

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION**

**LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

October 20, 2000

To: James H. Hodges, Governor  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Senate Finance Committee:

In accordance with Provision 72.58 of the FY 00-01 Appropriations Act, the State Election Commission hereby submits its Annual Accountability Report for fiscal year 1999-2000. The report states the agency's mission as set out in Title 7 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended and our major programs, prioritized by statutory mandates and both necessary and requested services to our customers.

Program objectives are based on the belief that this agency exists to support conduct of voter registration and elections in the state, and the performance measures reflect the quantity, efficiency and effectiveness with which these programs are carried out.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact me at (803) 734-9060.

Respectfully submitted,

James F. Hendrix  
Executive Director

JFH:hk

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
Fiscal Year 1999-2000**

As the chief election agency in South Carolina, the State Election Commission (SEC) 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.

We are a service agency, and through evaluation, analysis, and customer feedback we seek to improve our service and meet our customer's needs.

Our customers include the various county boards of voter registration and election commissions, the South Carolina General Assembly, candidates for public office, political parties, county and municipal government, other state agencies, the media, and the public.

The criteria to establish program priorities are statutory mandates and requests for services from our customers.

Our primary statutory mandate is the maintenance and support of the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS), including training and support of the forty-six county boards of voter registration. This was our number one priority.

437,797 new registrations and changes were processed by SVRS during this fiscal year. In addition to ensuring that the system is operational, and that all personnel are well-trained in use of the system, we print and provide all forms required for the voter process.

In 1968, South Carolina became the first state in the nation to implement a computerized central voter registration system. Automation of the voter registration process and providing direct access to the master file by each voter registration office allows for updates to the statewide file on a daily basis. It has also allowed us to handle an increasing volume of work with no increase in personnel at either the state or county level.

Automation also allows the agency to provide a wealth of statistics concerning voter registration and election participation on an up-to-date basis. Requests for these registration statistics and election results from candidates, the media, and the public provide the bulk of our requests for information. Additionally, the continued development of the agency's home page, including updating election results, by county and precinct, at fifteen minute intervals following statewide elections, has provided much information in an easy to access format for our customers. In this reporting period, we had 257,546 hits to our web site. This usage will only increase as more of our customers become aware of this valuable source of information.

Although an agency-wide effort, the Special Projects section of SVRS has the chief responsibility for continued development and implementation of our training and certification program for county voter registration officials. This program seeks to increase the knowledge

and raise the professional level of those persons dealing with voter registration and elections on a day-to-day basis. This program is successful. Of the 395 registration and election officials in the State, 294 have received certification. During this reporting period, we offered 41 classes and 304 registration/election officials and staff participated in the program. It is fair to say that as the professional level of our registration and election officials has risen, the quality of elections held in the State has improved.

A major agency project for this reporting period was the conduct of a statewide Election Summit. Beginning on the local level, each county's registration/election officials, with input from elected officials, poll workers, political parties, the media, and the public examined the registration and election processes in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, problems, and concerns. They also identified needs and suggested solutions to improve these processes. Forty-four counties participated in this program. Each county submitted a written report to the SEC setting out its findings and recommendations. The SEC formed a State Oversight Committee to examine the county reports, conduct studies of statewide issues, and prepare a State report. This report was submitted to the Governor and members of the General Assembly in January of this year. While the success of this study remains to be seen, several of the recommendations needed for statutory changes have already been made.

Conduct of the 2000 Primary Elections was our number two priority. We are pleased to state that all polling places were open and staffed as required by law. All poll managers received the required training to work in this election. All supplies were provided to county election officials at least one month prior to the elections. All ballots were proofed, approved, and provided in numbers required by law. Finally, the results of the elections were certified, recounts and runoff elections were ordered and conducted as required. These elections were conducted legally, as efficiently as possible, and within the projected budget.

The agency's Sale of Lists Program was our final priority. Required by law to provide these lists of registered voters, the program provides a valuable and much requested service to our customers. 682 saleable orders were processed this fiscal year. 98% of these orders were processed and shipped within 3 working days. Additionally, 198 jury lists were processed, including county magistrate and municipal jury lists. This is a revenue generating program, and funds generated by the program fund two positions necessary to provide the service. Additional funds are used to pay for needed changes and updates to the program. We monitor customer satisfaction and ideas for program improvement through customer comments and written customer surveys. All indications are that customer satisfaction with this program is high.

Increased opportunities for voter registration through the agency-based registration program illustrates interagency cooperation, or partnering, to provide services to the citizens of the State. Cooperative efforts between the SEC and the Department of Motor Vehicles, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Social Services, and the Department of Health and Environmental Control's WIC program have made voter registration easier for thousands of South Carolina's citizens. We have also partnered with DSS to enhance their program to locate those persons who are delinquent in child support payments. The Budget and Control Board's Office of Information Resources is a long-time partner in the automation of our Statewide Voter

Registration System. We look forward to continuing partnership with them and with the Office of Research and Statistics as we seek to bring more modern, up-to-date technology to the voter registration process. 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.

The SEC has been involved in performance excellence programs since 1994. Through workshops, retreats, and employee teams we seek to provide employees with the tools and opportunities to both focus on, and practice performance excellence. Management serves as mentors and coaches, and employees are empowered to bring their ideas, suggestions, and their best efforts to our processes. Excellence is recognized through a peer-nominated program and rewarded monetarily when possible.

This summary and the accompanying report indicate the breadth and level of services provided by the State Election Commission. We have a clear vision of our duties and responsibilities. We provide a full range of high quality services within our areas of responsibility, always mindful of customer and employee satisfaction.

**STATE ELECTION COMMISSION**  
**Fiscal Year 99-00**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The State Election Commission (SEC) 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 data bases 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, declare candidates elected and hear protests/appeals that may arise.

**LEADERSHIP SYSTEM**

Commission of five members meets monthly, or whenever necessary, to set policy for the agency supporting its mission. They also set goals and approve major projects. Additionally, the commission is 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 team is guided by the agency mission and election laws of this State.

While the Agency is involved, at least peripherally, in each of the 250-300 elections held each year in this state, a great deal of planning must be done 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 these elections. Instructing staff and providing them with the necessary tools to complete this task is crucial to the successful conduct of elections.

Staff development and training is a crucial part of the agency's vision for the future. Staff members from all levels in the organization are encouraged to increase their skills through training programs, workshops, continuing education, and mentoring. Tuition assistance is provided for college/university based programs and leave from work, as well as 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 will hopefully complete the program within the next three years. One member from senior staff has also completed the Associate Public Manager

Program and is 95% complete with the Certified Public Manager program offered by the S.C. Budget and Control Board, office of Human Resource Development. We believe that the networking and training gained from these programs will broaden employee knowledge, strengthen employee morale, and enhance customer service.

Managers are expected to serve as leader and coach to their employees as they oversee the daily operation of their respective divisions. Cross training and workforce planning are crucial to the success of this Agency. Benefits from this approach to leadership were clearly recognized during this past year when two of our three managers left the agency within a month of each other. Current staff members were qualified to step into those positions and made the transition with little difficulty.

### **CUSTOMER FOCUS AND SATISFACTION**

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

The Executive Director and management team meet quarterly with an advisory committee consisting of election officials from across 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 Agency employees in the direction of meeting those customer's needs.

The management team also meets regularly with political parties, advocacy groups, and members of the legislature to discuss ideas and issues that can be addressed by the daily operations of this agency. Members of these groups are our customers. We wish to know their concerns and implement the necessary procedures so that employees of this agency may conduct business in a manner that addresses customer needs. Employees are empowered and encouraged to work closely with customers to better determine customer needs. They are also encouraged to develop or improve processes affecting customer needs.

Special programs to meet customer needs are:

- Pilot Project for 2000 General Election - Voting On the Internet
- Agency Web site
- Various flyers and pamphlets addressing voting issues
- Election Legislation updates
- Regional training classes
- 1999 Election Summit to determine election/voter registration needs in the State
  
- Cross functional team to develop standars and provide cost estimates for a new statewide

- voter registration system
- Internal customer service team

Several methods in place to gather levels of customer satisfaction are:

- 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
- Internal customer service team

This agency 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.

## **PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE**

Through meetings, workshops, training classes, phone and in-person conversations with our customers, we determine their needs and 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.

Human resource focus is that, while we are only 20 employees, we are a strong group who are dedicated to the mission of the Agency. 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. Employees use their lunch hour to volunteer for these programs. Flex time is also an option for agency employees.

The agency practice for hiring is to promote from within whenever possible. Our compensation system is based on available funding and internal equity. Employee salary increases are given for performance, additional job duties, or completion of certain training programs, if money is available in the Agency budget.

Our rewards and recognition program is based on a peer nominated approach. Employees are nominated by their peers on a quarterly basis. 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 and their name is engraved on a large plaque in the Agency 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.

## Description of Programs

**Priority Ranking:** No. 1

**Priority Cost:** \$824,801.00 The funds are state appropriated.

**Program Name:** Statewide Voter Registration System

**Program Goal:** To 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 on-line voter registration system to county election and voter registration staff through training classes, on-site visits, the web, phone, and written documentation.

**Program Objectives:**

- To supply the forty-six (46) county boards of voter registration with lists of registered voters, by precinct, for each election: statewide, countywide, municipal or other.
- To remove the names of voters who have died, moved, been convicted of felonies or crimes against the election laws or otherwise become ineligible as electors.
- To provide support to the county boards of voter registration in the proper use of the on-line voter registration system.
- To provide support to the county boards of voter registration on proper voter registration procedures and any changes that occur in the law.
- To provide the county boards of voter registration with all forms and materials used for voter registration.
- To provide training in the use of the election results reporting system to county voter registration staff
- To provide technical support to the counties using the election results reporting system
- Serve as liaison with Office of Information Resources to maintain the current election results reporting system and make any updated changes as needed.
- To provide training for the on-line Poll Manager system

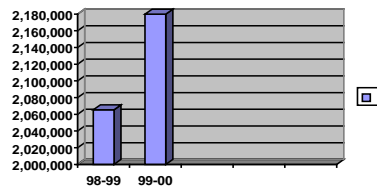
**Program Results:**

	<u>FY 98-99</u>	<u>FY 99-00</u>
Active registered voters	2,065,391	2,179,977
New Registrations added to master file	158,268	



185,025		
Changes to master file (includes address, name, death, conviction)	293,776	
252,772		
Voter Registration lists printed for elections held	219	
296		
<b>Use of on-line voter registration system:</b>		
Counties using absentee registration/balloting system (Used to enter the names of those voters requesting to register by an absentee voter application and simultaneously request an absentee ballot)	46	46
Counties using street address system (Used to determine in which election districts the voter resides)	40	40
Counties using election results reporting system (Used to enter and electronically transmit the election results)	46	46
Counties using poll manager tracking system (Used to track the number of poll managers used in each election, in which precincts the poll managers have worked, and to print pay vouchers for those managers)	32	32

### Active Registered Voters in South Carolina



All county boards utilizing statewide voter registration system

Based on information from the office of Vital Records and Statistics, we remove all deaths from our voter registration file on a monthly basis

On a monthly basis S.C. Court Administration provides a file of persons convicted of a felony or offenses against the election laws, at which time we flag them on our voter registration file as inactive for conviction and notify them that their voting rights have been removed

On a daily basis we receive notices from out of state voter registration offices as well as voters, concerning moves

County boards of voter registration call us on a daily basis with questions on how to use different programs on the on-line system

Any new changes to the voter registration system and changes in the law we send out memos, letters, and documentation in a weekly mail out to all 46 voter registration offices. We also can notify counties on immediate changes to the on-line system through the message program on the on-line system. Each county is notified when they log on each morning

We provide design, printing, and distribution of forms for all 46 voter registration offices dealing with the voter registration and election process

All county boards of voter registration/election commissions utilized the election results system and reported unofficial totals to us electronically within 24 hours of the election and official results within 24 hours after certification of the election on the county level. These totals were immediately placed on our web site for public information

Statistics on registered voters by county, precinct, district and race produced quarterly

Election participation statistics and voter history by county and precinct produced following every election in the state

New registrations and changes to the voter registration file are updated daily

Voter registration lists provided for all 296 elections held in the state at least 10 days prior to the election.

Within one month from receipt of the voter registration list from the county, the statewide file was updated to reflect which voters participated in the election.

2000 Primary Election results from the counties were transferred to our home page on the Internet within minutes of receiving the data.

Based on information from the national media and other state election offices, South Carolina leads the nation in utilizing automation to post election results and provide registration and election statistics on our home page. Our system is used as a benchmark by other states in the nation.

**Program Name:** Information Services and Special Projects

**Program Goal:** To provide updated information and training on registration and election laws, procedures, and statistics to public officials,

candidates for public office, and the citizens of South Carolina. To conduct special projects designed to improve the election process and facilitate voting for the citizens of the state.

**Program Objectives:**

- Provide information concerning election procedures and election statistics to the public
- Provide a comprehensive training and certification program to all county registration and election officials
- Provide a web page giving the public direct access to a variety of information dealing with elections and the voter registration process
- Conduct a statewide election summit involving all county boards of voter registration and election commissions, political parties, advocacy groups, media, and any other interested parties. The purpose of the summit was to consider any voter registration and election related problems and possible solutions to these problems

**Program Results:**

41 Training and Certification Program classes held with a total of 728 people in attendance

304 County registration board and election commission members and staff participated in training program

320 manuals for training classes produced in-house. By producing these manuals in-house we were able to reduce printing costs.

Cost for Training and Certification program offset by charging participants \$15 per class

Approximately 2500 requests for public information processed yearly

257,546 hits (inquiries) to the web site

44 counties participated in an election summit project. Meetings were conducted by registration/election officials on the county level. These meetings were open to anyone interested in the improvement of the election process. After each county meeting was held, a report was given to this agency outlining processes discussed and possible solutions to various election related problems. A state level summit was held simultaneously with the county summits. A final report of results from both the state and county level was presented to the governor, the General Assembly, the media, and all participants in December. A meeting was held with Governor Hodges to discuss the report.

**Priority Ranking:** No. 2

**Program Name:** 2000 Primary Election

**Program Cost:** \$2,247,345.33 Funds are state appropriated

**Program Goal:** To oversee and assist with the conduct of the 2000 Primary Elections and subsequent runoffs, if necessary, to ensure the quality of the election process and the faith and trust the voting public has in the integrity of the elections.

**Program Objective:**

- To provide each County Election Commission with the proper materials to ensure that each registered voter has the opportunity to vote
- Provide payment for expenses associated with the election such as poll worker pay, legal notices, ballot costs, supplies, and other miscellaneous costs, within a reasonable time frame.
- Conduct the election within the projected budget.

**Program Results:**

Provided daily advice and assistance to customers through telephone calls, written correspondence, meetings, on-site visits, and on a walk-in basis.

All supplies provided by this agency were ordered, received, and shipped to each county election commission one month prior to the election.

Election expense payments processed and mailed within 30 days of receipt of invoice.

**Priority Ranking:** No. 3

**Priority Cost:** \$151,766 Funds are state appropriated

**Program Name:** Election Services

**Program Goal:** Provide technical assistance and support to counties using electronic voting systems. Provide ballot layout assistance to county and municipal election commissions. Provide election supplies and forms to county and municipal election commissions.

**Program Objectives:**

- Create databases and print voting machine ballots for 18 counties using certain electronic voting systems. This support is offered for every election held in the county.
- Printed ballots and programming information should be complete and delivered to the county no later than two weeks prior to the date of the election. This deadline gives the local county office plenty of time to prepare the voting machines for election day.
- Proof and approve primary election ballots for all 46 counties. This service will be provided within 24 hours of receipt of original proofsheets.
- Equip each county with sufficient supplies such as the poll lists, helpful instructions, flyers, and envelopes to conduct the election. These supplies will remain updated as changes in the election laws or election procedures occur.
- Conduct training classes and assist with users group meetings related to electronic voting systems used in the state

**Program Results:**

Number of databases created	89
Number of ballots printed	3,282
On-site training classes and users group meetings held	30
Counties where ballots were proofed and approved	46

Databases and ballots were provided for all regularly scheduled elections as well as all elections for schools and other organizations who 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.

2,135 ballots plotted @ \$.36 per ballot	\$768.60
1,147 ballots copied @ \$.30 per ballot	\$344.10

All 89 databases and ballots created were delivered to the county election commission at least two weeks before election day.

Primary election ballot proofsheets for all 46 counties were received, proofed, and returned to the county election commission within 24 hours of receipt. Ballot proofsheets for municipal and other county elections were also proofed and approved within 24 hours of receipt.

All supplies required to be available by this agency were updated as changes in the law occurred. These supplies were ordered, stored, and then shipped to the county offices as needed. All supplies needed for the primary election were shipped to the county election commission one month prior to election day. This time limit was established through communication with the county election commissions to give them enough time to prepare precinct supplies before election day.

**Program Name:** Educational Services

**Program Goal:** To have competently trained poll workers for every election in the State and to have competently trained election commissioners for all county and municipal elections.

**Program Objectives:**

- Conduct on-site training programs for poll workers in at least 5 counties at least 30 days prior to the June primary elections.
- Travel to various counties and municipalities, as requested, to conduct workshops and training seminars on the conduct of elections.

**Program Results:**

Counties provided with training tools for poll manager training	46
Municipalities provided with training tools for poll manager training	165
Telephone calls received/made concerning election related questions	700
Poll manager training sessions held for county, primary and special elections	30
Poll manager training sessions held for municipalities	25
Training classes for municipal election commissioners	12

Worked with all county election commissions on training programs for poll managers. 12,000 poll managers were trained statewide prior to the primary election.

While the goal for on-site poll manager training prior to the June primaries was 5 counties, we were able to conduct 17 classes in 8 counties. Conducting this on-site training using smaller groups has proven to be beneficial in that there are fewer problems in those counties on election day and, through class assessments, we were able to determine that the participants retained the instructions they were given.

Phone calls handled on election day	600
Advised county/municipal election officials regarding conduct of election protests	12

**Priority Ranking:** No. 4

**Program Name:** Administrative- Sale of Lists Program

**Program Cost:** \$68,091 Funds generated through sales of names and addresses of registered voters.

**Program Goal:** To provide the names of registered voters to candidates for public office, the general public and other governmental agencies upon request and payment of fees. To provide statistics on elections in South Carolina upon request and payment of fees.

**Program Objectives:**

- To provide above information in a format suited to customers' needs on paper printouts, peel-off

- labels, tapes or disks within reasonable time limitations.
- To provide customer service in an effective and efficient manner.
- To continually monitor and upgrade program to insure it is compatible with technology available to customer
- To generate sufficient funds to insure fiscal responsibility of program
- Supply lists of registered voters to the courts for use as jury roll

### **Program Results:**

We sent customer surveys randomly to sale of list customers and the results indicated, from those customers surveyed, that they were satisfied with the information received, with the turnaround time, and with the overall customer service from our staff. The large number of repeat customers is also a good indication of customer satisfaction with the program. (See attached chart)

682 Orders Processed {235 lists, 217 labels, 116 CD's, 92 disks, 22 tapes }

198 Jury lists processed {53 lists, 4 CD's, 42 disks, 96 tapes }

95% of orders processed and shipped within three (3) working days

\$121,670 revenue generated which totally funds the program.

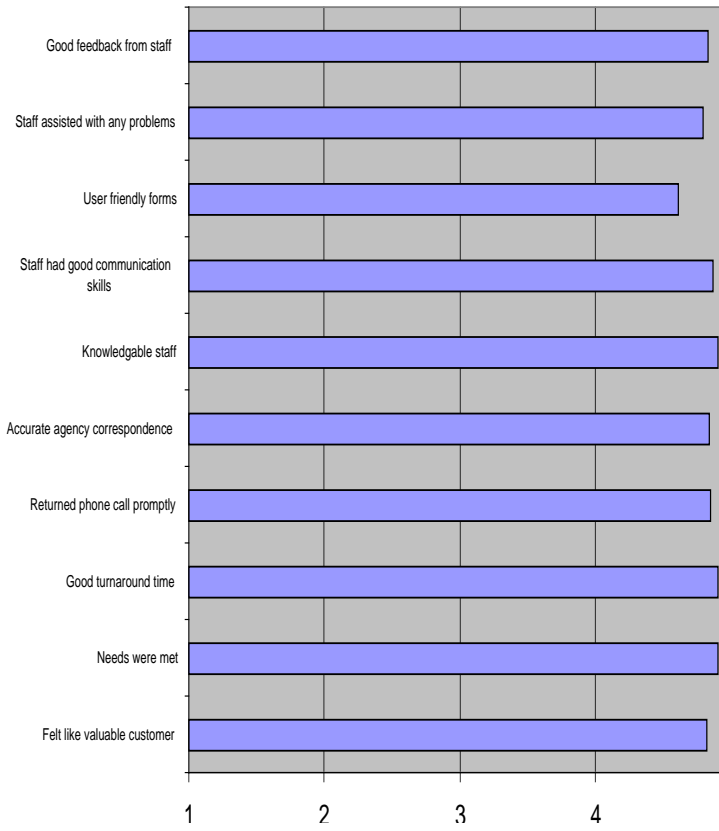
Programs updated by Office of Information Resources to reduce the cost of generating data. We were able to change programs to make compatible with technology available to customers.

The program cost includes salaries and benefits for one full-time and one permanent part-time employee in the Sale of List Division as well as costs for printing and mailing the lists.

Excess funds are used to help maintain the accuracy of the voter registration files. \$10,214 was used to print address confirmation forms to be mailed to potentially inactive voters pursuant to requirements of the NVRA (Motor Voter). The confirmation forms will be mailed following the November 7, 2000, General Election. These forms must include a post-paid return card to be used by the voter to confirm their address. Approximately \$35,000 in additional funds from this program will be used to fund the required postage.

Through verbal and written feedback from customers and with computer technicians from the Office of Information Resources we are able to determine the available media and technology for producing products for our customers. This process is reviewed when requested by the customer.

### Sale of List Customer Survey Results





1- poor; 5- excellent