

SCSL Digital Collections

Annual accountability report - 2000-2001

Item Type	Text
Publisher	South Carolina State Library
Rights	Copyright status undetermined. For more information contact, South Carolina State Library, 1500 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201.
Download date	2024-11-03 22:09:16
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10827/12276

SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the chief election agency in South Carolina, the State Election Commission is tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the voter registration and election processes in the State. Everything that we do as an agency, our programs and our projects, emanates from these responsibilities. Our primary goal is to provide the highest possible level of service within our statutory mandates.

Major Achievements During This Fiscal Year:

General Election – November 2000

While other states were delayed in counting ballots and determining election results, South Carolina had a relatively smooth election in November 2000. Certainly this success was obtained by variables on the county level but also through services and support of the State Election Commission (SEC) such as poll manager training, ballots and programming provided for counties with certain electronic voting equipment, pre-election ballot review, memoranda detailing statutory duties and responsibilities, availability of Commission staff to assist counties in successfully dealing with problems, and coordination of candidate results transmission and posting to the Internet. Implementation and encouragement to the county election commissions by the SEC on recently passed legislation allowing the use of 16 and 17 year olds as poll manager assistants, increased the dwindling cadre of poll workers and proved to be a positive step toward voter education and future staffing at the precinct level.

Election Legislation

Staff at the SEC worked closely with the General Assembly on passage of several pieces of legislation to benefit elections in the State. Legislation allowing the use of 16 & 17 year olds as poll manager assistants, that passed in 1999 and is mentioned above, was so successful in the 2000 General Election that the General Assembly passed amending legislation in 2000 to allow more of these young people to work in future elections. Compensation for poll managers was also increased from \$45.00 to \$50.00.

Other successful legislation beneficial to the State was the ability to use multiple polling places in a precinct to help reduce lines on election day; allowing voters who moved from one county to another without changing their address on the voter registration system to cast a ballot; and permitting the use of voting machines for walk-in absentee voters.

New Statewide Voter Registration System

The top priority listed from the 1999 Statewide Election Summit and also the 2001 Governor's Task Force on Elections was to update the current statewide voter registration system. Through the support and hard work of the General Assembly, Agency staff, county personnel, and staff from the Office of Information Resources and the Division of Research and Statistics, we were able to develop a good plan and secure funding to develop and implement a new statewide voter registration system. Many steps toward the final implementation have been completed and the expected date of full installation is March 2002.

Voting on the Internet

South Carolina will be listed in the history pages as the first state in the United States to participate statewide in an official election utilizing the Internet. This Voting on the Internet pilot program was administered by the Department of Defense, Federal Voting Assistance Program for uniformed and overseas citizens. Four other jurisdictions were selected to participate in the program but South Carolina was the only state selected that was able to offer this voting solution statewide.

Training and Certification Program

As part of our statewide training program for county election officials, we were able to offer 36 regional classes during the fiscal period. A total of 976 participants attended these 36 classes. Eight new classes were developed and presented as a result of topic requests from those election officials enrolled in the program.

Agency Mission and Values

The State Election Commission maintains the State's computerized statewide voter registration system. We are responsible for printing the lists of registered voters for all elections held in the state. The statewide voter registration system also serves as the source for selection of jurors in the state. The SEC provides oversight including assistance and advisory services to county and municipal election officials for elections in South Carolina. The SEC trains voter registration and election officials, provides voter registration and election materials, prints or provides funding for ballots for all federal offices, statewide offices and constitutional amendments voted on in South Carolina and produces databases and machine ballots for all elections in the State conducted on electronic voting systems. The members of the SEC serve as the State Board of Canvassers after elections to certify election returns, to declare candidates elected and hear protests/appeals that may arise.

Key Strategic Goals

We are always monitoring elections in the State and soliciting ways to improve the election process and maintain its integrity. As part of that process improvement, the following long and short-term goals are of priority to the State Election Commission:

- Implement a new statewide voter registration system
- Move all municipal, special service district, and certain school board elections to a common date in the odd numbered years
- Improve on the accessibility to the voting process by disabled voters
- Develop guidelines for county voter registration officials to visit nursing homes and assisted living facilities for the purpose of absentee voting among the residents
- Develop uniform guidelines for all voting methods determine voter intent
- Work with county election officials to shift training of poll workers to a more effective training method of specialized duties
- Strive to increase voter education and participation through training classes, public service announcements, advertisements, and news releases.

Opportunities and Barriers Affecting Agency Mission

Opportunities:

Funding for New Voter Registration System

The General Assembly recognized the need for a new statewide voter registration system and provided funding for the development and implementation of this system. A new system will make the processing of registered voters and their proper election district assignments more precise and will also enable the State to conduct elections with better accuracy and reduce the probability of protested elections.

Poll Worker Recruitment

One of the biggest problems facing election officials is the ability to recruit and retain qualified people to work a minimum of 13 hours at the precinct level on Election Day. Passage of recent legislation allowing the use of 16 & 17 year olds as poll manager assistants has increased the number of workers available on Election Day. After conducting a survey of counties utilizing this new law in the 2000 General Election, we were able to gather some very positive reasons for using these young people as poll manager assistants. Our Public Information Officer will use this information during the next year to prepare promotional materials to encourage all counties in the State to utilize this process.

Voting on the Internet Pilot Program

South Carolina was chosen by the Department of Defense to participate in a pilot program allowing uniformed and overseas citizens to cast their ballot via the Internet during the 2000 General Election. Of the four states chosen to participate, South Carolina was the only state participating on a statewide basis. The project had a 100% success rate and we have already been asked to participate in future elections. This was the first official election in the United States in which ballots were cast using the Internet and we are proud to be part of that history.

Providing Electronic Information to Agency Customers

By using our Web site, which was monitored by staff in the Budget and Control Board Office of Information Resources, and our voter registration system, we were able to post election returns on the Internet immediately upon their receipt. While our staff is very limited in number and we answer requests for this information as soon as possible, this Internet posting of results was of great benefit to the news media, candidates, and the general public because they could monitor the information as it was posted.

One of the services provided by the Agency is the sale of lists of registered voters. This information is provided using several different forms of media, such as peel-off labels, printouts and Compact Disks, which are produced by the Office of Information Resources. Because of the availability of new technology and a \$250.00 initial investment, we were able to begin producing this information in-house at a considerable savings and a reduction in shipping time to our customers.

Barriers

Poll Manager Training and Compensation

- The number of registered voters in the State drives elections. County Election Commissions are required, statutorily, to appoint and train a certain number of poll managers for each election according to these numbers. Often times, this training is not adequate and very limited. While the SEC has conducted this training in the past by using the S.C. Educational Television Network, we have determined that training is much more effective when conducted in-person on a local level with smaller groups. The SEC offers a training program to our county election officials in which several capable persons in the county would be trained extensively on election laws and Election Day procedures. These individuals would then train the remaining poll managers in the county. The State Election Commission feels that a mandatory requirement for this type of training would be beneficial to enhance the knowledge and abilities of poll managers in the State. This program, as positively implemented in counties in the state such as Greenville, Greenwood, and York, would greatly enhance the quality of elections conducted in the State.
- While poll manager pay has steadily increased over the past 6 years, it is still below minimum wage and causes problems with recruitment and retention of poll managers. Comments have been made by voters and other citizens that an increase in the amount of compensation for poll managers would increase the desire for people to work in this capacity.
- Funding for poll managers is the largest amount of the budget requested to conduct a statewide primary or general election. This funding has always been available and adequate in the past and would need to be continued for all future elections to ensure their success.

Additional Personnel

The Election Services Division is understaffed by one full time employee. Because of this shortcoming, services delivered by this division are limited. If an additional employee were available, at least three more counties would receive voting system support, and additional poll manager and election officials training could be conducted. Space is available for this employee and additional funding required would be approximately \$30,000 per year in the recurring budget.

Municipal Elections on Common Date

Approximately 250 elections are held in the State per year. These elections are for municipalities, special service districts, and certain school boards. The 1999 Election Summit report revealed that voters do not appreciate these various elections throughout the year and local election officials are not always equipped to conduct the elections. Legislation has been introduced in the S.C. House of Representatives to consolidate all such elections on a common date in the odd numbered year. This common date could be promoted by the media statewide and cause less confusion. These elections should also be administered by the county election commissions and overseen by the State Election Commission.

Use of Inadequate or Older Voting Technology

The disabled population in our State is hindered from voting because of the level of voting technology currently in use in the State. Also, as we witnessed in the 2000 General Election in Florida, future election problems could be incurred in the 25 counties in the State currently using punch-card or central count optical scan ballot systems. While these systems are adequate and generally well administered, they certainly utilize older and much less advanced technology which allows for the possibility of voter error and inaccurate vote totals. The newer, more advanced, technology available would accommodate voting for the disabled and also prevent voter inaccuracies such as overvotes, undervotes, and ballot intent.

Reliability of Other Agencies for Voter Registration System

Accuracy of the assignment of voters to their proper election districts is reliant upon information received from each county's 911 and GIS offices by the Department of Research and Statistics. It would be extremely helpful to require these local offices to report any changes in their plan to the Department of Research and Statistics to ensure accuracy of assignment of voters to the correct precincts and election districts.

Training and Certification of County Election Officials

Of the 675 election officials in the State only 322 have received their official certification. While some of the remaining numbers are new to the community and currently enrolled in the program, many are not enrolled and have taken few or no classes associated with the certification. Legislation is in place requiring them to complete the training within an 18 month period of their appointment, or reappointment. However, many officials do not adhere to this requirement without penalty. Legislation has been introduced to allow the Governor to remove election officials, based on the recommendation of the State Election Commission, for not completing the training program. This legislation is supported by this Agency and would be beneficial to enforcing the certification requirement.

SECTION II – BUSINESS OVERVIEW

The State Election Commission consists of 19 full time and 1 part time employee and has one operating location at 2221 Devine Street in Columbia, SC.

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	99-00 Actual Expenditures		00-01 Actual Expenditures		01-02 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$652,223.88	\$616,597.88	\$643,987.61	\$606,639.99	\$641,477.00	\$641,477.00
Other Operating	\$498,586.70	\$498,586.70	\$658,180.69	\$658,180.69	\$500,364.00	\$500,364.00
Special Items	\$126,800.00	\$126,800.00	\$102,537.95	\$102,537.95	\$685,470.00*	\$685,470.00*
Permanent Improvements	0	0	0	0	0	0
Case Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$718,816.64	\$718,816.64	\$683,950.00	\$683,950.00	\$635,775.00	\$635,775.00
Fringe Benefits	\$146,542.17	\$146,542.17	\$166,612.45	\$166,612.45	\$160,164.00	\$160,164.00
Non-recurring					\$2,100,000.00**	\$2,100,000.00**
Total	\$2,142,969.39	\$2,107,343.39	\$2,255,268.70	\$2,217,921.08	\$4,723,250.00	\$4,723,250.00

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	99-00 Actual Expenditures	00-01 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills		\$1,650,747.43***
Capital Reserve Funds	\$1,425,591.26****	
Bonds		

* Supplemental increase in poll manager pay and TQM funds.

** Funds for the 2002 Statewide Primaries and Runoffs. Actually recurring every two years.

*** Expenditures for 2000 General Election.

**** Expenditures for 2000 Statewide Primaries and Runoffs.

Customers of the State Election Commission include the citizens of South Carolina, county boards of voter registration and election commissions, the legislature, special interests and advocacy groups, municipal election commissions, political parties, candidates, other state agencies, and those who purchase lists of registered voters.

Key suppliers for the State Election Commission include the Office of Information Resources of the Budget and Control Board, voting system vendors, the voters and citizens of SC, USC, office of State Budget, office supply companies.

Major products of the State Election Commission are:

Maintenance of Statewide Voter Registration System

Maintain and support South Carolina's statewide voter registration system including additions and changes to the master file as provided by each county's board of voter registration. To provide training and assistance on the statewide voter registration system to county election and voter registration staff through training classes, on-site visits, the web, phone and written documentation.

Training and Certification Program for Election Officials

Administer a statewide training and certification program for election officials as required by the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976. This program consists of components designed to provide information about registration and election laws and procedures.

Conduct of the 2000 General Election

Oversee and assist with the conduct of the 2000 General Election and, if necessary, any subsequent special elections. To insure the quality of the election process and the faith and trust the voting public has in the integrity of elections in South Carolina.

Electronic Voting System Support

Provide technical assistance and support to counties using certain electronic voting systems. Provide ballot layout assistance to county and municipal election commissions. Provide election supplies and forms to county and municipal election officials.

Educational Services

Provides specialized training in conduct of elections and election laws of South Carolina to poll workers, county election commissions, and municipal election commissions. Assist county and municipal election officials with ballot layout procedures.

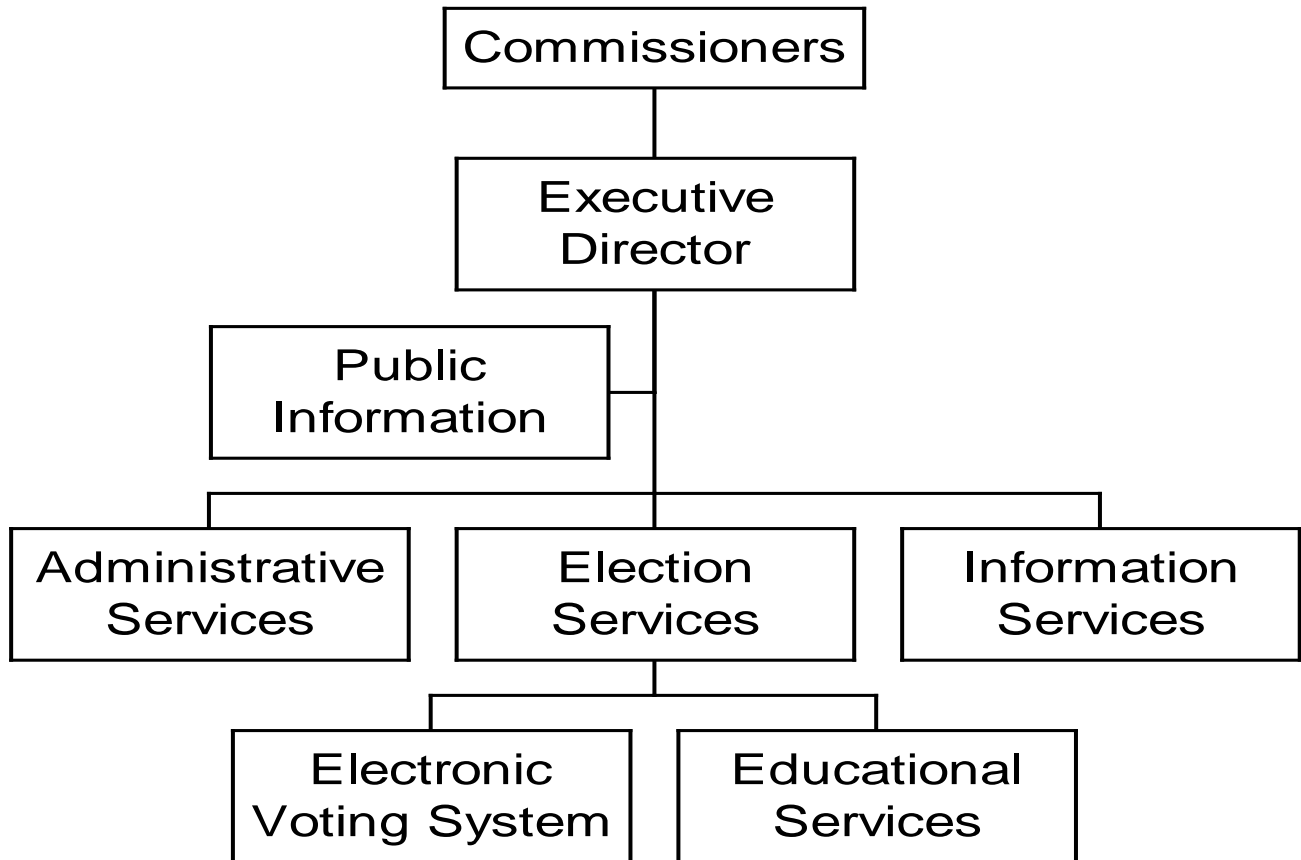
Sale of Lists of Registered Voters

Upon request and payment of fees, provide the names of registered voters to candidates for public office, the general public and other governmental agencies. Statistical information on past elections is also distributed upon request and payment of fees.

Providing Public Information

Registration statistics and information on past elections are available and distributed upon request.

State Election Commission Organizational Structure



Section III – Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category 1 - Leadership

The agency has five commissioners who meet monthly, or whenever necessary, to set policy for the agency based on its mission. They also set goals and approve major projects. Additionally, the commissioners are extremely supportive of agency initiatives.

The executive leadership system of this agency consists of the executive director and three division directors. This management team meets monthly, or as often as needed, to share ideas, discuss situations, and conduct strategic planning. The agency mission and election laws of this State guide the team.

The agency is involved, at least peripherally, in each of the 200-250 elections held each year in this state. Significant planning is required for the statewide primary elections and general elections in even numbered years. Management must anticipate deadlines and possible problems as well as have a clear vision of information and actions that will be expected of the agency for each election. Staff are instructed and provided with the necessary tools to complete this task. This is crucial to the successful conduct of elections. All members of the management team carry pagers and are available 24 hours a day.

Short and long-term directions are based on customer needs, election schedules, election law changes, and changes in technology. For short-term direction, if a customer has an immediate need it is evaluated and delegated to the staff member who has the skills to produce and complete the request in a timely manner. For long-term direction, department directors, with staff, assess needs, develop a plan, gather information, and a time-line is set for completion of the project. This time-line is stressed to each individual involved in achieving the long-term goal or direction. For example, our long-term direction several years ago was to upgrade and modernize the statewide voter registration system. We deployed and communicated this long-term direction by gathering information from customers, other state agencies, and various computer suppliers. Once the information was gathered, a plan was developed and a time-line development and implementation schedule for a new statewide voter registration system was established.

Performance and values expected of employees are communicated through employee evaluations and staff meetings. Employees are expected to perform both effectively and efficiently. Employees performing below agency expectations are counseled and provided with the necessary resources and mentoring to improve their job performance.

Staff development and training is a crucial part of the agency's vision for the future. Through workshops, retreats, and employee teams, employees are provided with the tools, resources, and opportunities to develop ways to enhance customer service to the benefit of the agency. Employees are encouraged to complete levels of higher learning and are offered flextime to accommodate their schedules. Tuition assistance is provided for college/university-based programs. Funding is provided for classes offered through the Budget and Control Board and other training opportunities that relate directly to improving employee skills and performance. Two members from senior staff have completed the South Carolina Executive Institute program and the remaining two senior staff members plan to complete the program within the next two

years. One member from senior staff has also completed the Associate Public Manager (APM) and the Certified Public Manager (CPM) program offered by the Budget and Control Board. Three other employees have completed the APM, two more are currently enrolled, and one other employee is enrolled in the CPM program.

All employees are expected to behave in an ethical manner that meets established and expected standards for professional and personal behavior. Problems with unethical behavior are immediately addressed as they occur. Written ethical policy provided by the Budget and Control Board is followed by this agency.

Senior leaders regularly review the following performance measures and set policy or take steps to ensure accuracy:

- Error rate and efficiency of election databases and ballots provided by the Electronic Voting Systems department
- Election day problems and phone calls incurred versus amount and content of training provided prior to election day
- Evaluations from training and certification program classes
- Processing of pay vouchers is reviewed weekly to ensure proper coding and reimbursement amount
- Accurate charges for sales of lists of voters
- When new personnel are hired in county offices we make contact with them on-site and determine their level of knowledge of voter registration and election procedures and laws. Based on that determination, we encourage training in areas to increase their knowledge. We also do on-site training before, during, and after elections
- Voter registration status reports are printed and mailed to counties weekly, quarterly, and yearly. Management reviews completion of these mailouts and ensures their prompt delivery

Employee feedback is sought by Senior Management to determine their own effectiveness as leaders. This feedback is gained through an open-door policy, regular staff meetings, evaluation forms, Edge 360 Management Profile, and other profiles completed as part of training classes offered by the Budget and Control Board.

Quarterly or monthly meetings are held to take suggestions on improving department processes. Verbal communication is encouraged and expected if an employee is dissatisfied or feels that their supervisor can help improve his/her performance.

The agency determines the impact of its services through surveys, verbal/written communication, and focus group meetings. In 1999, the agency conducted a statewide election summit that disclosed the impact of services and rendered valuable solutions to current and future problems. As part of the summit, 45 counties conducted a local election summit in their county. Participants included individuals who wanted to improve the voter registration and election process. Participants were asked what improvements could be made to the current voter

registration and election processes. Reports containing those improvements were compiled from each county and submitted to the State Election Commission. A final report combining the local level summit and a statewide summit was compiled into one report and used for strategic planning.

Priorities for improvement are based on immediate needs identified from various situations that arise. For example, there was a protest filed after the 2000 general election in a county in this State. The State Board of Canvassers ordered a new election to be held based on the fact that this election contained several irregularities. Prior to the second election, staff from the State Election Commission traveled to the county on several occasions to train the county commissioners, poll workers, and office staff. The director and deputy director also traveled to the county on Election Day to act as observers and provide assistance and advice when necessary. The second election proved to be very successful and new procedures were implemented to ensure that the same problems do not occur in the future.

Through encouragement and example, senior leaders promote employee participation in various charitable organizations through monetary donations and volunteer opportunities.

Category 2 - Strategic Planning

In 2001, the Governor appointed a task force to review the election process and report the status of election conduct in South Carolina and make suggestions for improvement of the process. Staff from the State Election Commission and the Budget and Control Board Division of Research and Statistics were asked to serve on the task force as resources. Coincidentally, the top priority of this task force was also a top priority of the Election Summit conducted two years earlier at the direction of the State Election Commission and by executive order of the Governor. This priority item was to implement a newer, more modern and efficient statewide voter registration system. Beginning in the year 2000, preparations began immediately on setting goals to develop and implement this new system by the 2002 primary elections. Meetings were held with the appropriate personnel and other state agencies to determine the full impact of such an implementation. The decision was made to allow the Budget and Control Board's Office of Information Resources, rather than an outside vendor, to develop and maintain this system, therefore, reducing the costs of software maintenance and development and retaining control of this system within the State. This newer technology will, we believe, greatly increase the accuracy of voter assignment to precincts and election districts in the upcoming reapportionment process and provide needed tools for county registration and election officials in the performance of their jobs.

Other needs that were also identified from the election summit and implemented in 2000-2001 include:

- Legislation was passed to allow 16 & 17 year olds to serve as poll manager assistants
- Legislation was passed to allow the use of multiple polling places within a precinct
- Poll worker pay was increased to \$50 a day
- Legislation was passed to allow voters who moved from one county to another within 30 days of an election to register and vote in their new county. This procedure will be tracked with the new statewide voter registration system

- Walk-in absentee voters are now allowed to use voting machines to cast their ballot instead of using the old method of paper ballots. Utilization of this feature will be tracked beginning with the June 2002 primary elections.

In addition to the above listed short-term goals identified by the election summit, certain long-term goals were identified and, through working with the legislature and other state agencies, steps to reach those goals taken during the 2000-2001 fiscal year were:

- Legislation introduced to hold all municipal elections and all special service districts elections on a common date in November of the odd numbered year
- Attempt to ensure that polling places and voting methods are available that accommodate and are assessable to all disabled citizens who choose to vote
- Implement a new voter registration system
- Legislation introduced to allow voter registration officials to visit nursing homes and assisted living facilities to offer qualified residents the opportunity to vote using the absentee process
- Legislation introduced to allow the office of President/Vice President to be connected to the straight party selection on punch card and optical scan voting systems

Customers are asked through surveys, focus group meetings, and in person communication of their expectations and needs. Needs identified through this method were:

- Specific training classes for the county voter registration/election commission officials were added based on customer requests
- At a yearly conference for voter registration and election officials in January, we distributed a list of classes the State Election Commission offers for certification in the mandatory training and certification program and asked officials which classes would interest them most during the coming year. Based on information gathered from the survey, we prepared a comprehensive schedule of classes desired by our customers for the coming year
- Because of advances in technology, we realized we were now able to produce CD's containing lists of voters on equipment in the office rather than lease this service
- Shift in training of poll workers to train one person in a specific duty of the election process
- A document to specify the voting machine certification process. As a result of a Certified Public Manager project, one staff member developed a booklet outlining this process. This booklet has been used in setting or revising standards in four other states
- Working on programs to educate the voting public on the voting and election process in South Carolina

- Develop uniform guidelines for determining voter intent and duplication of ballots in counties using punch-card and optical scan voting systems before the 2002 primaries
- Develop guidelines and procedures associated with ballot recounts before the 2002 primaries

To ensure accomplishment of our goals, resources available in state government are evaluated based on employee skills and available technology. A plan is then developed by senior leaders to implement the specific project. When developing and teaching new Training and Certification Program classes, office staff and county personnel are reviewed based on their skills and availability to teach the classes. They are then empowered to develop a curriculum and conduct the training for that class.

Category 3 - Customer Focus

Customers of the State Election Commission include the citizens of South Carolina, county boards of voter registration and election commissions, the legislature, special interests and advocacy groups, municipal election commissions, political parties, candidates, and those who purchase lists of registered voters. Our customers are determined by recognizing those who request information and services from our agency and whether our agency can fulfill the request. For example, the executive director and management team meet quarterly with an advisory committee consisting of election officials from all over the state. This committee serves as a liaison between all county election commissions and voter registration boards in the State and the State Election Commission. By taking this approach, the management team is able to speak directly with one of our biggest customers and then lead and train agency employees to meet the customer's needs. They have also been extremely valuable in establishing needs for statutory changes and fine-tuning programmatic focus.

The management team also meets regularly with political parties, advocacy groups, and members of the legislature to discuss issues affecting the operation of this agency. We are interested in customer input on agency performance so that we may implement procedures, if needed, to improve our customer focus. We listen to what the customer needs and, if valid, put forth our best effort to obtain it in the quickest way. For example, the Executive Director and a Commissioner met with the Chiefs of seven Native American Tribes to discuss their concerns related to identification of Native American on the registration rolls and voting in South Carolina.

There were several programs implemented in 2000-2001 to meet customer needs including:

- Pilot project for 2000 General Election - Voting on the Internet
- Updating of Agency web site
- Various flyers, posters, and pamphlets addressing voting issues
- Election legislation updates
- Regional training classes
- Continuation of solutions to needs identified in 1999 Election Summit
- Cross functional team to review & purchase new statewide voter registration system

Our agency implements several methods to gather levels of customer satisfaction including:

- Evaluations from training programs
- On-site visits with county offices
- Attend voting system users group meetings
- Customer comment/survey cards
- Advisory committee meetings with customers

The State Election Commission is dedicated to continuous improvement in the voter registration and elections process. By using the avenues outlined above, it is our goal to provide the best possible service to customers of this agency.

Category 4 - Information and Analysis

This Agency decides which systems to measure based on the agency mission and products. These measurements show trends for future planning and display areas of strength and weakness for error correction procedures.

Technology is used as much as possible to ensure data quality, reliability, completeness, and availability for decision-making. When problems arise or trends change requiring a shift in procedure, correct data is essential to make the right decision. All voter registration data is tracked using our statewide voter registration system and reports from that system can be accessed at any time. Reports available to the public include the voter registration totals broken down by race, sex, and age. Other reports are produced to determine proper ballot content and number of ballots necessary for an election.

Voter registration data entered into the Statewide Voter Registration System by county offices is used to compile statistical reports on a weekly, quarterly and yearly basis. This information contains breakdowns of the number of registered voters by age, race, sex, and election districts. Weekly update reports of changes made to the system are printed and mailed every Monday to all 46 counties using the system. The county offices then use these reports to verify changes they made to the system. Quarterly and yearly reports are distributed within 24 hours of their receipt from the Office of Information Resources.

A comparison of the voter registration lists used in all elections is made within ten days of receipt of that list in the office. The comparison checks for discrepancies and errors made at the precinct level on Election Day. If errors are found, the proper county election officials are notified immediately so that they can rectify the situation.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter) requires us to track each agency required to give assistance to customers desiring to register to vote to ensure that they are complying with the Act by asking clients if they would like to register to vote. This tracking is done by reviewing weekly reports and comparing trends and fluctuations in the numbers of voters assisted. When a problem is discovered the proper county election official or other agency is contacted immediately.

Other divisions use various tables and recording notebooks to track efficiency and effectiveness methods. For example, the Electronic Voting Systems Division keeps a manual log of when sample ballots are mailed to a county election commission, when they are returned, and the

number of errors contained in the information. If errors are found on the agency end of the transmission, steps are taken to reduce those errors in the future. Based on data retrieved from the Electronic Voting Services Division last year, it was determined that an unacceptable amount of errors were made on ballots leaving the office. While these errors were detected and corrected prior to the election, our goal was to have 0% error rate on ballots leaving the office. After analyzing the workload required of division employees, it was determined that additional help was needed to proofread ballots. Since implementing an additional proofreading procedure, the error rate has been reduced to 0%.

Category 5 - Human Resources

Motivation of employees is done informally through verbal conversations and mentoring. Formal motivation is achieved through practices such as flex time, agency retreats, promotions from within, and providing resources to perform the necessary job duties and monetary increases and bonuses when the agency budget allows. Our compensation system is based on available funding and internal equity. If money is available in the Agency budget, employee salary increases are given for performance, additional job duties, or completion of certain training programs. Regular staff meetings, verbal surveys, written surveys, observation, and feedback during evaluations are used to determine employee satisfaction and motivation.

Our rewards and recognition program is based on a peer nominated approach. Employees are nominated quarterly by their peers for outstanding service performed based on the agency's goals and mission. From those nominees, an employee of the quarter is chosen and recognized at a luncheon, breakfast or other gathering. At the gathering the employee is rewarded with a plaque. Each year an employee of the year is chosen from the employee of the quarter recipients and their name is engraved on a larger plaque in the office lobby. Additionally, we recognize the outstanding registration/election office, official, and newcomer from the various counties in the state. These peer-nominated awards are presented annually at the South Carolina Association of Registration and Election Officials conference.

Through meetings, workshops, training classes, phone and in-person conversations with our customers, we determine their needs and their expectations of this agency. By identifying these needs we are able to address them and develop or improve current programs to ensure customer satisfaction. These developments and improvements are executed using the most modern and economically feasible means available. Many times, development training of employees is needed to accomplish these program improvements. Employees are encouraged to attend advanced schooling and also to attend any training offered to help them better perform their job duties. Extra training is also encouraged for substandard performance when it is incurred.

While we are a small agency with only 20 employees, we are a strong group dedicated to the mission of the agency. Cross training and cross functioning are both supported and used frequently in the agency. All employees of the agency participate in the training and certification program either by teaching, preparing materials, or through administrative processes.

Our employee performance management system gives management an opportunity to acknowledge good performance and provide resources and advice to improve on substandard performance and areas of weakness. This process is demonstrated through the annual employee evaluation and by addressing problems as they arise. Weekly and quarterly staff meetings are also used to obtain and address this information.

A custodial staff hired by the Budget and Control Board Building Services Division maintains the work environment. Supervisory personnel report unsanitary conditions to the proper authorities immediately. We also comply with OSHA and state fire marshal regulations, and have security personnel stationed in the building from 7am until 7pm. Extra lighting was installed this past year in our lower level parking garage.

The Electronic Voting Systems Division produces ballots using large architectural plotters that require very heavy rolls of paper. Because of this extra weight, back braces are provided for staff to use while lifting the paper. Aprons and latex gloves are also provided for staff for use when working with ink cartridges necessary for these plotters. Employees using computers on a regular basis are provided with larger monitors containing screen filters, keyboards designed to prevent hand injury, and stands to hold data to be processed.

Most employees participate in the United Way and Good Health Appeal programs. Other volunteer programs by agency staff are: Christmas adopt-a-family, blood donations to the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, Sistercare Christmas assistance, and school mentoring. Many employees are also actively involved in church related activities. Employees often use their lunch hour to provide volunteer services for these programs.

Category 6 - Process Management

Voting System Support

Databases and ballots for 18 counties using electronic voting systems are designed using specialized software. The election laws of South Carolina and information specific to the election govern the design of this information. Software and voting machine hardware updates are subject to the certification procedures outlined in the election laws of South Carolina. Once a vendor has complied with these procedures, the State Election Commission may use the updated versions. New peripheral technology is explored and reviewed constantly by personnel in our agency Information Services Division and resources pertinent to this division are discussed and evaluated before purchases are made. If the evaluation determines that the upgrade in technology will benefit the Agency and its customers, and if funding is available, the change is incorporated.

The Election Voting Systems Division has a formal policy of delivering all databases and ballots no later than two weeks prior to the date of the election. In the case of larger counties, such as Charleston, Spartanburg, and Horry ballots are delivered as soon as possible with a goal of no later than three weeks prior to the election. With the exception of elections with special circumstances such as candidate withdrawal and lawsuits, having a well-stocked supply of paper and other materials needed, overtime of full-time personnel, and the use of part-time personnel meet these goals. Due to recent technology advancements, we were able to secure equipment which printed ballots much faster, therefore, eliminating the need for part-time personnel during the 2000 general election and saving the agency approximately \$825.00.

Division personnel are in constant contact with suppliers of the software, specialized supplies, and regular office, and mailing supplies needed. Contact with voting system vendors is done by phone for immediate resolution and through semi-annual users group meetings for items that need discussion and input from other customers. Supplies such as ballot paper and ink are stored in the office and inventoried 6 months prior to any major election. If inventory is deemed low,

new supplies are ordered so that they will arrive in a timely manner. Contact with suppliers is maintained through monthly newsletters, phone, and e-mail.

Educational Services

On-site training programs for poll workers, county election commissioners, and municipal election commissioners are performed on an as-needed basis. A county may request training in any of these areas by phone or through written communication. Once the request is made State Election Commission staff arrange for the time and place of the training based on the customer's schedule. The majority of this training is conducted during evening hours.

Periodic election law changes require changes to materials used in various training programs and on Election Day. These election law changes are tracked by the agency Public Information Officer and reported to staff responsible for updating materials and forms. Prior to every primary and general election, if not needed before, these changes are reviewed and incorporated into forms and materials supplied by this office. Changes needed as a result of a suggestion from office staff or our customers are also incorporated at this time. Supplies and printing are secured using State procurement procedures and distributed to county offices via UPS, interagency mail service, and personal delivery.

Staff from the Election Services Division travel regularly to county offices to provide assistance when needed. These trips are also used to obtain feedback and new ideas from customers that would benefit the election process. After the 2000 general election, one staff member was able to help Sumter and Oconee counties streamline their punchcard absentee system. This streamlined procedure will be communicated to other counties using this voting system as well.

Training and Certification Program

All county election or voter registration officials and designated staff members are required by statute to complete the Training and Certification Program provided by the State Election Commission. State Election Commission staff, certain county staff personnel, staff from other state and federal agencies, and professional trainers conduct components for this program. Classes are offered on a regular basis and are conducted regionally so that participants do not have to travel a long distance. Updates to the training classes are made as needed due to election law changes, procedural changes, and information gathered by written surveys given at the end of each class.

Once the classes are scheduled, agency staff prepares a calendar of deadlines for class preparation. Registrations for classes are received up until the day of the class. Because of this last minute registration procedure, extra materials are produced by the deadlines set on the original class calendar. Supplies for producing these materials are well stocked in advance and re-stocked immediately after depletion.

Performance from suppliers, trainers, and staff preparing materials are monitored in several ways. Materials for classes are monitored by using the deadlines previously determined. If there is a breakdown in production, it is noticed immediately and dealt with as soon as possible. The best way to prevent a breakdown is to prepare in advance by stocking proper materials and not waiting until the deadline to complete a project. Senior leaders encourage this process. Overall evaluation of classes and performance of trainers is obtained from written evaluations completed by class participants. These evaluations are used to modify and improve future

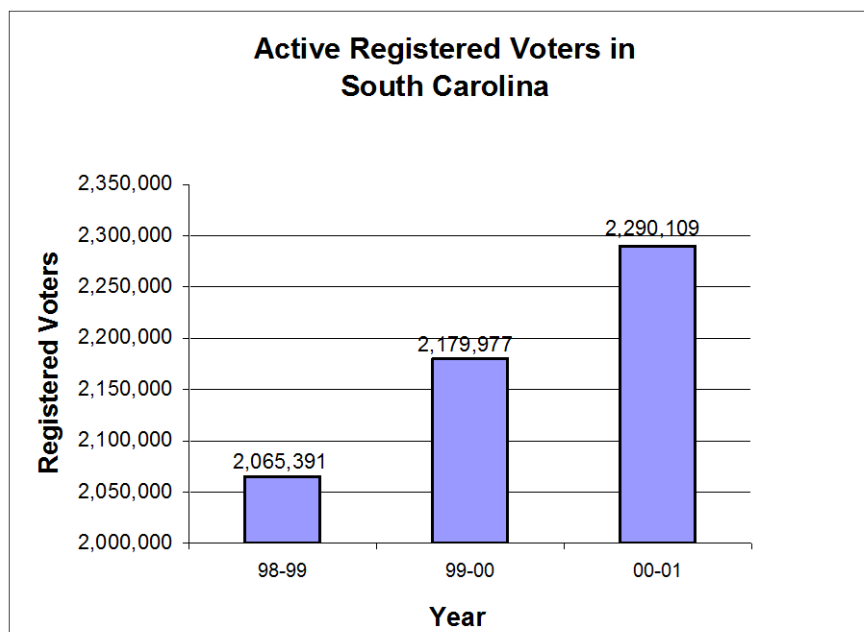
training classes. The cost of this program is borne by a \$15 registration fee paid by each participant.

Because we did not have our own training facility we had to rent training space from a local hotel in July 2000 which cost the agency \$5,000. We are in the process of preparing a training/public hearing room in our building to use for future classes which should reduce the costs incurred by the training program. This room was previously used for storage of election supplies.

Statewide Voter Registration System

The State Election Commission is responsible for maintaining a database of approximately 2.3 million registered voters in the State. Each county voter registration office is connected to a computer in Columbia at the Office of Information Resources which houses the master file of registered voters in the State. The individual county voter registration offices are enabled to add registered voters to this database and make changes to their county's file. Processes for which this agency is responsible for are:

- Operate and maintain the statewide voter registration system
- Provide voter registration lists to the county boards of voter registration for each election held in the State
- Maintain accurate voter history for each registered elector
- Remove names of voters who have died, moved, been convicted of felonies or crimes against the election laws or otherwise become ineligible as electors
- Provide technical support to the county boards of voter registration in the proper use of the statewide voter registration system
- Provide training to county election commissions on use of the electronic transmission of election results after the Primary and General Election. Once transmitted to us these totals are immediately placed on our web site for public information
- Provide forms and materials used for voter registration offices
- Serve as liaison with the Office of Information Resources to maintain the current election results reporting system and make any updated changes as needed



Agency Information Technology Support

The Information Services Division is responsible for the in-house, personal computer based computer system. When problems arise with hardware and software, staff in the division are notified immediately and they address the situation on a needs priority basis. Staff members are empowered to make decisions independently unless the decision requires major budget expenditures.

Agency Web Site – www.state.sc.us/scsec

The State Election Commission web page is maintained by the Office of Information Resources and is updated as needed based on customer input given to our Information Services Division verbally or in writing, frequent calls requesting duplicate information, and changes in information. We plan to start reviewing the site on a monthly basis to determine any other changes necessary. We are currently in the process of updating the site to make it accessible for individuals with physical disabilities and plan to complete this project by November 2002. Key information available on the site is:

- Statistical information on the numbers of voters participating in past elections
- Current election information such as polling place locations, dates and deadlines for voters, candidates, the news media, and county election officials
- Voter registration application. **We were the first state in the nation to post this application on the Web.**
- Election schedules
- Information on how to become a candidate and the political process generally

Accounts Payable

Invoices are received in the office. The accounts payable clerk then processes a voucher within three days of receipt of the invoice. Voucher is sent to the Comptroller General's Office. We also put the information from the voucher on a disk and send it with the voucher. The Comptroller General's office loads the information from the disk and sends this information to the Treasurer's Office. The Treasurer's Office then sends a check back to the agency where the check number is recorded and the accounts payable clerk mails the check to the respective individual or entity. Meetings are currently being held with the BARS (Basic Accounting Reporting System) personnel at USC and various agencies in an attempt to either modify the current accounting system or switch to another system through USC that will offer many more options and newer technology for all modules including accounts payable. A State Election Commission staff member is on several of the committees and will be working with USC in an attempt to develop and implement an improved accounting system.

Following this year's financial audit, the State Auditor's Office noted that we are paying certain bills in the wrong fiscal year. This is due to the fact that the end of the fiscal year comes on June 30th and our statewide primaries are held in mid-June. We have a difficult time with counties and vendors sending our agency the bills for reimbursement or direct payment to us prior to June 30th so we can pay these bills in the correct current fiscal year. We have written memos and spoken with the counties and the vendors in an effort to receive the bills prior to June 30th but we still continue to receive many after June 30th. We have been advised that we cannot give the

counties and the vendors a deadline to submit the bills to avoid the possibility of the bills not being paid. Our only option is to pay the bills from the last fiscal year in the new fiscal year with carry-forwards from previous years.

When we have a billing error or an error in the sale of list program, we deal with those errors immediately. Errors are tracked and addressed daily. We do not wait until it is time for an EPMS review of the employee to address any potential performance problems.

Sale of Lists Program

The State Election Commission's Sale of Lists Program provides customers with the names and addresses of registered voters in various formats including CD's, hard disks, peel off labels, printed lists, and magtapes. Voter history information may also be obtained on tapes and CD's. Other private companies and political parties offer the voter registration files, but the State Election Commission file is the most up-to-date because it is connected to the real-time registration files of all 46 county boards of voter registration. In the past, Office of Information Resources prepared the CD's for the State Election Commission. Beginning in May 2001, the employee who processes the orders for the Sale of Lists Program started preparing the CD's in-house. This was made possible by purchasing new, more advanced computer equipment. This revenue-generating program fully funds the salary of the full time employee who works with the program and one part time permanent position in the State Election Commission mailroom.

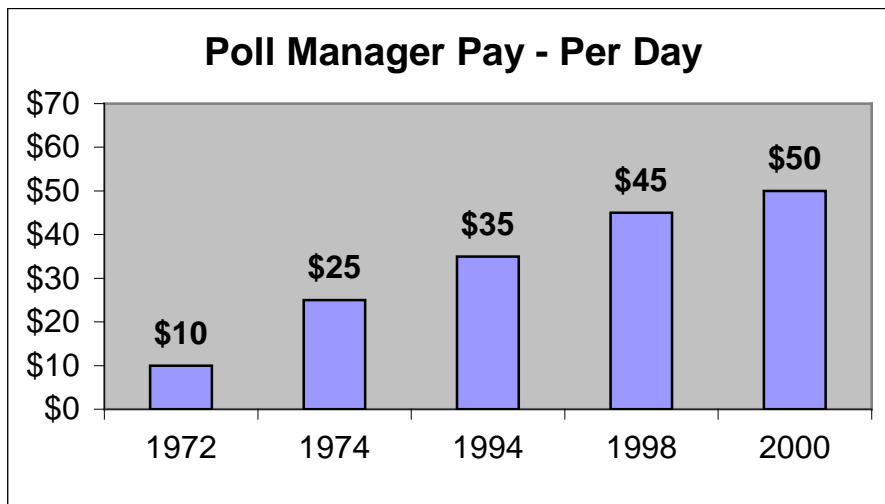
Supplement to county election commissions and registration boards

Currently, the State Election Commission provides a supplement to the County Registration Offices and Election Commissions per Proviso 62.1 in the amount of \$1,500 per member with a cap of \$12,500 per year. Those counties who have over eight commission members receive less than the full \$500 supplement. We have changed our practice of paying the supplement at the beginning of each quarter. This practice allowed commissioners and board members to be paid in advance of performing their duties. It is not always reported when vacancies occur in the various boards and, therefore, members are paid for the entire quarter with no regard to the amount of time that they may have served on the board. Beginning with FY02, the State Election Commission plans to send the funds to each county treasurer at the end of the quarter so that it will be easier to determine what members served and what length of time that they served with the funds being prorated accordingly. The Proviso does not stipulate when the funds must be disbursed to the county treasurer and it is our understanding that the county treasurer, in most cases, does not send the funds to the county boards until the end of the quarter.

Category 7 – Business Results

Poll Worker Pay and Recruitment

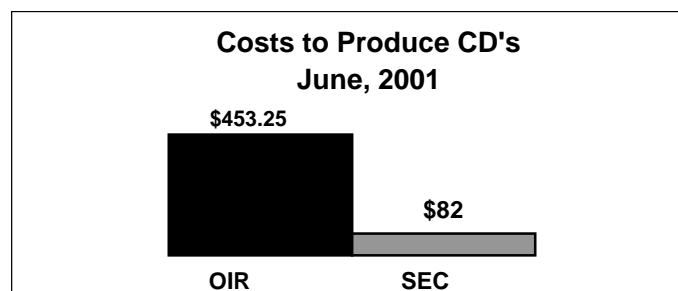
Below is a chart showing the increase in pay for poll managers as requested by the State and county election commissions and poll workers.



Legislation passed in 2000 and was implemented in the General Election to allow one 16 & 17 year old per precinct to work as poll manager assistants. A written survey conducted after the 2000 General Election determined that 16 out of 32 counties responding to the survey reported using the youth as poll workers. 30 of 32 counties plan to use the young people in the 2002 elections. Comments from counties using the 16 & 17 year-olds were unanimously favorable. Because of the favorable response and success of this new law, the legislature was convinced to increase the number of 16 & 17 year-olds allowed to serve at a polling place from one per precinct to one for every two regular poll managers at the precinct. This positive legislation will broaden the pool of potential poll managers for both statewide primaries and general elections. Additionally, it involves young people in the process at an early age, and we feel that they are more likely to register and vote because of this program.

Sale of Lists of Voters on Compact Disk

Prior to May 2001, purchased lists of registered voters on CD were prepared by the Budget and Control Board, Office of Information Services at a rate of \$64.75 per hour. By upgrading a computer in-house with newer technology, staff at the agency was able to start preparing these compact disks at a rate of \$14.28 per hour. We were able to track the justification of producing in-house compact disks by recording the time necessary to produce each compact disk multiplied by an estimated hourly rate including personnel and resources. Since this is a new process, we were only able to begin tracking the information in the month of June and realized a savings of \$371.25.



Ballot Review and Approval

All ballots for use in statewide primaries and general elections must be reviewed and approved by agency staff before the county officials can print their necessary official ballots. These proofsheets are mailed or faxed to the Election Services Division for review and then returned to the county within 48 hours. While it is not required, most county and municipal election commissions send their sample ballots to us for review prior to printing of official ballots.

For 2000 General Election:

835 ballot styles reviewed

3 ballots approved with undetected errors *

835 ballot styles reviewed and returned to the County Election Commission within 48 hours

** These undetected errors were corrected prior to the day of the election*

Educational Services Training

15 County poll manager training classes held with a total of 950 people trained

11 Municipal poll manager training classes held with total of 200 people trained

7 Municipal Election Commissions trained with a total of 27 people trained

Failsafe Voting

Because of new programming changes to the statewide voter registration system this year, we were able to determine how many people voted using the Fail-safe procedure. This procedure allows voters who have moved to another precinct within their county or from one county to another within 30 days of the election, but failed to change their address with the appropriate voter registration office prior to casting a ballot. 4,371 people utilized this Fail-Safe provision in the 2000 General Election.

New Statewide Voter Registration System

The 1999 election summit identified a need re-write the current software program of the voter registration system. The current system was designed in the 70's and updated 10 years ago. In the beginning, a cross departmental team reviewed a Statewide Voter Registration System in Arkansas which was developed by a private vendor. The team discovered that, while the Arkansas system was more technologically advanced, it was not as complete as our current system. Based on a 32 year successful relationship between our agency and the Office of Information Resources, the ability to have in-state development and support and the fact that the costs would be \$750,000 less, the Agency decided to retain the partnership with Office of Information Resources and allow them to develop and support the new system. Through partnership with the Office of Information Resources, Division of Research and Statistics, and several county voter registration board officials, we were able to establish a needs assessment and develop a project plan for implementation of the new system. The project is on schedule and the expected date of completion is March 2002. Current status of this project is as follows:

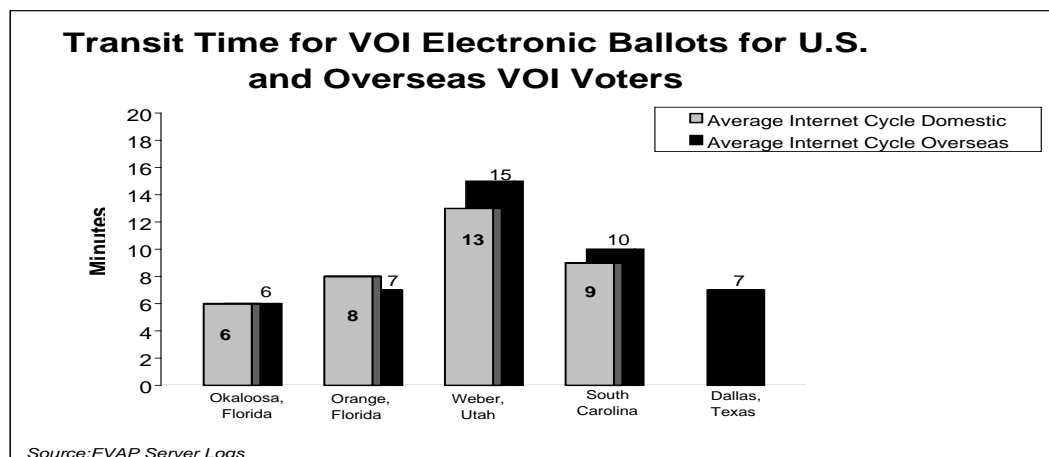
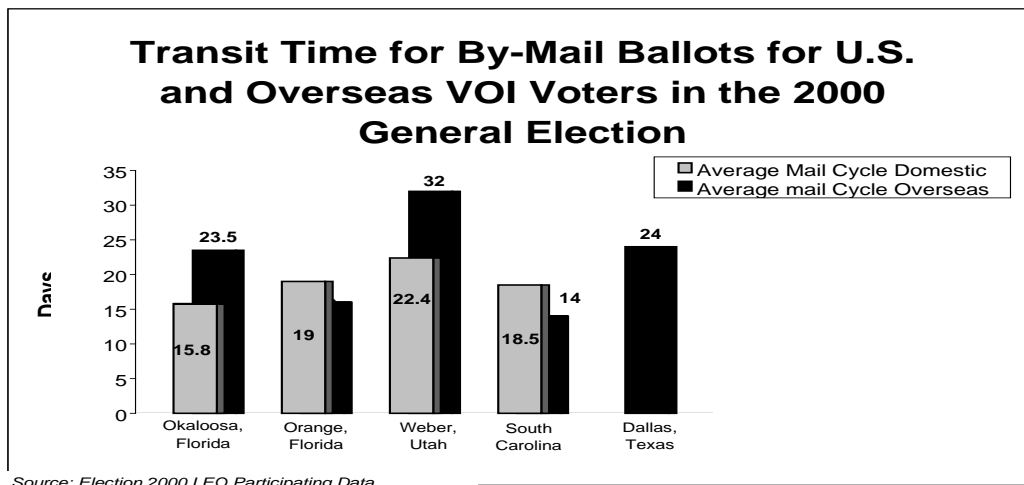
- On-site surveys to determine wiring requirements for new equipment in 27 counties were completed in June 2001.
- Two meetings were held with county voter registration boards to determine their desires in a new system.

- Cooperation was fostered with Research and Statistics allow the agency to link to their E-911 and GIS data to determine voting districts of electors.
- Surveyed all 46 counties to determine what equipment they currently had in place. This equipment will be replaced with new equipment compatible with the new system.
- Funding obtained from the General Assembly to be combined with available carry forward funds.

Voting on the Internet Pilot Project

South Carolina was one of four states participating in a voting on the Internet pilot project coordinated by the U.S. Department of Defense, Federal Voting Assistance Program. Other states participating were Florida, Texas and Utah; however, we were the **only** state that was eligible to participate on a statewide basis while only certain counties in the other three states participated.

The project was a small-scale feasibility study to examine the use of the Internet as an alternative method for remote absentee registration and voting for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens. Technical performance, security, integrity, ease of use, and ballot transit time were key areas tested by the Department of Defense in the pilot program. Ballot transit time was of great importance because of the deadlines involved with elections. Below are diagrams of the transit time for ballots delivered by mail and electronically over the Internet:

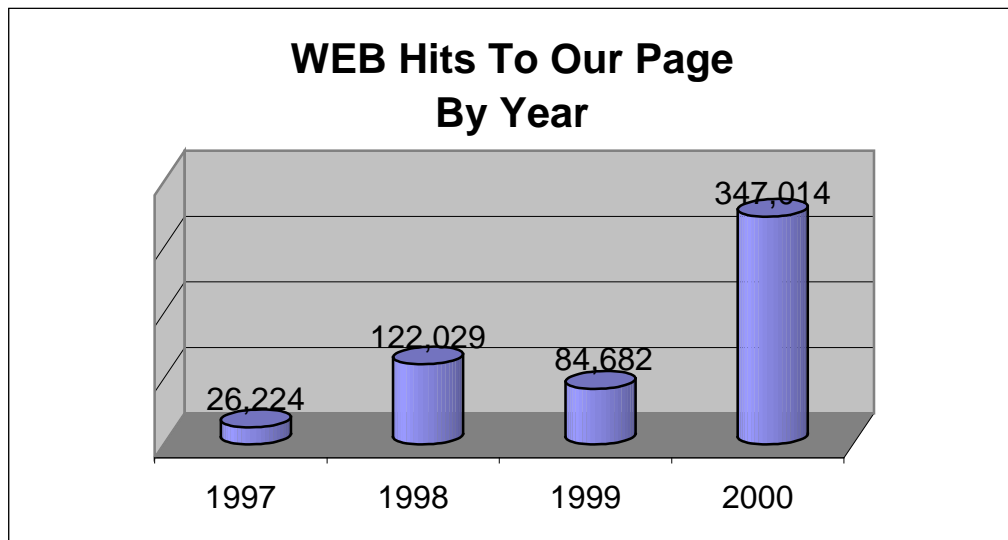
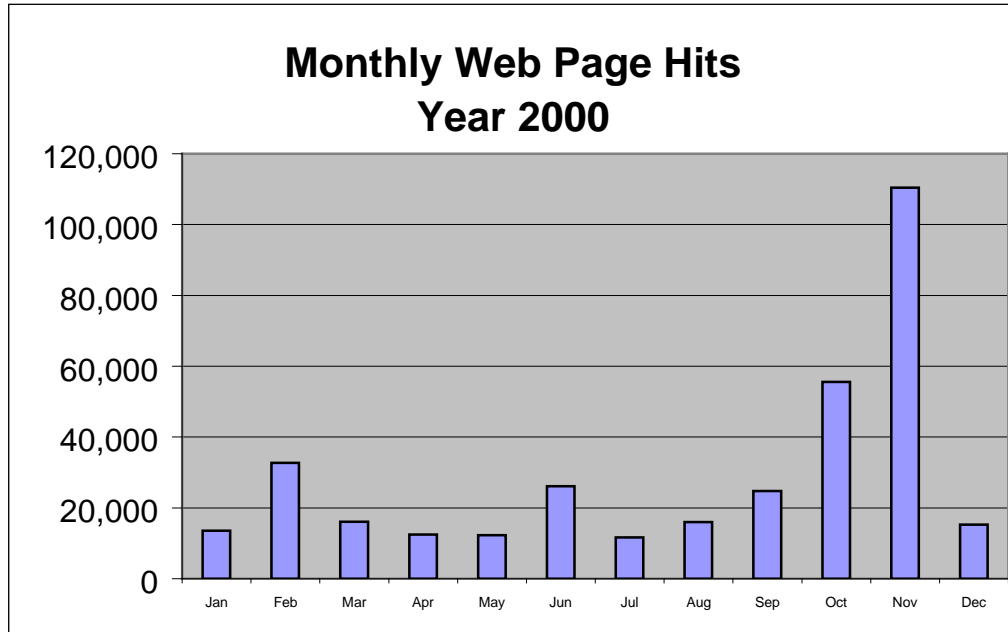


The program was a great success in that it enabled members of the Armed Forces to register and vote regardless of their physical location. Of the 47 volunteers allowed to participate from our State, 17 actual ballots were cast. The remaining 20 volunteers either moved or mailed in a paper absentee ballot. It is our hope to expand on this program since there were no errors or transmission losses of the ballot data. This pilot project was the first time anyone in the nation voted on the Internet in an official election and we are proud to have been a part of making history.

Agency Web Site

On the evening of the 2000 General Election, the Web page was updated every 3 minutes with election results transmitted from the 46 counties in the State. There were 5,979 visits to this site on election night and were from as far away as Japan.

We have noticed a significant increase in the number of visits to the Web site since its creation. There was a definite increase in visits to the site during November, which was also the month for the statewide General Election, and although we are unable to track the specific viewers of the site, various news media personnel have expressed their appreciation for the information available on the Web. Below are charts depicting these increases in site visits.



Training & Certification Program

Through focus groups and written surveys, participants in this training program often express the desire for components on specific topics. Based on these requests, the classes listed below were developed and offered in this fiscal period and were filled to capacity. One class, Election Law Violations, was so much in demand that it contained 19 more participants than the maximum class size previously established. Because of this demand extra chairs were brought into the room and participants agreed to share table space.

New Components for 2000-2001

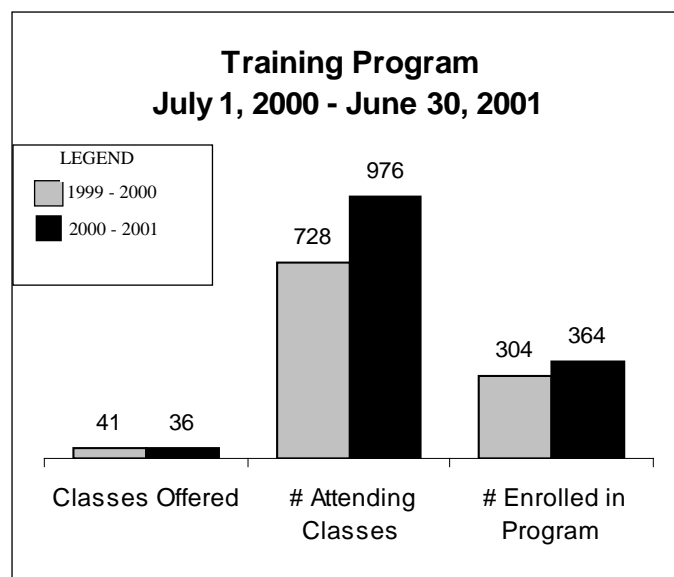
- Election Law Violations
- Increasing Voter Participation
- Internet: Election Surfing
- Making Your Board the Best it can Be
- Office Organization
- Promoting a Professional Image
- Quality Voter Registration/Election Office
- Winning Through Your Attitude

Other classes requested from surveys during this fiscal period and currently in the development stage are:

- Computer Concepts
- Office Procedures
- Elections from A-Z

Although we offered fewer classes during this period than last year, we realized an overall increase in participants. This could be attributed to the fact that legislation was passed in the last two years to require election and voter registration officials and their staff to obtain certification from the program within 18 months of their appointment or hire and the fact that we added eight new classes to the program.

Washington, Iowa, and Virginia have all used our program as a benchmark for starting or improving programs in their state. These states have requested copies of our program and staff has been in contact with Iowa State Election officials by phone to answer additional questions and give advice.



Public Information

Because of events that happened in Florida after the 2000 general election, several staff members fielded calls from various study groups and reporters from around the nation. This information was not tracked on a regular basis but members of the CalTech/MIT task force informed us that **South Carolina has the best absentee voting procedures and records in the nation.** We also learned from an attorney working with one of the various lawsuits that we have the best statistics in the nation. Both of these success stories can be attributed to our statewide voter registration system and dedication of State Election Commission staff and county voter registration offices to provide precise and accurate information on the absentee voting procedures and to provide accurate statistics on voter turnout and election results.

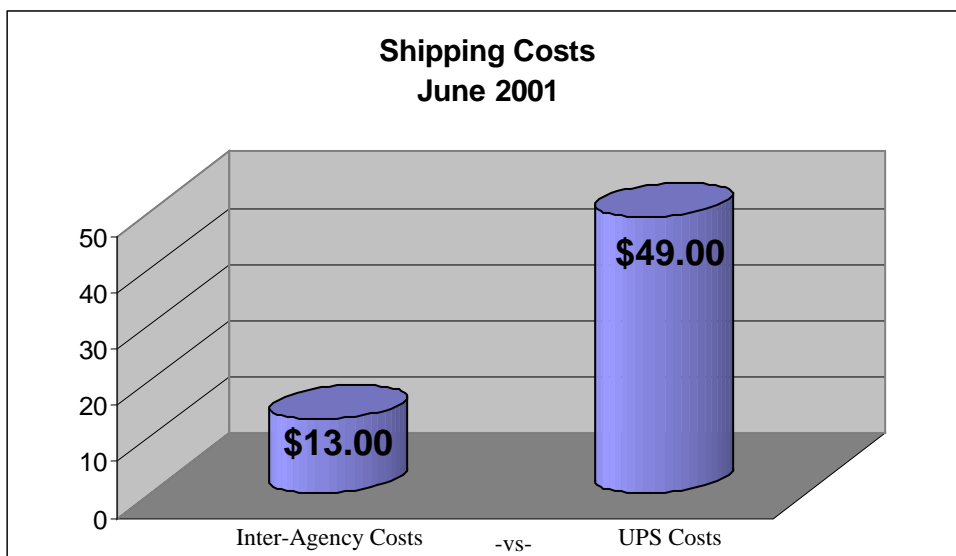
Protest Hearings

Following the 2000 General Election, the State Board of Canvassers convened in a judicial capacity to conduct hearings on 6 election appeals and 2 protests of the election. This board is required by law to hear election appeals from the county level and any election protests for statewide, senate district, and house district elections. Below is a table describing the specifics of the hearings and what steps the SEC took as a result:

Appeal/Protest	Decision by Board of Canvassers	Needs Identified and Steps Taken to Address Those Needs
Edgefield School Dist. 6	Sustained Election	
Beaufort County Council	Ordered Recount in District 10 only	Stressed to county election commission the importance of privacy sleeves for each voter. County will work closer with poll workers to stress this important procedure.
Senate Dist 31	Tie vote by board— Election Sustained	Worked with county personnel to ensure their proper procedure for absentee ballot tabulation in the future.
House District 60	Tie vote by board— Election Sustained	(Same as above)
Florence County Council, District 2	Tie vote by board— Election Sustained	(Same as above)
Florence County Council, District 4	Tie vote by board— Election Sustained	(Same as above)
Bamberg School Board	Protest Denied	
Jasper County Council	Ordered New Election	3 staff members from SEC worked with county election commission and poll workers on 3 trips prior to the election to provide advice on procedures. 2 staff members were available in the county on election day to provide assistance and advice. This second election was successful and no protests were filed as a result.

Electronic Voting System Ballot Shipping

Ballots and databases prepared for all elections for the 14 counties using Danaher Voting equipment are normally shipped using United Parcel Service (UPS). By partnering with the Budget and Control Board's Interagency Mail Service (IMS) and satellite state government offices in each county such as DSS and the Division of Motor Vehicles, we were able to start shipping this information via the IMS delivery system. We started using this service in mid-June and plan to continue the partnership in the future. Since this is such a new project, we are able to show a cost savings of only \$36.00 for a two week period; we will be tracking this information daily and will be able to report a larger amount of savings next year. We also expect to see more significant savings during the months prior to busier election days.



Voting System Support

Databases and ballots were provided for all regularly scheduled elections as well as all elections for schools and other organizations that use the voting machines. By providing this service to our customers at no charge, they are able to reduce election costs and provide voter education opportunities that might not be feasible or possible if this service was provided by other sources. These ballots are used as an educational tool for school age students by providing mock elections. This tool will have lasting results as these individuals grow into adults and become registered voters in our state.

All ballots and databases were mailed to the county offices within two weeks prior to the general election. After recognizing a 10% error rate in information sent to the county office for approval, we implemented an additional step in our procedure and reduced that error rate to 0%. Even with the original 10% error rate for approvals, we were able to correct all 10% of those errors prior to the election.

The following statistics are for services delivered by the Electronic Voting System division for this fiscal year:

- ❖ 18 counties serviced in the State
- ❖ 113 election databases created
- ❖ 6 on-site training classes and users group meetings held
- ❖ 2090 ballots plotted @ \$.36 per ballot = \$752.00
- ❖ 1234 ballots copied @ \$.30 per ballot = \$370.00

The chart below depicts actual costs of these services versus the costs incurred if a vendor or commercial firms had provided these services.

