BREAKING: Iowa’s ‘Killer App’

Des Moines, IA — Iowa Caucus results for 2020 eventually will be verified and validated, thanks in part to “paper trails”. But this year’s General Election Kick-Off underscores just how much can go wrong when leadership leans too heavily on “unnecessary” or “untested” tech. WIRED reports and warns this could be a harbinger of some of the many things that could go wrong in 2020.

See Iowa Raucous on page 5.


WASHINGTON (AFNS) — Celebrating a 100th birthday is monumental in itself, but for retired Col. Charles E. McGee, shortly after this celebration he would reach yet another milestone in his successful career.

This week on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, he found himself in the Oval Office at the White House being promoted to brigadier general by President Donald Trump.

McGee’s successes started early on in his career, when on June 30, 1943, he earned his pilot’s wings as one of the Tuskegee Airmen, the decorated unit of African American Airmen famous for not only their combat successes, but the impact they had on the cultural shift in the military.

His military career spanned across three decades, where he flew 409 combat missions during three different wars – WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War. While serving, McGee was presented with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Air Medal and the Presidential Unit Citation.

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Dr. Juan E. Gilbert is a human-centered computing expert and associate chair of research under the Preeminence Initiative at the University of Florida. Dr. Gilbert is chair of the University of Florida’s Department of Computer & Information Science and Engineering (CISE) and has many inventions to his and his lab’s credit. Dr. Gilbert gained recognition when the electronic voting interface he created became a new standard for universal accessibility in elections after successful applications in Oregon, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin. A lifetime BDPA Member, Dr. Gilbert earned a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Cincinnati, one of the youngest African Americans to do so.
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AN IOWA RAUCOUS: ‘KILLER’ APP IMPLODES

DES MOINES, IA — During the Iowa Caucus, precinct captains were supposed to report three (3) sets of results using a new app created for this special 2020 primary election kick-off event. Only a few succeeded; however, inadequate training and numerous technical issues prevented many of Iowa’s precincts from using the app. *Politico* reports many precincts tried to report results manually using phone lines, but widespread app problems created an enormous rush of calls jamming help desk lines. Data and precinct results from the app were sent to a separate system that was supposed to collect and calculate final results.

And this is when everything went down hill. Officials noticed so-called “coding errors” only reporting partial results. According to *WIRED*, the votes were all properly recorded [on paper], and paper backups mean that votes can be verified. It was the reporting process that collapsed, requiring extra time for collecting and tallying final results. Ben Adida, executive director of *VotingWorks*, a nonprofit maker of voting machines stated “when we do introduce technology in the foundational layer of our democracy, it should be broadly vetted, load tested, security reviewed, and open source.”

Training notwithstanding, apparently none of what Adida listed happened in Iowa. *Politico* reported this week’s Iowa Caucus disruptions most likely were not the work of hackers according to Homeland Security and cybersecurity officials — though some cautioned that it is too soon to say even that much for certain. Some experts said it is impossible to know for sure. Nonetheless, Monday’s turmoil fuels the kinds of conspiracy theories undermining The People’s faith in algorithms, technology, and trusting our electoral processes.

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