

SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

Major Achievements During This Fiscal Year:

General Election – November 2002

The State Election Commission faced several challenges in conducting the general election but South Carolina was able to conduct a smooth election. South Carolina also conducted the arduous task of House and Senate redistricting. However, staff members worked together to pull resources to help make this a successful election. We can also credit this success on variables on the county level and through services and support of the State Election Commission 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.

Election Legislation

Staff at the SEC worked closely with the General Assembly on passage of two pieces of legislation to benefit elections in the State.

- Two counties, Charleston and Dorchester, legislatively combined their voter registration boards and election commissions. These boards, now that they are combined, will be better able to serve the voters in their counties by sharing resources and assets.
- Eliminated the requirement for the State Ethics Commission to send copies of campaign finance reports to our agency. The State Ethics Commission is now solely responsible for auditing and maintaining these reports.

The Department of Justice approved legislation that did not require a special election to fill vacancies in office if only one candidate filed for that particular office. This legislation will save on the expense of unnecessary elections and save voters time in the frequent number of elections to vote.

New Statewide Voter Registration System

The top priority identified in the 1999 Statewide Election Summit and the 2001 Governor's Task Force on Elections was to update the current statewide voter registration system. Funding was provided by the General Assembly and development of a new election administration system is underway. To prepare for the system, new hardware and network infrastructure has been installed in the 46 county voter registration offices. After a review of system progress, it was determined that several design changes are required. Implementation of the election administration has been postponed until January 2005 to allow adequate time for testing, training and so the implementation will not interfere with statewide elections to be held in 2004.

Training and Certification Program

As part of a statewide training program for county election officials, the SEC was able to offer 11 classes during the fiscal period. A total of 616 participants attended these classes. Two new classes were developed and presented as a result of topic requests from those election officials enrolled in the program.

As an effort to save agency dollars on renting conference rooms for training purposes, the agency constructed its own training room for conducting voter registration and election training classes. The SEC purchased furnishings from surplus property funds and is monitoring the cost of the investments versus the cost of renting other conference rooms. All training classes in 2002/03 were held in the new training room. This eliminated the need for employee travel expenses and room rental charges normally paid for regional classes.

In addition, we have partnered with the Office of Human Resources and allow them to use our training room for free and they in turn allow staff from our agency to attend up to four employee development classes per year at no charge. The room is also used by other State agencies in our building at no charge by the State Board of Canvassers for protest hearings that were formerly held in borrowed conference rooms, and for various other SEC meetings.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

In October 2002, President Bush signed the "Help America Vote Act of 2002" (HAVA). The main purpose of this legislation is to improve the election process in the United States through providing federal funds to update technology in the polling places and assisting disabled voters with better access to and in polling places and voting booths. This Act provides that every citizen is afforded an opportunity to vote and have their vote counted. The SEC staff along with the HAVA committee has worked diligently to draft South Carolina's plan to comply with this Act. We expect the final draft to be delivered to the Federal Election Commission in September 2003.

Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE)

South Carolina is one of ten states participating in this project through the Department of Defense. This project is an effort to provide military and overseas citizens an opportunity to register and vote absentee via Internet. South Carolina is again a model for other states in the ability to participate in this project.

Budget Reductions

Like other agencies, the SEC has been affected by budget reductions in several ways. The agency has eliminated two full-time positions. The SEC has also delayed purchasing updated equipment and reduced the number of training classes and amount of travel required to educate the county voter registration and election officials on voter registration and election laws and procedures. In order to continue providing the service of database generation and ballot printing for 12 electronic voting system counties, the SEC has started charging the county election commissions for services once provided free of charge. The SEC also eliminated employee training classes critical to accomplishing our mission and eliminated tuition assistance. The SEC has also consolidated/reduced office space, reduced operating expenses, and did not fill a vacant position. The budget reduction also affected the county boards of voter registration and elections. The SEC reduced the amount of money sent to the county voter registration and election commission offices to help defray operating expenses. The SEC was also not able to

pay the maximum allowed to members serving on the county boards of voter registration and election commission.

Agency Mission and Values

The mission of the State Election Commission is to maintain an accurate database of registered voters in the State and provide services necessary to ensure successful elections in South Carolina.

The SEC maintains the State's computerized statewide voter registration system. The SEC is 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 certain 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.

The agency values:

- **Employees** – Human resources are the agency's most important assets. Their knowledge, skills and characteristics are key to the success of services provided. The Agency is committed to ensuring their satisfaction, training, development and well-being.
- **Customer Driven Excellence** – To understand customer needs and anticipate their future desires.
- **Visionary Leadership** – Motivate and recognize employees by setting examples, providing direction, recognition and rewards.
- **Understanding the Future** - Our two biggest elections, Primaries and the General Election, occur in two year cycles. Needs and preparations for these two events must be considered in advance.
- **Agility** – Because of the statutory deadlines regarding election days, it is crucial that we meet all deadlines and provide necessary services.
- **Relationships** – Contact with county and municipal election officials, the General Assembly, other State and federal agencies, political parties and other special interest groups is vital to the success of voter registration, elections, and laws dealing with both processes.

Key Strategic Goals

The SEC works with municipalities and counties to improve the election process in the State and solicits 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:

Agency Goals	Status
Implement Statewide Voting System	Working with a consultant and the State CIO office to develop an RFP for a statewide uniform voting system. Award to qualified vendor should be made during 1 st quarter 2004
Implement State Plan as required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)	HAVA required the SEC to develop a plan outlining how HAVA requirements would be accomplished by South Carolina. The Plan was developed and awaits approval by the Governor.
Absorb Budget Reductions	Office space was reduced. Office space for four staff members was combined with existing office space on another floor. Reduction in Force resulted in elimination of one position. One vacant position was not filled. Departments are being re-organized to better serve customers and accommodate budget cuts.
Establish procedure for receipt of federal funds	Funds were received in FY03 but disbursement did not begin until FY04. Accounts have been established.
New statewide voter registration system	All hardware installed, plan to implement application in January 2005
Participate in Secure Electronic Registration & Voting Experiment (SERVE) project with U.S. Department of Defense.	Begin to accept applicants in December 2003. Uniform and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and military voters will be allowed to vote over the Internet in 16 counties.
Prepare for a successful statewide primary and general election.	Successful 2002 General election. Preparations have begun for the 2004 Democratic and Republican Primaries and presidential preference primaries.
Conduct statewide training and certification program.	11 classes offered in 2002-03. 616 participants. 27 certificates issued.
Improve on accessibility to the voting process by disabled voters.	Encourage counties to purchase equipment with features for the disabled.
Develop uniform guidelines for all counties to use when determining voter intent.	Once the statewide uniform voting system is implemented, a cross functional team of county and State election officials will develop these guidelines and will make them specific to the voting system chosen.
Move all municipal, special service district and certain school board elections to a common date in the odd numbered years.	Support from election community and Municipal Association was obtained. Legislation was introduced but did not pass the General Assembly.
Assist SC Association of Registration and Election Officials (SCARE) with legislative priorities	Working with SCARE to draft legislation based on their legislative priorities. Will assist in introducing legislation in Jan. 2004.
Eliminate the need for a special election if only one candidate files for the election.	Legislation to eliminate this need successfully passed the General Assembly and signed by the Governor in January 03. This new law has saved approximately \$6000 normally spent to conduct these special elections.
Assist county offices with the redistricting process	New Senate and House lines have been approved

Agency Goals	Status
	by U.S. Justice Department. SEC will work with Research & Statistics to assist county election offices with Senate changes.
Successful federal audit of HAVA funds	SEC received federal funds for the 1 st time. These funds will be audited on a State and Federal level. Working to establish proper accounts and track purchased to ensure proper expenditure of these funds.

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 challenges 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.

Voting on the Internet Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE)

South Carolina is one of ten states participating in the SERVE project. This project provides UOCAVA and military citizens the opportunity to facilitate the absentee voting process by allowing participants to vote over the Internet. 16 counties are participating in this project.

Providing Electronic Information to Agency Customers

By using the agency Web site, which is maintained by staff in the Office of the State Chief Information Officer (CIO), we are able to post Primary and General 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 is of great benefit to the news media, candidates, and the general public because they can monitor the information as it is posted.

The voter registration application is located on the SEC web page and is a convenience for potential voters. Many counties direct applicants to this form saving the printing and postage cost to both the State and counties. The web page is currently being examined as a source for other forms used by both the public and county personnel.

There are many services found on our web site. One of the services is the sale of lists of registered voters. This information is provided using several different forms of media, such as peel-off labels and printouts that are produced by the CIO. This information is also produced in-house on compact disks which provides a considerable savings and reduction in shipping time to our customers as opposed to having this service provided by the CIO. Another service is the availability of the voter registration by mail application electronically. Potential voters are able to download and print the application on-line.

The web site is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Election Legislation

Legislation was introduced in 2003 to mandate a statewide electronic voting system and also change the wording in SC election laws to recognize that newer voting systems should no longer be classified as machines but should be classified as voting systems. This legislation, if passed in 2004, will assist with implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Election reform legislation was introduced in 2003 that will eliminate several election related problems in the State.

Legislation passed in 2002 and was approved by the U.S. Justice Department in 2003 to eliminate the need for a special or municipal election if only one candidate files to run for the office involved. This new law has saved approximately \$6000 in costs associated with the election process.

HAVA Federal Funding

Congress passed the Help America Vote Act in 2002 and allocated funding for each state to implement the Act. If fully funded, South Carolina will receive approximately \$48 million dollars to bring the State into compliance with the Act.

Health & Human Services (HHS) Grant

A grant was written on June 24, 2003 to Federal Health & Human Resources for \$167,271. This grant is part of the Help America Vote Act of 2003 funding for disabled voters. This money will be given to county election commissions to make polling places more accessible for the disabled. This accessibility includes adding ramps, widening doors, handicap parking signs and spaces, and walkway accessibility. Funds should arrive in September or October 2003.

Barriers

Poll Manager Training and Compensation

- The number of registered voters in the State drives the cost of elections. County Election Commissions are required, statutorily, to appoint and train 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, it has been 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 the 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 supports 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 has been positively implemented in Greenville County and has greatly enhanced the quality of elections conducted in that county.
- Poll manager pay has not increased over the past 5 years and it is still below minimum wage. This causes problems with recruitment and retention of poll managers. Potential poll workers have indicated the low salary keeps them from working as a poll manager.
- 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.

Funding and Budget Reductions

Due to recent budget reductions, two positions have been eliminated; however, the workload was not reduced. Current employees were required to accept additional job duties, which is a potential morale issue because of the increase in hours worked to accomplish the additional tasks. Also, employees who would normally be participating in training programs were not allowed to participate this year because funding was not available.

Sustaining the ability to provide services to our customers with shrinking financial resources is a constant concern. Budget reductions will be a barrier for continuing education for employees, conducting customer surveys, updating equipment, providing necessary supplies for the work environment, and will create a lag time in response to public inquiries for agency information.

In this fiscal year, the Agency Reduction in Force (RIF) plan was initiated for the first time in Agency history. One position was eliminated through the RIF and another position was not filled. Also, two positions are being funded through revenue generated by charging SEC customers for services which were formerly provided at no charge. Due to the reduction in force, services offered in the past, such as training for election officials, will be limited.

Antiquated Accounting System

The current internal system that we use, BARS (Basic Accounting Reporting System), is very antiquated and caused many problems with recording dual employment transactions in FY03. Reconciliations between STARS (The Comptroller General's system) and our with BARS were difficult. However, with the current budget situation, purchase of another internal system is impossible.

Municipal Elections on Common Date

Approximately 250 elections are held in the State each year. These elections are for municipalities, special elections, special service districts, and school boards. The 1999 Election Summit report revealed that voters think there are too many elections throughout the year and local election officials are not always equipped to conduct the elections. These elections should also be administered by the county election commissions and overseen by the State Election Commission. 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.

Use of Inadequate or Older Voting Technology

As we witnessed in the 2000 General Election in Florida, future election problems could be incurred in the 24 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 utilize older and much less advanced technology that 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. The disabled population in our State is hindered from voting because of the level of voting technology currently in use in the State.

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 Office of Research and Statistics.

Training and Certification of County Election Officials

While some election officials in the state are currently enrolled in the training program, many are not enrolled and have taken few or no classes associated with 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. Legislation was introduced to allow the Governor to remove election officials, based on the recommendation of the State Election Commission, for not completing the training program; however, this legislation did not successfully pass the General Assembly.

Election Legislation

Legislation passed in 2001 that allows certification of Presidential candidates 25 days after the deadline for all other candidates. This new deadline will cause the county election commissions to rush their efforts of getting ballots printed and mailed to absentee voters. This new law needs to be addressed to allow the county election commissions time to print their ballots and distribute absentee ballots.

SECTION II – BUSINESS OVERVIEW

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

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	01-02 Actual Expenditures		02-03 Actual Expenditures		03-04 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$621,160.	\$580,495.	\$571,590.	\$535,791.	\$595,504.	\$497,878.
Other Operating	\$915,503.	\$450,099.	\$1,011,098.	\$412,564.89	\$2,083,148.	\$382,448.00
Special Items	\$14,216.	\$0	\$5,187.	\$0	\$35,000.	\$0
Permanent Improvements	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Case Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$888,543.	\$635,775.	\$635,775.	\$635,775.	\$610,229.	\$610,229.
Fringe Benefits	\$160,288.	\$151,597.	\$157,035.	\$147,961.	\$196,392.	\$171,392.
Non-recurring	\$2,188,547.	\$0	\$1,938,080.	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$4,791,259.	\$2,803,104.	\$4,318,766.	\$1,732,092.	\$3,520,273.	\$1,661,947.

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	01-02 Actual Expenditures	02-03 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$1,113,032.	\$2,102,359.
Capital Reserve Funds	\$1,203,410.	\$4,593.
Bonds	\$0	\$0

Interim Budget Reductions

Total 01-02 Interim Budget Reduction	Total 02-03 Interim Budget Reduction
\$70,520.	\$118,907.

Key Customers

Customers of the SEC 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, Federal agencies such as Department of Defense and Federal Election Commission, and those who purchase lists of registered voters.

Key Suppliers

Key suppliers for the SEC include the Office of the Chief Information Officer of the Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics, technology consultants, voting system vendors, the voters and citizens of SC, USC, Office of State Budget, office supply companies, and printers.

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 county 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 Primary and General Elections

Oversee and assist with the conduct of the Primary and General Elections 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 the two electronic voting systems supported by the SEC. 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.

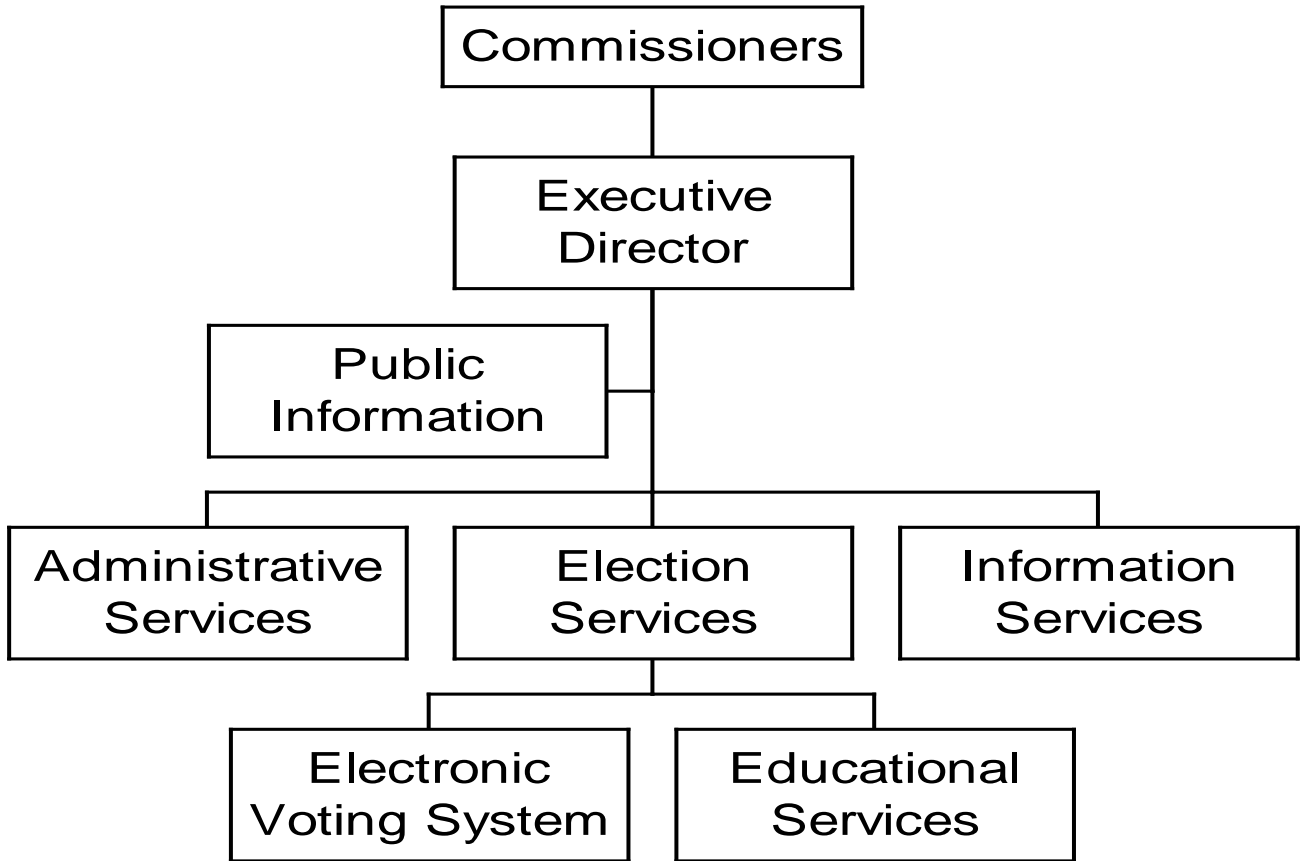
Sale of Lists of Registered Voters

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 at other times when 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 weekly, 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.

1.1a 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, the 1999 Election Summit, 2001 Governor's Election Task Force, and 2002 HAVA State Plan all recommend or require a statewide uniform electronic voting system. We deployed and communicated this long-term direction by hiring a consultant to assist with gathering information from customers and developing an RFP for the new system. A timeline was developed for a phased-in approach to implementation of the new system and Staff were alerted that, when the system is chosen, they will be trained on various aspects of the system and will assist with installation and training of the system in counties in South Carolina.

1.1b/c 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.

1.1d Senior staff properly train and empower employees to make decisions and take actions directly related to their job and within their boundaries that satisfy customers on first contact and that provide better agency business results. Employee innovation is encouraged to improve agency services to customers with recognition to employees whose ideas increase agency productivity or reduce agency expenditures.

1.1e 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. 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. Figure 1.1 depicts the level of employee development programs in which agency employees have been involved.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Courses	Number completed	Number Currently Enrolled
Executive Institute*	2	0
CPM**	2	1
APM***	5	0
PPD****	0	1

Figure 1.1

*The South Carolina Executive Institute is primarily for state government officials with executive levels of responsibility and authority. The Institute is administered by the State Budget and Control Board and offers an annual curriculum tailored for public sector leaders and designed to meet evolving needs of governmental leaders in South Carolina.

**The Certified Public Manager™ (CPM) program is a nationally accredited management development program for public managers. The CPM designation is a professional credential that involves intensive study, practice, application, and testing to prepare public managers for the challenges of today’s and tomorrow’s workplace. This program, developed by the S.C. Budget and Control Board’s Office of Human Resources, was accredited by the National CPM Consortium in 1996.

***The Associate Public Manager APM™ offers new or experienced supervisors the skills and knowledge to help them stay on top of the latest supervisory techniques and achieve success in today's changing workplace.

**** The Public Professional Development (PPD) certification is designated to help agencies develop professional staff and enhance their ability to work with teams, gain presentation skills, and manage priorities.

1.1e All employees are expected to act 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.

1.2 Senior leaders establish and promote a focus on agency customers through a variety of learning and listening methods. Senior staff are also available to speak with customers when requested. An “unwritten” policy is in place for staff to promptly return all phone calls and reply to all letters within a day’s time, if possible.

1.3 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 Voter Services 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, SEC employees make contact with them on-site and determine their level of knowledge of voter registration and election procedures and laws. Based on that determination, training is encouraged in areas to increase their knowledge
- 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

1.4 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.

1.5 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.

The SEC also determines the impact of its services based on the 2001 Governor's Task Force report on elections and requirements outlined in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

1.6 Priorities for improvement are based on immediate needs identified from various situations that arise. For example, due to the 2000 census, Senate and House redistricting of voters took place in 2002. Agency staff worked with staff at the Office of Research and Statistics to organize meetings with all counties involved in the redistricting process to examine the new district lines and discuss the procedures necessary to move voters into their proper district. Once

the meetings were complete, SEC staff began to work with the county staff to re-assign voters and print voter registration cards.

1.7 Through encouragement and example, senior leaders promote employee participation in election organizations and various charitable organizations through monetary donations and volunteer opportunities. Employees are encouraged to assist organizations such as the South Carolina Association of Registration and Election Officials (SCARE) and helping with association events.

Category 2 - Strategic Planning

2.1 The Agency strategic plan is developed based on the goals of the agency. Goals are based on the agency mission and what is required of the SEC by South Carolina statute. Customer expectations and needs are determined through surveys, focus group meetings, and in person communication.

To ensure accomplishment of agency goals, resources available in state government are evaluated based on employee skills and available technology. A plan is then developed by senior leaders and counties 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.

2.2 The goals of the Agency are determined by customer and supplier needs, the Agency mission, and the South Carolina statute. Once determined, goals are placed on a scorecard that is reviewed monthly by senior management and Commission members. Departmental managers communicate the results of this scorecard with the appropriate staff members in their department.

2.3 Strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures are communicated to employees and commissioners through a series of meetings. This information is listed on a scorecard that is distributed at the above-mentioned meetings.

Category 3 - Customer Focus

3.1 Key Customers of the SEC 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.

3.2 & 3.3 Customers are determined by recognizing those who request information and services from the agency and whether the 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 SEC. 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. The SEC is interested

in customer input on agency performance so that it may implement procedures, if needed, to improve customer focus. The SEC listens to what the customer needs and, if valid, puts forth its best effort to meet that need in the quickest way. For example, once it was determined that South Carolina would implement a statewide electronic voting system, three regional meetings were conducted to gain input from county election officials on their requirements for a voting system.

3.4 Information from customers and stakeholders is used to improve services and programs by evaluating the output from customer feedback and assessing the need for change in services or possible new services needed. Many times, this requires a cross-functional team of agency staff, outside advisors, and county election & voter registration personnel.

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

3.6 Positive relationships with customers are built by providing accurate and timely information with good customer service. We involve customers in the process of developing and improving our services.

Category 4 - Information and Analysis

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

4.2 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.

4.3 Data analysis is used to determine the validity of a process and support decision making by capturing the pertinent data over a period of time and then evaluating all data and options to improve the process. For example, in the past, ballots were delivered to county election commissions through the U.S. Postal service and United Parcel Service only. In an effort to deliver the ballots in a more timely manner, staff investigated the possibility of using Interagency Mail Service. Delivery time and costs of packages were tracked and it was determined that, not only did the packages arrive overnight rather than 2-3 days later, the Agency saved an average of \$400 per year in shipping charges. The SEC continues to use this method of shipment.

4.4 A review of the voter registration lists used in all elections is made within ten days of receipt of that list in the office. The review 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 correct improper procedures.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter) requires the SEC 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 Voter Services 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.

Category 5 - Human Resources

5.1 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.

5.2 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 continue their education 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 19 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.

5.3 SEC 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.

5.4 There is no formal or informal assessment method to measure employee well being, satisfaction and motivation at this time.

5.5 A custodial staff provided 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.

The Election Services 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.

5.6 Many employees are actively involved in work related activities such as:

- The S.C. Association of Registration and Election Officials
- The Society of Certified Public Managers
- Executive Institute Alumni
- S.C. State Government Improvement Network
- Government Finance Officers Association
- SC Information Technology Directors Association
- State Agency Training Consortium
- CPM Advisory Board
- International Personnel Management Association
- Human Resources Advisory Committee
- SC Assistive Technology Advisory Committee

Most employees also participate in the United Way and Good Health Appeal programs. Other volunteer programs by agency staff include Christmas adopt-a-family, blood donations to the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, Sistercare Christmas assistance, school mentoring, Salvation Army, and food drives. Employees often use their lunch hour to provide volunteer services for these programs.

Category 6 - Process Management

Voting System Support

Databases and ballots for 16 counties, using the two electronic voting systems supported by the SEC, 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 SEC may use the updated versions. New peripheral technology is explored and reviewed constantly by personnel in our agency Election 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 Services 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, the goals are met by having a well-stocked supply of paper and other materials needed, overtime of full-time personnel.

Division personnel are in constant contact with suppliers of the software, specialized supplies, 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.

Voting System Certification

The State Election Commission is responsible for examination and certification of voting equipment before it can be purchased by any county in the State. Voting System vendors must complete national qualification testing based on the Federal Election Commission's voting system standards before applying for certification in South Carolina. Application packages are received with a fee of \$1000 for 1st time certifications and \$500 for all upgrades to existing certified systems. Once the application and fee are received, staff at the SEC begin testing the system against election laws in the State and observing the system in use in at least two precincts in a live election in the State. Once the examination and test election are complete, the system is presented to the Commissioners of the SEC for certification.

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 SEC 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's 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 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 agency travel regularly to county offices to provide assistance. These trips are also used to obtain feedback and new ideas from customers that would benefit the election process. In 2002/2003, Colleton and Laurens Counties requested emergency SEC staff assistance because both counties experienced a sudden loss of leadership and had no one available to carry out the duties of the Directors' position in the voter registration/election office. SEC staff were able to assist by recommending individuals who recently retired from the Director position in other counties and also by providing assistance with training and questions.

Training and Certification Program

All county election and voter registration officials and designated staff members are required by statute to complete the Training and Certification Program provided by the SEC. SEC staff, 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 at annual conference. 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 prepare 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.

Prior to 2002, these classes were held in rented or borrowed meeting space. Because the SEC now has its own training room, all of these training classes were held in that training room, therefore, saving the SEC approximately \$5000 in room rental fees.

Statewide Voter Registration System

The State Election Commission is responsible for maintaining a database of approximately two million registered voters in the State. Each county voter registration office is connected to a computer in Columbia at the CIO 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 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 on an as needed basis. Limited support is also offered on computers and printers.
- Provide forms and materials used for voter registration offices
- Serve as liaison with the CIO to maintain the current election results reporting system and make any updated changes as needed
- Conduct National Voter Registration Act confirmation mailing as needed

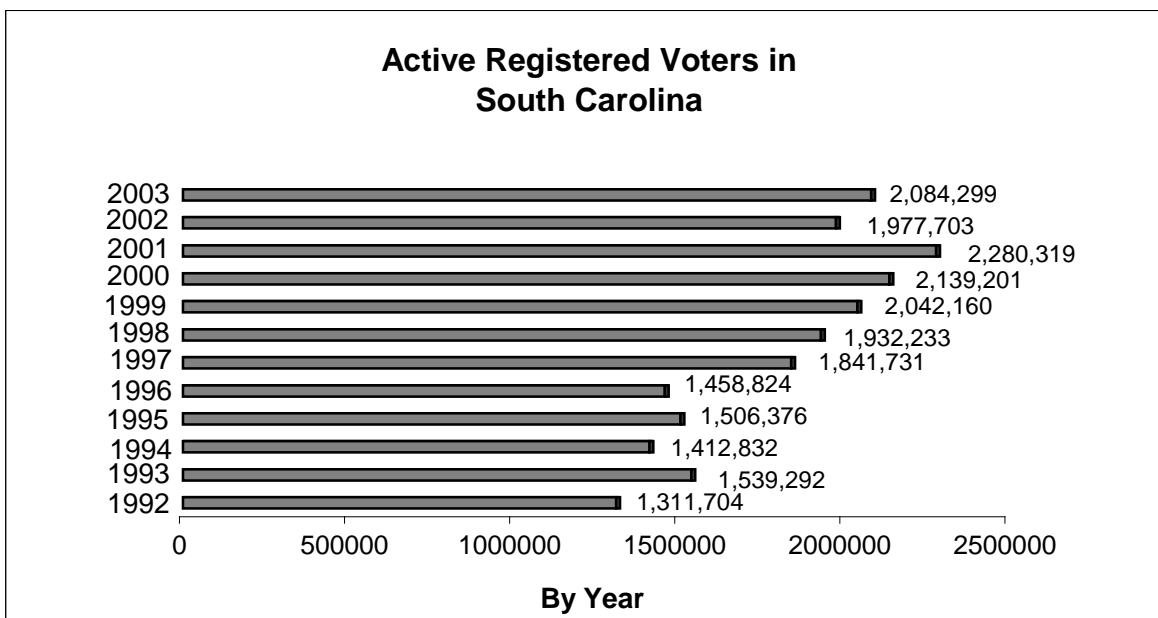


Figure 6.1

Between 1997-2001 there was a steady increase in the number of registered voters. The increase in voter registration numbers can be attributed to the convenience of voter registration sites, including several state agencies. Figure 6.1 shows this steady increase in voters through 2001. In 2002, however, the number of registered voters declined. Prior to 1995, the SEC was allowed to remove (purge) voters from the voter registration file if they had not voted in two general elections or in any municipal election in between. In 1993, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was passed which prohibits voters from being purged from the voter registration file for failure to vote. The NVRA, however, mandates that after a cycle of two general elections, if no activity has been made to a voter's registration record or they have not voted in any election in-between, then the voter can be sent a confirmation card that requires the voter to respond to the county voter registration board. If the county voter registration board does not receive a response, the voter is made "Inactive" on the voter registration file. The voter's name will still remain on the voter registration list for the following two general elections. After a cycle of two more consecutive general elections, if the voter still has no activity on the voter registration record,

the voter is then removed from the voter registration file. The decrease in voter registration numbers for 2002 can be attributed to the SEC's 2001 confirmation mailing described above and outlined in the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. There were 420,856 confirmation cards mailed to voters throughout the State. Over 315,200 voters who were mailed a confirmation card did not respond to the mailing and were placed on 'inactive-moved' status on the statewide voter registration system.

Agency Information Technology Support

The Voter Services Division is responsible for the in-house, personal computer based network. 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 SEC web page is maintained by the CIO and is updated frequently based on customer input given to our Voter Services Division verbally or in writing, frequent calls requesting duplicate information, and changes in information. This site is reviewed on a monthly basis to determine any other changes necessary. We recently updated the site to make it accessible for individuals with physical disabilities and are now Bobby compliant. 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
- Individual voter information

Accounts Payable

When an invoice is received, the accounts payable clerk processes a voucher within three days of receipt. The voucher and electronic copy (disk) is sent to the Comptroller General's Office. The Comptroller General's office loads the information from the disk and sends the information to the Treasurer's Office. The Treasurer's Office then sends a check 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 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 serves on the committee and will be working with USC to develop and implement an improved accounting system.

The SEC received bills requesting election expense reimbursement from county election commissions in an untimely manner in the past. The Finance Director of the SEC has

implemented procedures to correct the problem by sending memos to the counties advising them of the situation and requesting that they send reimbursement requests sooner. Proviso 62.2 was added in the 2003 Appropriations Act that allows the SEC to deduct 10% from bills received more than 30 days following the election. This amendment was enforced following the 2002 General Election and several counties who were late in submitting bills were subjected to the 10% payment. SEC anticipates that fewer delinquent bills will be received in the future as the counties realize that the amendment for the Provision will be enforced. Bills for reimbursement of statewide general election expenses are paid with either primary or general election carry-forward funds and not general fund appropriations.

Billing errors or errors in the sale of list program are dealt with immediately. Errors are tracked and addressed daily.

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 on CD, 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, the CIO 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

The SEC sends a supplement to each county registration board/election commission member on a quarterly basis. The supplement is funded at a rate of \$1,000 per member, per year. In the FY00 Appropriations Act, the amount per member was increased to \$1,500, but the General Assembly did not fund the increase. Therefore, those boards that have over eight members do not receive the full \$1,500 supplement per member. In the past, members were paid the full quarterly amount even if they did not serve for the entire quarter. Because of a shortage of funds, at the beginning of FY02, the SEC Finance Director started disbursing the funds at the end of the quarter instead of the beginning of the quarter. This allows the SEC to pro-rate the supplement to the members who do not serve for the entire quarter, and will also eliminate double payments which have occurred in the past when a member left during the quarter and someone replaced the member during the same quarter.

Election Protest Hearings

As part of the fair election process, candidates are allowed to protest an election if they feel they lost an election due to irregularities. Protests for countywide and less than countywide offices are filed and heard on the county level and then appealed to the State Election Commission while protests for federal, statewide, Senate, House of Representatives, and multi-county offices are filed directly with the State Election Commission. Once an appeal or protest has been properly filed, the Commission of five members convenes in a judicial capacity to hear the protest. Once a decision has been made, candidates have an option to appeal to the South Carolina Supreme Court.

Administration of Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

On October 29, 2002, President Bush signed the "Help America Vote Act of 2002," (HAVA). This legislation aims to improve the administration of elections in the United States, primarily through:

- Providing funds to improve the election administration process, technology related to elections, replacement of punch card voting systems, and assistance to disabled voters
- Establishing a federal presence for election assistance
- Providing that **every** citizen has the opportunity to vote and have their vote counted
- Offer training to voters, poll workers, and election officials on voter registration and the election day process

Each State in the nation was required to submit a State Plan, to the federal government, outlining steps that would be taken to ensure HAVA compliance. Although the Act was not signed by the President until October, SEC staff began working on the State Plan in August of 2002 in anticipation of this signing. A diverse group of approximately 50 people were appointed to the HAVA State Plan Task Force. The group consisted of members from the Senate and House of Representatives, Office of Research and Statistics, Office of the State Chief Information Officer, Governor's office, both political parties, NAACP, Palmetto Project, League of Women Voters, disability community, county boards of voter registration and election commissions, and staff from the SEC. This group, divided into five teams, held seven planning meetings to develop this Plan. The final plan, expected to be delivered to the Federal Election Commission in September 2003, outlines how South Carolina will implement programs to comply with HAVA.

Category 7 – Business Results

Poll Worker Pay

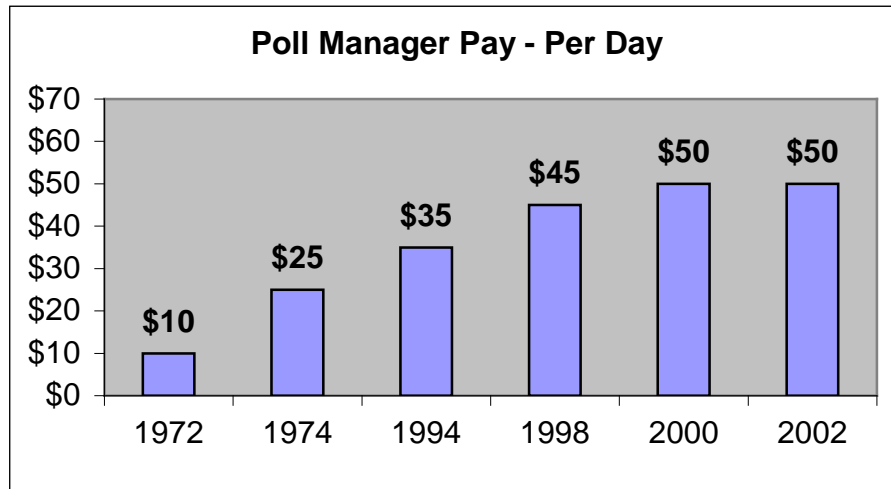


Figure 7.1

The 1999 Election Summit indicated that one reason for the decline in poll worker recruitment was because of the minimal amount of pay for this job. The SEC requested an increase in poll worker pay to \$55.00 but was unsuccessful due to the State's budget situation. Poll worker pay is a priority of the SEC as well as the S.C. Association of Voter Registration & Election Officials. Figure 7.1 above reflects the slow increases in poll manager pay over the past 30 years.

Voting System Certification

Staff in the Voter Services Division continually examine and test voting equipment for certification in the State. Figure 7.2 shows a breakdown of those vendors seeking certification during the FY02/03.

Vendor Name	Upgrade or Initial Certification	Date Tested	Date Certified
Hart Intercivic, Corp.	Initial Certification	6/1/01 – 7/1/02	8/30/02
Election Systems & Software	Upgrade	3/30/02	8/30/02
Voting Technologies Intl.	Initial Certification	2/12/03 – 6/10/03	6/18/03
Northrup Grumman	Upgrade	3/18/03 – 4/1/03	4/24/03
Election Systems & Software	Upgrade	4/21/03 – 5/5/03	5/21/03
Hart Intercivic	Upgrade	5/19/03 – 5/29/03	6/18/03
Advanced Voting Solutions	Initial Certification	2/20/03 – 6/12/03	8/20/03
Mets Corporation	Initial Certification of polling place functionality	3/27/03 – 8/18/03	8/20/03

Figure 7.2

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 2002 General Election:

150 ballot styles reviewed

20 ballots approved with undetected errors

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

Educational Services Training

Staff in the Educational Services & Public Information Division continually provide training to poll managers and Election officials. Figure 7.3 shows a breakdown of those classes held during the FY02/03 and the number of customers serviced.

Training Completed	Total Events	Total Participants
County Poll Manager Workshops	10	400
County Election Commission Workshops	12	85
Municipal Poll Manager Workshops	12	75
Municipal Election Commission Workshops	5	30

Figure 7.3

As a result of these workshops no protests were filed for any elections held in those jurisdictions where training was held and fewer calls were received on election day from these jurisdictions.

Failsafe Voting

Because of programming changes to the statewide voter registration system this year, we are able to determine how many people voted using the Failsafe 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, to cast a ballot. Prior to the 1993 National Voting Rights Act, these people would not have had an opportunity to vote.

New Statewide Voter Registration System

The 1999 election summit identified a need for a new voter registration system. A cross departmental team reviewed a Statewide Voter Registration System in Arkansas which was developed by a private vendor and discovered the system was more technologically advanced than our current system but it did not meet the needs of SC. The agency's long relationship with the CIO, their 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 CIO and allow them to develop and support the new system. Through partnerships with the CIO, Office of Research and Statistics, and county voter registration board officials a needs assessment was conducted and a plan for implementation of the new system was developed. The implementation was reviewed and determined that several design changes are required, therefore, implementation of the project has been postponed until January 2005.

Agency Web Site

On the evening of the 2002 General Election, the SEC Web page was updated every three minutes with election results transmitted from the 46 counties in the State. There were 21,300 visits to this site on election night.

Each year there is a significant increase in the number of visits to the Web site – especially during election time and on election night. The number of visits can be attributed to the publicity of the web site and the information posted on the site. Various news media personnel and many of our key customers, including private citizens interested in tracking elections, have expressed their appreciation for the information available on the Web. Below are charts depicting these increases in site visits.

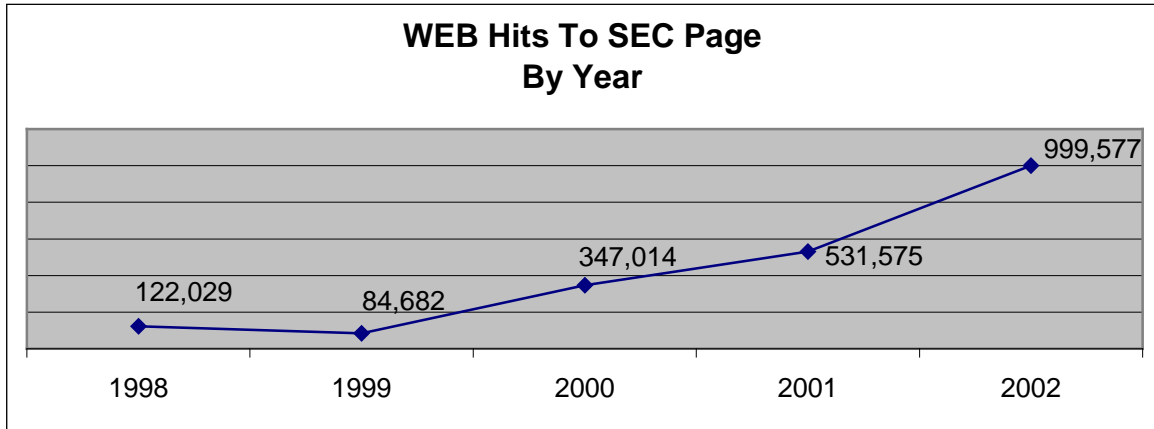


Figure 7.4

**Monthly WEB Page Hits
July 2002- June 2003**

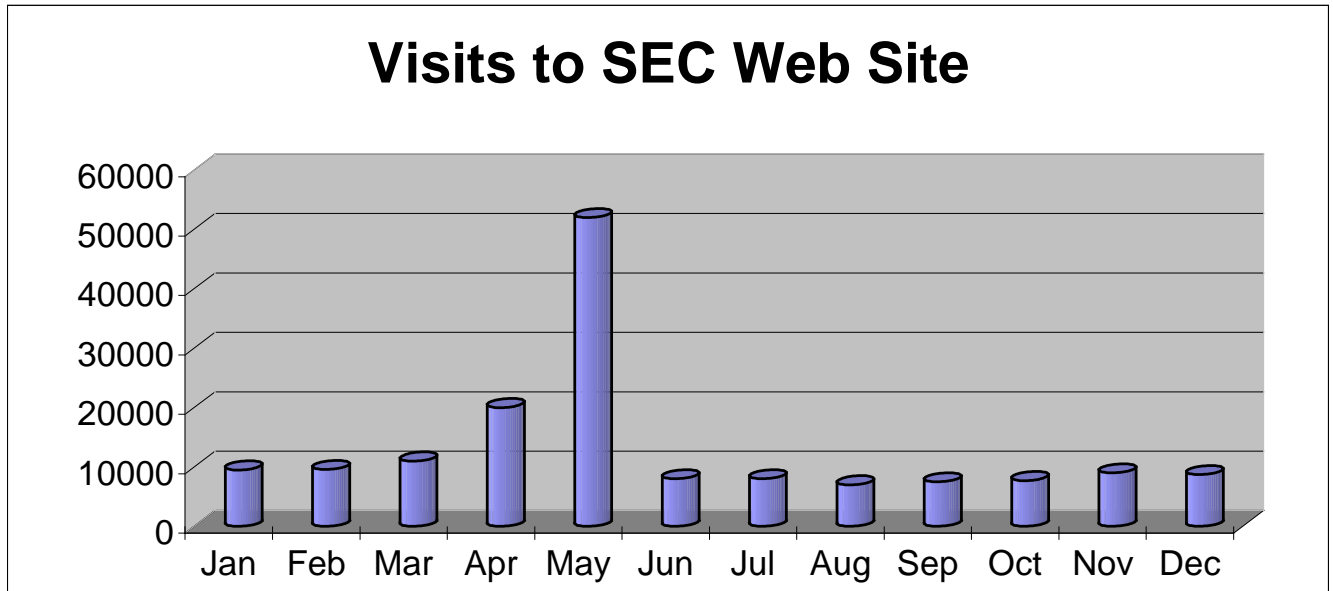


Figure 7.5

Training & Certification Program

Through focus groups and written surveys, participants in this training program have expressed the desire for components on election related topics. In 2002 Congress passed the Help America Vote Act to improve the election process in the United States. Since this Act would have a tremendous impact on the current election process, the Agency decided to conduct a class for all participants at the annual county association conference in January 2003 to address this issue. The Director of the Election Center was invited to conduct this training class and gave insight on the impact of HAVA on South Carolina.

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

- Elections from A-Z
- Dealing with Difficult People

Washington, Iowa, and Virginia have all used our program as a model 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.

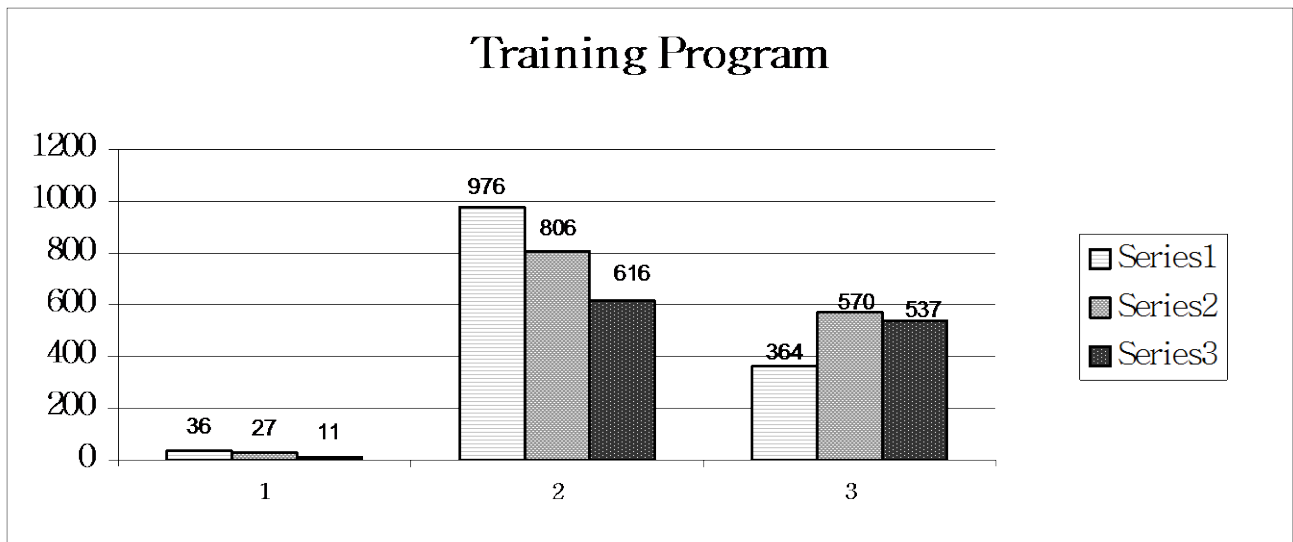


Figure 7.6

Public Information

As a result of the election problems 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 reported 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.

Voting System Support

Databases and ballots were provided for all regularly scheduled elections and special elections. By providing this service to our customers at no charge, our customers 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. Organizational and school 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. The following statistics are for services delivered by the Electronic Voting System division for this fiscal year:

- ❖ 17 counties serviced in the State
- ❖ 148 election databases created
- ❖ 7 on-site training classes and users group meetings held
- ❖ 3109 ballots plotted @ \$.60 per ballot = \$1865.00
- ❖ 3229 ballots copied @ \$.10 per ballot = \$323.00

Figure 7.7 depicts actual costs of these services versus the costs incurred if a vendor or commercial firms had provided these services.

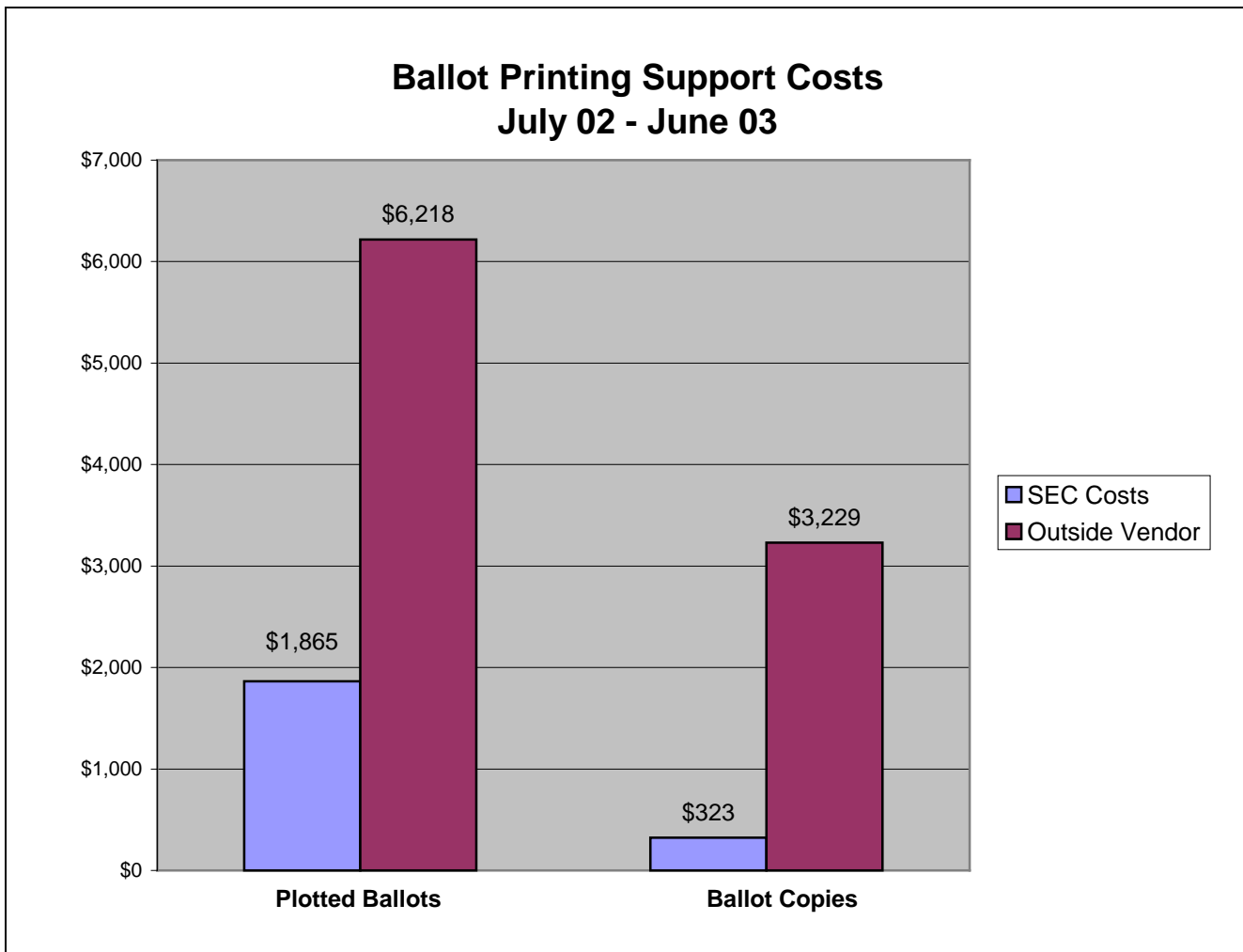


Figure 7.7

Budget Reductions

Due to continuing State Government budget reductions, the following actions were taken:

- One FTE was eliminated using our Reduction in Force policy
- One vacated position was not filled
- Office space was consolidated
- Counties were charged for services that were previously provided free of charge. These charges were used to fund the salaries of two employees in the Voter Services Division so that the same level of support for this service could continue
- Reduced the amount of money sent to the county voter registration and election commission offices to help keep those offices open
- County boards of voter registration and election commission members were not paid the maximum they are allowed by law
- Drastically reduced operating costs to the point that future cuts will affect customer services

Protest Hearings

Following the 2002 General Election, the State Board of Canvassers convened in a judicial capacity to conduct hearings on 5 election appeals. 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	Decision by Board of Canvassers
Barnwell County Council 4	Ordered new election in Precinct 2 only
Charleston County Council 10	Election Sustained
Charleston County Sale Tax Referendum Appealed by two separate parties	Tie Vote – Election Sustained
Jasper County School Dist 5	Ordered new election

General Election 2002 Education and Outreach Issues

Public Service Announcement

Prior to the general election, a public service announcement (PSA) was produced reminding voters that new district lines had been established and informing voters they might not be voting in the same districts they voted for in the past. The PSA was placed on tape and CD. There were 15 beta tapes and over 20 CD's produced. All tapes and CD's were distributed to interested TV and radio stations.

The total cost to produce the PSA was \$1,345. We feel that the PSA was an important service to voters to avoid potential confusion at the polls.

Poll Manager Flyer for Inactive Moved Voters

The SEC produced a flyer for poll managers instructing them on processing voters listed as 'Inactive-Moved' (I-M) on the voter registration list. In August 2001, the SEC conducted a certification mail-out resulting in the inactive status of voters who have had no election activity within four years. This mail-out is mandated by the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) to allow states to update their voter registration files with correct names and address of voters. While these voters are still eligible to vote, there was concern that their status had been made 'inactive'. This flyer gave explicit instructions to all poll managers working at the polls on election day on how to process a voter who wanted to vote but their status on the registration books was listed as 'inactive'. This resulted in more voters' information being updated on the voter registration rolls.

Guidelines for Observers at Polls

The SEC drafted guidelines for polling places in anticipation of increased 'observers' at the 2002 election. In the 2000 election, county election commissions questioned the use of 'poll observers' at the polls. State law only addresses 'poll watchers' observing the election process on election day and there was confusion as to whether 'poll observers' should be defined the same as 'poll watchers'. These guidelines were simple instructions for poll workers in answering any questions that may arise on election day. These guidelines allowed voters the opportunity to observe the voting process while also allowing poll workers to maintain a sense of voter privacy and ballot security.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

The HAVA State Plan Task Force met during the 2002/2003 fiscal year to develop a state plan outlining how South Carolina will implement requirements of HAVA. The South Carolina State Plan provides a description of current election procedures and outlines how South Carolina will meet the new requirements mandated by HAVA. The State Plan will be updated each year to reflect election law changes and future plans.

The State Plan reflects strategic objectives of great importance to every voter in South Carolina: implementation of a statewide uniform electronic voting system, support for disabled voters in every precinct in the State, enhancements to election administration, and training for voters, poll workers, and election officials. Building on current capabilities, the goal is to offer a higher level of service with increased ease of use, convenience, and consistency in every precinct across the State.

The South Carolina State Plan will be accomplished over the next four years, utilizing approximately \$48.5 Million in federal funding. It will draw on the combined efforts of state and county organizations and affect every voter in South Carolina. The long-term impact of HAVA will be felt throughout the State for many elections to come.

The State Election Commission (SEC) recognizes the value of HAVA to South Carolina and is committed to successful implementation of all elements of the State Plan. With this State Plan, the SEC has taken an important step toward *Helping America Vote* and ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to vote and have their vote counted.