training will be conducted at the customer site and will take three to three- and one-half days.

Operator manuals for each system are supplied at the time of the training class. In addition, each operator is given a training guide which gives clear and concise instructions on how to operate the system and includes pertinent screen shots for clarity.

Upon completion of the training, each operator will receive a certificate verifying that they have successfully completed the training and are qualified to operate the equipment. Class attendees are typically able to perform the routine tasks described upon completion of the training and will become proficient in these tasks within 90 - 180 days experience on the systems, depending on the level of experience.

Additional training after the install will be charge training and will be quoted by the local District Service Manager.



Annual Hardware and Software Maintenance

Vote by Mail Service Package

We have a variety of options available for service support, however, we have included information on our standard election support package. Standard service is available Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM Local Time Zone (excluding recognized federal holidays): during a declared election. Final cost and service commitment is to be determined.

- Access to Bluecrest’s Customer Care Center for Equipment or Software issues
- Phone response by a trained BlueCrest Customer Service Engineer (CSE) during normal business hours to assist Customer with general questions or troubleshooting.
- On site response for problems not resolved via the phone by a factory trained technician (up to 12 per year). Response time for technician to arrive averages approximately 4 hours.
- Replacement of any broken non-consumable parts
- Scheduled inspection and test of VBM sorter to ensure readiness of election ballot processing for up to 2 elections per year. The PM inspection will include the replacement of non-consumable parts that are deemed necessary to ensure optimal efficiency of the equipment.
- After the election, BlueCrest will perform post-election services to ensure the system is properly prepared to lay idle until the next election processing period. The post-election services ensure the trouble-free startup of the equipment at the next election period.

SOFTWARE & EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Warranty: 90-day parts and labor (excludes wear parts and consumables)

Annual Software Maintenance Agreement (SMA)	\$20,800
Annual Equipment Maintenance Agreement (EMA)**	\$19,500
Automated Signature Verification (300K compares/ 12 months)	\$11,600

Standard Service Package Includes:

- Coverage for 2 elections per year
- 2 PM’s per year
- 12 service calls per year
- 6-hour response (average)
- Parts included

Quote for Elevate Sorter

The pricing for the proposed configuration is as follows:

- Elevate Front End
- Single side, single tier configuration with 8 bins
- Slide out Tray Drawers and upper racks
- LCD Bin Displays
- SABRE™ Vote by Mail Camera (front)
- Report Printer for reports
- Tray Tag Printer to manage individual trays
- Integrity Package (Thickness and Doubles Detection)
- ReliaVote Server Computer
- RDS (Remote Diagnostic Server)
- ReliaVote 360 Software
- Integration with DFM Voter registration system
- Hand Scanner
- Installation, On-site Testing and Training

Government price \$ 341,690

Trade-in (Agilis Sorter) \$41,715

Net cost \$299,975

Notes

- Price includes freight and standard inside delivery- customer is responsible for any special rigging
- Does not include any applicable taxes
- Price quote good for 60 days