ELECTION CENTER

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTION DEPARTMENT

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

February 19, 2008

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Steering Committee
Sacramento County

Voter Registration and Elections Administrative Audit
C/o Stuart Frazer, Senior Administrative Analyst
Countywide Services Agency
700 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Steering Committee Members:

Attached is The Election Center's final administrative audit (performance review) report for the Sacramento County Department of Voter Registration and Elections.

The consulting team would like to thank you for the opportunity to conduct this review and to assist Sacramento County in their quest for excellence. We appreciate the feedback that we received from the steering committee on our draft report. We also appreciate the assistance provided by County management and staff and that of the many stakeholders who took his or her time to answer our questions and to provide very useful information. The review team would like to recognize the valuable cooperation and assistance received from the entire staff of the Department of Voter Registration and Elections and thank them providing the information necessary to complete this review.

We are looking forward to presenting our report to the Board of Supervisors. Please let us know as soon as possible when the report is scheduled for presentation to the Board. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Ingrid E. Gonzales
Lead Consultant

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INTRODUCTION

The Election Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, preserving, and improving democracy. To further this goal, consultants are available to assist electoral jurisdictions to improve their processes.

The Sacramento County Countywide Services Agency issued a request for proposals for an administrative audit (also referred to as a performance review) of the Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) Department. On October 9, 2007 the Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a contract for this service with the Election Center. This report contains the Election Center's findings and recommendations.

SCOPE:

The performance review objective, as stated in the request for proposals (RFP), was to describe existing business practices, measure customer satisfaction levels, and suggest programs and practices that could result in greater program or cost efficiency and effectiveness.

The performance review process included the following components:

- Interviewing a broad range of individuals to identify key issues, trends, goals, expectations, objectives, procedures and service delivery goals;
- Developing descriptions of VRE processes;
- Reviewing VRE work processes and work product;
- Evaluating VRE efficiency and effectiveness;
- Reviewing professional practices and benchmarks of measurements in comparable agencies and California counties;
- Evaluating VRE's service model used for determining fees; and
- Developing Recommendations.

The Election Center review was conducted to determine if VRE is operating at peak efficiency; in accordance with legal requirements; at the lowest practical cost; and if not, to make recommendations for improvement. This was a performance review and as such, the review did not include an independent examination or evaluation of the voting system used by VRE. The report does not include a policy discussion regarding voting systems and the current initiatives by the state regarding voting equipment.

METHODOLOGY AND TIMING:

An on-site three person consulting team was assigned to this project, comprised of individuals who had extensive California election experience at both the county and state level, as well as involvement with election organizations nationally: Bradley Clark, Ingrid Gonzales and John Mott-Smith. Randy Riddle, legal advisor, and Doug Lewis, Executive Director of the Election Center provided additional consultation and review.

The contract for the performance review was signed on October 9, 2007 and work began on October 10, 2007. The proposal by The Election Center contained a request for specified documents and those documents were provided by the Department during the first days of the review. In accordance with the contract, Countywide Services Agency formed a Steering Committee to provide oversight of this project. Members of the review team met with the committee early in the process to discuss the project and receive any input. Progress reports were submitted monthly by the Election Center to the committee.

To obtain as much input as possible in the time available, written questionnaires were developed along with questions to be used in personal interviews. Input was sought from within the County organization, jurisdictions for which VRE conducts elections, community groups, political parties, candidates, the media, and organizations with whom VRE interacts. A summary of the results is included in Appendix E and F.

The review team spent several weeks' on-site reviewing documents, and conducting interviews and "walk-throughs" of specific processes. The on-site review included the opportunity to observe several Election Day activities or functions for a small local election. Findings were documented and follow-up was conducted to confirm facts, identify needs and research solutions, establish benchmarks, and determine priorities.

A draft of the performance review was prepared and submitted to the Steering Committee and to VRE on January 7, 2008. Input received from that review was incorporated into the final report as appropriate. The final report was submitted on February 19, 2008.

ASSISTANCE:

It should be noted that VRE was extremely helpful in providing documents, information, space and any other assistance needed. All staff interviewed was open and informative. The team felt it had complete cooperation and did not run into any "road blocks." This assistance made it possible to do a thorough review in a relatively short period of time.

LIMITATIONS:

While the review team was able to observe many procedures actually being executed, many could not be observed due to the timing of the election. Reviewers were able to observe some specific functions for a small election in November. However, they were unable to observe a major Election Day operation. While the concept is much the same, the difference in volume can make a difference in how well an operation or organization functions.

FORMAT:

The primary goal of the performance review was to examine whether the department was operating efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with federal and state legal requirements. However, another goal as identified by some interviewees was to make recommendations to make VRE the "best election department possible." With that in mind, the report is organized in a fashion that is most easily referenced by the department itself since it will be staff that will have to do the majority of the work to implement change.

The report is organized to reflect the structure of the office. VRE is divided into four divisions, plus an administrative and outreach section. The report has a chapter for each of these divisions/sections. In addition, there are several broader topics that affect the entire operation and are not a specific function of any one group. Those appear in the first chapter as general topics.

Each chapter describes the duties of, and functions performed by, each unit and includes background information and observations. Also provided are concerns and recommendations. Although there is an appendix for professional practices, some are noted in specific chapters, especially where they relate to a practice that has been developed by VRE. Itemized recommendations contained in the body of the report have been copied to Appendix C where they have been prioritized.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND:

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved a contract with the Election Center to conduct a performance review/performance audit of the County's VRE Department. This is part of a countywide process to evaluate the operations of all departments. The Countywide Services Agency, of which VRE is a part, requested that this review be performed at this time. This priority was in part due to problems that had occurred and the desire to objectively determine if the problems had been properly addressed. In addition, the agency wanted to determine whether VRE was operating efficiently and effectively, and to identify ways in which operations could be improved.

Sacramento County is the eighth largest county in California with 527,073 registered voters as of December 7, 2007. The county encompasses approximately 994 square miles. VRE conducts state and federal elections for county voters; elections for 7 cities, 22 school districts, 35 special districts; and other specialized elections such as Mello-Roos, landowner, and County Retirement and County Union elections. Sacramento County is required under the Voting Rights Act (VRA) to provide election services in both English and Spanish. VRE has 38 permanent positions.

Several past problems were brought to the attention of the Election Center reviewers. Each of these problems was reviewed and comments appear in the conclusions that follow.

CONCLUSIONS:

Specific concerns and recommendations appear in the body of this report. The following is an overall assessment of VRE.

Overall: VRE is an example of what a well-run election department should look like. They have a national reputation for excellence and the review proved the reputation is well deserved. While many election offices suffer from a large number of vacancies and a lack of experienced personnel, VRE has a strong, well-trained staff with professional standards and commitment to the electoral process and customer service. Morale is high even during times of intense pressure and scrutiny.

VRE experienced several problems in 2004 – 2006. It is important to point out that these problems occurred at a time when a new voting system was being installed and implemented. Given all the changes and the controversy, the problems while extremely regrettable, are not unusual under such circumstances.

Election Administration:

No matter how well an election office is functioning, there is always room for improvement. Elections depend on armies of volunteers, require thousands of pages of ballots and sample ballots to be 100% accurate in a very short period of time, and the result is that, even under normal circumstances every election department in the state will experience some "problems" for each election. The issue is: are there too many problems; is VRE making the problems known; are the problems being properly resolved; and are the proper steps being taken to avoid a reoccurrence? It is our impression that VRE works efficiently and effectively to bring errors or problems to light and to resolve them, and that the office has an overall culture of seeking "continuous improvement" in the administration of the election process.

Several specific problems in the recent past were brought to the attention of the reviewers and have been addressed in more detail in specific portions of this report. A summary of the problems addressed includes:

1. 2004 General election - Some polling places ran out of ballots. This is addressed in the General Topics Chapter, under Ballots and Sample Ballots. VRE was proactively aware and responded to this potential problem. The solutions employed were appropriate. Appropriate steps have been taken to avoid the problem in the future but there continues to be a risk that the problem could recur if large numbers of voters choose to vote in a polling place other than the one to which they have been assigned, which they are now permitted to do under a recent change to state law. This concern is not one that is unique to Sacramento County and, in fact, has become a national issue.

2. 2006, Primary election – The sample ballots in the 4th Supervisorial District did not contain the race for Republican Party central committee. The cause of the problem was identified, appropriate steps were taken to correct the problem, and procedures were enhanced to avoid this problem from arising in the future. This topic is addressed in the General Topics Chapter, under Ballots and Sample Ballots.

3. 2006, Primary election - Ballot cards in the 4th and 5th Supervisorial Districts were designed to "wrap" the candidates from the bottom of one column to the top of the next column, possibly causing voter confusion. VRE has made improvements by providing a notice at the bottom of the column that the race continues in the next column. VRE is somewhat limited in what can be done because of vendor limitations, but this may not be the best solution available. This issue has been addressed in more detail in the General Topics Chapter, under Ballots and Sample Ballots.

4. 2006 Primary election - Some vote by mail voters who were to receive two ballot cards, one for candidates and one for measures, did not receive the

correct ballot cards. The correction methods VRE employed were appropriate. The cause of the problem was identified and appropriate steps taken to improve procedures, including more quality control at the vendor site. Due to the large numbers of ballot styles and multiple cards, it is impossible to guarantee that inserting errors will not occur in the future. However, VRE is taking appropriate steps to reduce the risk of this problem recurring. Specific recommendations regarding this problem are addressed in the Voter Services Chapter.

5. 2006 General election – The Measure M contest was voted upon by a small number of voters who were incorrectly included in the district, leading to questions regarding the outcome. This problem was actually fairly common throughout the state several years ago before GIS systems were in place, but typically did not affect the outcome of a race. Although the Registrar of Voters wanted to conduct the election again, County Counsel determined that it was not within her power to do so. Eventually the district did conduct the election over. VRE was immediately forthcoming on this problem, and took the proper steps to correct. There has been a great deal of improvement in this area and it is addressed in the Precinct Operations Chapter under GIS Mapping.

6. 2006 Primary election – There have been allegations that the Republican Party candidates had not been invited to Latino Forums hosted by VRE. This issue is addressed in the Outreach Chapter. We do not see any indications of partisanship within VRE and it does not appear that there was any intention or effort to exclude the Republican Party. Although VRE had good intentions, we have concerns regarding the appropriateness of VRE being involved hosting such forums.

It is our conclusion that the problems noted above do not appear to be more frequent or serious than problems in other county election offices; were not partisan in nature; VRE was open and honest in making the facts known; the problems were properly corrected; and steps have been – and continue to be taken - to avoid a recurrence. It is unfortunate that these distinct problems all occurred within a relatively short timeframe. When this happens, it creates a seed of doubt, but this seed will grow only if there are not aggressive efforts to identify the problem and prevent its reoccurrence. In this instance, there has been aggressive action taken by VRE. We understand the concerns that have been raised, but do not believe there are currently reasons to doubt the ability of VRE to conduct fair and honest elections.

NOTE: During the course of the review the Registrar of voters alerted us that the Logic and Accuracy testing on the precinct ballot counters had failed. After considerable discussion with both the equipment manufacturers and ballot printers the exact cause of the failure could not be accurately identified. To have continued trying to identify the cause and possible remedy for the upcoming February 5th

Presidential Primary Election could have placed the entire election in jeopardy. As a result, the Registrar elected to discontinue the use of the precinct ballot counters and instead decided to have the voted ballots brought back from the polling place to the election office to be counted centrally. The central counters passed the necessary logic and accuracy test. The Secretary of State was advised of the situation and supported this approach. The media were promptly notified of the Registrar's decision.

While we believe that the Registrar took the correct actions, given the circumstances, we did not investigate this situation. In defining the scope of this audit the vote count equipment was specifically excluded making this issue beyond the scope of the audit.

Efficiency:

VRE operates efficiently. Management and staff are aware of what is available to enhance their operations and are taking advantage of technology to improve processes. VRE is very active in state and national election organizations and implements improvements that are discovered through these connections. They are completing tasks and meeting prescribed timelines. Interviews and questionnaires used during the course of this review indicate a very high rating of efficiency. It should also be noted that during the course of the review, we discovered numerous and significant professional practices used in Sacramento that are not only saving Sacramento County time and money, but could benefit other election jurisdictions as well.

Effectiveness:

VRE is very effective in delivering most services. This was substantiated by interviews and questionnaires. However, there are some areas where effectiveness should be improved. These areas include voter outreach and student poll worker programs.

Customer Service:

It is rare to find an election department with such a high level of customer satisfaction. This finding was borne out by the interviews, surveys and questionnaires. It became very evident during the course of the review that VRE sees this as a priority. Observations during the review demonstrated this to be true.

Compliance with Law:

The election process is governed by a wide variety of federal and state laws and regulations. These laws and regulations are constantly changing, which has a major impact on the conduct of elections. The preparation for and conduct of a major election takes more than a year. When changes to legal requirements occur late in that process, it can lead to complications. VRE is currently in a difficult situation shared by election officials throughout the state as they struggle to implement

additional tasks and requirements imposed by the Secretary of State quite late in the process for the February 2008 election.

The review did highlight a few areas where improvement is needed and two areas where VRE may not be in full compliance with legal requirements – consolidation of precincts and bilingual printing of ballots and sample ballots. These are discussed in detail in the General Topics Chapter, under Legal Issues.

VRE is a leader in participating in the development, monitoring and implementation of legislation. This is addressed in the General Topics Chapter, under Legislative Advocacy. The department is knowledgeable in this area and takes appropriate steps for implementation.

Decision Making:

VRE was praised many times during the course of the review for their recommendation and selection regarding new voting equipment. The system chosen by VRE resulted in substantial cost savings and has enabled Sacramento County to avoid much of the controversy and tribulations associated with touch screen voting, while still meeting the needs of the voters This approach is consistent with our conclusion that the process of decision-making within VRE is an inclusive process that is open to ideas, suggestions, and criticism from all employees, and particularly from the management team. The department is one that truly practices teamwork.

Departmental Organization and Morale:

These topics are discussed in more detail in the Administration Section Chapter, under Personnel. The department has been improving its technical support services as is required by the changes in technology and the reliance on computer-based systems. During the course of the review there were various concerns pointed out related to job classifications, reporting structure, etc. We believe VRE would benefit from a comprehensive review of these areas. VRE is more fortunate than most election departments in having all staff positions filled, and having experienced employees in almost all positions. However, if these employees are not properly classified and appropriately compensated, VRE runs the risk of being a training ground for other departments. Morale within VRE is very high. With all the demands of an election department, this is not always the case. This reflects well on the Registrar of Voters and her management team.

Facilities and Security:

The physical plant of the VRE appears to be nearly ideal, with only minor adjustments needed to more effectively conduct elections (more space in the voter services area – Chapter 5 Voter Services) and reduce the potential for problems (cooling in the computer room – Chapter 6).

Voter Confidence:

There was a concern raised during the review that past problems VRE has experienced might have affected public confidence in the integrity of the election process. We have found no evidence to support that concern. In fact, stakeholder confidence appears quite high. This was reflected in the interviews, and questionnaires. Although a number of the problems mentioned above were related to the Republican Party or its central committee contests, the responses we received from local party leaders indicated that they still thought very highly of VRE and did not believe they showed partisanship.

Voter confidence could be enhanced with a more proactive official observer program. This is discussed in more detail in the Campaign Services Chapter, under Election Observers.

SUMMARY:

Readers of this report should not judge the election department based on the number of concerns and recommendations included. The vast majority of these recommendations could be considered "fine tuning" for a department generally operating well. However, the nature of elections and the high visibility means that even the smallest problem can become a matter of great concern given the right circumstances – such as a very close election. Planning and preparation in order to avoid or prevent problems is key to maintaining voter confidence.

The initial observation of VRE was that it was a model election department. Although, during the course of the review, we identified areas that could benefit from improvement, our initial assessment did not change. No election department will be perfect and there is always room for change. VRE has proven to be very receptive to suggestions for improvement and actively pursues opportunities to improve. The reviewers cannot say that VRE is the best election department, as was the goal of some interviewees. Based on our combined experience, we would definitely rank VRE in the top tier. Can it get better – the answer is yes and it is our hope that this review will assist in that effort. To quote the 2006-2007 Sacramento County Grand Jury report, VRE "lived up to the motto: We proudly conduct elections with accuracy, integrity and dignity."

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL TOPICS

The performance review report is presented in chapters to coincide with the current organization structure for the Voter Registration and Elections Department. The basic chapters cover the programs (functions) performed by the individual divisions and units within the election department. The General Topics chapter pertains to topics of a more general nature that affect the entire office, but are not the responsibility of any one division or unit of the office. As in the program chapters, the review team has included background, observations, concerns, and recommendations where applicable.

BALLOTS AND SAMPLE BALLOTS

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) department develops, prints, and provides voters with ballots and sample ballot pamphlets for each election. The processes of developing, printing, and distributing ballots and sample ballots to voters and polling places requires the participation of the Election Managers of each of the four divisions within VRE: Campaign Services, Precinct Operations, Voter Services, and Voting Systems and Technology.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

State law, to a great extent, defines the design and order of elective offices and measures on the ballots. Information on the offices, candidates, and measures appearing on the ballot can originate from multiple sources, including from:

- Secretary of State, for federal, statewide, and state candidates, as well as state ballot measures;
- Jurisdictions within the county, such as: cities, school districts, the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District and other special districts, and;
- Information filed with VRE for candidates for county offices and county ballot measures.

Two software systems are used to create ballots and sample ballots. They include the Election Information Management System (EIMS) from DFM Associates and the Unity system from Election Systems & Software (ES&S). EIMS feeds information into the Unity system.

EIMS software defines and captures information on offices and measures to be voted on at an election, and the Unity system arranges these offices and measures in the form of a ballot. There are several different types of elections, and each requires different ballot configurations. For example, a primary election requires separate ballots for candidates for each qualified political party, whereas a general election does not, and a gubernatorial election cycle (primary and general) will include candidates for governor and other state offices, whereas a presidential election cycle will not.

Properly managing ballot complexity is a significant issue for election officials. Each voter must receive a ballot that includes only those candidates and measures he or she is qualified to vote for (i.e. city council, school board, and district offices and measures, state assembly, senate, and congressional districts) based on his or her

residence address and, in a primary election, his or her political party affiliation. In addition, the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, requires that Sacramento County voters have access to ballots printed in Spanish as well as English. Finally, state law requires that the names of candidates for a particular office rotate according to defined criteria, so that no one candidate is always listed on the top of the ballot.

As an illustration of the complexity of printing ballots and sample ballots for a primary election, if the county has 75 distinct ballot types, the county must multiply this by 8, (6 political parties plus 2 "cross-over" ballots), and again multiply by 2 to produce each ballot in Spanish, for a total of 1,200 different ballot types that must be planned, proofed, printed in proper numbers, and provided to voters.

VRE staff estimate that, for the February 6, 2008 Presidential Election, they will develop, print, and provide approximately 150 to 200 separate ballot types. For the June 3, 2008 Statewide Direct Primary Election, they estimate they will be required to produce between 1,500 and 2000 separate ballot types. The November 4, 2008 Presidential Election is estimated to require approximately 500 distinct ballot types. The complexity of printing this number of different ballots, ensuring that each ballot is the correct one for the voters using that ballot type, the process of proofing each ballot type and otherwise ensuring quality control, and the distribution of the correct type and number of ballots, to precincts and vote by mail voters, represents an enormous and complex task that must be done perfectly in a short amount of time.

The Voting Systems and Technology division "defines" each election well in advance. For the February, June, and November elections in 2008, for example, templates were already established as of December 1, 2007. The template provides the base for the election; although some jurisdictions are permitted to be added to the ballot up to 88 days prior to the election. The process begins by determining whether the election is a presidential election, a primary or general election, whether the election will be consolidated with other (city, school, district) elections, and other factors. The process involves establishing the template into which candidates for office and ballot measures will be entered. As a candidate qualifies to appear on the ballot, his or her name is entered into the template by the Candidate Services team. Voting Systems and Technology enters information on state and local measures. The ballot template is proofed by the Candidate Services team. The progress of the ballot definition process is discussed at weekly Manager Meetings.

The Precinct Operations and Voter Services teams determine the number of each ballot type to be ordered. State law establishes a minimum (75% of the number of voters registered in the precinct), but the Precinct Operations team is required to estimate the appropriate order amount between 75 and 100% based on historical levels of voter turnout for similar elections, as well as other factors. VRE has established a formula for determining, as a starting point, the number of ballots for each election. These numbers are then refined by staff through personal knowledge

and experience of circumstances in various precincts (e.g. there may be a higher number of spoiled ballots in a precinct with one or more retirement homes).

State law was recently amended to provide that if a voter casts a ballot in the wrong polling place within the county, the election official must count his or her votes for any offices and measures on that ballot the voter would have been eligible to vote for based on his or her correct precinct; in some cases, this will mean that the voter could vote for all of the candidates and measures on the ballot, while in others the voter may be able to vote on just a few candidates and measures. This law has resulted in various campaigns and organizations at times informing voters that, rather than going to their assigned polling place, they may vote in any polling place in the county. If this were to occur on a widespread basis, it would be very difficult to predict the number of voters in any given precinct, and the number of ballot orders would have to be adjusted upwards in order to prepare for a worst-case scenario.

For the March 2, 2004 Presidential Primary Election, Sacramento County had 828 voting precincts, with approximately 589,592 persons who were eligible to vote at those polling places, for an average of 712 registered voters for each polling place. Of those eligible to cast a ballot, only 176,656 (30%) cast ballots at a polling place, while 115,960 (20%) voted by mail. Total voter turnout (polling place plus vote by mail) equaled 294,616, or 50% of those eligible to vote. Notwithstanding that only 50% voted and, of those who voted, approximately four of every ten voted by mail, the election official was still required to prepare for that election as if 100% of those eligible to cast ballots would vote at the polling place.

In prior elections, VRE met the requirement for Spanish language ballots by printing "bilingual" ballots (English and Spanish on the same ballot). This was changed for the February 5, 2008 election, primarily as a cost savings. The Registrar of Voters consulted with county counsel to determine if printing separate ballots would comply with the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA), and discussed the option with representatives of minority language groups who gave their approval. The information was presented to the Board of Supervisors and, based on that information, the Board of Supervisors directed that, beginning at the February 5, 2008 Election, English and Spanish ballots would be printed separately. VRE staff indicates that approximately 2,300 Sacramento County residents have officially requested (generally through a check box on the form to register to vote) that they receive ballots printed in Spanish.

The U.S. Department of Justice has indicated a strong preference that ballots be printed in a bilingual format, rather than as separate monolingual versions, whenever it is technically practicable to do so. The stated reasons for this preference are:

- If there is only one (or even a few) minority language voter(s) in a precinct, if separate ballots are used there will be only one (or a few) such ballot(s), and this

could compromise the secrecy and privacy of ballots cast by minority language voters;

- Using different ballots for English and Spanish may deter Spanish-speaking voters from requesting a Spanish language ballot;
- Having separate ballots can increase the chance of error; and,
- Having separate ballots increases the risk that a polling place may run short of minority language ballots.

Sample ballot pamphlets are printed separately in English and Spanish – not combined. Bilingual applications for vote by mail ballots are on all sample ballot pamphlets. Spanish versions of each voter's sample ballot are available on the VRE web site and at the polling place. Spanish language sample ballots are distributed to all voters who have indicated a preference for materials in Spanish, and the English language sample ballot includes a phone number to request a Spanish version.

After the Voter Services and Precinct Operations divisions determine the number of ballots necessary for each ballot type, the Assistant Registrar of Voters reviews the order numbers, and the Precinct Operations division, with the assistance of the Voter Services division, orders the ballots. VRE contracts with separate vendors for printing of ballots (Consolidated Printing), and sample ballots (Merrill Printing). Vote by mail envelopes are printed by Applied Graphics. A single vendor (Avant Page) translates all the materials.

Voting Systems and Technology develops the ballot images for each ballot type in preparation for sending the ballot order to the printer. These images are proofed by a retired County annuitant and a team of proofreaders with whom VRE contracts for this purpose. Staff indicates that the proofing process is urgently in need of improvement: they express limited confidence in the current process. Proofing of ballot materials is one of the most critical activities performed in preparing for an election. Mistakes discovered in time, can be corrected, but may result in costly re-printing and re-mailing. Mistakes not discovered in time can lead to legal proceedings after the election. There should be one person in VRE who has overall responsibility for the ballot ordering process, including having received appropriate training in proofing techniques.

Staff indicates that the Unity software provided by Election Systems &Software (ES&S) has limited flexibility in regards to ballot layout. For example, the software will apparently not permit the person laying out the ballot to require that a contest begin at the top of the next column, rather than beginning at the bottom of one column and "wrapping" to the top of the next column. It is possible to make minor adjustments in order to create more space between contests.

After the ballot images are proofed and reviewed, Voting Systems and Technology transmits the images to the printer, and, based on the ballot order, the printer

produces the desired number of ballots for each ballot type. Three Election Managers monitor the "product" and the Fiscal Manager monitors the contract.

The firm that prints the precinct ballots, Consolidated Printing, is located in Berkeley, California. Voter Services and Voting Systems and Technology staff sometimes, but not always, are present at the printing facility to ensure quality control during the printing process.

When the ballots and sample ballots arrive at the VRE warehouse, warehouse staff (assisted by Precinct Operations and other staff) conduct a quality assurance procedure that includes: comparing the invoice against the physical stock received to verify that the shipment is complete; checking that each sample ballot type has the appropriate cover, contents and back page; verifying that each ballot type is correctly printed and in the correct amount; scanning ballots to verify that they contain the appropriate serial numbers, and; scanning the ballots for marks or smudges that could interfere with proper tabulation. Test ballots are reviewed and checked by the Voting Systems and Technology division and vote by mail ballots are reviewed and checked by the Voter Services division.

Sample ballot booklets are produced by the Voting Systems and Technology division in a process similar to that used for actual ballots, are mailed to every registered voter, sent to each polling place, and made available at the front counter of the election department. They are also available on-line.

Contents of the sample ballot include information on the date and time of the election, a facsimile copy of the ballot the voter will receive at the polling place, the location of the polling place, instructions for use of the voting equipment, an application for a vote by mail ballot, information regarding the accessibility of the polling place to persons with disabilities, and other election related information. Voting Systems and Technology monitors the contract with the printing vendor.

VRE has an exemplary record in election administration, but like every jurisdiction, has made some mistakes in implementing the enormously complex task of producing ballots and sample ballots.

1-1	Concern: Ballots in the 4th and 5th Supervisorial District in the 2006 primary election were designed in such a way that not all the candidates for county central committee were listed in the same column on the ballot, potentially making the ballot choices unclear or confusing to voters.
	Recommendation: VRE should establish a general policy of not permitting contests to "wrap" from one column to another. This may have potential cost implications if this policy requires an additional ballot page. In addition, VRE should consider graphic arts training for those persons responsible for ballot design. The principles of graphic design will enhance staff's ability to, within legal requirements, construct "user friendly" formats that are clear and easy to use by voters. If an exception to the policy is necessary, it should be the result of a considered decision, rather than the default procedure for the ballot layout software. If an exception is made, it should be noted and the candidates in the contest advised. In this circumstance, at a minimum, ballots should be designed so that if a contest does "wrap" to the next column, there is a "footer" instruction at the bottom of the first column for the voter to find the remainder of the candidates for that contest at the top of the next column, and a corresponding "header" instruction in the second column that specifically identifies the contest the listed candidates are in. In addition, VRE should request and, if necessary, amend the contract to require that the vendor provide the functionality within the Unity software to permit increased flexibility in ballot layout and design.

1-2	Concern: The Republican County Central Committee was omitted from sample ballot booklets in the 4th Supervisorial District for the primary election in 2006, requiring the reprinting of sample ballot booklets. Current proofing procedures rely primarily on contract employees, without significant participation by permanent staff.
	Recommendation: Proofing of ballots and sample ballots is a critical and complex function. Given the complexity, and the short timeframes and deadlines for ballot production and printing, it is nearly impossible to never make a mistake. However, the potential for error can be minimized or reduced to nearly zero by adopting enhanced proofing and quality control procedures. The cost of additional proofing procedures represents a good investment when measured against the cost of correcting an error (which can involve completely reprinting ballots or sample ballots). VRE should consider the following: • Using permanent staff to conduct some or all of the proofing. Though there are advantages to having "fresh eyes" from persons who are not employees of VRE conducting the proofing, there are also significant advantages to having experts with training and experience in the election process involved in a central manner; • Establishing, using, and regularly updating a checklist of proofing tasks that includes ballot layout and format issues as well as potential spelling, capitalization, and other grammatical errors. This checklist should require an affirmative sign-off for each item. The checklist and proofing procedures should be updated as necessary following each election; • Consulting with Secretary of State staff responsible for proofing the state ballot pamphlet to determine additional proofing procedures; • Seeking professional training for permanent staff on proofing techniques; • VRE should convene a meeting of the Mother Lode Area Association counties on the subject of proofing techniques; and, • Producing, and regularly updating, a procedures manual for the various election materials requiring proofing.
1-3	Concern: All four of the divisions within VRE participate in one or more portions of the process of ballot and sample ballot design, printing, and distribution, and responsibility for the process is accordingly decentralized.
	Recommendation: Given the central importance of accuracy for ballots and sample ballots, the Registrar of Voters should designate one manager to be responsible for oversight of this process.

1-4	Concern: As a result of a competitive bid process, separate vendors are responsible for printing ballots, and sample ballots, making it difficult and expensive for limited VRE staff to be on-site to monitor the accuracy and quality of each of these printing processes, thereby increasing the opportunity for an error or mistake to be overlooked.
	Recommendation: VRE should establish a policy that staff would, to the extent practicable (i.e. it may not be practical to observe printing around the clock), be on site during the printing process for ballots, sample ballots, and vote by mail ballots, and develop procedures for quality control during this observation. In addition, VRE might want to include in bid specifications for printing of ballots, sample ballots, and vote by mail ballots, incentives for combined bids on these materials, and should establish preference credit for vendors who meet the printing requirements and are located in areas that are convenient for VRE staff observation.
1-5	Concern: The process of determining the appropriate number of ballots to order for each polling place includes a significant distortion that increases the cost of an election without providing a benefit to either the voters or the county. This issue is discussed in more detail in the Precinct Operations chapter as it relates to consolidating precincts; however the recommendation is the same. Under current law, the elections official is prohibited from creating precincts that contain more than 1,000 voters. The law also permits any voter to apply for status as a “permanent vote by mail voter” and to automatically receive a vote by mail ballot for each election. Election officials are thus required to order precinct (polling place) ballots for voters who are known to be voting by mail. Current practice by VRE is to interpret the state statute to require there be no more than 1,000 persons who are eligible to cast a ballot, thereby subtracting the permanent vote by mail voters.
	Recommendation: VRE should continue to support legislation to clarify VRE interpretation, and to specifically permit the elections official to not include voters who have received status as permanent vote by mail voters in the calculation of the required limit of 1,000 registered voters in a precinct.
1-6	Concern: Current policy is to provide separate, monolingual ballots in English and Spanish, rather than the bilingual ballot strongly recommended by the U.S. Department of Justice.
	Recommendation: VRE should revisit its decision to print monolingual versions of the ballot, and continue this practice only if it is the only practical approach.

COMMUNICATION

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

In order to accomplish its mission, and to provide appropriate levels of customer service in the performance of its duties, the Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) department must communicate well internally; within the structure of county government; as well as externally with various stakeholders and customers at other agencies, organizations, and with the general public.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

In addition to verbal and written communication, VRE uses technology to improve communications, such as: web sites, and automated phone systems. These technology tools are discussed in more detail in the Voting Systems and Technology chapter and Voter Services chapter. In order to assess communication performance, we relied on internal and external interviews and questionnaires. A summary appears in Appendix E and F.

External Communications:

This includes other Sacramento County agencies, cities, districts, candidates, community groups and the general public. Comments received in response to written questionnaires distributed to stakeholders generally indicate satisfaction with communication both from and to VRE.

We interviewed four members of the Board of Supervisors. Three members indicated complete satisfaction with the level of communication they receive from VRE. One Supervisor indicated a preference, as a matter of form, for communicating with VRE via the County Executive's office; all others interviewed indicated that if they have a question or need information they call either the Registrar of Voters or her staff. Three of four Supervisors interviewed mentioned that the "Info Alert" system operated well to advise board members, as well as Executive staff, of potential problems or issues, and that the Registrar of Voters did a good job of keeping the Board of Supervisors informed on critical issues, such as the purchase of a new voting system. Staff from the County Executive and County Counsel's offices also expressed satisfaction with communication to and from VRE.

Persons interviewed who had experience as a candidate for office indicated satisfaction with the information provided to them by VRE. Several mentioned the proactive, customer service orientation of the staff in VRE, and specifically within the Campaign Services division, in alerting candidates to upcoming filing deadlines and other requirements. In addition, there were many favorable comments describing the friendly, helpful, and professional nature of the staff.

Interviewees were nearly unanimous in indicating that VRE does a good job of communicating information to the public**.** This communication is an important ingredient in ensuring transparency of the election process and encourages public trust in the integrity of the election. VRE is proactive in efforts to educate and inform the public concerning election deadlines and requirements. One member of the Board of Supervisors went so far as to comment that VRE staff was almost always present at community events he attended, and were there to encourage voters to register to vote, to demonstrate new voting equipment, or otherwise provide information. In addition, interviewees expressed satisfaction that, if an error had been made in the election process, VRE would quickly ensure that the error was publicly known and explain what action was being taken to remedy the mistake.

VRE has, in many instances, a statutory duty to publish information or invite the public to observe the election process. Although many of these requirements are routine (e.g. publishing the location of all voting locations), several involve sensitive processes that should be observed by members of the public. Examples of such procedures include: the testing of the accuracy of voting equipment prior to the use of that equipment on Election Day; vote by mail processing and, the canvass of the ballots following the election. Should any question or issue arise following the election involving election procedures, the ability of ordinary, nonpartisan citizens to attest to the integrity with which the procedure was performed is a critical ingredient in the public's trust in that regard.

Notwithstanding that VRE invites public observation of these processes; the invitation itself consists of a press release, flyer, or other relatively passive form of communication. In some cases no one, or only a very few people, actually take advantage of this invitation. This issue is also discussed in the Campaign Services chapter under election observers.

Several members of the Board of Supervisors, as well as county staff and others from the community mentioned that VRE went "above and beyond" in making information available, and in conducting the duties of the office in a fair and nonpartisan manner. Comments from Board of Supervisors members and their staff along this line include: "The Registrar of Voters and her staff are very professional, they don't have an agenda, and they are straight shooters who just want to do their job", and "During the canvass, because the vote was so close, I was in the VRE office for eight to nine hours a day. The process is very transparent; the Registrar of Voters went out of her way to show everyone what the procedures were … they treated both sides equitably."

VRE has appropriately adopted a procedure that identifies those staff persons who are authorized to respond to inquiries from the media, and directs all other staff to forward those inquiries to those designated persons. Media is covered in more detail

in the Campaign Services chapter. Media questionnaires indicate satisfaction with VRE communications.

Communication from VRE to other county departments appears to be effective, with most interviewees expressing satisfaction with that communication. For example, communications with the OCIT regarding issues of technology are made by the Manager of Voting Systems and Technology program or by appropriate staff within Voting Systems and Technology. As with any bureaucracy, however, there are instances when another department or official appear unresponsive and a call or contact by the Assistant Registrar of Voters or the Registrar of Voters is required.

Communication from VRE to vendors is generally limited to those persons working on the program the vendor is supporting. The efficiency and effectiveness of this communication varies according to the vendor. The vendor supporting the Election Information Management System (EIMS) apparently encourages any employee to post recommendations for possible improvement on a web-based "bulletin board." One manager indicated that in some cases, the request goes directly to the vendor.

1-7	Concern: A recurring theme, from Voting Systems and Technology staff in particular, is the difficulty in communicating with one vendor - Election Systems and Software (ES&S). According to staff, this vendor is routinely unresponsive to calls or requests for service, and the Registrar of Voters is frequently required to call the company president in order to obtain service.
	Recommendation: VRE should document each instance of past lack of a timely response, and institute a system to document each instance of a lack of service, or poor service, by any of the various vendors with which they have significant contracts, and upon whose customer service the successful conduct of an election might depend. Vendors should be alerted that this record is being maintained, and that, if a pattern of poor service emerges, the county will take appropriate action, including legal action if warranted.

1-8	Concern: The Election Information Management system (EIMS) vendor encourages any employee to send recommendations for program improvement to a "bulletin board." The vendor evaluates these recommendations and, if appropriate, incorporates them into new versions of the EIMS system. Although this open system may encourage a wide range of recommendations, it may not always operate to the benefit of VRE.
	Recommendation: It may be appropriate for recommendations/requests to the vendor to go through an internal vetting process that enables staff to discuss the potential recommendation and determine if it is one the department would like to see implemented. Such a vetting process should also probably include, if VRE determines that the recommendation has value, whether it can be accomplished internally, if not, it should be distributed to the other counties in the DFM User Group prior to submittal to the vendor and at this point a priority assigned. This procedure would assist the User Group in representing a united front to the vendor in terms of the relative priority of recommendations.
1-9	Concern: Transparency of the election process is a key ingredient in establishing its integrity in the public mind. Current procedures to invite public observation of many of the processes involved in conducting an election appear relatively passive, and are certainly unsuccessful in achieving the desired result.
	Recommendation: VRE should adopt a goal that, for every election procedure for which there is a requirement for notification of the public of an opportunity to observe that procedure, that VRE will make every effort to recruit appropriate observers, and will aggressively pursue every reasonable avenue to meet that goal.

Internal Communications:

Internal communications within VRE include policy, meetings, debriefings, and workshops. Communication from employees concerning issues inside the office is encouraged to follow a prescribed pattern: if a problem arises, the problem should go first to the supervisor of the section in which it occurred and, if necessary, be escalated to higher levels of management. In interviews with staff, they were asked what they would do if they made a mistake or discovered an error. Universally they replied that they would: inform their supervisors; work to correct the problem; and, identify ways to avoid a repetition. None expressed any hesitation in using this process and had no fear of retribution or of being blamed.

Communications may be enhanced through technology. Staff appears very comfortable in using inter-office e-mail systems, and calendaring. Anytime staff

members were asked about a meeting time, they immediately went to the computer and were able to see not only their own calendar, but also that of others. The system is being used to save time in coordinating schedules.

In terms of communication within the VRE office, the Registrar of Voters has established a schedule of regular meetings for the purposes of managing responsibilities and also to keep employees informed of the activities of the office. There are primarily two types of meeting: Manager Meetings and All Staff Meetings.

VRE conducts weekly "**Manager Meetings**" which are attended by the Election Managers of: Campaign Services, Precinct Operations, Voting Systems and Technology, and Voter Services divisions, as well as other key staff. These meetings appear to be the central VRE method for coordinating election programs and ensuring that all necessary tasks are performed, and performed at the appropriate time. Meeting agendas are prepared in advance and include topics suggested by the Election Managers.

The Election Calendar is used to organize discussion, but each manager may have a separate and more detailed calendar for his or her program. Election calendars are discussed in more detail in the General Topics chapter under election planning. Minutes and notes are taken and record the subjects discussed, and are placed on a shared directory accessible to all Election Managers, though current procedures do not appear to require that "action items" be captured in these minutes and reviewed at subsequent meetings to verify that they have been accomplished. Each Election Manager is expected to report back to the staff within his or her program after each Manager Meeting, though this does not appear to occur on a uniform basis.

All-Staff Meetings are held quarterly. Observation of one of these meetings indicates that the purpose is not so much to plan or implement activities necessary to administer an election, as it is to transmit basic information, recognize employee accomplishments, and to foster morale. The Registrar of Voters provides information on larger issues, such as election related actions of the U.S. Congress and the State Legislature and developments relating to lawsuits and voting equipment. In addition, each program manager reports on the activities of his or her section. Staff may comment or ask questions and team-building activities may be used. In addition to regularly scheduled All Staff Meetings, an All Staff meeting is also called on an "as needed" basis to respond to emergency circumstances. These emergency meetings appear to be very effective in fostering employee morale, and often result in professional practices as follow up actions. For example, following an accident involving a VRE employee, the Registrar of Voters held an All Staff Meeting and brought in counselors and offered CPR classes to employees interested in taking such a class.

The Registrar of Voters also schedules All-Staff Meetings (**election debriefings**) following each election. The purpose of these meetings is to identify what went right,

what went wrong, and how the actions of VRE could be improved for future elections. These "election debriefing" meetings represent a "best practice" and are very effective at involving staff in efforts to continually improve election administration. Although tasks are assigned, there does not appear to be a system to systematically collect and record issues over the course of an election cycle, thereby potentially limiting discussion at these "post mortem" meetings to the processes and activities occurring near the end of the election process, while potentially omitting events earlier in the process. As is the case with Manager Meetings, although tasks are assigned there does not appear to be a systematic process in place to ensure that each action item and improvement is accomplished.

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO), of which VRE is a member, annually in December conducts a "**New Law Workshop**" to discuss new statutes enacted by the Legislature. This workshop is always located in Sacramento and, as a result, VRE is able to send several staff to attend. This is a very valuable experience, and helps staff stay up to date with required procedures. Generally, however, these discussions are on a very general level that describes what the previous law required, and how the law has changed. In part because each of the 58 counties may have slightly to significantly different administrative procedures, the workshop does not generally include discussion on how the statutory changes should be administered.

1-10	Concern: There is no system in place to ensure that "action items" are properly addressed at Manager Meetings. There is also a concern that not all Election Managers are consistently communicating back to their staff what was discussed and decided in Manager Meetings. This leads to some VRE employees not being as informed as others. This is a particular concern because often it is the lower level employee who can provide valuable input.
	Recommendation: At a minimum, Manager Meeting minutes should identify "action items" and should assign a specific person to each task. The list of action items should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting as "Old Business," and, in order to ensure accountability, those action items should remain there for future meetings until the item has been accomplished. The agenda for each meeting should also include a requirement to verify that each program manager had communicated back to his or her staff the contents of the previous Manager Meeting.

1-11	Concern: The election debriefings happen after the election when several months may have elapsed since a problem occurred. It is possible that these problems are forgotten during this time span and are not being included in the agenda.
	Recommendation: Although the initiation of post-election debriefing meetings is itself a professional practice, it can be improved. The Registrar of Voters should consider implementing a system to track and record issues, events, errors, and professional practices *throughout* the election cycle to ensure that the post election debriefing meetings include all such actions taking place at any time during the preparation and administration of the election. In addition, the "action items" identified at these meetings should be tracked to completion at weekly Manager Meetings. This is of particular importance when these action items require the updating of the Election Calendar and any procedures manuals.
1-12	Concern: Tracking new laws, and determining the detailed procedures for implementing required changes within VRE, is of critical importance to the continued excellence of the office. This practice is also a necessary discipline to ensure that procedures and practices are updated and current for use by new employees who may not have been familiar with past practices or changes to the law.
	Recommendation: As a complement to the existing practice of sending staff to the New Law Workshop, the Registrar of Voters should consider an All Staff Meeting to discuss new laws. The focus of this meeting could be, in addition to the general description of the change, on the details of implementation: What adjustments need to be made to office procedures? Which procedures manuals and publications need to be updated? Are revisions to the Election Calendar necessary? Does the new law require a change to information on the VRE web site? Etc.

LEGAL ISSUES

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The VRE is responsible for accurately and fairly administering federal and state election laws and regulations.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Legislation:

The following federal legislation has had a major impact on elections: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), The National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter) of 1993, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986 and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. In addition, the regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 (ADA) established requirements for accessible polling places. During the course of the performance review we evaluated programs to determine compliance to these laws.

1. The Voting Rights Act (VRA):

Congress passed the language minority provisions of the VRA because it found that "through the use of various practices and procedures, citizens of language minorities have been effectively excluded from participation in the electoral process." Congress adopted the language minority provisions of the Voting Rights Act in 1975 for a period of ten years, and then extended them in 1982 for ten year and in 1992 for fifteen years. Congress recently extended these provisions again. Based on data from the 2000 federal census, Sacramento County has been subject to these provisions as they relate to the Spanish language since publication of the Federal Register on July 26, 2002.

The language minority provisions are contained in Sections 203 and Section 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act. Sections 203 and 4(f)(4) require that when a covered state or political subdivision "provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials of information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language."

Assessment:

Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) has made a good start at compliance with the language minority provisions of the VRA. The department has an outreach unit with a staff of two, one of who is bilingual English/Spanish. VRE has one other full-time employee in the Campaign Services section that is bilingual English/Spanish. The Outreach unit has taken steps to establish a Latino Task Force to receive input from the Spanish speaking community. A great deal of election information as well

as much of the VRE web page has been translated into Spanish. VRE Precinct Operations has taken some positive steps to identify precincts where Spanish speaking poll workers are needed and placing bilingual workers there on Election Day.

However, we believe that VRE should take several additional steps to ensure compliance with the VRA. These steps include:

- The first and perhaps most important step is to do a complete inventory of all written materials. This threshold step is very important to ensure that all registration and election related material is reviewed to determine if it needs to be translated. Items, such as: Vote by mail applications, guides for how to prepare an initiative measure and other types of information that is available to members of the public must be translated into Spanish. As in many areas, one indication a jurisdiction is seeking to comply is whether they have communicated with other local election officials and advocacy groups, since they may have ideas about materials that should be translated based on their experiences. Finally, this is an ongoing process. Every time new written material is prepared, the official must have a process in place for determining whether the material must be translated.

- Once a complete list of materials that must be translated has been compiled, the materials must be professionally translated. This is an area where jurisdictions can experience problems. Many of the technical terms related to elections have exacting translations, and a failure to properly translate them can result in ineffective translated materials that can confuse or mislead voters. VRE should contact other counties, such as: Alameda and Santa Clara who have such glossaries and consult with local community and advocacy groups to ensure that the local Spanish speaking community will readily understand the translations. A sample glossary is available on the U.S. Department of Justice web page at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/index.htm. The Election Assistance Commission also has a glossary on its web site as www.eac.gov.

- Another critical requirement is to ensure that translated materials are provided to those who would want it, including any materials sent by mail, such as: sample ballots and vote by mail ballot materials. One important practice is for a jurisdiction to take every opportunity to allow voters to self-identify their interest in receiving Spanish language materials. There should be a check-off box on all written materials provided to voters that will or can be returned by the voters, to indicate their interest in receiving Spanish language materials, such as vote by mail applications. The office should have an established practice of making this inquiry of persons who come into the office or call into the office, when it appears that the person could be interested in Spanish language materials. This involves having a process in place and training staff to ensure that it is done consistently and appropriately.

- Another important component of a program designed to ensure compliance with the VRA Minority Language provisions is the presence of a qualified Minority

Language Coordinator who speaks the language, and is proactive in terms of outreach to the community and relevant advocacy groups, and who oversees all aspects of compliance. In addition, the office should work to ensure that there is always office coverage by at least one person fluent in Spanish.

- The County must have in place an effective program for identifying polling places where Spanish-speaking poll workers should be assigned. This is another area where effective communication with community and advocacy groups is critical, since they can provide valuable information about the need for Spanish-speaking poll workers in appropriate areas. The number of bi-lingual poll workers in Sacramento County, versus other similar sized counties is very low. It appears that VRE is estimating the need based on those who request materials in Spanish rather than on census information. This topic is covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

- Next, the County must have an effective program for recruiting and tracking Spanish-speaking poll workers. Once again, outreach to community and advocacy groups is critical in this area. The process must begin early, must have contingency plan for Election Day no-shows, and must be continually assessed both for its effectiveness and to determine how it can be improved. It is also important to have means for ensuring that potential poll workers who purport to be able to speak Spanish actually are able to do so proficiently. In addition, the County must be able to address problem poll workers who express hostility or frustration with the Minority Language provisions and whose presence and actions may intimidate or discourage Spanish language voters.

- Finally, the need for complete and accurate record keeping of efforts to ensure compliance cannot be over-emphasized. This practice is important both to assist in effective assessments of what is working and what is not so that improvements can be made, but also as evidence for the U.S. Department of Justice when it visits the jurisdiction. The record-keeping should cover all aspects of the County's compliance efforts including identifying each document that has been translated, all outreach efforts to the community, tracking Spanish speaking poll workers and their performance so that can be used again in the future, documenting all contacts with members of the public who called and who are identified as requesting Spanish language materials, and all other efforts

2. National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993:

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the "NVRA" and the "Motor Voter Act"), to enhance voting opportunities for every American. The Act has made it easier for all Americans to register to vote and to maintain their registration.

In addition to whatever other methods of voter registration which States offer, the Act requires states to provide the opportunity to apply to register to vote for federal elections by the following means:

- Section 5 of the Act requires states to provide individuals with the opportunity to register to vote at the same time that they apply for a driver's license, change their address, or seek to renew a driver's license, and requires the State to forward the completed application to the appropriate state of local election official.
- Section 7 of the Act requires states to offer voter registration opportunities at all offices that provide public assistance and all offices that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities. Each applicant for any of these services, renewal of services, or address changes must be provided with a voter registration form of a declination form as well as assistance in completing the form and forwarding the completed application to the appropriate state or local election official.
- Section 6 of the Act provides that citizens can register to vote by mail using mail-in-forms developed by each state and the Federal Election Commission.

Requirements for how States maintain voter registration lists for federal elections are contained in Section 8 of the Act. The Act also requires notification of all applicants of whether their voter registration applications were accepted or rejected. The Act requires list maintenance programs to incorporate specific safeguards, e.g., that they be uniform, non-discriminatory, in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and not be undertaken within 90 days of a federal election. The removal of voters for non-voting or for having moved can only be done after meeting certain requirements provided in the Act. The NVRA also provides additional safeguards under which registered voters would be able to vote notwithstanding a change in address in certain circumstances. For example, voters who move within a district or a precinct will retain the right to vote even if they have not re-registered at their new address.

Assessment:

The NVRA has been in effect for over 10 years and according to VRE staff, NVRA related duties have become part of "the way things are done". VRE works with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and social service agencies to provide voter registration services to their clients. VRE worked with the Election Information Management System vendor to update the program when NVRA was adopted to ensure that VRE was able to maintain proper records regarding the source of registrations. According to the Registrar of Voters these procedures have been thoroughly worked out and have become "routine."

The Registrar of Voters indicated that the number of new registrations from social service agencies is very low and she is concerned that not all social service clients are being offered the opportunity to register to vote. She recently forwarded a letter from the Secretary of State on the subject to the Directors of the Department of Human Assistance and the Department of Health and Human Services. The Registrar reminded the directors of this responsibility and offered VRE assistance to them in updating their training for staff. VRE also complies with the list maintenance provisions of NVRA.

3. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA):

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act ("UOCAVA") was enacted by Congress in 1986. The UOCAVA requires that the states and territories allow certain groups of citizens to register and vote by absentee (referred to as vote by mail in California) in elections for Federal offices. In addition, most states and territories have their own laws allowing citizens covered by the UOCAVA to register and vote absentee in state and local elections as well.

United States citizens covered by the UOCAVA include:

Members of the United States Uniformed Services and merchant marine;

Their family members; and

United States citizens residing outside the United States.

The UOCAVA provides for a "back-up" ballot, called the Federal Write-In Absence Ballot (FWAB), which can be used by citizens covered by the Act in federal general elections. Voters who have made a timely application for, but have not received their regular ballot from the state or territory, subject to certain conditions, may cast the FWAB. This process is overseen by the Federal Voting Assistance Program, through the Department of Defense. The FWAB is available at military installations and embassies worldwide. An official on-line version of this ballot, and information and instructions about it, are available on the Federal Voting Assistance Program web site.

Assessment:

The Vote by Mail section of the Voter Services Division is responsible for processing applications and ballots for military and overseas voters. Procedures are in place and used to ensure compliance with this process. In addition the Manager of Voter Services served as Chair of a California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) subcommittee on Military and Overseas Voting. The subcommittee produced a manual on Military and Overseas Voting that is now used in Sacramento County as well as throughout the state. The director of the Federal Voting Assistant Program, Department of Defense, reports no compliance problems with Sacramento County.

4. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA):

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 was passed by the United States Congress to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process. HAVA addresses improvements to voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 election.

HAVA creates new mandatory minimum standards for states to follow in several key areas of election administration. The law provides funding to help states meet these new standards, replace voting systems and improve election administration. HAVA also established the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to assist the states regarding HAVA compliance and to distribute HAVA funds to the states. EAC is also responsible for creating voting system guidelines and operating the federal government's first voting system certification program.

HAVA requires that the states implement the following new programs and procedures:

Provisional Voting
Voting Information, including information required at the polling place
Modern and Upgraded Voting Equipment
Statewide Voter Registration Databases
Voter Identification Procedures

Assessment:

Sacramento County formerly used a modified VotoMatic voting system that relied on punch card ballots. HAVA, as well as a federal court decision in California, required that punch card voting systems be eliminated and that new systems be used. HAVA now requires that systems provide for "second chance" voting, meaning that voters would be notified before casting a ballot if they left one or more contests blank. HAVA also requires that voting systems be accessible to voters with disabilities.

VRE purchased and installed a new voting system to comply with HAVA. The new system utilizes paper ballots that are scanned at the precinct. This system returns a ballot to a voter if anything is left blank or over voted. The voter then has the opportunity to correct the ballot or re-submit as is. VRE supplements this system with AutoMark devices that allow voters with disabilities to mark their ballots privately and independently. Sacramento VRE met the 2006 deadline for installation of compliant systems.

To comply with HAVA, VRE has expanded their voter outreach activities to better educate citizens on their rights as well as how to use the voting equipment. The Precinct Operations division has changed precinct officer training to better assist voters and to handle new identification requirements under HAVA for first time voters who registered to vote by mail.

The Voter Services division, working with the EIMS vendor, changed affidavit processing to ensure that additional information required by HAVA is documented. The Voting Systems and Technology division has worked with the EIMS vendor and the Secretary of State to ensure that Sacramento County voter

database is compliant with state and HAVA requirements. At the time of the performance review the Voting Systems and Technology manager indicated VRE was compliant and transferring and receiving the voter registration data from the Secretary of State without problems.

5. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

Under the ADA and corresponding state law, a public entity must ensure that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from services, programs, and activities because existing buildings are inaccessible. A State or local government's programs, when viewed in their entirety, must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. They may provide program accessibility by a number of methods including alteration of existing facilities, acquisition or construction of additional facilities, relocation of a service or program to an accessible facility, or provision of services at alternate accessible sites.

The ADA applies to polling places used by the county in the conduct of public elections and requires that all polling places be accessible to voters with disabilities. Specific requirements have been set forth in guidelines adopted by the federal government. These requirements present a significant challenge to all local election officials, since it requires them to find numerous accessible buildings for use on a single day.

Polling place accessibility is also governed by the federal **Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984.** This Act requires that all polling places be accessible to voters, according to guidelines established by the Secretary of State. These guidelines include a requirement that each county constitute a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), with defined duties.

Assessment:

VRE surveyed all polling places in the county for accessibility to persons with disabilities. Polling places that were not accessible and could not be made accessible are no longer used. The Precinct Operations division reports that 100% of polling places used in Sacramento County elections are accessible to voters with disabilities, which is a significant accomplishment. The Voting Systems and Technology division manager stated that the department web page has been made accessible for the visually impaired. In addition the VRE office is accessible and training for precinct officers includes a section on ADA compliance, as required by state law.

Sacramento County does not have a VAAC, but instead participates on a County committee that addresses accessibility issues countywide.

1-13	Concern: Sacramento VRE has made positive steps to implement the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act. However, there is no written plan to ensure that legal requirements are being met.
	Recommendation: VRE should prepare a written plan to ensure compliance with the minority language provisions of the VRA. The plan should include, but not necessarily be limited to the following: • Complete an inventory of all written materials dealing with voter registration and elections that are provided to the public; • Have all written materials in the inventory professionally translated into Spanish, including materials on the VRE web site; • Establish a policy to ensure that new forms are translated as they become necessary and that existing material is updated as laws change; • Prepare a glossary of election terms in Spanish and ensure that these terms are consistently used; • Ensure that all people who need Spanish language election materials receive them by including a request box on all forms and notices mailed to voters where voters can request Spanish language material and mail back, as well as procedures for in-office request for information; • Ensure that there is at least one staff member fluent in Spanish on duty in the office at all times; • Establish a written plan to identify polling places where Spanish speaking poll workers are needed; • Establish a written plan to detail how to recruit and place Spanish speaking poll workers and how to ensure that workers who purport to be Spanish speaking can actually speak the language; • The plan must also identify how the County will deal with problem poll workers who display hostility or frustration with non-English speaking voters and whose presence at the polls might discourage participation by non-English speaking voters; and • Establish a complete and accurate record-keeping effort of all actions done to comply with VRA.

1-14	Concern: The NVRA requires that clients at public agencies, such as: social services must be given the opportunity to register to vote. According to the Registrar of Voters the numbers of registrations received from Social Services agencies is very small, approximately 20 per month, and she is concerned that clients are not being offered the opportunity to register.
	Recommendation: The Registrar of Voters should be more proactive in efforts to encourage agencies to participate in voter registration efforts. This would include enlisting the support of the Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Officer to emphasize the legal requirements and to personally encourage participation.
1-15	Concern: The requirement for translating materials can create confusion if these changes are not accurately and consistently tracked over time, especially as it relates to ensuring that the same changes are made on materials and information placed on the web site as is done with printed materials.
	Recommendation: The VRE should consider a system of accounting for changes to documents and the web site by utilizing the "track changes" function on office word processing software to create a record of which changes were made to each document and when.
1-16	Concern: VRE does not have a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee as required by the federal Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 and guidelines established by the Secretary of State.
	Recommendation: Examine whether the county accessibility committee fully meets the requirements of the Voting Accessibility for the elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 and if not, reconvene the VRE Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Protection Against Fraud:

The election office has a responsibility under federal and state law to protect the integrity of all aspects of the voting process, including voter registration, vote by mail and precinct voting, and the initiative and referendum petition processes. This requirement includes installing procedures and systems to detect and prevent fraud.

Safeguards to the voting system are described throughout the report in the appropriate areas. During the course of the performance review, VRE learned that two voters charged with felony counts of election fraud in the March 27, 2007 election for Folsom-Cordova Unified School District had been convicted. The election office

reported suspicious registration activity to the Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit for investigation. With the Secretary of State's findings and consulting with County Counsel, VRE was able to prevent fraudulent ballots from being counted and the District Attorney filed charges.

VRE utilizes election management systems to detect and investigate potential fraudulent activity. This could include illegal registrations, voting twice, etc. VRE works well with the Secretary of State and appropriately reports suspicious activity. The County structure (County Counsel and District Attorney) aggressively works to prevent voter fraud.

	Concern**:** None.
	Recommendation: None.

Lawsuits/legal Advice:

Lawsuits are not uncommon in an election office. Because the election official must adhere strictly to the law that is not always clear, and given that election administration is an intensely human endeavor involving thousands of transactions, when VRE's actions are questioned it is often left up to the judicial system to make a determination. Such decisions often result in new legislation to clarify the issue.

VRE is included as a party to lawsuits more frequently than many jurisdictions because of its proximity to the state capitol. In those cases, VRE is usually a technical third party and the Secretary of State's office takes the lead. In an interview with county counsel, John Whisenhunt, he informs that there have been very few lawsuits directly involving actions taken specifically by VRE, only three or four that he could remember.

When a lawsuit is filed VRE and counsel must work closely. Mr. Whisenhunt enthusiastically endorses the Registrar's knowledge of election law, responsiveness, and cooperation. He states that VRE is very good about calling and taking a pro-active approach. He calls the Registrar of Voters and her staff "straight shooters with good legal and political radar".

When considering a change in ballot card design, VRE contacted county counsel who did research and advised on whether the VRE would be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act if it printed separate English and Spanish ballots and sample ballots. When Mr. Whisenhunt was asked about legal issues on the horizon, he spoke of electronic voting and indicated that the Registrar of Voters deserves credit for not rushing to electronic voting, but taking a cautious approach that involved the community in evaluating options for new systems. He feels this prudent approach has to a large extent avoided the controversy over electronic voting that has caused significant problems and uncertainty in other counties.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

Legal Remedies:

When a voter or candidate questions the outcome of an election the law provides two options – a voter requested recount and/or an election contest. VRE has had only one recount (Del Paso Heights School Board) in the past fifteen years and no election contests. This is a surprisingly low number given the number of elections administered by VRE, and demonstrates confidence in the voting system. The review team examined the procedures in place for a recount and found them, with one exception, to comply with the law and state guidelines. The exception relates to fees charged for recount boards and is discussed further in Chapter 2 under Fiscal Services/Fees.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The Sacramento County department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) is responsible for implementation of federal and state election law, as well as regulations and procedures for election administration, for elections held within Sacramento County.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Development of policy and enactment of statutes to improve the election process is the responsibility of the United States Congress and the California Legislature. However, elections in California are administered by election officials in the 58 counties; the county clerks and registrars of voters are the professional experts, and their participation in the legislative process is an essential element in ensuring that policy and law is informed by this professional experience. Once legislation has been passed, it is the job of election officials to implement the laws.

The position responsible for elections in each county is either the county clerk (typical of smaller counties) or the registrars of voters (typical of larger counties such as Sacramento). These officials have formed an advocacy association; the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO). CACEO has constituted a subcommittee on legislation for each of the interests of the association; clerks of the Board of Supervisors; County Clerks, and, Elections. CACEO annually sponsors nonpartisan proposals to improve the election process, analyzes and takes positions on proposed laws, testifies before the Legislature, and conducts educational seminars on new laws. In addition, the Elections Legislation Committee has designated several subcommittees to research and develop policy and procedures on a wide range of election-related issues, such as: the nomination process, overseas ballots, the petition process, etc.

Although most election-related legislation of interest to Sacramento County is developed and monitored through CACEO, the county's Legislative Advocate may, at times, also become involved in this process, principally if the proposed bill in question would have fiscal or policy effects on the county as a whole.

CACEO is, in and of itself, a professional practice and operates as a model for other states in promoting uniformity of application and interpretation of law and regulation. CACEO has also constructed a list serve to facilitate discussion of legislative proposals, as well as to enable election officials to compare procedures on any given issue or problem.

VRE is very centrally engaged in the activities of the CACEO, is very proactive in its participation in the legislative advocacy process and, overall, and has an outstanding record and reputation in this area, setting it apart and above any other election office in the state. Examples of this participation include:

- The Election Legislation Committee of CACEO is co-chaired by the Registrar of Voters of Sacramento and San Diego Counties. This committee is open to election officials from all counties, with average attendance from approximately 30 county election offices, and meets monthly to discuss proposed legislation and to take positions on these proposals.
- The Registrar of Voters represents CACEO in testimony before both policy and fiscal committees in the State Senate and Assembly.
- The Registrar of Voters is a member of the Legislative Committee of the Election Center, an organization of election officials from all the states, and has testified before the US Congress on proposed legislation.
- The Registrar of Voters participates in the Joint Election Official Liaison Committee (JEOLC), a national organization of election officials that advocates for improvements in the election process.
- The Registrar of Voters regularly contacts area Congressional, State Senate, and Assembly representatives to provide information on proposed state or federal legislation.
- VRE annually submits draft proposals to the CACEO Election Legislation Committee for consideration for introduction to the Legislature.
- The Assistant Registrar of Voters is the chair of the SB 90 Subcommittee of the Legislative Committee. This committee tracks issues related to reimbursement of state mandated local costs related to elections and has been instrumental in obtaining appropriate levels of funding for Sacramento County for these mandates.
- The manager of the Voter Services division of VRE served as chair of the Subcommittee on Election Procedures for Military and Overseas Voters. The subcommittee produced a manual that is now used in all counties.
- The Election Managers of the Voter Services and Precinct Operations divisions participate on the Subcommittee on Voters with Specific Needs (e.g. voters with disabilities, voters with language needs, etc.).
- Several VRE staff members are active in planning and conducting the biannual “Summer Institute”: a multi-day education and training seminar for election officials held at Stanford University.
- VRE staff participates on ad hoc CACEO subcommittees formed to develop uniform guidelines and procedures for the petition process, processing of provisional ballots, conducting the canvass, etc.
- Staff provides substantial logistical support for CACEO educational activities, such as: the New Law Workshop (attended by all Election Managers, as well as many line staff), the certification program for election professionals, and development of the directory of clerks and election officials.

1-17	Concern: The federal government has become more active in election policy, both through law and regulation. Although Sacramento County has an excellent system for tracking and responding to election-related proposals at the state level, it is not clear that this same level of scrutiny is applied to the federal level.
	Recommendation: Ensure that laws proposed by the US Congress, as well as regulations, guidelines and standards adopted by the Election Assistance Commission and other federal agencies, promulgated to implement these laws, are monitored for their effect on Sacramento County.

ELECTION PLANNING

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

Election planning is critical to the successful conduct of elections and begins as early as one year prior to Election Day. Successful planning involves identifying all critical steps, incorporating legal requirements and deadlines, assigning responsibility, coordinating, monitoring, and tracking.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Most election offices rely on an election calendar to ensure that all tasks are accomplished and all legal deadlines are satisfied. In California, the Secretary of State produces a calendar with legal deadlines and requirements. The election office must then expand upon the legal requirements and plan for the hundreds of specific tasks that make up an election. Calendars usually refer to “E minus” dates – counting down the days until the election.

VRE has an election calendar that is created by the Executive Secretary in Excel. The initial Election Calendar (the same master used each election) with "new" calendar election dates is sent electronically to each manager before the calendar becomes effective. Each manager responds (either electronically or with a hard copy) with additions, deletions, and/or corrections. Their sections are highlighted with a "color" that pertains to them only. The Executive Secretary makes changes to the calendar at that time. When the Secretary of State’s election calendar is received, those events not already included in the past election calendar are added by each manager as they pertain to their section. Managers also keep a copy of the Secretary of State Election Calendar in their files.

The Assistant Registrar of Voters reviews the calendar, and it is then routed weekly to the Election Managers with colored paperclips clipped (manager specific) to the task they are assigned. They sign off when the task is complete, remove the clip, and pass the calendar on to the next manager. Each week, when the calendar is returned to the Executive Secretary, she begins with new paper clips for the upcoming week, routes it to the Registrar of Voters and Assistant Registrar of Voters first, then to the Election Managers. The office wide election calendar is available on line and in hard copy.

Sometimes the calendar is not provided to everyone before the Manager Meeting. During the meeting the actual calendar is not used, but Election Managers refer to the clipped items for discussion. If a manager fails to discuss a problem area, it is possible that other Election Managers may not be informed. This could be critical if the item affects more than one division. How the calendar could be better used in Manager Meetings is discussed in Chapter 1 under Communication.

We do not consider the current election calendar to be as useful as it might be. It does not contain as much detail as necessary to accurately track progress, even though the detail might exist on other calendars within a division. The "model" used to create the calendar seems to include tasks for all elections, and is not specific to a particular election. For example, one calendar we referenced was for a small December 2007 election. This was a local election but the calendar had entries as if it was a major statewide election. Therefore, much of the calendar did not apply. When this happens, staff is likely to lose confidence in the system because they know it is not accurate for the election at hand. The calendars do not clearly separate the task from the responsible party and do not have space for noting if it is complete. As designed, there is not enough space to clearly lay out the calendar with all required information.

It appears that Voting Systems and Technology has developed an election calendar system that is used by some, but not all, managers. This calendar has more detail and capabilities than the system used by the VRE as a whole.

In addition to election calendars, each division works with other groups who supply services or supplies, to plan election tasks. More information on this appears within program chapters.

1-18	Concern: The current election calendar is not user friendly and is not adequate to ensure that all election tasks are completed in a timely manner. The manual monitoring of the calendar is time consuming and not efficient.
	Recommendation: A new election calendar system should be implemented and all Election Managers should be required to use it. If the calendar introduced by Voting Systems and Technology has the necessary capabilities it could become the model. If not, there is commercial software available that could simplify the process. One such program is sold by the company supplying poll worker on-line training. It would be useful to consider templates for different types of elections – primaries, generals, local, mail ballot, etc. That would eliminate unnecessary items. The calendars should be sortable by division. Although it is beneficial to have all tasks listed in one calendar, it might be useful to have some tasks designated to a sub-category that was available, but not shown, on the main calendar screen/document unless requested. These would be the small tasks that Election Managers know do not affect another section within the department. These calendars should be updated electronically as tasks are completed and ideally notify the manager if an item missed the deadline.

PROCEDURES

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The development of clear and comprehensive procedures is critical to an election office. These procedures document what the office does and how they do it. Quality procedures ensure accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Well-documented procedures are the equivalent of an insurance policy in the event you lose experienced staff. In addition, an election office uses a large number of temporary workers in a major election. These employees do not, in most cases, have election experience. They need well-written procedures and checklists that can be used to train and that can be used for reference as they learn the job. In addition to procedures developed by VRE, there are procedures that are *required* to be used. For example, the procedures adopted when a voting system is certified. VRE recently received procedures from the Secretary of State that were imposed for an election that was only weeks away, and was unable to implement some of these procedures without causing unacceptable risk to the conduct of that election.

An election office is different from other county departments. Elections must be open and transparent. Although this has always been the case, public observation and scrutiny of the process has increased dramatically since 2000. It is often necessary to provide observers, attorneys, and media with copies of procedures in order to explain what they are seeing and what is being done. When that happens, the procedures must be available, understandable, current, and accurate.

Many years ago, VRE hired an outside contractor to assist in writing procedures. Those procedures were written with a decimal system that corresponded to forms used to carry out the procedure. VRE was a leader in this effort and many counties "borrowed" their procedures as a model. Unfortunately, those procedures became outdated due to major changes to technology and laws. More recently the Voter Systems and Technology division hired a professional writer to write technical procedures.

VRE made a major commitment during the past two years to assemble procedure manuals. Each manager was assigned the task of writing procedures for their own division or unit. The Executive Secretary monitored the process to ensure everyone complied.

The hardcopy manuals (notebooks) are located in the office of the Executive Secretary, who is responsible for keeping them updated as new procedures are

developed or changes made. Each manager keeps their own procedures on their computer system and when changes are made, they must provide the Executive Secretary with that change. The notebooks are organized according to division of the office as shown on the organization chart. In addition, the office maintains a notebook of functional job statements. These notebooks were extremely helpful in gaining a better understanding of VRE during the course of this review.

As part of the review, the team looked at procedures for the entire office. This is a standard undertaking whenever a performance review is conducted. In many jurisdictions no organized, written procedures exist – rather each part of the office has their own set of procedures, notes, etc. In the worst cases, there is very little actually in writing. This leaves the election office vulnerable to error and inefficiency.

What we found at VRE was a very good beginning to achieving professional practices in the area of policies and procedures. It was enough to give the reviewers, who have election experience, a good understanding of the procedures followed by VRE. However, we did find room for improvement and bring this item to your attention because the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Supervisors have indicated that they want the Sacramento VRE to be the best.

Most election tasks that must be performed are included in VRE procedures. However, the majority of the procedures lack sufficient detail to explain specifically *how* the task is actually done. In some cases, the procedure is simply a listing of legal requirements. There are exceptions where sufficient detail is provided. One such exception is the Voting System and Technology division where the services of a professional writer were used. In at least one instance, procedures necessary for a new employee to perform her required tasks were completely missing (see discussion in Chapter 2 under Fiscal Services).

The writing styles vary because of different authors. Most attempts at flow charts are really a column of boxes with tasks – not identifying the actual workflow. In many instances the procedures do not properly identify the possible deviances that may occur. They instruct to do a certain task, but do not properly inform what to do if there is an exception – "If/then" scenarios. There is no overall plan for inclusion of legal references, such as: citations to Election Code sections that require a certain action. This makes it more difficult to identify areas in need of change when the laws change. There is not a clear understanding of what is policy versus a legal requirement. Very few examples of forms are used and there is no system for identifying forms to procedures so that if you were to pick up a form in the office, you would know to what procedure it belonged.

Once procedures have been developed, they must be tested. In many instances we found that if you were to pick out a procedure and try to perform the task, it was not complete, out of order, or confusing. If such a procedure were to be given to the public, it would not instill confidence in the process. Too often those writing

procedures have a personal understanding of the process and therefore do not think the detail needs to be documented. That is a fallacy – what happens if the person with that experience is not available?

1-19	Concern: VRE procedure manuals do not yet contain sufficient detail in many cases, are not referenced to forms or laws, and many have not been sufficiently tested. If given to the public some could have an adverse affect on voter confidence or impact a court decision.
	Recommendation: Most election offices do not have the time or expertise to develop thorough documented procedures. VRE should consider hiring a contractor to oversee this process, work with Election Managers, and teach this skill. It would also be helpful to develop professional flow charts as a visual tool. Before any procedure is included in the manual, it must be thoroughly tested. Someone other than the writer must actually perform the task using the procedure.
1-20	Concern: Procedures will change every year depending new legislation or technology. If not routinely updated, they will quickly become obsolete and a liability.
	Recommendation: VRE should adopt a process to regularly (i.e. annually, after the legislature adjourns for the year) meet to review new laws with a specific purpose of determining if procedures need to be updated, publications need to be updated, and/or the web-site needs to be updated. This should also be done as part of the review process after each election.

STAFF MORALE AND RECOGNITION

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

An election office imposes unique stresses and responsibilities upon employees. The demands of the job may make it difficult to schedule time off and require significant overtime with little advance notice. Legislation, procedures and technology are constantly changing and the process is open to public observation and media coverage. Teamwork is critical. It takes a special commitment to the electoral process to remain in the election field. Therefore, morale and recognition are vital to a good election office.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Morale:

Each staff member was asked by to complete a questionnaire regarding the office. Results of the questionnaire as well as personal interviews with the staff indicate a high level of morale in the department. The questionnaire asked staff if they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed with 20 statements regarding the office.

92% of the staff either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “This is a good place to work”. This overall statement demonstrates a high level of satisfaction by the election staff. The staff gave high marks to the department on the issue of training to do their jobs. 84% of staff either strongly agreed or agreed that they were well trained to do their jobs and 100% of staff strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “I am given opportunities for training.” 94% of the staff either strongly agreed or agreed that they could take problems to a manager without fear and 97% of staff strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that “Election Managers are accessible and able to answer my questions.”

An area where staff indicated a problem was in the opportunities for promotion and advancement in the office. Only 50% of the staff strongly agreed or agreed that such opportunities were available. In personal interviews staff members mentioned the limited number of management positions in the department and the department’s small size as reasons for their answers.

Another problem area for morale involves staffing in the department. Only 65% of the staff strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “There is enough staff in the office to get the job done.” This seems to be a particular concern in the Voter Services division that processes voter registration, petitions and ballots by mail. See Appendix F for complete results of the staff questionnaire.

Management staff also indicated a problem with training and retention of staff in the Voting Systems and Technology division. Elections work on strict deadlines that require a significant amount of overtime work. Many information technology workers could potentially work in other county departments for equal salaries without the need to work the additional hours and under the intense time deadlines. This is also a difficult situation for workers with families to work the long hours and days necessary in the election department.

Staff members were involved in preparing for the Presidential Primary Election during the time of this review. The overall atmosphere in the office was one of quiet professionalism. Staff was aware of the heavy 2008 election schedule ahead of them and seemed confident and prepared. Based on results of the questionnaire, surveys, and observations staff morale is high.

Recognition:

COUNTY STARS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Star of Excellence is a countywide award given to county employees. The awards have been given in 2003, 2005, and 2007 each covering activities during the previous two-year period. Any county staff member may nominate other county staff for their work or creativity or cost saving programs. There is a team of judges from various county departments and the winners receive a medal. There is a recognition ceremony and reception, which has been held at the Sacramento Convention Center and members of the Board of Supervisors are usually present.

There are five categories for which an individual or team can be nominated. The five categories are: Quality of Work life, Collaboration, Innovation, Cost Savings and Customer Service. Department of Voter Registration and Elections staff have won awards in all three award years for the following: Contract Officers Team, Election System Installation, Pallet Storage System, Streamlined Annexation (Mello Roos process overhaul), and honorable mention for Voter Registration On-Line program.

DEPARTMENT “GUESS WHAT I SAW” AWARDS

The Guess What I Saw award is part of the Employee Appreciation and Recognition program. The county authorizes funding for employee recognition programs. The program has a written plan and a budget, which is submitted with the annual budget package for approval. The Employee Appreciation and Recognition committee is made up of permanent staff and the membership is scheduled to rotate every six months, but sometimes members stay on longer. The goal is to include staff from all sections so that no one is left out.

Staff created the “Guess What I Saw” award in order to recognize staff that goes above and beyond their job duties to help others. Any staff member may nominate any other staff member for any reason. Staff may be recognized for work related

reasons or for things done outside the office. Staff members have been recognized for reasons varying from providing assistance to other sections during busy election preparation periods to an employee who was recognized for rescuing stray cats in the community. The committee decides which of the nominations will receive a gift and all nominees receive an award certificate. The nominees are recognized at an All-Staff Meeting.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

ELECTION DISASTER RECOVERY

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

Emergency preparedness and plans to recover from a disaster are essential components of an election. The department must have the ability to relocate key services without interruption of services, including but not limited to ballot counting.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

VRE maintains and updates Procedures for Disaster Recovery, including, a "Security and Emergency Action Plan: Policies and Procedures." This plan details staff assignments and responsibilities, lists emergency contacts, identifies procedures for various disaster scenarios, such as: fires, earthquakes, and bomb threats, describes procedures for handling suspicious mail packages, includes a "Emergency Preparedness Plan" and an "Election Day Emergency Plan," and discusses provisions for election night security and miscellaneous other subjects.

Responsibilities and Duties: The Plan establishes the position of "Facilities Coordinator", describes that person's duties, and provides for back-up "Alternate Facility Coordinators" in the event of the absence of the primary coordinator.

Emergency Contacts: The Plan includes a list of "Emergency Contacts" and instructions for activating the emergency paging system.

Disaster Procedures: The Plan includes brief procedures for small and large earthquakes, as-well-as indoor air quality events. The Plan does not indicate whether staff is trained in these procedures prior to each election.

Bomb Threats: The Plan contains detailed information on handling bomb threats, including a checklist for how to handle a phone call involving a bomb threat. Among other things, the procedures indicate that it is the Facility Coordinator's decision whether to conduct a search or evacuate the building.

Mail Handling Guidelines: The Plan identifies a "County Workplace Violence Prevention Policy (revised January 15, 1998) that requires each department to undertake a security assessment of its workplace. The Plan identifies general precautions, mail handling procedures, and instructions for employees to follow when they detect a suspicious mail item. The Plan also indicates that training should be developed for employees and that technical assistance is available from the Sheriff's Department.

Election Security: The Plan includes a description of approaches to election security, including deterrence, detection, and recovery. These procedures indicate, for example, a badge system to regulate access to key areas and equipment, the use of physical barriers and technology (such as password control, firewalls, and network access restrictions) to prevent unauthorized access.

VRE operates a very effective video surveillance system that provides a significant level of security for ballots and voting equipment, and has adopted separate procedures for the operation of this system.

Emergency Preparedness Plan: The Plan includes procedures for communication with polling places on Election Day, including operation of a phone bank accessible for poll workers needing to communicate with the central office. In case of an emergency, a phone tree will be activated to provide information to polling places.

The increased use of technology in voting equipment has had many consequences, one of which represents a huge potential vulnerability for the election process. The reliance on software to operate voting equipment increases the risk that if one piece of equipment has a problem, that problem could involve every piece of equipment. In this scenario, it is critical to recovery to be able to communicate more or less instantaneously with every polling place to describe the problem and its solution. The success or failure of this communication depends in large measure on the appropriate sizing and staffing levels of Election Day phone systems. This situation is addressed, along with recommendations in the Precinct Operations chapter under Election Day support.

Election Day Emergency Plan: The Plan includes basic instruction and procedures for response to an emergency on Election Day.

The What-ifs on Election Day: The Plan includes several questions, apparently addressed to poll workers, asking what they would do in the event of an adverse event on Election Day. The Poll Worker Training Manual includes procedures for emergencies and what to take in the event of an evacuation.

Election Night Security: The Plan contains a brief discussion of measures for security on election night at VRE office. VRE procedures include an electronic sweep of the premises to detect any wireless activity on election night.

1-21	Concern: It is not clear from the procedures whether the Emergency Contact List is checked and phone numbers tested and verified prior to each election.
	Recommendation: Amend the procedures in the Emergency Plans to ensure that the Emergency Contact List is checked and phone numbers tested and verified prior to each election.
1-22	Concern: It is not clear whether procedures for disaster scenarios, such as: earthquakes, fires, indoor air quality events, and bomb threats include a requirement for training (or reminding) staff of these procedures prior to each election.
	Recommendation: Amend disaster procedures to include a requirement to train and remind staff of these requirements prior to each election.
1-23	Concern: It is not clear whether VRE has plans to evacuate the election office on Election Day in the event of a disaster and relocate critical election functions to another facility.
	Recommendation: VRE should adopt a goal of, if necessary, being able to seamlessly relocate from their current building to another location on Election Day if a disaster or emergency shuts down election headquarters. The alternate location should be identified prior to the election, procedures should be adopted to ensure rollover of phone and computer processes to the new location, and staff should be trained to relocate, and practice that relocation, prior to each election.
1-24	Concern: Current procedures assign VRE staff responsibility for key decisions in the event of a bomb threat.
	Recommendation: VRE should review with law enforcement and, if appropriate, revise their procedures for bomb threats to clarify which agency has decision-making authority in case of a bomb threat.

1-25	Concern: Although the office has procedures in place for mail handling in general, it does not appear that the current procedures specifically include handling procedures for suspect election mail. For example, what procedure would apply if an application for a mail ballot was received on the deadline for application and staff had some concerns regarding its safety?
	Recommendation: Mail handling procedures should be updated to include specific instructions and procedures for election-related mail (i.e. suspicious envelope that appears to contain completed affidavits of registration) as well as a schedule for reviewing the procedures with staff prior to each election. These procedures should protect both the voter's rights and the safety of the office staff.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of a strategic plan is to assist an organization in determining its long range three to five year) goals. A strategic plan helps focus an organization on a vision for the future. The plan clearly defines the purpose of the organization and sets measurable goals and objectives and a method to evaluate them. By preparing a strategic plan an organization can monitor whether it is using its resources to meet the stated goals and objectives.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

We interviewed the Registrar of Voters and Election Managers regarding the planning process used in the department. Currently the Sacramento County Department of Voter Registration and Elections has no strategic plan nor does it have a formal process in place to develop one. Planning is done on a more short-term basis involving primarily specific projects or elections. Developing and monitoring such plans is done in meetings, either staff meetings or meeting involving just those staff members involved with the specific project according to the Registrar of Voters. The planning process takes place primarily in the Manager Meetings each week attended by the division Election Managers, Administrative office staff, Registrar of Voters, and Assistant Registrar of Voters.

The department currently has a clear mission and values statement:

Our mission is to:

- Provide the opportunity and the means for participation in the election process;
- Be effective, efficient and responsive to customer needs through continuous improvement;
- Achieve open communication through teamwork and a spirit of goodwill;
- Support educational and training opportunities to produce quality work;
- Ensure legal requirements are met and applied consistently; and,
- Work together to pursue and achieve excellence.

We demonstrate and support the following values:

- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Accuracy
- Efficiency
- Respect for all

- Ethical conduct
- Commitment to Customer Service

These statements can be used as a foundation to plan a vision of where the department wants to be in the future.

1-26	Concern: Election administration is changing rapidly and a strategic plan would be useful in helping to make decisions involving changes in the future.
	Recommendation: Making decisions regarding voting systems and automation of office functions would be aided if a strategic plan enumerating the vision and goals of the department were in place. The department, perhaps in conjunction with a trained facilitator, should develop a strategic plan developing a vision for the next three to five years. It can and should be used to work "incremental" approaches that take a few years to fully achieve satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2

ADMINISTRATION SECTION

FISCAL SERVICES

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

Fiscal services are provided by a unit of the Administration section. The unit is responsible for overseeing development of the departmental budget, establishing fee schedules, billing jurisdictions for conducting elections, and other fiscal services. The unit has two positions: an Administrative Services Officer II (ASO II) who is the Fiscal Manager, and is supported by an Account Technician (AT).

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Budget:

The office of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) annually develops a proposed budget, negotiates an actual budget with county administrative staff, receives an approved budget from the Board of Supervisors, and monitors expenditures for adherence to that budget. The fiscal year for Sacramento County is July 1 to June 30. The County generally adopts a "preliminary" budget on or about July 1 of each year, and the Board of Supervisors approves a final budget on or about September 1 of each year.

The VRE has established a process for the development of its annual budget proposal. This involves the Fiscal Manager and Account Technician. The Assistant Registrar of Voters actively participates in the budget process, and the Registrar of Voters provides final approval of the department's proposed budget.

Salary and benefit levels are determined by the Board of Supervisors. Division Election Managers provide information on projected operating expenses based on prior year budgets, making adjustments for costs, savings, or potential revenues associated with new programs, increases in existing programs, reduction of existing programs due to increased efficiencies, or elimination of programs.

The process of budget development begins in December when the Fiscal Manager sends a memo to all Division Election Managers requesting budgetary information on each program. The Election Managers have two to three weeks to provide the requested information. The Fiscal Manager aggregates the information from each program, and assembles it into a draft budget for review by the Assistant Registrar of Voters, who reviews it and makes adjustments. After approval by the Registrar of Voters, the budget is submitted to the county budget office in the Sacramento County Budget Development Application format, where it is analyzed and adjusted. The Registrar of Voters and Assistant Registrar of Voters meet with County staff to determine a final budget for submittal to the Board of Supervisors.

Generally, the budget development and monitoring process appears to be very well managed within the VRE. It also appears that the county provides, and the VRE receives, adequate funding and other resources to accomplish the mission of the department

Monitor Expenditures:

The VRE has established systems and procedures to track and monitor expenditures against the approved budget. All expenditures are required to be pre-approved by the Assistant Registrar of Voters, who reviews each expenditure request to determine if the request is appropriate, if it is authorized by the budget, and determines if a bid process or other procedure is required for the proposed expenditure.

Purchases:

Credit cards are issued to four employees: one Election Manager in the Voting Systems and Technology division; one to the Fiscal Manager; one to the Account Technician; and one to the Warehouse Manager. These are to be used for purchase of supplies only, and each purchase must be pre-approved.

The County contracts with various vendors for office supplies, furniture, photocopiers, and other items. VRE has maintenance and service contracts for some election equipment, including the voting machines, the Election Information Management System (EIMS), ballot printing, and the vote by mail ballot envelope sorter. In addition, some temporary staff is employed via a countywide contract with an employment agency.

In general, County policies provide that expenditures of $300 or less may be made at the discretion of VRE. Expenditures of $300 to $5,000 require a bid process and must be pre-approved by the County Purchasing office through a Department Field Order. Expenditures of $5,000 or more require a Purchasing Authority, a process administered by the Purchasing Department, with VRE providing the specifications for the goods or services requested.

In some cases, the Purchasing Department may execute multi-year contracts. For example, the contracts to print polling place ballots and sample ballots, as well as to translate these materials, are one-year contracts with a county option to renew for two additional years, which provides the department flexibility in case special elections are called. The Purchasing Department also negotiated contracts for on-line training of poll workers, and the printing of vote by mail ballots. Purchasing conducts training classes on purchasing procedures and staff attended during the audit period.

The county General Services Agency operates a printing facility, and VRE generally uses this facility for printing of brochures, pamphlets, manuals, and other materials.

Outside vendors are used for mass printing of ballots and sample ballots due to the complexity and special presses required.

Routine mail is sent through the county mail system, with larger mailings such as sample ballots and permanent vote by mail ballots implemented through a countywide contract with a mailing vendor. This is to ensure mailings that entail special sorting are at the lowest possible cost.

Invoices are, generally, sent directly from the vendor to VRE, and are entered directly into the budget tracking system, thereby permitting a "real time" procedure for monitoring of expenditures. The Fiscal Manager and the Account Technician review the expenditure report on a daily basis, as well as conduct a complete review in each of the 13 annual reporting periods.

Fee Schedules:

VRE provides services to candidates, voters, and other members of the public. In some cases, VRE charges a fee for these services. Some of these fees are set by ordinance or statute (e.g. the fee for filing to be a candidate for office or the cost for copies of public documents), while other fees are established by VRE. In general, these fees may not legally exceed the actual cost of providing the service and are calculated by measuring labor hours and attaching the approved county overhead rate. The fee schedule is approved by the Board of Supervisors after public hearings are conducted for comment. Interviewees uniformly indicated that the fees were fair. This last year the fees increased by approximately 30%, which we were told reflected added costs of operating the new voting systems and the addition of Geographical Information Systems.

There appears to be at least one fee that may be in excess of what is permitted by law. Elections Code section 15624 permits VRE to recover actual costs of a recount, but Elections Code section 15625 limits what may be charged for the salaries of members of the recount board (the persons actually recounting the ballots) to what is paid to poll workers. Whereas poll workers (other than inspectors) receive $125 per day, VRE is assessing a fee of $405.50 per day for each member of the recount board.

VRE has prepared an excellent handout brochure that describes services and lists the fees.

Election Costs:

VRE contracts with cities and districts to administer their elections, and establishes fees for this service. The fees are based on the total cost of providing the service, including administrative overhead. A proposed fee schedule is developed by VRE every two years. The information is distributed to jurisdictions subject to the fees, and VRE invites these jurisdictions to attend a meeting to explain how the fees were

determined, and to discuss any concerns the cities or districts might have. The fee schedule is approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Reimbursements:

The Fiscal Manager and Account Technician also track and monitor funds received and expenditures made pursuant to the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). As mentioned in the section of this report on the Voting Systems and Technology division, VRE staff has been very successful in obtaining HAVA funds (e.g. for the vote by mail ballot envelope sorter and warehouse improvements) as well as wise about how HAVA funds should be spent (e.g. the decision to forego touch screen voting equipment in favor of the optical scan technology). Voting system improvements required by HAVA have been completely reimbursed from HAVA funds and/or state funds through the Voting Modernization Bond Act of 2002.

The Fiscal Manager also tracks claims for reimbursement for state mandated programs (SB 90) such as special elections to fill legislative and congressional vacancies. The Assistant Registrar of Voters is the chair of a California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) committee on state mandates. VRE was instrumental in the efforts of California counties to obtain full reimbursement for expenses related to the 2005 Special Election.

2-1	Concern: The Fiscal Manager expressed concern that the scope of her current duties and responsibilities does not permit undertaking longer-term projects such as developing detailed desk and procedure manuals for all the various required functions. She indicated that, when she first took the position, the absence of such procedures was a significant issue. New responsibilities, projects, or actions that were required to be performed on a regular basis were not recorded and there were no procedures indicating how they were to be done. The Fiscal Manager is planning to retire in the spring of 2008. Although there is an effort underway to train current staff to take over this function when the current occupant of the position retires, the current staff has full-time duties that limit the effectiveness of this knowledge transfer. The absence of procedures may make this transition difficult.
	Recommendation: It may be appropriate to retain the current Fiscal Manager on a consulting basis when she retires for the exclusive purposes of training the next Fiscal Manager and to developing detailed procedures.

2-2	Concern: The current Fiscal Manager appears to be highly competent and capable and an asset to the VRE. The Personnel and Facilities Manager has expressed some concern that the duties and responsibilities actually performed by the Fiscal Manager position are broader and more complicated than the current Administrative Services Officer II classification for that position reflect. Under current practices, the Fiscal Manager is responsible for the entire VRE budget, as well as contracts, purchasing, HAVA finances, SB 90 claims, and implementing the fee schedule for districts and others who contract with the VRE to conduct elections.
	Recommendation: The Personnel Manager, in an interview, indicated that the position of Fiscal Manager should be upgraded to the level of an Accountant and we feel this is something that should be studied.
2-3	Concern: The VRE is assessing a fee of $405.50 per day per member of the recount board in a recount procedure, whereas state law appears to specifically limit this to $125, the amount a clerk is paid for working at a polling place.
	Recommendation: The fee for recount board members should be reviewed for compliance with state law.

PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The Personnel and Facilities unit is one of two units in the Administration section. The unit is responsible for recruiting and hiring staff, performance monitoring and terminations of both permanent and temporary, as well as administering employee programs related to compensation and benefits, safety, accessibility, family and medical leave, evaluations, adverse actions, training, etc. In addition, the unit has responsibility for maintaining and improving the physical space at 7000 65th Street, Suite A. The unit has two positions: an Administrative Services Officer II and a Personnel Technician. The Administrative Services Officer II is the Personnel and Facilities Manager and reports directly to the Registrar of Voters.

OVERALL BACKGROUND, OBSERVATIONS:

Personnel (Permanent Employees):

There are 38 permanent positions in VRE; all were filled at the time the review was conducted. In addition to these employees, the department must hire between 75-100 temporary employees during major election cycles.

The election process has, over the last several years, become increasingly reliant on technology. Almost every routine office function, including processes for accounting, personnel, facilities management, registering voters, and verifying signatures on petitions, now relies on software systems. Position classifications and job descriptions have not, in many cases, been updated to reflect this new emphasis. More critically, the infrastructure of the voting process itself is now much more dependent on technology. Whereas ballot layout and design was previously a function performed by the contract printer, elections staff are now responsible for conducting these processes. Technology is the principal reason that VRE has been able to implement many of the labor intensive changes brought about by changing legal requirements.

The voting equipment used by voters in the polling place is another example of a development in technology, and that equipment now requires sophisticated programming and training for successful use. In many counties, because of the technical complexity, the vendor has assumed responsibility for programming elections and tabulating ballots. VRE, to its credit, has not permitted the vendor to assume these critical and sensitive responsibilities.

Enhanced technology can provide many benefits, including greater productivity and flexibility through decentralization of technical tasks to the user level. However, increased reliance on technology can create greater vulnerability, and magnify the

consequences of mistakes, potentially exposing the county, and VRE, to unwanted public attention and legal action through failure to properly administer an election. Having the ability and tools to recruit, hire, and retain an appropriate number of qualified personnel is increasingly important to ensure accurate elections.

In addition, technology has completely changed the landscape for the public's expectation for "customer service." In particular, the Internet has become a primary source for public agencies to provide information to the public, as well as for the public to conduct business with those agencies (e.g. obtaining a form to register to vote). VRE, to be effective in the Internet Age, must have qualified personnel and systems that enable flexible use of this new tool.

VRE has recently upgraded or reclassified several positions, particularly in the Voting Systems and Technology division. Whereas approximately three and a half years ago the Voting Systems and Technology consisted of 1 Election Manager, 1 Senior IT Technician, and 3 IT Technicians, the division is now comprised of 1 Election Manager, 2 IT Analysts, and 3 Senior IT Technicians. In addition, VRE converted 1 Senior Cadastral Drafting Technician position to a GIS Analyst.

Management staff indicated a problem with training and retention of staff in the Voting Systems and Technology area. Elections work on strict deadlines that often require a significant amount of overtime. Many information technology workers could potentially work in other county departments for equal salaries without the need to work the additional hours and under the stress of legal deadlines. This situation, requiring staff to work the long hours and days necessary in the election department can be an adverse situation for workers with families.

Several interviewees, both within and outside VRE, indicated a belief that, although personnel in VRE are functioning at a high level, there are structural deficiencies and inequities in the current position classifications that should be addressed to promote the ability of VRE to recruit and retain qualified employees, provide expected levels of customer service, and enable employees to continuously improve that service.

The current department organization creates a stand-a-lone Outreach section that seems to work independently from the other divisions, even though the section is directly involved in meeting the requirements of federal and state laws and guidelines. This section reports directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. This organization does not provide sufficient supervision, guidance or support. Therefore, the outreach efforts of VRE are not as effective as they should be.

2-4	Concern: • Salary compaction: The potential for some staff (specifically IT and GIS) at their highest pay step to be compensated at a level higher than one or more of the Manager positions in the office; • Limited promotional opportunities: VRE only has 38 full time positions (all positions filled as of December 23, 2007), with limited opportunity for advancement within the existing position classifications. Advancement and career opportunities are of particular importance in recruiting and retaining key staff, as well as back up staff for key positions. Without these or similar opportunities, the risk of program failure increases. In general, VRE employees are in one of the job classifications referred to by staff as the "Election Series" including: Election Clerk (part time); Election Assistants (entry level, full time); Senior Election Assistants; Election Supervisors, and; Election Managers. Exceptions to this series include: Information Technology positions (these are countywide); ASO II; Accounting Technician (AT) positions; (PT); Executive Secretary (ES); GIS Analyst; Registrar of Voters; and Assistant Registrar of Voters. The election series helps to recruit from within in order to recognize the unique need for, and benefit of, election experience. However, when internal staff does not possess the education or management skills necessary to the task, and there is no one to promote, it can inhibit recruitment and hiring; • Potential loss of experienced personnel: County Executive Office staff indicated a countywide concern that salaries and benefits in other counties place Sacramento County at a competitive disadvantage in terms of recruitment and retention. They also indicated a concern that the "baby boomers," many of whom are in management positions with many years of experience and expertise may leave in the coming years. As election administration has become more technically oriented and scrutinized by the media and the public, the increasing level of stress related to the level of responsibility, long hours, legal issues, and potential for public exposure can discourage some experienced staff from continuing in their positions; • Outdated position classifications and job descriptions: In many cases, the current classifications and descriptions do not reflect the current requirements and responsibilities of the position, and there is an apparently inordinate amount of time required to update these classifications and descriptions. For example, the Senior Cadastral Drafting Technician classification, a job description for a mapping position that included using pen and ink on linen paper, was recently updated and upgraded to a GIS Analyst position, after several years of effort. Also, interviewees in the Voter Services section indicated that classifications might not be entirely appropriate for the work being (Continued)

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done and the salaries paid may not be sufficient to attract and maintain an effective workforce in this section. Clerical staff voiced a concern in private interviews that they had no lead worker from whom to seek direction in the absence of the supervisor; and,

- Need for position upgrades: Several interviewees indicated that some positions within the VRE should be upgraded to reflect the level of responsibility in that position. Specifically:
- Several interviewees indicated that, given both the importance and responsibilities of the position, the Election Manager position responsible for the Voting Systems and Technology program should be converted to an IT Manager within the IT series;
- The Fiscal Manager position for the VRE is currently classified as an Administrative Services Officer II. The current occupant of this position appears to perform at a very high level, and intends to retire in the spring. Given that the position is responsible for, in addition to the department's budget, administration of HAVA funds, SB 90 claims, fees for local jurisdictions, etc., this position could be extremely difficult to fill at the current classification.
- The position responsible for Personnel and Facilities appears in practice to be a generalist position with responsibilities beyond the title of the position, including: disaster recovery, assisting in precinct officer training, managing contracts for building construction or improvement projects, acting as safety officer for the department, and accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act. It was suggested that, given the breadth of these responsibilities, the position should be upgraded; and,
- The Election Manager position in Campaign Services is also responsible for front office supervision and media relations for the VRE, and the Election Manager of Precinct Operations, in addition to duties related to polling places and poll workers, is responsible for precinct mapping and warehouse operations.

Recommendation:

The Board of Supervisors should consider a comprehensive review of the positions, job qualifications, and job descriptions within the VRE to determine if the classifications, salary levels, benefits, and, opportunities for advancement are sufficient to recruit and retain staff, including providing redundancy or qualified back up for critical positions. This review should address the issue of technological changes in the election process, and whether current job classifications are adequate to ensure the accuracy of the election process, as well as enable independence from vendors, and permit the VRE to take advantage to the Internet and other tools to provide information and services to the county. It should be noted that, should these

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	(Continued) positions be upgraded, there may be equity issues in terms of the pay structure for the current program managers in the "Election Manager" positions, as-well-as possibly the Assistant Registrar of Voters. Interviews indicate that although current staff appears highly qualified and there are no current vacancies, VRE could be vulnerable if experienced staff were to leave.
2-5	Concern: Although the GIS Analyst position is a technology position, the position reports to the Precinct Operations Elections Manager rather than the Voting Systems and Technology Election Manager. While this is appropriate in terms of the program responsibilities for the GIS Analyst, it might not be the best method of retaining technically skilled employees.
	Recommendation: It may be appropriate to consider the consolidation of all technology positions under one Election Manager in Voting Systems and Technology, thereby integrating that position into the technical staff. This could benefit the VRE by enhancing the professional interactions and exchanges on the Voting Systems and Technology team.
2-6	Concern: The Outreach section is the only section in the office providing election services that is not currently part of one of the four program function areas (divisions) in the office. The Outreach section reports directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. This structure does not provide sufficient supervision for the section and makes it difficult to integrate the outreach efforts into the overall work of the department.
	Recommendation: The organizational structure of the department should be changed to place the Outreach section under the Voter Services division reporting to the Election Manager of Voter Services instead of the Assistant Registrar of Voters. In addition the workspace for the outreach staff should be moved from the current location to the Voter Services section.

Personnel (Temporary Employees):

In part due to the periodic nature of elections, and the corresponding "peaks and valleys" of workload for various tasks, VRE relies heavily on temporary employees to accomplish its mission. At times, VRE must hire 75 – 100 such temporary employees.

VRE is able to hire two types of temporary workers, referred to by VRE staff as "county temps" and "agency temps." County temps are eligible to work no more than

1,560 hours per year, and are hired through the County Human Resources Department. This process can take several weeks, but may result in the hiring of an employee with specific experience, including prior experience in VRE.

Agency temps, on the other hand, are only eligible to work 1,040 hours per year, but can be hired much more quickly; in some cases the next day. Agency employees may have certain contract restrictions (e.g. a 20 pound limit on how much weight they can be required to lift) that render them unsuitable for some tasks (e.g. warehouse).

2-7	Concern: Although information can be extracted from budgetary and personnel records, it does not appear that VRE routinely analyzes and utilizes information on the number and type of temporary workers they employ, nor the number of hours they spend on specific tasks. This information would be important for determining whether some or all of this work could or should be accomplished by regular county employees.
	Recommendation: Include temporary help (as well as regular employee overtime) hours and tasks in regular and monthly budget tracking and monitoring reports made available to managers and policy makers. This information should be included in the annual budget development process.
2-8	Concern**:** The temporary agency apparently has some specific limitations for its employees (e.g. how much weight employees can lift), making it difficult to hire for warehouse work or other specific tasks.
	Recommendation: Some agencies will work with employers to develop classifications that meet client needs. The temporary agency in San Bernardino developed a specific category and was able to provide warehouse workers, even though the cost was higher to reflect the added liability. San Bernardino County uses three agencies to meet their needs so that they do not rely too heavily on one agency. This method prevents getting referrals “from the bottom of the list”.

Training Opportunities:

An important element in employee retention is the ability to provide training and networking opportunities to employees that enhance their job performance and career opportunities. Sacramento County appears to be a leader in this area. In addition, VRE provides extensive opportunities for staff training and networking. This training includes mandated training for ethics, defensive driving, sexual harassment, and standard training for new supervisors. Other training opportunities are described in more detail below.

1. SACRAMENTO COUNTY CUSTOMER SERVICE ACADEMY**:** All department employees are enrolled in this series of nine classes on customer service through a "Customer Service Academy" training program for employees. No pay differential or other incentive is offered for completion. The Department Training Coordinator coordinates class registration. Classes in the academy are:

- Managing Conflict and Difficult Clients;
- Customer Service for Supervisors;
- Communication Skills;
- Maximizing the Telephone as a Customer Service Tool;
- Client Relation and Customer Service;
- Managing Yourself;
- Diversity;
- Time Management; and,
- Stress Management.

At this time 15 VRE employees are enrolled in the Customer Service Academy. Currently over half the department staff has completed at least six courses and are eligible to receive a certificate from the County Department of Training and Development.

2. CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR CREDENTIAL (CALPEAC): CACEO sponsors a professional credential program for election administrators. All employees of the Sacramento County Department of VRE are encouraged to take part in this training and receive a CalPEAC credential. The VRE pays the tuition and travel expenses for employees to attend this training. The classes in the CalPEAC program include:

- The Role of the Election Administrator in California:
- Ballot Access, Design, & Preparation;
- Voting Equipment Acquisition, Operation, & Maintenance;
- Poll workers: Recruiting, Maintaining, Training, & Managing;
- Integrity of Elections: Recounts & Qualifying Provisional Ballots, Canvassing & Certification;
- Precinct Requirements and Redistricting Issues;
- Federal and Constitutional Law;
- Voter Registration and Alternative Voting;
- Voters with Special Needs;
- Budget and Finance, Election Administration Accounting; and,
- Election Security (People, Places and Things).

At this time, 25 employees have completed at least one class in this training program and 19 employees have completed all courses and received certifications.

3. CERTIFIED ELECTION AND REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATOR (CERA): The Election Center, in partnership with Auburn University in Alabama, sponsors the CERA program, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting, preserving, and improving democracy.[1] Its members are largely government employees whose profession is to serve in VRE administration. The Election Center's CERA program was the first national program to certify election officials. All VRE employees are encouraged to complete the courses to receive the CERA certification. VRE pays the tuition and travel expenses for employees to attend this training. The twelve class CERA program includes the following classes:

- Introduction to Election and Voter Registration Systems Administration;
- Management Concepts in Election and Voter Registration Administration;
- Planning and Budgeting for Elections and Voter Registration;
- Election and Voter Registration Information Management and Technology;
- Ethics in Election and Voter Registration Administration;
- Communications in Election and Voter Registration Administration ;
- Facilitating Voter Participation;
- Implementation of New Programs in VRE Administration;
- Leadership in Election and Voter Registration Administration;
- The Law of Elections and Voter Registration;
- The History of Elections and Voter Registration I - Antiquity to Modern Era; and,
- The History of Elections and Voter Registration II - The Modern Era.

At this time seven current employees are enrolled in the CERA program and five have completed the courses and received the CERA certification.

4. ELECTION CENTER CONFERENCES**:** The Election Center conducts one national conference and at least two election related workshops each year. Each conference and workshop includes sessions dealing with current topics in election administration. At present seven staff members have attended at least one Election Center national conference or workshop, and some staff, based on their expertise and experience, has been invited to participate as presenters at these conferences.

5. CACEO SUMMER TRAINING INSTITUTE**:** The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) conducts a training institute at Stanford University in the summer of each odd-numbered year. This multi-day training program selects one subject in election administration and studies it in depth. As an example, the 2007 Institute covered the candidate filing process. Ten VRE employees attended, including all staff in the Candidate Services division as well as staff from the Voting Systems and Technology division and the Assistant Registrar of Voters.

[1] For disclosure purposes, The Election Center is conducting this performance review.

6. TRAINING ON REQUEST: Staff members may request outside training needed for their jobs that are offered by companies such as Skill Path. Unit supervisors take the staff request for training to the Election Manager for approval. If the training class is approved by the Election Manager, it is sent to the Assistant Registrar for budget approval and then to the training officer for enrollment.

The County Office of Communication and Information Technology (OCIT) offers 35 computer training classes that department staff is encouraged to attend. These classes include basic through advanced Windows training (e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook, etc.) as well as specialized training.

Classes are available through the County Safety Department. The Registrar of Voters recently coordinated a CPR class that all staff (including temporary staff) was invited to attend.

Staff is encouraged to attend vendor sponsored training classes, as they are available. A recent example of this type of training was the three-day off-site training on use of the Pitney-Bowes mailing machine attended by staff from Voter Services and Voting Systems and Technology divisions.

Networking Opportunities:

Election processes and procedures are administered at the local level by 58 county election offices. Historically, each office developed its own procedures. The advent of technology, such as the statewide voter registration database and Election Information Management Systems, has enhanced the uniformity of procedures among the counties. However, as in any organization, staff benefit, both in terms of personal and professional growth, from peer-to-peer interactions and association with other professionals engaged in the same or similar tasks and activities as they are. Opportunities for networking with other election professionals exist on the federal, state, and regional levels and include:

1. THE ELECTION CENTER**:** Sacramento County Department of Voter Registration and Elections is an active member of this national organization. The Election Center has numerous committees working on issues dealing with election administration. Sacramento County, Registrar of Voters, Jill LaVine, is the Co-chair of the Election Center National Postal Committee working on mailing issues affecting elections. In addition Ms. LaVine is a member of the Election Center's Legislation Committee and is a board member on the Professional Education Program Board. VRE staff directly benefit from professional relationships formed with officials in other jurisdictions across the country, surveys conducted by the Election Center on election administration issues, sharing information on voting systems and voting system vendors, and exposure to "professional practices" from around the country.

2. CACEO**:** CACEO conducts one annual conference each summer and a New law Workshop each December. CACEO has an active Elections Legislation Committee that meets approximately ten times per year to discuss and take positions on election related legislation. CACEO also operates a list serve connecting staff in all 58 counties. This list serve is of critical importance in sharing information, asking questions and receiving answers, obtaining assistance, and promotes uniformity of implementation of law, regulation, and procedure among the various election offices. Department staff attends conference and workshops as well as the participating in various committees and subcommittees in the Association. Currently 30 department staff are active members of CACEO. Staff from Sacramento County is active in CACEO as follows:

- Jill LaVine, Registrar of Voters serves as Co-chair of the Elections Legislation Committee;
- Alice Jarboe, Assistant Registrar of Voters serves as chair of the SB 90 Subcommittee;
- Diane Jones, Election Manager of Voter Services served as chair of the Military and Overseas Voter Task Force;
- Roberta Kanelos, Election Manager of Voting Systems and Technology, participates in development of the VoteCal system, a statewide voter registration database;
- Brad Buyse, Election Manager of CS is editor of the annual CACEO Directory; and,
- Debbie Woods, Election Supervisor of Outreach participates in the Mother Lode and Bay Area Region Voter Outreach Committees.

CACEO divides its membership into five regions, called “Area Associations”, the purpose of which is to provide regional forums for discussion and education. The Sacramento VRE is included in the “Mother Lode Area Association”, with thirteen other counties (Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mono, Nevada, Place, Sierra, Sutter, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba). This area association is, currently, under-utilized as a mechanism for professional staff training and education.

3. ELECTION SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE (ES&S) USERS GROUPS: ES&S is the vendor that supplies the voting equipment and ballot counting software for Sacramento County. Jill LaVine, Registrar of Voters, is an active member of the ES&S National Users Group. She attends national meetings with company representatives and other ES&S users to discuss issues involving the voting equipment. Roberta Kanelos, Election Manager for Voting Systems and Technology helped organize and is an active participant in the ES&S California Users Group.

4. DFM ASSOCIATES USERS GROUP**:** DFM, Inc. is the software vendor that provides the Election Information Management System (EIMS) for Sacramento County. DFM holds an annual User Group meeting and Sacramento County Voting

Systems and Technology staff always participates. DFM also operates a Customer Support line to assist in education and problem solving.

5. PITNEY-BOWES USERS GROUP**:** This is a new organization made up of staff from several counties who use the Pitney-Bowes mail and sorting machine. Roberta Kanelos and Diane Jones, both Election Managers participate in this users group.

6. OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (OCIT)**:** OCIT is the county department responsible for information technology. Roberta Kanelos, Election Manager of the Voting Systems and Technology division, represents the department on a number of OCIT groups.

2-9	Concern: Although there appear to be numerous and substantial training opportunities for staff, it is not clear that these are coordinated into office needs (such as improved proofing ability) or career advancement plans for each employee and program.
	Recommendation: VRE should consider developing a career development and training program for each employee, and including funding for this program as a line item in the budget.
2-10	Concern: The availability of the Mother Lode Area Association as a training and educational opportunity is currently under-utilized, usually only activated for discussions of voter outreach.
	Recommendation: Activate the Mother Lode Area Association with regular (quarterly) meeting to discuss election topics and determine professional practices in other counties on a variety of topics, including: use of GIS technology for election purposes; ballot and sample ballot proofing procedures; warehouse operations; disability access; materials for inclusion in candidate handbooks, etc.

Facilities:

VRE operates a state-of-the-art facility at 7000 65th Street. This facility is well designed as an election office, and includes space for training, election observation, the various program functions, and a large warehouse. Although the county originally leased the space, the building was purchased one and a half years ago, adding to the flexibility to make improvements that enhance the administration of elections. Improvements are financed out of a Capital Improvements Fund. VRE was able to design the facility themselves to meet their needs and moved in four years ago.

Although the office is not centrally located and equally accessible to persons from all parts of the county, it is only 50 minutes to the furthest points. Workspace layout is very well designed and meeting space is exceptional, though, as in all election offices, it can be a limiting factor during peak times for voter registration, petitions, and other processes. The main portion of the office features a classroom orientation of desks and terminals towards a front drop-down screen that is useful for providing instruction to all employees at the same time. The facility has a large public lobby with space for public terminals, candidate filing, and vote by mail or in person voting. The facility also features a generous amount of parking, convenient space for election night activities, and is on a bus line and near Highway 99.

VRE has a small, separate office space near the front counter (with card keys to prevent access to any other than the public areas) that is available for private conversations with candidates or the public. It is also used to train groups who wish to conduct voter registration drives. This is an excellent idea and good use of space.

The warehouse is particularly impressive, with separate staging and storage areas, including secure areas (with video surveillance) for retention of specified election materials. The electrical system for the warehouse was recently upgraded to facilitate more efficient charging and preventative maintenance of voting equipment. Improvements were also made to the loading/unloading dock. VRE used the excellent warehouse design developed by Riverside County as a model for the recently installed electrical system.

Security:

Building security is controlled through an access system that requires a badge for access from the public area. Video surveillance cameras are installed and operate in areas where ballots and other sensitive election materials are stored. VRE understands that once installed, security systems must always be re-examined and updated to prevent intrusion. Accordingly, VRE plans to conduct a comprehensive security review of the facility. VRE shares the building with the County Sheriff, adding additional, and immediate, security to the premises.

Risk Management:

During the course of the review, an accident occurred at the loading dock that was under construction. Following the event, the Registrar of Voters informed the Countywide Services Agency head and called a staff meeting the following day to share details and avoid unnecessary concern. The reviewers later learned that County Risk Management called to say that VRE handled the situation appropriately.

Maintenance:

The ASO II is responsible for managing contracts for construction projects, as well as all aspects of facility maintenance, including painting, replacement of ballasts in

fluorescent lights, fixing cracks in the floor, etc., both in the building itself and in the warehouse.

2-11	Concern: The IT server room currently has only one cooling unit and no alarm system. The cooling unit is temperature sensitive and has failed in hot weather. The VRE plans to install a new cooling system, and retain the current cooler as a backup, if needed.
	Recommendation: The installation of appropriate cooling equipment for the election servers as well as an alarm system should be a priority, and the county should ensure that this installation takes place between the February and June elections in order to be operational for the June election.
2-12	Concern: Although the current structure appears to be working well, the Warehouse Operations Supervisor currently does not have responsibility for warehouse maintenance and construction projects.
	Recommendation: It may be appropriate to examine the potential benefits from upgrading the Warehouse Operations position to include management of warehouse construction and maintenance projects.
2-13	Concern: A few interviewees indicated that, notwithstanding the state-of-the-art nature of the VRE facility, its relatively remote (or, non-central) location could pose problems in terms of easy public access to election information and services.
	Recommendation: Investigate the feasibility, efficiency and effectiveness of providing a limited range of information and services at remote sites, potentially through the existing network of Neighborhood Service Centers. Santa Barbara County currently operates two remote offices.

CHAPTER 3

CAMPAIGN SERVICES DIVISION

OVERALL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Campaign Services section is one of four program functions in the Voter Registration and Elections Department (VRE) and reports to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. The division consists of four permanent positions: (1) Election Manager, (1) Senior Election Assistant, and (2) Election Assistants. During busy nomination periods, two temporary staff members supplement the permanent staff.

Campaign Services is the first point of contact for those phoning or coming into the election office. They provide appropriate access to the office's on-line and other election services, including for those interested in conducting voter registration drives. Campaign Services ensures that jurisdictions preparing to conduct an election are provided the proper information and services. They file candidate papers, process local measures, and prepare certificates of election. Campaign Services also monitors campaign disclosure filings and coordinates with the Fair Political Practices Commission. The manager of Campaign Services is responsible for media contact and election observers. The division has limited involvement in the production or ordering of ballots or sample ballot pamphlets.

Sacramento County consists of seven cities, 22 school districts, and 39 special districts. Questionnaires were sent to all of these jurisdictions. See Appendix F for a summary of responses. Elective offices and measures in all of these jurisdictions, in addition to state and federal offices, can appear on the ballot and require varying degrees of assistance. In the November 2004 General Election, staff issued nomination papers to 367 candidates. In addition, Campaign Services is involved in the conduct of landowner elections. Mello-Roos and County Retirement Board and County Union elections are the responsibility of the Voting Systems and Technology division.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

The evaluation of Campaign Services included, but was not limited to: a review of procedures; interviews with staff; and interviews with, or questionnaires to, cities and districts preparing to conduct elections, along with central committee representatives, individual random candidates, and media sources. Information from that process is included as appropriate in specific functions that follow. Items more general in nature are mentioned in this section. This includes an observation of written procedures and forms control. The Campaign Services division is to be commended for documenting

procedures and job descriptions – this assisted in the evaluation process. Procedures were readily available in hardcopy or on-line. However, there appears to be a division and department-wide need to add to and improve documentation and the associated control of related forms. This is addressed in more detail in the Chapter 1 General Topics – procedures.

Campaign Services appears to have sufficient, properly trained staff. They have the tools, space and departmental support needed to properly perform their responsibilities. The election information management system (EIMS) is a product of DFM Associates and is supported by Voting Systems and Technology staff. Campaign Services staff is kept informed by the Election Manager and is involved in decision-making. Staff is comfortable with use of computer systems. Information, history, election calendars and procedures are all readily accessible and updated. Morale in the Campaign Services division is high.

Since Campaign Services plays such a critical role in providing customer service, it was notable that the comments and evaluations from stakeholders having contact with this division were consistently very high and complimentary. Staff was often mentioned by name, which showed a familiarity and comfort level with Campaign Services staff. Most people interviewed mentioned the great service provided by Brad Buyse. It was also evident from interviews with staff, that quality customer service is a primary goal. A county best practice is the establishment of customer service training. The VRE has been an active participant in this training.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

The Political Reform Act of 1974 requires all candidates for state and local elective office, all elected officeholders, and all committees supporting or opposing candidates and measures to file campaign statements disclosing contributions and expenditures. The VRE provides Fair Political Practices Committee manuals and forms for this process along with basic information. The disclosure requirements can be very complex and the election department is not responsible for explaining those requirements. They are required to provide forms, receive completed forms, conduct basic reviews of submitted documents for completeness, contact treasurers to obtain missing information based on such reviews, maintain records of filings, and provide for public access to these statements. When candidates begin the nomination process, they are provided necessary forms and instructions related to financial disclosure and telephone numbers to call at the Fair Political Practices Commission, Federal Election Commission and the Secretary of State for assistance. However, they are given no additional assistance/training at the election office.

A checklist/log is maintained by staff that indicates who is supposed to file documents and when they must be filed. When statements are submitted (they must be in duplicate), they are stamped with date and time and reviewed for content. Filers are contacted when required information is missing. The log is marked in green to show receipt. After scanning, the cover page is indexed on the computer by keying in specific data. Upon completion, scanned documents for county offices are kept in a hardcopy file in the Campaign Disclosure scanning room. Others are boxed by time period, with no indexing or way to identify what is in each box, and then stored in the warehouse. The warehouse is responsible for record retention.

The scanned document file is then made available on the public terminals in the lobby. These terminals are available to anyone who wants to see the documents. Note: the terminals display all information on scanned documents. Anyone using the terminal may hit a print key and the print copy will print inside the Campaign Disclosure room where a form will be prepared charging the legal limit of ten cents per page. Payment is by cash or check.

As a courtesy, Campaign Services sends reminder letters before first deadlines to candidates and committees and also reminder letters when committees fail to file. However, they do not appear to be following through or assessing fines on committees that continue not to file.

It should be noted that the VRE has been scanning disclosure documents since the 1980's, much earlier than most counties. This avoids the public having to wait for staff to sort through hard copy documents and make copies each time. At the close

of filing, when the media is in a rush to obtain information, staff makes an extra effort to provide assistance while at the same time acting expeditiously to make the scanned documents available as quickly as possible. In a questionnaire sent to media contacts, it was mentioned that they would like to have this information available on-line.

The VRE is in the process of installing a new on-line campaign financial disclosure system using a product purchased by the county Office of Computer Information Technology (OCIT). This is a front-end scanning system with a central repository. This is a joint development effort between OCIT and the VRE for this specific application. Other products specifically designed for Campaign Disclosure were determined to be too expensive. Because the product was purchased by OCIT and is to be used countywide, it is expected to lower costs. The new system (to be available June 2008) will allow the public to see disclosure documents on-line at no cost, but will not provide the media, candidates, or the public with the significant search ability that characterizes the most successful and useful systems. Management made a policy decision that on-line documents will not contain addresses of contributors or treasurers. On-line documents date back to 2003. Anyone wanting to view documents before that time will still need to come to the election office.

The new system will reduce data entry during indexing by populating fields through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. The system will also automatically block out address information. However, it will be necessary for staff to review every page scanned, instead of just cover sheets, to ensure that addresses are blocked. The Chief of the Political Reform Division of the Secretary of State office is in favor of the steps taken by the VRE and hopes that they will extend the service to on-line filing. If all counties moved in this direction, the State could follow suit.

3-1	Concern: The new on-line system is a good beginning but it addresses only part of the process. It does nothing to improve customer service for the candidate and provides limited search capability.
	Recommendation: Expand development of the on-line campaign disclosure system to include additional sorts for types of contributors. In addition, provide on-line *filing* of documents. This will save time and labor in the election office, provide faster lookup to the public, and provide better customer service to filers.

3-2	Concern: Counties are responsible for determining if required documents have been filed and for assessing fines as necessary. The system for tracking this appears to be manual. The assessing of fines is not taking place and allows candidates or committees to circumvent the system without penalty.
	Recommendation: Create a better and more automated system for tracking financial disclosure filings. The system should notify when filings are late, generate reminder letters, and track status. Based on this, and when necessary, the VRE needs to fine and report on non-compliance.

PHONE AND COUNTER SUPPORT

Oversee Distribution Of Voter Registration Cards:

Campaign Services greets visitors at the counter and issues blank voter registration affidavits. This can be as simple as providing one or two affidavits to an individual, or large numbers to those wishing to conduct registration drives. They are using the appropriate forms for issuing affidavits, and are tracking affidavit numbers for large distributions (over 50). Those wanting to conduct drives are required to watch a training video. If the customer wants to pick up items other than affidavits (i.e. signs, posters, etc.) Campaign Services contacts the Outreach section.

Front Counter and Telephone Public Contact:

Campaign Services is considered "reception" in the election office. They respond to customers coming to the front counter and to those calling the general department telephone number.

Front counter functions include but are not limited to taking orders for services or public documents, providing requested items, and receiving corresponding payments (i.e. walking lists, public documents, etc.); welcoming and providing badges to visitors; receiving, distributing and sending out mail; providing blank voter registration affidavits; providing support to members of the public wishing to use public access terminals in the lobby area; and, assisting Voter Services during the vote by mail voting period.

Proper security is being maintained through badges, escorts, and electronic door controls. Forms and procedures are in place for all functions. In surveys conducted, it did not appear that anyone had any problems with obtaining billable services.

There are three terminals in the front lobby – one for campaign disclosure filings, and two for voter registration. Registration terminals display name, party, voting history and districts – they do not display addresses or other confidential information. Access is granted to the general public upon completion of a form. Printed copies are available by pressing the print key and the may be picked up in another room. Appropriate fees and forms are used to bill the customer. Payment options include cash or check. If an individual wants to use terminals inside the office in order to see information on voter registration files not available to the general public, they are required to complete the necessary documentation and provide proof of identity.

During the final week/days leading up to major elections, Campaign Services staff supplements Voter Services staff in providing ballots to voters at the front counter. This seems to be a good sharing of knowledge, space and systems.

The VRE has an automated telephone system (IVR) that is described in more detail in the chapters on Voting Systems and Technology and Voter Services. Essentially, the IVR provides options for specific topics. For general questions and when the caller presses "0", the operators who answer are Campaign Services staff. During most of the year, both public telephone lines go first through the IVR and then to an operator. Beginning seven days prior to a major election, however, the telephone system changes. The IVR is no longer the first to answer on the general public telephone lines (as posted on the cover of the sample ballot pamphlet). Instead these calls go to a telephone bank supervised by Voter Services. Voters are connected to the IVR through another number posted on the inside of the sample ballot pamphlet. During this period the only calls directed to Campaign Services are those from IVR users who press "0" for an operator. No records are kept by staff of the types and numbers of calls being handled. The IVR system can track the number of times an option is selected, including "0" but it does not track the reason for the calls to an operator.

3-3	Concern: The separation of Outreach (located in the back of the office) makes it necessary for Campaign Services to oversee the issuing of affidavits for registration drives. This may not be the most effective method of increasing voter registration.
	Recommendation: Discuss options to more appropriately involve the Outreach section of the office in overseeing registration drives, issuing, materials, training, tracking, etc.
3-4	Concern: Without records of types and volumes of calls, it is difficult to determine if the automated system is functioning at optimum efficiency.
	Recommendation: Discuss feasibility of developing a tracking system for phone systems that would provide needed information.

3-5	Concern: Customers may not appropriately plan for the actual cost of services. If they do not have sufficient cash or a check, they must make a second visit.
	Recommendation: Investigate the use of credit and/or debit cards for those purchasing services. This is a nice customer service but may require countywide policy decisions. It is understood that this was looked at several years ago but times change and it might be more feasible now.
3-6	Concern: The staff is helpful to those wanting to use public terminals. However, the instruction is verbal and can easily be forgotten or misunderstood.
	Recommendation: Print and laminate basic terminal use procedures – including options available, how to get print copies, etc. These procedures should be printed in English and Spanish.

ELECTION ASSISTANCE

Assist the Public with Local Petitions:

Voters who want to qualify a measure for the local ballot must work with the election office. This most frequently involves recall elections. But can also include local referendum and initiative petitions. Campaign Services provides instruction manuals and works closely with the proponent to assist in ensuring that all legal requirements are met. They have a ready supply of manuals that are the result of guidelines developed by election officials throughout the state and further refined by the VRE. Information is also available on the website. In the case of recalls, Campaign Services contacts those being recalled in order to provide sufficient time and opportunity to respond. Once petition formats have been approved, the returned petitions are processed by the Voter Services division.

Coordinate and Assist Jurisdictions/ Entities Going to Election:

By law, the VRE must conduct elections for federal, state, and county offices and measures. Cities may conduct their own elections but in Sacramento County, all seven cities have chosen to have their elections conducted by the VRE.

In addition to these elections, the VRE also conducts Mello-Roos, landowner, and County Retirement Board elections. Campaign Services is involved in all but the Mello Roos and Retirement Board elections that are handled by Voting Systems and Technology. When any of these entities have questions, the contact point is Campaign Services. Much of the work done involves answering questions and conducting research to ensure compliance with a myriad of legal references i.e. Elections Code, Government Code, Water Codes, Education Codes, etc. Campaign Services is responsible for providing information, schedules, and deadlines - they are not responsible for providing *legal advice*. Note: Many election offices do not conduct Mello-Roos or other elections not covered by the Elections Code. The fact that the election office provides this service is good service to the county but it should be acknowledged that it is an added burden to the department. It appears that at present, the election office is able to provide this service but it may not always be possible given the changes taking place in election law and increased workloads.

Survey results from city clerks and districts revealed a high level of satisfaction with the election office, and specifically with Campaign Services.

Prior to elections that include city offices, Campaign Services conducts briefings for city clerks. At this time they review changes in law, new technology or procedures, election schedules, and deadlines. This is a useful process. Note: Cities are responsible for the nomination process of city candidates but this must be coordinated with the VRE.

Oversee Candidate Nomination Process:

Campaign Services creates and publishes the notice of election advising the public of: upcoming elections; what offices and measures will be on the ballot; deadlines for filing nomination papers and ballot arguments; vote by mail processing dates for observation; and information on the central count. This is done by extracting information from EIMS and formatting for publication.

Prior to an election, Campaign Services enters information into a tracking system that indicates jurisdictions that are scheduled for election, when notices were sent, received, etc. This ensures that jurisdictions do not miss critical deadlines for their elections. Using this system, they send out notices and, when necessary, reminder calls are made. Folders are created to organize and track documents related to each jurisdiction.

A "black book" is manually created for the front counter and is manually updated during the filing process so the public and media can at a glance look to see who has picked up papers, returned papers, filed signatures in lieu, etc. This book is updated as time permits during the day and each evening. Information is also tracked on line through the EIMS system.

EIMS is used to set up election contests. This system then determines what forms will be required for each office and as candidates are entered into the system, forms are printed with pertinent information included. Forms are reviewed and updated as necessary. Campaign Services then prepares Candidate Handbooks that contain all the information and requirements necessary for a voter to run for office. This is also made available on the website. Creating the handbook involves up to 15 proofs. This is a very complete and user-friendly document. In interviews with past candidates they all stated that the information was useful and they had no suggestions for improvement.

When the candidate-filing period begins, each prospective candidate who takes out nomination papers is entered into the system, which then generates appropriate forms with the candidate's information pre-printed as necessary. The system tracks all stages of the filing process. This same information is added to the "black book" manually as time permits. If the media needs information before the book is updated, staff makes every attempt to accommodate as long as it does not impact the process.

Specified candidates file at the VRE office and city candidates file with the city. Candidates for specified races may file at the election office or the Secretary of State. The VRE office location is approximately one hour from the furthest parts of the county. Although some past candidates did mention that they preferred the former office location (usually because it was closer to their homes/office), it did not appear

to be a major problem. However, two members of the Board of Supervisors indicated an interest in remote site operations.

The VRE lobby is large and there is a sitting area. Three to four candidates can be processed at one time. The system seems to be "first come, first served" and candidates stand in line. Previously, the VRE employed a system where individuals took numbers to obtain assistance, but that system has been eliminated. There are no appointments because there is no way of determining how long it will take per candidate and they cannot lose time waiting for a late appointment. We are told that the waits are not usually long, but may be longer on the last day of filing. Previous candidates interviewed did not indicate a problem with waits. Candidates are given a receipt that lists what they were given and the candidate signs off. This is a good tool to ensure that nothing is missing. Most questions are referred to the candidate handbook.

City Clerks are responsible for overseeing fillings by their city candidates. Campaign Services shares their forms with the cities but it is the city's choice whether to use them. During the filing period, it is necessary to check the registration of the candidate and to verify nomination or "signature in lieu of filing fee" petitions. To facilitate this process, Campaign Services sends runners to the cities to pick up these forms so that work can begin immediately, rather than waiting until the last minute. This is a commendable practice and good customer service.

A major part of candidate filing is the candidate statement that appears in the sample ballot pamphlet. Rules for the candidate statement are established in the California Elections Code and are explained in the Candidate handbook. Candidates are told to bring in the written statement along with a computer disk of the statement. The disk is used on the public terminal in the event there is a problem with accepting the statement as written. This allows the candidate to make changes on site, have it printed out, proofed, and submitted without a second trip. The disk is strictly for the candidate's use – a copy is made of the paper statement – the original goes to Voting Systems and Technology where it is scanned into the system for use in the sample ballot pamphlet. The copy goes into the candidate folder and is available to show the public after filing closes. Voting Systems and Technology and Campaign Services proof the scanned copy to the original. Districts pay for including candidate statements in the ballot pamphlet and the VRE bills the districts directly for the actual cost. Candidates for county offices pay an estimated amount and candidates are notified of over or under payments.

Those candidates using signatures in lieu of paying the filing fee have their progress tracked in the EIMS system, and Campaign Services makes courtesy calls advising of shortages.

The 5:00 p.m. close of filing, as prescribed by the Elections Code, is strictly enforced, which is critical to ensure consistency of treatment. Campaign Services checks the

correct time and the Assistant Registrar locks the doors at exactly 5:00. During the performance review, staff was advised that it would be wise to either remove the clock or check it earlier in the day to ensure that it is accurate, since it can be seen from the front door after it is locked.

Campaign Services issues press releases of any extensions for filing (such as where an incumbent officer chooses not to seek reelection. At the end of the filing period, Campaign Services conducts the random alphabet drawing to determine ballot order. At that time letters are generated from the system to candidates advising of the random order that has been established, and verifying ballot designation and spelling, and various other pertinent items. Letters go to qualified candidates and also to unqualified candidates, along with reasons for disqualification.

Candidate statements are available to the public at the end of filing and candidates are advised that they can be faxed for a fee. A certified list of candidates is posted on the website, notices are sent to central committees regarding availability of reports, and each candidate is sent a sample ballot pamphlet for their own ballot type as soon as it is available.

Working with the Assistant Registrar, information is prepared for county counsel in order to prepare Board of Supervisors' Resolutions for districts not going to election or where there were insufficient or no nominees.

Campaign Services provides the candidate information necessary for preparation of the sample ballot pamphlet. Voting Systems and Technology uses information that has been tracked and entered in the EIMS system by Campaign Services to produce ballots and sample ballots. During small elections, Voting Systems and Technology does not hire proofreaders but instead utilizes Campaign Services for this task.

3-7	Concern: Although Campaign Services faxes candidate statements upon request, there can still be a delay and it is an added task for personnel at a busy time.
	Recommendation: Since candidate statements are in electronic format after scanning, consideration should be given to making them available on-line.

3-8	Concern: Some candidates may find it difficult to travel to the election office on multiple occasions.
	Recommendation: It was mentioned by members of the Board of Supervisors that the county had established regional sites that could perhaps be used for providing certain election services. It might be possible to at least set up certain days/times for issuing nomination papers, although the candidate would still have to come to the election office for filing.
3-9	Concern: Running for office can be intimidating for first time candidates and especially those without experienced campaign managers. This can have a dampening effect on the electoral process.
	Recommendation: Campaign Services could conduct candidate information classes (Running for Office 101) that explain the procedures, requirements, services available, etc. It is understood that this has been tried in the past with minimal participation. We realize that experienced candidates have little need for such classes but with the right promotion this could make a difference in encouraging participation by inexperienced candidates.
3-10	Concern: Waiting in line to file as a candidate can be an uncomfortable experience for some individuals, considering that it can take up to 20 minutes to process each candidate.
	Recommendation: The VRE lobby is large and has comfortable seating areas. It would seem a more pleasant experience to ask candidates to sign in on a log and then call them to the counter in that order.
3-11	Concern: Maintaining the “black book” for the public to be able to check filing status is a good customer service practice but is time consuming.
	Recommendation: Discuss with the election information management systems vendor the possibilities of automating this service.

ELECTION OBSERVERS / ELECTION SUPPORT

Election Observers:

The election process must be transparent and the public allowed to observe processes. Item #31 in the Secretary of State edict "Additional Conditions for Use of Election Systems and Software, Inc. Optical Scan Voting Equipment" requires observation at certain key processes. Notices of when certain processes will take place are published or posted. The reality is that few individuals actually observe except on Election Day at the polls or at the election night counting center. Election offices also "recruit" what are often referred to as Official Observers to ensure that processes are observed.

The manager of Campaign Services is responsible for recruiting and managing election observers. He has developed an Observer Plan that the Secretary of State used to model the State requirements and is mandatory for all election offices. However, it appears to the reviewers that it does not address all functions to be observed. Prior to the election the Campaign Services Manager sends invitations to the County Grand Jury, Central Committees, Spanish language advocacy groups, League of Women Voters, and Media – along with any other groups or people who have voiced an interest in Election Day activities. The invitation is supplemented by an offer to all groups to attend meetings and provide an opportunity for groups to ask questions about the process. He then prepares packets of information to be given to those who respond to the invitation. If no one responds, then there are no official observers.

It appears that these individuals are primarily involved in visiting polling places. We saw nothing in the plan that encouraged observation of other vital processes such as Logic and Accuracy testing, vote by mail ballot processing, ballot counting, canvass, etc.

Following the election, Campaign Services makes an effort to obtain feedback from official observers. This is done by encouraging them to provide written comments, attending their group meetings (if applicable), or inviting them to a meeting at the election office. This is a good practice that will benefit the VRE and the public.

The Observer Plan is a good one, as far as it goes. However, it appears that there are still very few participants. In order to ensure participation, the VRE will need to make a stronger commitment to recruiting.

Election Day and Post Election Support:

On Election Day, Campaign Services supports vote by mail voting by assisting voters who want to vote in the office or who come to the office to obtain a ballot. They also

assist on the telephone. During the evening they are responsible for receiving critical items from pickup centers, including memory cards that will be used in ballot counting operations. The procedures used for receiving these items were reviewed and enhanced during the performance review to reflect some suggestions by the review team for improvement. It was observed that staff scans the return of memory cards on laptops which is a good procedure. However, they record problems in a manual log.

Upon completion of the canvass, Campaign Services assists in the preparation of the Certificate of Election Results – a statistical report of ballots counted in every precinct. This document is then made available to political parties, members of the Board of Supervisors, and the media, and is also available on the website. Certificates of Election are prepared for each winning candidate. This is a manual project. If a voter requests information regarding a recount, Campaign Services is the first contact. If an actual request is filed, the Assistant Registrar assumes responsibility.

3-12	Concern**:** Preparing certificates of election is a time consuming process.
	Recommendation**:** Request an enhancement to the EIMS that would automatically generate certificates of election by merging information from different sources.
3-13	Concern**:** Campaign Services scans the Election Night receipt of memory cards in one system and manually records any problems. This creates a separate record that might not be the most efficient use of time.
	Recommendation**:** Investigate the feasibility of enhancing the program that scans memory cards to include the ability to record any problems in that same program.
3-14	Concern: The Observer Plan is a good one, as far as it goes. However, it appears that there are still very few participants. This can be a problem if there are allegations of wrongdoing and no official observers to dispel those allegations.
	Recommendation: Take aggressive action to identify all key observation points and to recruit and train official observers to monitor each point.

MEDIA

The manager of Campaign Services is the departmental Communications and Media Officer (CMO). This position is referred to as a Public Information Officer (PIO) throughout the county. He has written draft procedures that contain useful information but could use more detail as to how certain tasks are accomplished. The CMO writes all media releases and is the listed contact person for media inquiries. All releases go through a screening process – from CMO, to Assistant Registrar, Registrar, back to CMO for edits, then to Countywide Services Agency PIO, then back to CMO for distribution. Releases are distributed to media outlets, members of the Board of Supervisors, County Executive, Countywide Services Director, and also to all staff in the election department. Releases for the past two years were reviewed and they appear to be appropriate and well written. An effort has been made to develop stories that would be of interest.

The CMO is the primary media contact and only forwards calls to the Registrar or Assistant Registrar if it is an especially sensitive area. Office policy directs staff to forward all media calls to the CMO. The CMO also conducts the bulk of on camera and radio interviews, with the exception of Spanish language, which are coordinated through the CMO and done by a Spanish-speaking staff member in Outreach. Kerri Aiello, Countywide Services Agency Public Information Officer assists with the media on election night for general elections. We were able to observe an on-camera interview by the CMO and a live radio broadcast by the staff member from Outreach in Spanish. Both were well done.

The CMO prepares a Media Handbook prior to each election that contains information needed by the media to accurately report on the election. The packet is available in the office – provided to media when they are on-site – either before the election or on election night. Portions are also available on the website. If the CMO goes off-site for an interview the handbook is taken along for distribution.

Surveys were sent by e-mail to 12 media contacts, along with a second reminder. Completed surveys were received from four. The ratings were excellent or very good in all categories with only one exception/concern. This appears to be related to the fact that campaign disclosure documents were not available on-line – something that is being addressed as this report is written.

The CMO indicates that he receives very few calls from smaller publications but that he makes a special effort to contact them if a special election is being held in the area covered by the publication.

In an interview with the Countywide Services Agency PIO, she explained that the county now has 27 public information officers (PIO). In her position she works with PIO's from all the Countywide Services Agency departments. She states that the VRE PIO, who is referred to as CMO within the department, went to media training provided by the county. In her opinion, the CMO is "proactive and identifies opportunities, and "is doing a great job". She has been impressed with the quality of media releases and interview skills. She says that the CMO and the VRE are always responsive, open to suggestion, and easy to work with. If there were any area that she saw a need for improvement, it was the website. This subject is discussed in more detail in the Voting Systems and Technology Chapter.

3-15	Concern: While the Media Handbook is generally very well done, there are some areas where it is not as useful as possible. This includes the historical data, which does not show statistics for all elections, such as small local or special elections, and the impact of vote by mail voting.
	Recommendation: Gather statistic pages used in media packages and on-line from other counties in order to develop a reporting format that will better serve your public and media. This should show the growth of vote by mail voting and the percentage of the vote that is vote by mail versus at the polls. This could be complicated by the various types of mail ballots – requested, permanent vote by mail voters, military, etc.
3-16	Concern: Not all media may know of the availability or usefulness of the Media Handbook since it is not routinely distributed. Media may not always understand the processes at the VRE.
	Recommendation: Either mail the handbook to all media contacts, or at least send a notice that it is available and what is posted on the website. Conduct a media briefing before major elections where recent changes and what is unique or different about the election can be highlighted. This would provide time for questions and answers and to obtain input from the media of what would make their job easier and more effective.

3-17	Concern: The media often is present during ballot counting activities and at the polls on Election Day. This can present problems if the media is not properly informed in advance of restrictions on access or conduct.
	Recommendation: Send a special notice (or highlight it in the Media Handbook) that informs the media of what they may and may not do. Determine the permissibility of cell phones, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA's), cameras, flash drives, etc. There needs to be some decision making regarding electronic "gadgets" when anyone enters the actual ballot counting room.
3-18	Concern: Although the CMO feels that the department is currently able to provide adequate services and availability to the media, it is not clear that there is a backup plan in the event of increased scrutiny or controversy. Many election offices have experienced such an increase that can require additional qualified personnel to adequately respond to the situation.
	Recommendation: Investigate backup media plans for a major event. Monitor media activity and be prepared to consider adding staff in the future to focus on this activity.

CHAPTER 4

PRECINCT OPERATIONS

OVERALL DESCRIPTION:

The Precinct Operations division is one of four program functions in the Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) Department and reports to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. The Precinct Operations division consists of nine permanent positions: One Election Manager; two Election Supervisors; one Senior Election Assistant; three Election Assistants; one Geographical Information System (GIS) Analyst; and, one GIS Technician. During preparation for an election the permanent staff is supplemented by up to 40 temporary staff.

The Precinct Operations division is divided into three different sections:

1. GIS Mapping**:** Maintains precinct maps, constructs precinct and district lines, and redraws these lines after each ten-year census;

2. Precinct/Poll Worker: Consolidates precincts, locates and assigns accessible polling places, and recruits and trains poll workers; and,

3. Warehouse Operations: Prepares, distributes, and retrieves polling place supplies, stores and maintains voting equipment, and supervises routine warehouse operations and office wide record retention.

In addition to these basic functions, the Precinct Operations division is responsible for Election Day support of polling places and poll workers, and the canvass of election results.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

The review of the Precinct Operations division included, but was not limited to: on-site review of procedures; interviews with staff; Election Day observation and visits to polling places (including interviews with poll workers) and ballot pick-up centers; and observation of portions of the election canvass. Information from that process is included as appropriate in specific functions that follow.

The review revealed that that the Precinct Operations division is an efficient operation with good working conditions, tools, and space. Employees are competent, trained, and dedicated to doing a good job. Morale is high; there is good teamwork; and there is consensus among employees that the Election Manager is very competent and supportive.

GIS MAPPING

Maintain Precinct Maps and Construct Precinct Lines:

Voters are eligible to register and vote for candidates and measures based on the voter's residence address. The GIS Mapping section is responsible for maintaining the maps and establishing appropriate precinct lines. This section has one GIS Analyst, supported by a GIS Technician who works half time in the GIS Mapping section and half time in the Precinct/Poll Worker Section. Implementation of a GIS system requires unique skills, including an understanding of legal descriptions, the US Public Land Survey System, Spanish and Mexican Land Grants, and the California Assessor's Parcel System.

Voters within a county are assigned to *precincts,* geographical areas where everyone votes on all the same issues. Under the Elections Code, precincts may not contain more than 1,000 registered voters.

There are 1,700 established precincts in Sacramento County. Often, voters from a number of precincts will vote at a single polling place. Precincts are grouped into different combinations, depending upon what is on the ballot, and then assigned to a polling place. Sacramento County will have 548 polling places in the 2008 Presidential Primary Election.

Precincts are located within *districts,* geographical areas that represent entities that can go to election – i.e. Congressional, supervisory, city, school, water, etc. There are 140 districts in Sacramento County. If voters are assigned to the wrong district, they could be voting on issues to which they are not entitled or not voting on issues to which they are entitled.

Until 2001, the VRE mapping system was primarily a manual system that was not supported by GIS technology. Many counties began using GIS technology more than ten years ago because of the accuracy that system provides in locating any geographical point. However, even though GIS technology was introduced to the VRE in 2001, there was a lack of properly trained staff to take advantage of the systems. In fact, from December 2005, through July 2007, the position was vacant because the specifications did not reflect the required special skills. During that time another County agency provided support to the Election Department. The first GIS Analyst was hired July of 2007.

In November of 2006, a problem was reported by the consultant working on a ballot measure (Measure M for Folsom-Cordova Unified School District). The result of the VRE investigation revealed that nine voters had been incorrectly placed in the wrong

district, which resulted in them voting on Measure M when, in fact, they were not eligible to do so. This type of problem was much more common in all counties before implementation of GIS systems, especially the first elections that followed reapportionment (every ten years). That was because so much of the work was done manually and there were inaccuracies in these mapping systems. Typically the problems affected small numbers of voters and, when discovered, corrective actions were taken. The numbers very rarely were large enough to affect the outcome of a contest. In the Measure M case, the results were very close and could have been affected by the problem. The Registrar of Voters acknowledged the mapping errors, conducted the appropriate research, and was forthcoming with facts. Upon advice from County Counsel, the Registrar of Voters certified the election because she did not have the authority to do otherwise. The school district requested a new election and was not billed for the first election.

When the new GIS Analyst assumed his position in 2007, he began a process to examine the accuracy of all district lines. However, this was primarily a manual examination. Once the GIS Analyst became more familiar with the election environment and systems, he developed an automated program that reviewed all district lines. This examination produced a large number of "possible" problems that required further research, resulting in 424 voters who actually had not been voting in a correct district. However, in many cases, the districts had never conducted an election; therefore there was no actual harm caused by this error.

The results did show that of the 424 voters in wrong districts, in 217 instances the voters had not been voting on the correct issues. Research into past elections conducted since the reapportionment of 2001, showed that, even though they did not vote in the correct district, the vote difference was sufficiently large that this error could not have had an affect on the outcome. The only exception was Measure M, which was resolved before the GIS Analyst began his verification process.

During the course of the performance review, letters were mailed to voters notifying them of the error and the corrective action taken. There were several variations to the letter depending upon the circumstances and geographic location at issue. The GIS Analyst provided the information, but the letter was drafted and mailed by several other people. When inquiries came in from the public, it was discovered that only one version of the letter was mailed to everyone – rather than the specific details for each case. This meant that a second correction letter had to be mailed.

Once the GIS Analyst was satisfied that voters were assigned to all of the correct *districts***,** he moved on to develop an automated examination to ensure that voters were in the correct *precinct*. He is in the process of locating, researching, and correcting these problems. It is important to note that these voters have not voted improperly. However, in some instances they may have gone far from their home to get to the polling place.

The GIS unit has developed and maintains procedures for use of this GIS system. The procedures were last revised in June 2007. The procedures include instructions for precinct formation and voter assignment to a precinct, with specific reference to Election Code requirements; determination of precinct assignment under a variety of conditions; sources for information for mapping purposes; the process for determining and changing precinct boundaries; the use of the precinct data file; the use of the street index file; the different types of maps required to be produced; map maintenance, map retention requirements; and other information related to the VRE processes that require information derived from the mapping process. These procedures appear to be complete and sufficiently detailed.

GIS mapping is responsible for maintaining correct maps and ensuring that voters are properly assigned. However, in preparation for an election, it is not the responsibility of the GIS Analyst to consolidate precincts in order to determine polling places. This task is performed by the Election Supervisor in the Precinct/Poll Workers section.

The GIS Technician works part time in mapping and part time in recruiting poll workers. As a result of this split, she feels that there is a lack of clarity as to her job duties. This could be remedied with more discussion between the GIS Technician and her immediate supervisor, or the Precinct Operations Election Manager. Most large Counties with GIS systems have more than one person providing this service. The current situation of splitting duties may need to be reevaluated as the next census approaches to determine if more staffing is required.

4-1	Concern: It is not clear why GIS personnel are not included in the Voting Systems and Technology (VST) group for purposes of supervision, training and retention.
	Recommendation: Since the GIS Analyst is strictly providing technical support, and not involved in consolidating precincts, it would seem that this function should be under the Voting Systems and Technology section.

4-2	Concern: The GIS Analyst performs a unique function within the VRE, but does not have the advantage of being part of larger group dynamics and sharing of ideas.
	Recommendation: The current GIS Analyst appears to be very capable and the VRE has designated a GIS Technician as a back up to this position. However, it may be useful to consider forming a "user group" of sorts, or a list serve, with GIS personnel in other county election offices in order to benefit from the expertise and experience of a group of professionals engaged in similar work.
4-3	Concern: Too many staff members were involved in sending notices to voters who had been incorrectly assigned to a district, which resulted in errors.
	Recommendation: The responsibility for producing and sending letters to voters, upon approval of administration, should be with the section of the Department most familiar with the details.
4-4	Concern: The use of a part time GIS Technician might be causing the employee concern about consistency of duties and professional advancement.
	Recommendation: Duties of the part time GIS Technician need to be better defined and explained and consideration should be given to increasing the use to full time as the next census approaches.

PRECINCT/POLL WORKERS

Recruiting Polling Places:

The process of securing polling places is the responsibility of one Election Supervisor, one Election Assistant and the part time help of the GIS Technician, along with up to six temporary workers. Their task is to: Consolidate precincts into voting precincts with a polling place; determine precincts that will be vote by mail only; locate polling places that meet specific criteria; inspect potential sites to determine if they are accessible to voters with disabilities; determine special needs and supplies; coordinate with polling place owners; and maintain detailed records and files.

Consolidating Precincts:

Every voter's residence address is assigned to a precinct. The Elections Code section 12223 states that precincts must be established in such a way as to ensure that "the number of *voters* in the precinct does not exceed 1,000 on the 88th day prior to the day of election." Elections Code section 12241 allows the County to consolidate up to six precincts into one voting precinct for elections other than the direct primary, presidential primary, or general statewide elections, provided that the boundaries of the precinct do not cross any district boundaries, such as the boundaries for a legislative or congressional district.

Depending upon the election, precincts may be grouped together to form a voting precinct with a single polling place. For example, if the election does not involve school districts, precincts where the *only* difference is the school district to which they are assigned, may be joined together to form a voting precinct. However, if the election does have school districts on the ballot, those precincts may no longer be joined.

Consolidations can result in very high numbers of voters at one polling place depending on how many *voters* are in each precinct. Precincts are generally consolidated in local or special elections with typically very low levels of voter turnout.

In the Presidential Primary Election it is only permissible to consolidate precincts up to the limit of 1,000 *voters*. The Registrar of Voters defines "voters" as being those who are expected at the polling place – an opinion shared by many jurisdictions. This means that the VRE subtracts the number of permanent mail ballot voters (voters who have asked that a ballot be mailed for all elections) when calculating the number of *voters* who may be assigned to a precinct.

The Legislature's intent in prohibiting precincts from containing more than "1,000 voters" is an issue that may need further review and clarification. It is arguable that

this provision of the Elections Code refers to “registered voters.” Election officials, in interpreting this provision, recognize that the number of voters going to the polls is shrinking and the number of voters who choose to vote by mail is growing.

In Sacramento County up to 30% of the registered voters in a precinct are permanent mail ballot voters, meaning that they automatically receive a mail ballot in each election without the need of requesting it. This does not mean that they cannot vote at the polling place, but it is unlikely that many would choose to do so. If the legal definition were construed to mean “registered voters” rather than voters expected, the result would be more polling places and poll workers than are actually necessary to handle the volume, and increased costs associated with establishing polling places while simultaneously handling mail ballots. Because it is becoming more and more difficult to find sufficient numbers of qualified poll workers, and polling places that meet accessibility guidelines, the VRE, along with the California Association of Clerks and Elections Official Association (CACEO), has participated in developing proposed legislation to clarify this issue and has been unsuccessful. This is an issue the Board of Supervisors had indicated support for and that all county governments may want to continue to pursue due to its possible budgetary impact.

In certain areas, precincts may not be able to be consolidated due to distance to the polling place or other factors. If the total number of registered voters is less than 250, the precinct may be designated as a mail ballot precinct and these voters must vote a mail ballot. The Precinct Operations division provides the Vote by Mail section a list showing the two closest polling places to each mail ballot precinct. This information is sent along with the ballots in the event a voter chooses to return the ballot to a polling place rather than through the mail.

For the February 6, 2008 Presidential Primary, Sacramento County will have 548 polling places, and 122 mail ballot precincts.

The Election Supervisor has primary responsibility for determining which precincts will be consolidated for an election. To accomplish this task he uses the Election Information Management System (EIMS) and the GIS Mapping system. This process requires a good working knowledge of the County and buildings that may be available to use as polling places. The consolidations are based on what is on the ballot, number of voters, distance to proposed polling places, and polling places that are available. Taking all factors into consideration, the Election Supervisor determines which precincts will be combined together, and of the available polling places, which will be used.

If an established polling place is not available, he assigns staff to recruit a new site. The criteria used, the decision-making and the system support, all appear to be good. The only area in question is the removal of permanent mail ballot voters in determining the number of voters assigned to a voting precinct. The EIMS system

appears to be working very well and provides the tools necessary to create consolidations and produce the various reports and tracking mechanisms needed.

Selecting Accessible Polling Places:

All polling sites used in Sacramento County are accessible. This has become more difficult to accomplish because of slope restrictions – new subdivisions located in flood plains may have higher driveways that exceed accessibility requirements for maximum slope. In many areas there are no public buildings and individuals do not want to open their homes and garages to voters. Garages also present a problem in inclement weather and many homeowners do not want to allow voters and poll workers the use of restrooms.

Polling place owners receive $50 for the use of their facility that includes storage of some voting equipment/supplies for a short period before and after the election. This amount has not been changed for many years according to the VRE staff. Staff reports a polling place stability rate of approximately 80%. This means that between 100-150 polls will need to be replaced each election cycle.

The federal Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 requires that all polling places be accessible to voters with disability; "Accessibility" is required to be defined by guidelines adopted by the Secretary of State. These guidelines include a requirement for a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee. In the past, Sacramento County met this requirement and formed a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee. Their purpose was to work with the VRE to ensure that polling places were made accessible and to generally advise the elections office on the topic of accessibility. Among its other duties, if there were polling place special cases that needed a variation from accepted requirements, the committee could grant permission. The VAAC is no longer in use because all polling places have been made accessible and exceptions are no longer sought. However, the VRE continues to be involved in the issue of accessibility and participates on the county's Disability Access Advisory Committee. The VRE is required to report to the Secretary of State on the number of polling places that are not accessible. The VRE is able to report 100% compliance.

During the past summer, all polling places (including those that had never been used but were in the systems for possible use) were surveyed or reviewed by four surveyors. This revealed 127 that were non-accessible and they were removed from use. Those were replaced with new accessible sites. The procedures, forms and checklists used for surveying, and recording data are very good and meet the Secretary of State standards. Many important criteria have been added, such as, grounded outlets for voting equipment. Surveyors key their own data into the EIMS that records items needed at the polls so that the VRE warehouse staff knows what to pack and what to include on receipts. The system identifies polling places by categories, such as: 189 schools are used, 163 churches, 30 garages, etc. The low number of garages is good, since these can be the least desirable in bad weather.

When the Department determines which polling places they wants to use, a selection letter is generated from the EIMS system asking for use of the site and providing requirements; written confirmation is required. The notice includes a letter from Sacramento County Risk Management advising that the County is self-insured. The EIMS is a well-designed tool that supports this process. It allows staff to record information specific to each polling place to act as future reminders or cautions.

4-5	Concern: Some polling places insist on higher insurance limits before agreeing to use.
	Recommendation: Explore the option of obtaining additional insurance for polling places (when required) from outside sources. This added cost can then be shared with the jurisdiction(s) participating in the election.
4-6	Concern: The federal law, and state guidelines for polling place accessibility, requires that each county have a VAAC, Sacramento County does not.
	Recommendation: The VRE should consider reconstituting the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, and possibly expanding its duties to also advise on HAVA related accessibility issues.

Recruiting Poll Workers:

The process of recruiting and training polling workers is the responsibility of one Election Supervisor, one Senior Election Assistant and up to four temporary workers. Their tasks are to recruit poll workers, produce polling place specific materials, develop training and train poll workers, recruit and train Coordinators, track performance, and maintain detailed records and files.

The VRE staffs each polling place with a minimum of five temporary workers: one Inspector and four clerks. This is more than required by law but ensures a more efficient and accurate operation. Additional workers are assigned in especially heavy turnout precincts or when two polling places are in one location, in order to facilitate traffic control. In accordance with Elections Code section 12303, where a polling place has more than 3% of the registered voters who have requested assistance in Spanish on their voter registration affidavits, a bilingual poll worker is assigned. Elections Code section 12303 (a) states that “no person who cannot read or write the English language is eligible to act as a member of any precinct board.” Inspectors earn $140 plus $25 for class attendance, $10 for using personal cell telephone, and $4 for mileage. Clerks earn $125 plus $25 for class attendance and $4 if they accompany the inspector with ballots to the ballot return site. A comparison to other jurisdictions of similar size is in the Benchmark Appendix.

County of Sacramento. In addition, the VRE has established a student poll worker program. Staff believes that it will meet the goal for February and are not experiencing any unusual problems.

Poll workers are **registered voters**, who provide a vital service to their community. Any registered voter can find information on the website about working at the polls in addition to information that is distributed at community events year round. Elections Code section 12306 allows the party central committees to nominate people to work at the polls. It appears that the VRE is not inviting that participation. The VRE maintains a large database through the EIMS system that includes potential poll workers as-well-as records of those who have previously served. Communication is maintained with poll workers through a newsletter that is mailed once a year to all poll workers and polling place owners.

For the February 6, 2008 Presidential Primary, staff must recruit and train approximately 2,800 poll workers. To fill this need, the VRE recruits from the registered voter database, as-well-as through the departments within the

During the summer of 2007, the VRE sent approximately 6,000 availability cards to potential poll workers asking them to serve for the February 6 or June 3, 2008, election. This is a good use of the VRE resources. They received back 50% as of December 17, 2007. Some of those contacted agreed to be available for both elections, some for only one election, and some declined. Availability cards note that they will receive confirmation IF they are selected to work. Based on this response and historical records, staff selected inspectors for each polling place and made telephone calls to fill inspector vacancies.

Selected inspectors are mailed confirmation letters that include worksheets containing names and telephone numbers of potential Clerks, along with party affiliation. Inspectors are responsible for filling Clerk vacancies and if unable to do so, they indicate that on the returned worksheet. A notice is included with the worksheet advising of the VRE policy that no more than two immediate family members may work at one polling place.

There is no apparent system in place to ensure that all poll workers could read and write the English language. Those applying at the VRE during the year are given some training and a test. Other than that, there is no testing.

There is nothing said about candidates or their immediate families working at a polling place or being a polling place owner. This caution does appear in the Candidate Guide, but it would be a good secondary check to include the caution in the worksheet to Inspectors. California law does not require equal party representation at a polling place. If Central Committees do not nominate poll workers, it is conceivable that all poll workers at a polling place could be of one party.

The VRE staff recruits to fill vacancies that the Inspector could not fill. Confirmation letters are sent to selected poll workers. Those who return availability cards and are not selected are not notified.

The VRE has a **County Poll Worker Program**. Letters are sent to other County Departments asking for employees to take a day off from their regular job and work at the polls. These poll workers receive their regular pay from their county job, plus the same pay as other poll workers, but no overtime from their regular job. In November, 2006, 80-150 County employees served as poll workers, coming from departments such as: Health and Human Services, General Services, Airports, Sheriffs, Revenue and Recovery, to name a few. This does not include those who work and do not identify themselves as County employees.

Precinct Operations has a database of 527 county employees and 143 of those will be working at the February 5, 2008 Presidential Primary Election. This can be a valuable program and provide workers who have certain proven skills. However, staff indicates a problem with no shows. The problem results from employees neglecting to obtain prior supervisor approval. This could be minimized by requiring a copy of the approval to be filed in advance with the VRE. In interviews with the County Executive Officer (CEO) and four members of the Board of Supervisors, they all indicated support for this program. Los Angeles County has an excellent program and involves employees from all levels, including the Chief Executive Officer and some members of the Board of Supervisors and/or their staff. It has proven to be an eye opening experience that demonstrates the difficulty of the job in a way that words cannot convey.

The VRE has a unique benefit of being located in the county of the state capitol. State law permits state employees to take the day off to work at the polls. It did not appear that the VRE was actively recruiting from this source of potential poll workers.

State law allows **students** who are 16 years of age, U.S. citizens, and in good academic standing to work at the polling place. Students are paid the same as other poll workers but cannot act as an Inspector. The program is coordinated through government teachers at each school. It is noted that there are no positions set aside for students and minimal coordination takes place between teachers, school, and the VRE staff. It is unclear whether the students are participating in the same way as other poll workers or if they are simply assisting other clerks. There are 61 public and 20 private high schools in Sacramento County. At present the Outreach coordinator is working with Sacramento City Unified School District and sent out 22 packets to teachers for the February 2008 election. In November 2006, there were 190 student poll workers. Students are required to attend a training class along with other poll workers. There does not appear to be any formal method of obtaining feedback from students or any special recognition.

While the VRE has approximately 10% of the clerk positions filled by students, San Francisco uses students for nearly 50% of its non-inspector positions. This is the result of a very proactive student poll worker program. The Sacramento County program is not as proactive or organized as it should be to have maximum impact and benefit to both the student and the VRE.

Bilingual Poll Workers were recruited for 45 polling places in the February 6, 2008, Presidential Primary Election. To date, the staff has had no difficulty filling these positions. However, we have a concern that VRE is calculating the need for bilingual poll workers based on whether they check a box on voter registrations or mail ballot requests asking for materials in Spanish. This appears to be a narrow reading of the law. Many other counties use census information to determine the need and there has been an effort to provide census information to the counties that more closely coincides with precinct boundaries. This becomes more apparent when you look at Appendix B –2. Identifying areas where there is a need is something that can be aided by involving community groups

Staff is doing a good job staffing polling places and the technology/systems in place are well designed and effective. However, if they face the situation that many other Counties face, of large shortages, they will need to significantly increase efforts to attract student, county poll workers, as well as reach out to state employees.

4-7	Concern: It is possible that a candidate might not notice the prohibition regarding work at the polls that appears in the Candidate Guide. It is also possible that staff might miss this because they do not know the names of every candidate and their immediate family members if the family members do not live at the same address as the candidate. This could lead to appointments that violate policy and require last minute alterations.
	Recommendation: Include a warning to Inspectors in the worksheet, to make sure that the Clerks chosen are not candidates or immediate family members of candidates who will appear on the ballot in that polling place.
4-8	Concern: There are no laws that require a specific political party makeup at the polling place. However if central committees do not nominate poll workers it could affect the perception of equality and fairness at the polls. The more the parties participate, the more they will have an understanding and appreciation for the process.
	Recommendation: Work more closely with the Central Committees to get their support in nominating poll workers.

4-9	Concern: Notices are sent to voters who are chosen to work at the polls. However, no communication is sent to those who are not chosen. These people have responded to the availability request and may have set aside time from their calendars. This leaves them in doubt and perhaps keeps them from volunteering the next time.
	Recommendation: Develop a system that informs all applicants of whether they have been chosen as poll workers. Mail is expensive, but perhaps the availability cards could state a date at which time those *chosen* will be posted on the website and if their name is not present, that they are thanked for volunteering and the VRE hopes to be able to contact them again in the future. If not on the website, perhaps a way for them to obtain the information through an automated feature of the telephone system.
4-10	Concern: The concept of the County poll worker program seems to have the support of the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Supervisors. However, it appears to be promoted strictly from the VRE. If there is a shortage of poll workers, this may not be adequate. In addition, it appears that the program does not extend to state workers.
	Recommendation: The success of the County poll worker program could be improved by asking the Chief Executive Officer and members of the Board of Supervisors to directly encourage other County departments to voluntarily participate and recognizing these employees post election.

4-11	Concern: The VRE has a Student Poll Worker Program. However, it is not as organized or proactive as it could be and does not provide opportunities for schools throughout the county. Students are not being used as efficiently as possible and there is no effort made to obtain feedback towards improving the program. More work in this area could prevent shortages of poll workers, and provide more students with a meaningful experience in grassroots democracy.
	Recommendation: Contact Fresno, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Placer or Los Angeles Counties for information on their student poll worker programs. They will help to recruit teachers by making the teacher's job easier, provide ideas on recognition, provide ideas on how to make the best use of students who volunteer, and how to train and obtain feedback. This same program should be integrated with a general outreach program to young people through the schools, and could be used to begin a student program for students to work at the tally center on election night. In some counties, students volunteer (no pay) for this task and it has been a great success. It is noted that the counties with successful programs have devoted an employee to this task. To be more effective, the VRE should consider adding personnel.
4-12	Concern: The method of determining the need for bilingual poll workers is based on a method that may not accurately reflect the need of the community.
	Recommendation: Examine methods used by other counties to determine the need for bilingual poll workers. Discuss the intent of the Voting Rights Act and whether the current methods are meeting the intent of the law.

Develop Training and Train Poll Workers:

The Elections Code requires that every Inspector attend training and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires that some HAVA funds be used to ensure that all poll workers receive the same training. Elections Code section 12309.5 lists standards that should be included in training. A review of the training materials and procedures indicates that the VRE is in compliance. However, training is something that is constantly being changed and improved and there will always be room for improvement.

The VRE encourages all Clerks to attend training and pays them to do so. This is a good reinforcement, as well as preparation to become Inspectors in the future. Prior to each election, a Precinct Officer Manual is prepared by the Precinct Operation

Manager and a Senior Election Assistant. Manuals from other Counties have been reviewed for professional practices.

Staff reviews past manuals, and updates as necessary for changes to law, procedure, etc. During the last year staff conducted a complete review of the manual.

The manual is given to every person who attends a training class and is also available on-line. We reviewed several prior manuals and found them to be well written, organized and user friendly. It was noted that there could be more information and training provided regarding minority language assistance and assistance persons with disabilities. These topics were addressed, but could be improved.

The manual is the basis for developing training. We reviewed the training plan and it was a well-organized presentation that included power point, video clips, hands-on, questions and answers, etc. However, there are no tests.

Staff indicates that training classes last three hours. Poll workers from the November, 2007 election that were interviewed indicated the class for that election had been shortened to 2 hours and they felt it was rushed.

Training for a major election takes place at five remote sites plus the Election Department. There are three classes per day for three days – day and evening (8:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 pm.) and they aim for 50 poll workers per class. Saturday classes are located only at the Election Department. Trainers of the classes are the: Election Manager, Election Supervisor, and Senior Election Assistant of the Precinct Operations division, along with other long-time temporary employees. Coordinators call their assigned Inspectors and remind them to attend class, and many Coordinators assist at the classes by helping to sign in students and do demonstrations. Precinct Operations is using a good system to record responses to an evaluation form used at the end of training classes. The form is “read” by the ballot counting equipment. Inspectors and Clerks are encouraged to attend as a group and are sent a notice of their assigned training time. They can call to reschedule if necessary. In addition to training classes, ten days before an election staff has an “equipment day” where anyone can come in and practice on the voting equipment from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

The VRE is in the process of purchasing an on-line Poll Worker Training Program that will be implemented for the June 2008, election. This will be purchased using HAVA funds. The program allows poll workers to review training on their own computer and to stop, start, and repeat instructions as necessary. The vendor uses the Precinct Operations training manual and adds games, quizzes, etc. This is an excellent supplement to the classes and we encourage its use.

While visiting two polling places at the November, 2007 election, poll workers were questioned about the manuals and training. We observed that the manuals were present and being used. The consensus among poll workers was that they were very good and very helpful. They thought the training classes were informative and well done but perhaps a little rushed.

4-13	Concern: No serious concerns.
	Recommendation: Poll Workers interviewed during the November 2007 election had the following recommendations: Slow down a little; encourage "stupid" questions or set aside time to ask for questions; and, provide more time for hands on training in the setting up of equipment. Continue with plans to purchase on-line training. Continue with efforts to enhance the Poll Worker's Manual.

Recruit and Train Coordinators and Provide Election Support:

The VRE has an excellent system for supporting poll workers. The Precinct Operations Election Supervisor hires and trains Coordinators. Coordinators are paid $12.22 per hour (same rate as Election Clerks). Classes are three hours in length, night or day, and include a modified version of the poll worker training class along with "What's New." Coordinators receive a Coordinator Handbook and supplies equivalent to two polling places.

One Coordinator (a former Inspector) is assigned to no more than ten polling places. They develop a relationship with the poll workers by: introducing themselves well in advance of the election; providing reminders of supply pick-up; assisting at training classes; calling to ensure supplies have been checked; visiting the polls several times during the day; providing additional materials as necessary from the extra supplies they carry, or by going to a remote supply site; and the day after the election calling to thank Inspectors/Boards and asking for and passing along input to the VRE. The first point of contact for poll workers on Election Day is their assigned Coordinator. The exception is voting equipment problems that go directly to Voting Systems and Technology.

Prior to Election Day, Coordinators are required to drive the route they will use on Election Day to visit their assigned polling places. This is good planning and avoids unexpected delays or confusion. It is noted that coordinators use their own vehicles and are reimbursed mileage. Some jurisdictions use rental cars for this purpose to avoid liability and to ensure reliable vehicles. It is unknown whether the VRE has evaluated the cost effectiveness and benefits of this method or whether the current process is the best.

Track Performance:

Coordinators have a checklist that is completed for each of their polling places and includes input from poll workers. Poll workers have a comment sheet where they evaluate the Coordinators. On Friday, after the election, Coordinators attend a de-briefing where information is shared and documented for needed action. In addition, other various reviews are conducted. For example: during the canvass when all work on rosters is reviewed. The results of these various examinations are entered into the computer and used to make future improvements and to avoid repeats of past problems. These checks and balances are all good. However, most of this work is manually entered and can be extremely time consuming. Information from the canvass checklist is used to give poll workers a "report card" to help staff and poll workers identify areas needing improvement or to recognize a job well done.

4-14	Concern: There are several checks to determine poll worker performance, but not an overall system to pull them together into one complete report. A lot of time is being spent to manually input data.
	Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive list of items to be tracked to ensure that poll workers are performing all vital functions – from attending class, to Election Day, to return of election ballots/supplies, to canvass, etc. Create forms for tracking this information that can be scanned into spreadsheets. This should not be difficult, as most of the items require yes and no answers. Another alternative is to build on the system in place for poll worker training class evaluations that uses ballot-counting equipment to tally results.

WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

Warehouse Operations are the responsibility of one Election Supervisor who has 25 years of experience in two counties, two Election Assistants (one with 20 years experience) and up to seven temporary workers. This section inventories, prepares, distributes, and retrieves polling place supplies; stores and maintains voting equipment; oversees shipping, receiving and storage of materials; and oversees record retention and destruction.

The warehouse facility is connected to the Election Department. There is a large warehouse used to store precinct ballot scanners (M100's), Automark voting units, election and office supplies, and it also includes a chain link secured cage that is used to store Logic and Accuracy equipment (voting equipment already tested and ready to deploy) or ballots received from the vendor but not yet inspected. There is a second smaller warehouse that includes another locked cage that is used to store ballots that have been inspected and are ready to go to the polling place. There is also a new loading dock that makes it easy to drive up and unload all the large trucks with supplies. The space is generous, well laid out, secure, and well organized. Personnel are using computers to track equipment and supplies, manage inventory and record retention, and for receipt and distribution of materials. Warehouse personnel seem comfortable with technology and were able to readily access procedures and forms as requested.

The Election Supervisor is supported by two Election Assistants, and the supervisor would like to study the benefits of two different levels for his supporting staff, rather than two at the same level.

The facility is a model for other jurisdictions – many of which have warehouses located across town or in basements, etc. The electrical enhancements make it possible to service and maintain the voting equipment. The large warehouse does not have heating. One employee mentioned that it would be nice to have some type of heating available.

A review of procedures that were developed for the processes in the Warehouse Section shows a good beginning, but some tasks are not documented and much more detail is needed. Many areas say what *should* be done, but do not include the detail of *how* it is done. There are exceptions, such as the areas regarding ballot card inspection and work on voting equipment. It is critical that procedures are in place to record anyone touching or having access to voting equipment.

Prepare Supplies:

The warehouse operations' staff is responsible for ensuring sufficient quantities of forms, signs, etc. That will be used at each polling place. They have a computerized inventory system that records items, quantities needed and how many are in stock. The election supervisor coordinates with other precinct operations staff to be certain the correct versions are available and places orders with general services for printing. During slower periods before an election, staff begins preparing standard supplies – polls signs, electrical cords, basic supplies. These are items that will not change. Closer to the election precinct specific items are packed. There is a good checklist of items to be included and it appears that much of the packing is performed by experienced temporary workers. Quality control includes random checks of all supplies.

While observing preparation of basic supplies for the polls, it was noted that many were laminated. This is an environmentally friendly practice and re-uses non-changing forms rather than placing them in the dumpsite.

The Warehouse Operations' staff is responsible for a thorough quality control check of ballots that will go to the polls. The procedures and quality control for this process appear to be very good and complete. Involvement in quality control of vote by mail ballots and test ballots is primarily receiving, checking packing sheets for quantity, and assisting Voting Systems and Technology in any further proofreading that may be necessary.

Once all items have been prepared, staff must pack supplies for every polling place. They use plastic bags for many "groups" of items thus reducing weight and making it easier to identify contents. Red ballot bags can be rolled, making it easier for the poll worker to transport them. Items are properly labeled and an Asset Tracking System uses a bar coding system to track voting equipment at several stages of the process. Staff scans bar codes for equipment going out and personnel at pick-up sites scan in the precinct to which it is assigned.

Distribute Supplies:

Voting booths, black boxes that m100 ballot scanners sit on, Automark voting devices, and tables, are delivered to polling places approximately one week prior to the election. Equipment for all but five polling places is delivered by a private firm (Graebel). The remaining five polling places are in the Isleton/walnut grove area and supplies are delivered by the VRE staff. The VRE prepares routing maps for the company using GIS technology, which makes the job easier and faster and staff knows the status of equipment delivery at all times.

The Inspector picks up all other items needed at the polling place, including M100 ballot scanners, on the Friday before the election from an assigned pick-up site. This is the same location that will be used for election night drop off. Hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Coordinators call to ensure Inspectors have picked up and

checked their items. This allows time to replace any missing items. Staff scans the M100 ballot scanners as they are given out to a specific polling place. There are five remote sites plus one location at the Election Department. In November 2006 there were no calls received for missing supplies.

Anyone who does not pick-up from their assigned pick-up remote site must come to the VRE Department on the Saturday before the election. There have been very few Inspectors (fewer than 12) in a major election, which did not get to their pick-up site.

Supplies for pick-up sites are packed in trucks that are provided by and driven by Sacramento City Unified School District at no charge. It provides training opportunities for the school and a great cost saving service to the County.

The distribution system appears to be working very well.

Retrieve and De-process Supplies:

In a major election, five remote site locations (same as used for supply pick-up) plus the location at the Election Department are considered drop off sites for ballots and materials on Election Day. They are also referred to as collection centers and return sites. It would be helpful to determine one name and stick to it to avoid confusion. The Election Supervisor determines staffing levels and the Personnel section hires. There is a Site Supervisor and an Assistant Supervisor, plus 20 - 30 employees (permanent and temporary workers) at each remote site, plus another 10 for transport. There are up to 45 workers located at the Election Department. Approximately 80 -100 polling places are assigned to each remote site. Transport personnel are recruited from service groups such as the Kiwanis, and they drive their own vehicles. There is a Site Supervisor meeting prior to the election to review procedures.

Two poll workers in one vehicle bring all their supplies to their assigned drop off site with the exception of Automark voting machine, voting booths, and empty black boxes from the M100 ballot scanners. Those items are picked up by the same company (Graebel) that delivered them or in the case of Isleton and walnut grove, by the VRE staff. Poll workers drive in, hand over certain items, and others are unloaded for them from their vehicles. They are given a receipt and depart. The concept appears to be that poll workers do not need to get out of their vehicle. Most items are loaded onto truck trailers and transport vehicles are loaded with voted ballots, data transport bags (containing the memory card from the ballot scanner), and roster bags (containing vote by mail, write-in, spoiled and provisional ballots). There are five transport returns from each drop off site on election night. Contents from transport vehicles are unloaded and sorted on election night. At the end of the evening, a cab is hooked to the trailers holding supplies and they are brought back to the location of the election department. They are secured in a locked lot with security cameras and are located next to the Sacramento County sheriff's facility. These trailers are unloaded the next morning.

During the November 2007 election, we reviewed written procedures, interviewed staff, and visited a drop off site. There was only one drop off site for the election and only 38 polling places using the site. We are told that what we observed was not typical and that there was a shortage of people to properly staff the site. What we observed appeared to be sufficiently disorganized as to create a safety concern. A review of procedures did not reassure us that what we saw would not be repeated again if the Supervisor were not thoroughly experienced. The procedures provide a description of what should occur, but they are not thorough or complete, and leave questions unanswered.

It appears that up to five people might be removing items from one vehicle, and at the end, one will give the driver a receipt. It is unclear how all items are accounted for. The receipts are generic, but procedures say that poll workers will "hand out" cell telephones "if they were assigned one". There was no obvious procedure or method for those receiving or unloading to know who was or was not assigned a cell telephone. The same was true for other supplies including possible replacement scanners.

In addition, the verbal instruction and assignments given were confusing, not all workers wore safety vests, lighting was barely adequate and workers moved in front of and behind vehicles. Poll workers were getting in and out of their vehicles and in some cases helping to unload. There was insufficient planning for scanning/tracking the returned scanners and they were removed from vehicles and placed on the ground near tire wheels waiting to be scanned – even though there was a table immediately adjacent. There was also confusion when it was time for the transport team to convey ballots, data transport bags, and roster bags to the VRE. There were not enough people to replace the first transport team when it was ready to leave. All of this resulted in longer than necessary delays for tired poll workers.

The procedures state that drop off sites close at 11:00 p.m. and that if the poll workers do not arrive before personnel are ready to leave, the poll workers are required to deliver the ballots and other materials to the VRE. Although we are informed that poll workers are required to call the VRE if not finished by 9:30, that coordinators are available to help, and that drop off sites can track which precincts have reported in with the Asset System, it is not clear that someone will monitor all these activities.

The concept of the drop off sites is very good and the overall process, as described in the procedures, is good. However, much work needs to be done to improve the implementation of the procedures in order to avoid future problems.

The morning after the election, trailers are unloaded and the process of examining the contents for anything that might be needed before the canvass begins. Graebel and the VRE staff picks up the Automark's black empty ballot boxes, voting booths

and tables at the polls, one to three days after the election, and brings them back to the VRE. This process seems to be very thorough. Items that need to go to the canvass personnel are marked as to the precinct they belong. Items such as voted ballots and unused ballots are secured until after the election is certified. Items required by law to be retained for pre-determined time frames are marked, palletized, shrink-wrapped and stored in the large warehouse. Other items that are no longer needed, such as unused ballots, are properly disposed of.

4-15	Concern: Warehouse operations ensure that documents/forms needed at the polls are printed. However, it appears that different sections of the Department print their own forms, etc. and Warehouse Operations stores them. This does not appear to be the best use of resources. Also, there does not appear to be a Department-wide control of forms. This can easily lead to distributing the wrong form providing incorrect information, and not getting the best price for printing services, etc.
	Recommendation: Consider consolidating forms control under one person who can coordinate with anyone needing forms. This person should be trained in forms design and be responsible for any bids for printing (not including the sample ballot or ballot card). An inventory system should be developed showing what forms are in use, assigning an identifying number, and using this information in job procedures.
4-16	Concern: Workers unloading supplies from poll worker's vehicles do not know when they should be getting non-standard items, such as assigned cell telephones; therefore, they can easily be missed if someone forgot to return those items. This would then require additional follow up after the election.
	Recommendation: Develop a system where drop off site receipts are pre-printed with non-standard items included, or a user-friendly listing is prepared for the person assigned to complete the receipt. The forms used for receipt should be compatible with other forms used to track performance of poll workers.

4-17	Concern: Based upon what we observed and the written procedures, the drop off site process is vulnerable to errors, accidents and inconvenience to poll workers. Procedures call for the poll worker to hand the following items "out of the window": cell telephone (if issued), roster of voters/forms bag, sealed data transport bag, and voted ballot boxes. This seems like a lot to be passed through a window - especially heavy ballot boxes.
	Recommendation: Set up a mock drop off site at the VRE well in advance of an election; actually walk through the steps, documenting procedure as you go. This will point out missing or incorrect information. Look at this from the standpoint of the poll worker. Also, put yourselves in the "shoes" of a new Supervisor who has never performed this task before and do not "assume" something will be done unless it is written down. Try assigning workers by number and give specific tasks to each number. As you walk through the process, you will see where people are crossing paths unnecessarily or where something is being missed. More detail is needed for what the Supervisor is responsible for doing and how it should be done. This document should incorporate some of the detail, pictures, and presentation as is used in the Precinct Manual. Once this is done and procedures are developed, incorporate a mock up drop off site into the site supervisor-training meeting. On Election Night, instead of showing items or pictures of items to be removed from vehicles, try packing a vehicle with items and doing a dry run with newly trained staff so they can walk through the process without pressure.
4-18	Concern: Current procedures direct the drop off site to close at a specific time. If a polling place has not reported by that time they must drive to the main office. This could create delays in the election count and an added burden for the poll worker. It could be a very long drive for the poll worker and a longer wait for the VRE.
	Recommendation: We are informed of steps taken by the VRE to ensure that all polling places are accounted for, including: calls from poll workers, dispatching of coordinators, and ability of Asset Shadow System to record receipt of election materials. However, the procedures for the drop off site do not mention these steps and appear to give the site the authority to close at a specific time. Drop off sites should not close until all precincts are accounted for unless other arrangements are made - other than making the poll worker drive to the VRE. Drop off sites should have to receive permission to close from the VRE.

4-19	Concern: Poor lighting at drop off sites can make the job more difficult and contribute to accidents resulting in a financial liability to the county.
	Recommendation: If lighting is insufficient at drop off sites, perhaps it could be supplemented with battery operated lighting inside the trailers.

Store and Maintain Voting Equipment:
Warehouse staff is responsible for storing and some minor maintenance of voting equipment that includes: 1,000 ballot scanners (M100's), and 1,000 Automarks. Each polling place gets one scanner for voters to scan their voted paper ballot, and one Automark for voters with disabilities to use to mark a paper ballot that is then scanned on the M100. This required upgrades to the warehouse that included heavy-duty racks and special electrical power.

Automarks, which are large and heavy, have their batteries charged beginning no earlier than 92 days before every election. This is done while they remain on the racks due to a clever design system. This can be done in one day. During logic and accuracy testing they must be moved to tables and are worked in groups. After the election, Automarks are scanned and stored in the cage area of the warehouse where they are "de-processed." This procedure includes opening cases, checking for any ballots and to see that all equipment is there, and looking for any obvious damage. Workers remove the "flash" card that contains programming for that election and give it to voting systems and technology where the current election will be deleted and the card reprogrammed for future elections.

Prior to each election M100 scanners are placed on tables at the ends of the racks where special power has been installed to charge the batteries. Staff can charge 60 units per day and it can take up to 15 days to charge all units. When charged, M100's are removed from hard cases and placed in soft cases that go out to the polling places. They are secured in the large cage in the warehouse. When voting systems and technology is ready to conduct logic and accuracy tests on the units, warehouse operations staff assists in transport and set-up in the ballot counting room.

Due to the constraints of the contract with the voting equipment vendor, Election Systems and Software (ES&S), the VRE staff is not allowed to do maintenance on the voting equipment other than charging batteries and minor maintenance. Other maintenance is performed by Election Systems and Software staff on a yearly basis for a fee.

The Asset Tracking System is an excellent tool for tracking voting equipment. The systems in place to store, maintain, and identify voting equipment appear to be appropriate.

4-20	Concern: Election Systems and Software personnel are the only individuals allowed to perform maintenance. That means that the Election Department is obligated to a continuing fee for this service. This procedure was observed during the performance review and Election Systems and Software was using the services of a Voting Systems and Technology staff member. It is uncertain whether the employees hired by Election Systems and Software have any special abilities that are not possessed by Voting Systems and Technology staff or could not be learned.
	Recommendation: Look into the conditions of the existing voting system contract and determine whether there is any flexibility, either now or in the future, for more involvement of VRE staff in performing system maintenance. Voting system vendors should not have control of any portion of the operation and maintenance of voting equipment, except as support for the VRE staff.

Oversee Shipping, Receiving and Storage of Materials:

Procedures and systems are in place for the receipt and shipment of goods ordered by the VRE. Permanent staff is responsible for this task. Staff reviews destination addresses, as well as the contents before unloading. After unloading, staff verifies that the quantity received matches the description on the invoice, checks quantity, and looks for damage. Incoming and outgoing shipments are logged into the computer system and received items are distributed or stored as appropriate. Staff uses an internal e-mail "voter-all" to inform the VRE staff of items received or shipped. This system seems to work well. The only concern voiced was that occasionally the VRE staff neglects to inform warehouse staff of expected shipments, sometimes resulting in minor delays.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

Oversee Record Retention and Destruction:

General Warehouse Operations' procedures contain some information about the storage and destruction of specific items. Individual division procedures also contain bits of information on the need to secure documents following an election. However, there is no overall written procedure for how to accomplish the task and the steps required. When asked, the Election Supervisor immediately produced a listing of types of documents, retention periods, and applicable laws. A check of procedures, along with an interview and observation, indicated that critical items were being handled properly. Observation of the contents in the warehouse showed that items were properly labeled and stored. Items such as ballots are destroyed by confidential recycling. Others items, such as sample ballots, are simply recycled.

There are computer databases identifying items stored in the warehouse, their exact location, the quantity, the election (if applicable) and the destruction date (if applicable). The destruction date is entered according to the retention chart and when the date comes for destruction the Election Supervisor proceeds with destruction.

It appears that staff in other divisions of the VRE is aware of what items to provide Warehouse Operations for storage in the warehouse, and instruction to do so is in their procedures. This process, however, is not written in an overall retention procedure.

4-21	Concern: The destruction date for ballots and memory cards can change depending upon special situations, such ac court decisions, etc. The Election Supervisor may not always know if there are any extenuating circumstances that change the destruction date.
	Recommendation: As a secondary check, before destroying documents, a form should be used to obtain permission for destruction from the Registrar of Voters. The Registrar of Voters would be responsible for checking with all involved to be sure there is nothing affecting the destruction date.
4-22	Concern: Although the warehouse is storing and destroying items properly, the lack of complete procedures could lead to errors if the current Election Supervisor were not available.
	Recommendation: Create a policy and procedure specifically for record retention and destruction. This policy should detail who does what, how to properly label, and enter items into the system. It would also include procedures regarding how and when destruction takes place. There was nothing in the documents we reviewed that explained the difference between recycling and confidential recycling.

ELECTION DAY SUPPORT OF POLLING PLACES/POLL WORKERS

Support is provided from various Units in the Precinct Operations division: Availability of supplies is managed through Warehouse Operations. Coordinator and telephone support is provided through the Precinct/Poll Worker section, and assistance for voting equipment issues is provided by Voting Systems and Technology.

Warehouse Operations is responsible for making polling place supplies readily available on Election Day in the event of missing items or shortages. This is accomplished by hiring and training temporary workers who drive supply vehicles to one of five remote sites. The supply vehicles do not have a stock of ballots. If there is a shortage, voters can vote using the sample ballot and putting it into an envelope until ballots are delivered from the VRE.

On Election Day, the driver stays in one location with the supply vehicle and if poll workers need anything, they call their Coordinator who provides the needed supplies from his or her supplies issued by VRE, or makes a run to the closest assigned remote site. This is an interesting and different approach and one that appears to be working very well. It avoids long drives from the Election Department, results in a quicker response time, and reduces duplication of efforts. In many jurisdictions, they have temporary workers that act as runners – delivering supplies either from the Election Department or from assigned remote areas. This can create more confusion or problems with communication. The VRE solution is a good one.

Poll Worker calls for assistance regarding procedures or supplies, etc. goes first to the assigned Coordinator and, if necessary, directly to the Precinct/Poll Worker section. Coordinators are able to resolve most problems and keep records of problems on a checklist for each polling place. They visit each polling site multiple times; check to be sure essential procedures are being followed, and provide assistance as needed. All poll worker calls regarding voting equipment are directed to Voting Systems and Technology.

Calls directly to the VRE have, in the past, been manually documented on call sheets. During the observation of the November 2007 election, we noted a new system being tested. It was developed by Voting Systems and Technology and provides a module where information can be keyed and information made available on-line within the Department. Voting Systems and Technology also used the module to enter calls regarding equipment. This was new and the election was small. However, staff in the Precinct/Poll Worker Unit did not seem to be consistently using the system, but preferred the familiarity of the old system. During a major election, the call volume is much greater and information and status of resolutions

needs to be made available to the Registrar of Voters as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The system developed by Voting Systems and Technology is a good beginning, but is not as effective as it needs to be and is discussed further in the Voting Systems and Technology Chapter. However, once an effective automated tracking system is developed, it will be critical that staff use the system. King County, Washington has such a system and a unique way of using it that might work in Sacramento County. Most operators taking calls find it difficult to use the computer while talking. In King County, they record key information on user-friendly forms that are then distributed to data entry staff and to those who can fix the problems as needed.

We reviewed the Coordinator materials, including the telephone list. It contained numbers that were no longer needed and staff is making corrections. A discussion of the telephone system in the Precinct/Poll Worker section showed that there were three places where operators could sit and take calls, but they were not connected. These need to be combined into a system that rolls over to the next available operator. This would free permanent staff with more experience to supervise others and expedite more calls faster.

If the VRE needs to communicate with poll workers they rely on calls to the Inspectors, who have cell telephones provided by the VRE or have telephones available on-site. They can also call Coordinators who are responsible for up to ten polling places. This is a good system, but in the case of a real emergency it might not be capable of reacting as quickly as necessary. A situation developed in Montgomery County Maryland where a problem was discovered election morning affecting every polling place. Although it was eventually resolved, the problem was exacerbated because of the amount of the time it took to reach Inspectors at every polling place. One solution implemented for the future was the use of a reverse 911 system. This system calls out in an emergency rather than someone calling in. The County of Sacramento has this capability, although it is our understanding it may be in the early stages of implementation.

4-23	Concern: The trouble call tracking system developed by Voting Systems and Technology is not as effective as it could be because the end users seem hesitant to transition to this new method. In a major election, this could slow the flow of critical information to the Registrar of Voters and hamper record keeping. The Coordinator program is outstanding, but the Coordinators are handling many problems in the field and it does not appear that a record of the problems is readily available to staff at the Election Department on Election Day. Thus it is difficult to respond to calls from the media or public officials, etc. without directly contacting the Coordinator. It is almost impossible to track trends on Election Day.
	Recommendation: We encourage the VRE to investigate existing trouble tracking systems in San Francisco and King County, Washington. The San Francisco system allows the election office to track and display calls on a scrolling screen so the Registrar of Voters can track each problem to resolution and identify trends such as numerous polling places running short of ballots. We also encourage research into ways to implement the system in a user friendly way and for staff to make the commitment to its use.
4-24	Concern: In the event of a major problem requiring immediate communication with all polling places, the current system might not be sufficient. It is important that everyone receive the same message.
	Recommendation: Investigate, along with OCIT, the feasibility of using the reverse 911 system to communicate with polling places in an emergency. This system calls out to pre-determined telephone numbers and provides the same message to all. It is the same system that recently saved so many lives in the fires that swept Southern California. Rather than residents calling for help, or telephone banks trying to call out, the system called the residents to notify of evacuations. This could be used to supplement existing systems.
4-25	Concern: The telephone system in place for receiving calls from poll workers on Election Day is not efficient. There are multiple numbers and as it is now set up, it is necessary to transfer calls to experienced staff from the telephone bank area.
	Recommendation: Discuss the operation of multiple phone lines in Precinct Operations and then work with OCIT to develop a more streamlined telephone system that reduces the numbers for Coordinators to call.

OFFICIAL CANVASS OF ELECTION RESULTS

The Election Manager of the Precinct Operations division oversees the canvass of election results with supervision of much of the reconciliation performed by the Election Supervisor of the Precinct/Poll Worker section. In addition, the Voter Services (VS) division is involved in processing outstanding ballots – mail ballots turned in at the polls, provisional ballots, entering voter history, etc. The Warehouse Operations section is involved by inspecting all returned materials and supplies from the polling places. The Voting Systems and Technology division is involved by counting processed ballots and providing necessary assistance to the Precinct Operations division, and the Campaign Services division is involved by assisting observers.

The Elections Code specifies that the canvass is to start no later than the Thursday following Election Day, shall be open to the view of the public, and shall be completed in 28 days from the date of the election for a primary or general election. Public observation is discussed in more detail in the Campaign Services chapter. However, it is noted here the VRE needs to be more proactive in seeking official observers. The canvass actually starts the day following the election as the VRE immediately starts de-processing election supplies and processing uncounted ballots, etc. The Election Code specifies what the canvass must include (as listed below in parentheses), but does not preclude counties from conducting additional checks.

1. "Inspection of All Materials and Supplies Returned by Poll Workers". Any precinct specific items pertinent to canvass that are found by warehouse personnel are marked with the precinct number and taken to the appropriate section of the Department. This could be a ballot mistakenly left in the black box, a returned vote by mail ballot left in another envelope, etc.

2. "Reconciliation of the Number of Signatures on the Roster with the Number of Ballots Recorded on the Ballot Statement and Total Recorded as Actually Counted by Computer". This is similar to balancing a checkbook. Voting Systems and Technology produces a report indicating the number of ballots counted for each precinct. Each roster is examined and a worksheet completed to balance the total number of ballots received at the polling place with the total number of voted ballots, the number of ballots spoiled, the number of provisional ballots issued, and the number of unused ballots. They also balance the number of voted balances against the number of signatures recorded by poll workers. If there are any discrepancies, a further investigation takes place until the discrepancy is resolved or explained.

3. "Reconciliation of the Number of Ballots Counted, Spoiled, Cancelled, or Invalidated Due to Identifying Marks, or as Otherwise Provided by Statute, with the Number of Votes Recorded, Including Absentee and Provisional Ballots, by the Counting System". Balancing also includes a review of the number of absentee (vote by mail) ballots returned against what was counted or deemed invalid. The EIMS system results of processing are balanced against the voting system totals and an Accounting Report broken down by each type of mail ballot is prepared.

4. "Processing and Counting any Valid Absentee and Provisional Ballots Not Included in the Semifinal Official Canvass (Election Night Count)". The number of tasks involved in canvass and the volume of outstanding ballots after election night, make it a challenge to complete the task within the statutory time frame. This is the result of the growth in popularity of vote by mail and the changes in law regarding provisional voting and the numbers continue to grow.

Provisional ballots cannot be processed to determine if they are valid until voter history has been examined. This task used to take place after the election was certified, but now must take place first to ensure that a provisional voter has not voted at another polling place. Voter history is applied by wanding bar codes next to each voter's name; this will reveal whether the voter cast another ballot. Canvass staff cannot start reconciling the rosters until voting history is complete.

Mail ballots must be checked to ensure that the voter did not also vote at the polling place. In addition, the signature on the mail ballot must be verified against the signature on the voter's registration affidavit. Mail ballot processing was made more difficult when the law directed that mail ballot results must be sorted and available by precinct. That meant a long process to sort to 500+ precincts. The VRE purchased, using HAVA funds, an automated sorter that can sort returned mail ballot envelopes into precinct order, thus reducing the long and error prone process of manual sorting.

Counting Valid Write-In Votes:

Polling place Workers separate any ballots with write-ins at the polling place. If they miss any the ballot counting system will stop and "kick it out." As mail and provisional ballots are processed for counting, those with write-ins are separated. All ballots with write-ins are processed by special boards and valid write-in votes are manually tallied. The results are added to the final results. Once this is completed, the ballots are then sent back to Voting Systems and Technology for counting.

Reproducing Any Damaged Ballots:

This process is called ballot duplication and is performed by teams of two. Ballots that are damaged and cannot be read by the computer must be reproduced. Provisional ballots that include votes on issues to which the voter is not entitled to vote on must be reproduced to count only the correct races.

Vote by mail voters who vote on the sample ballot pamphlet, rather than the ballot card, must have the ballot reproduced. It was noted while observing this process, that it can be time consuming to "fill in the bubble" for several races. We are told that they tried broad markers but the ink bled through which could affect races on the reverse side of the ballot card. During the duplication process, staff kept going back in the manila envelopes to double-check the contents. Perhaps using plastic envelopes would save time.

Reporting Final Results to the Governing Board and the Secretary of State as Required:

While all of the above processes are underway, there is also a requirement to conduct a one percent manual recount of ballots. Public notice is published in the newspaper and posted on the VRE web-site five days prior to the beginning of the manual recount, but few (if any) attend. This is an excellent opportunity for those who have concerns regarding the accuracy or integrity of the voting system to observe first hand at no cost. The VRE goes beyond what is required by law. The Assistant Registrar of Voters selects one percent of all the polling places, adding precincts to ensure that every race is included in the manual recount and adding vote by mail and mail ballot precincts. In the 2006 General Election this amounted to 33 precincts or 5.78% of the ballots being counted manually. While observing the manual recount of the November 2007 election, it was noted that different teams counted the ballots using different methods.

Canvass procedures exist that were last revised November 2007. As with other parts of the VRE, some procedures are detailed and others may raise questions or create misunderstandings. However, procedures appear to address all required tasks and staff is using statewide guidelines that were developed to promote uniformity. There is a good understanding of the process among Supervisors and we can detect no omissions. The systems in place are good and are instrumental in completing this task.

The Assistant Registrar of Voters reviews all reports and results of the canvass and the Registrar of Voters then certifies the election results.

4-26	Concern: Wanding for voting history as a first step is creating a bottleneck and significant delay. The DFM Election Information Management System (EIMS) and the Election Systems and Software ballot counting systems do not have a current solution to this problem.
	Recommendation: The VRE has investigated the use of electronic poll books and believes funding is available through HAVA. Although there may be some problems currently with obtaining approval from Secretary of State, this is a tool that could make a major difference. Electronic poll books record voting history and the voter's signature at the time they are given a ballot. It is then, a simple matter to apply the voting history after the election. Electronic poll books also are able to direct any voter to the correct polling place, thus reducing the number of provisional ballots.
4-27	Concern: Staff reconciling rosters is manually inserting specific information for each polling place. Much of that information is contained elsewhere – i.e.: precinct number, poll worker information, number of ballots sent to polls, and number of ballots counted election night, etc. This adds to the time it takes to complete the canvass and can increase errors.
	Recommendation: Investigate the possibilities of merging information contained elsewhere into precinct specific worksheets.
4-28	Concern: The canvass is open to public viewing. If public observers were given a copy of the recount procedures, it might raise concerns seeing staff counting using different methods than what is included in the procedure. While both might accomplish the same thing, it is the inconsistency that causes alarm.
	Recommendation: Discuss with staff involved in recounting ballots why they prefer different methods and make a decision on the one that works best. Then, ensure that the agreed upon method is adhered to and any changes are made to the recount procedures.

4-29	Concern: The number of ballots requiring is increasing and could impact the canvass schedule.
	Recommendation: Contact vendors and search for pens that “fill the bubble”, when marking ballot cards during the remake process, but do not bleed through. Also, if filling in bubbles by hand, consider using a plastic template to keep from going out of the lines.

CHAPTER 5

VOTER SERVICES DIVISION

OVERALL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Voter Services division is one of four program functions in the Department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) and reports to the Assistant Registrar of Voters (AROV). The division has twelve positions; (1) Election Manager; (2) Election Supervisors: one for the Registration section and one for Vote By Mail section; (7) Election Assistants and (2) Election Clerks. The permanent staff is supplemented with sixty to eighty temporary clerical employees during a major election cycle. These additional employees include both short-term county employees and temporary staff hired through a temporary agency. This division is responsible for registration of voters in the county; maintenance of the voter file; processing nomination, initiative, referendum and recall petitions; vote by mail (formerly known as absentee voting); provisional ballot processing; and election phone bank and website response.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

The review of Voter Services included, but was not limited to, on-site review of procedures; interviews with staff; and observation of work processes. During the review period, we were able to observe registration activity, state petition processing, election phone banks, and researching voting history. Information from those processes is included as appropriate in specific functions that follow. Items more general in nature are mentioned here.

The work of the Voter Services division is highly dependent upon the Election Information Management System (EIMS) that is provided by an outside vendor, DFM Associates. This is a comprehensive software program that handles all aspects of voter registration, file maintenance, signature verification, mail ballot processing and overall election management. The EIMS provided by DFM Associates does not have a comprehensive and current user manual.

Voter Services maintains a file of procedures that are followed for each of the processes listed above. However, the procedures are not always sufficiently detailed and are not well organized; making them difficult to use effectively.

It must also be noted that Sacramento County is covered under section 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act (VRA), which requires the county to provide all registration and election information available to the public in Spanish as well as English. There

is currently no permanent employee in Voter Services who is bilingual English/Spanish. While there are two full time bilingual employees in the department, neither works in voter registration or vote by mail which could be a problem when Spanish-speaking citizens need assistance with registration or mail ballots. This is an area that should be addressed to ensure complete compliance with the VRA.

The physical layout of the Voter Services division is very good with permanent staff occupying cubicles along the wall and the central part of the section set up with a permanent pool of computer terminals for use during election periods. The pool area can be utilized for all functions of Voter Services; voter registration; petitions processing; and processing vote by mail ballots. All computer terminals in the pool area face one direction and a large drop down screen is available when training is necessary. Voter Services employees worked well together and morale seemed good.

5-1	Concern: There are procedures for all aspects of processing voter registration forms, file maintenance, processing petitions and the Election Day telephone bank. However, the procedures are not always sufficiently detailed, are maintained in separate files, and are not well organized, making them very difficult to use.
	Recommendation: Voter Services needs to complete a reorganization of procedures to establish a manual in chapter numbered order, with a table of contents to make it more usable for staff. Care must be given to ensure that each section has sufficient detail to be useful to employees. Consideration should be given to hiring an outside professional to prepare the manual and to train staff how to maintain and update it.
5-2	Concern: The EIMS vendor does not maintain an up-to-date user manual for the EIMS system. Election staff must maintain their own procedures to use the system. This has caused problems when staff needs to perform a function and is unclear how to correctly use the system. There is always a danger that work is not being performed correctly or uniformly when a complete manual of procedures is not in place.
	Recommendation: The Registrar of Voters should require the EIMS vendor to maintain up-to-date user manuals for the system. This can be done as an individual customer or through the vendor user group.

5-3	Concern: Sacramento County is covered under the minority language provisions of section 203 of the VRA that requires the county to provide all registration and voting information in Spanish. The Department of Justice has sued several counties in California and many more nationally on the overall issue of compliance with the VRA. There is currently no Spanish speaking permanent staff member in the Voter Services section. This is a serious problem in terms of compliance with the VRA.
	Recommendation: Designate at least one position in Voter Services as a required bilingual English/Spanish position so that when a vacancy occurs, permanent bilingual staff can fill the position. In the interim ensure that one or more temporary staff members during election season are bilingual English/Spanish. It is important to have someone in the section at all times who can assist Spanish-speaking voters.

REGISTRATION

Process Voter Registrations:
The Registration section of Voter Services is responsible for the accurate and timely processing of voter registration affidavits and the maintenance of voter registration records. This includes processing registration forms received in the department as well as processing registration information in an electronic format from the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Secretary of State. Sacramento County had 595,140 registered voters as of September 7, 2007. From July 2004 to the present, voter registration in Sacramento County has ranged from a low of 588,880 in June 2007 to a high of 654,794 in December 2004.

Voter Services receives completed voter registration forms through the mail from individual voters, other counties, public agencies and the Secretary of State. Completed forms are also received over the counter from voters who complete them in the office and from groups and individuals who are conducting voter registration drives. These forms must be inspected to ensure that all necessary legal information is included. The forms must then be processed so that the voter information is accurately entered into the voter registration file in EIMS. Voter Services staff updates registration information (change of address) from electronic files received from the DMV via the CalVoter system operated by the Secretary of State's office. The Department must provide all newly registered voters and voters with changes on their registration a Voter Notification Card (VNC) when the new information is entered into the registration file. When a change is made to any voter's record because of information received from the postal service or other third party, the Department sends a card required by the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). This is a two-part card that asks the voter to respond if the new information is not correct.

Since July of 2003 Voter Services has received 271,375 affidavits of voter registration that were completed by voters. The peak period for registrations was in October 2003, the month before the Gubernatorial Recall Election, when 20,709 affidavits were received and in October 2004 and the month before the 2004 Presidential General Election, when 50,121 affidavits were received.

Prior to 2007, affidavits of registration were entered into the EIMS through a data entry process requiring that all voter information be keyed into the system. In 2007 Sacramento became a beta test site for a new DFM Associates optical character recognition (OCR) program. With this program, the affidavits are scanned into the system and the system populates the fields in the voter file automatically. Operators are now required to only enter the information that cannot be read by the computer. This process has reduced the amount of staff time needed to enter affidavits of registration by 25% to 50%. All registration staff members have been trained to complete the data entry portion of this process but some newer staff members are not yet trained to complete the scanning process. This is consistent with our general observation that clerical staff members are trained to do certain jobs within the

section but not all of the clerical staff is trained on all of the jobs necessary in the section.

While reviewing forms used by registration staff it was noted that a card is sent to 17-year olds who register to vote more than 90 days prior to their 18th birthday. The card states that the potential voter should not complete a registration form more than 90 days prior to their 18th birthday. However, the Elections Code has no mention of this 90-day limit.

Procedures are in place and utilized for all of the functions listed above. The procedure manual includes screen prints of from EIMS to assist the user. However, the EIMS vendor, DFM Associates, does not maintain a current procedures-manual for use of their product. This is a concern of the Election Manager of Voter Services.

There is also a concern in the division that staff salaries are not sufficient and are not competitive with comparable counties. The Voter Services Election Manager is especially concerned that the supervisors in the section are overburdened with tasks, and feels that there needs to be a new and higher level clerical classification in the section that could handle some of the more difficult functions and relieve some of the pressure from the Election Supervisors. Clerical workers voiced concern in private interviews that there was no lead worker in the unit that they could consult with when the supervisor was absent.

All staff members were given a questionnaire regarding the office and interviewed privately by a member of the performance review team. Results from the staff questionnaire raise a few issues for the section. Only 33% of the staff strongly agreed with the statement that they were kept well informed about issues affecting the office and only 33% strongly agreed with the statement that staff meetings were held on a regular basis. In addition 66% of the staff in Voter Services felt that there was not enough staff to get the job done. Interviews with staff indicated a feeling that the section Election Manager should hold more regular meetings with staff. The Election Manager stated that there was no set schedule for meetings and that they were sometimes postponed during busy election periods. The Election Manager, as well as both supervisors believe that additional permanent staff is needed in the section.

5-4	Concern: Not all registration staff members are trained to complete all jobs in the registration section. This could be a problem in 2008 when registration levels will likely increase due to the Presidential Election.
	Recommendation: All permanent registration staff members should be trained on all aspects of scanning and entering registration data into the EIMS and all jobs within the section.

5-5	Concern: The VRE files contain a card that is mailed to 17-year olds who complete a voter registration form. The card states that a person should not register to vote until 90-days prior to his or her 18th birthday. The Elections Code states in section 2000: (a) Every person who qualifies under Section 2 of Article II of the California Constitution and who complies with this code governing the registration of electors may vote at any election held within the territory within which he or she resides and the election is held. (b) Any person who will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the next election is eligible to register and vote at that election. The information regarding the 90-day time limit included on the card mailed to 17-year old registrants is incorrect.
	Recommendation: Affidavits of voter registration received from 17-year olds should be kept in the office and processed when the person will be 18 by the date of the next scheduled election. All forms sent to voters should be reviewed for legal accuracy and contain a code citation.
5-6	Concern: Staff classifications may not be appropriate for the work being performed and salaries paid may not be sufficient to attract and maintain an effective workforce in this section. Clerical staff voiced a concern in private interviews that they had no lead worker to consult with in the absence of the supervisor and the staff questionnaire revealed that 66% of the Voter Services staff feel that there are not enough workers to get the job done.
	Recommendation: A complete review of staff classifications and salaries should be completed for the registration section either by the County Human Resources Department or an outside consultant. The review should also study whether additional permanent staff is needed.
5-7	Concern: Staff in Voter Services feels strongly that they are not kept well informed about issues affecting them. They expressed concern in a staff questionnaire and in private interviews that division staff meetings were not being held on a regular basis.
	Recommendation**:** The Voter Services Election Manager should ensure that the VRE policy of briefing staff after Manager Meetings is carried out on a regular basis.

Voter File Maintenance:
The Registration unit of Voter Services is responsible for file maintenance. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires programs to maintain accurate voter files. The National Voter Registration Act (VRA) requires that systematic programs to remove voters from the list be completed a minimum of 90 days prior to an election at which there are candidates on the ballot for federal office. California law permits several methods of file maintenance to ensure that the voter file is as accurate as possible. List maintenance procedures are necessary to reduce waste in printing and mailing, and to ensure that only eligible voters are allowed to vote. The methods are described below:

- Elections Code section 2220 requires counties to conduct a **pre-primary election** residency confirmation mailing whereby a postcard is mailed to every voter in the county prior to a primary election. The cards state that if the voter named on the card is still a resident at the address on the card that the registration will remain active and no further action is necessary by the voter. The card asks that if the person named on the card is no longer a resident at that address that the card be returned to the election official. These cards are mailed using the **Address Correction Service (ACS)** of the Postal Service. The residency confirmation mailing using ACS results in address corrections for: voters who have moved and completed a change of address notice with the Postal Service, returned mail for voters who have moved and did not complete a change of address notice with the Postal Service, and correction information provided by voters who receive the cards. Any voter whose record is changed due to information received is mailed a notification card to confirm. Counties utilizing this method must complete the process by the 90th day prior to the primary Election. This is an efficient, but expensive method to help maintain accurate voter files. However, it is still less expensive than providing election materials to voters who have moved. It is expensive because it requires the County to mail a card to every voter in the county (Sacramento County registration as of September 2007 was 595,140) and to pay for ACS for voter's who have moved.

- In lieu of the method above, Elections Code section 2222 allows counties to use the National Change of Address (NCOA) program to update files. This method involves electronically comparing the voter registration file to the NCOA records to identify any voter who has moved and filed a change of address notice with the Postal Service. Voters who have moved have their records updated and a notice is mailed to them similar to the residency confirmation process. Previously each county using this method was required to contract with the Postal Service for this information. However, this information is now available upon request and free of charge from the California Secretary of State. This method is more cost effective than the residency confirmation process but does not identify any undeliverable mail. Therefore if a voter has moved and did not file a change of address notice with the Postal Service, his or her name would remain on the registration file when the NCOA process is complete.

- Elections Code section 2223 allows counties to use the **Address Correction Service** (**ACS)** of the Postal Service when mailing **sample ballots** for any election. Utilizing this process, the county can receive an electronic file of all voters whose sample ballots were either undeliverable or had an address correction. The Postal Service charges a fee for each address correction that is provided. This is a very effective, but somewhat expensive method of updating files after an election.

- The final choice for major file maintenance is the **Alternate Residence Confirmation (ARC),** which is detailed in Elections Code section 2224. Under the ARC process a notice is mailed to any voter who has not voted or had any update to his or her registration in the past four years. These voters receive a notice stating that records indicate that he or she has not voted in four years and the county is confirming whether the voter wishes to remain registered. There is a postage paid reply card that the voter can return if he or she wishes to remain registered. The voter must return the card to remain registered to vote. If the voter does not return the card, his or her record is moved to the inactive voter file. The list of inactive voters is required to be provided to the polling place in order that, in the event that the voter's registration was cancelled in error, the voter can be restored to the rolls and vote a ballot. A voter in this file can be reactivated upon confirming continued residence but until then, the voter does not receive election materials in the mail. This is an effective way to update records on voters who may have moved and not filed a change of address notice. However, this process cannot be utilized until the voter has failed to vote for four years.

- In addition, Elections Code section 2201 requires that an election official cancel the registration of a voter: 1) at his or her request; 2) when the mental incompetence of the voter is legally established; 3) upon proof that the voter is in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony; 4) upon receipt of a certified copy of a judgment directing the cancellation; 5) upon the death of the voter; 6) upon proof that the voter is now registered to vote in another county or another state; or 6) upon proof that the person is otherwise ineligible to vote.

Information from the Voter Services Election Manager indicates that file maintenance has been conducted in Sacramento County for the past several years using the ACS process from sample ballot mailing and periodic NCOA updates. Records of confirmation cards mailed indicate that the NCOA process has been done approximately once a quarter for the past two years. Voter Services plans to discontinue the use of the ACS process for sample ballots beginning in 2008 and to begin conducting a monthly NCOA update utilizing the free NCOA files from the Secretary of State. They additionally plan to conduct an alternate residency confirmation ARC process after every general election. Utilizing a monthly NCOA and an ARC process after each general election is a cost effective method of file maintenance.

In addition to the major file maintenance processes listed above Voter Services has procedures in place to delete registrations based on the requirements of Elections Code section 2201. The County Department of Health sends a list of deaths recorded in Sacramento County each month. Procedures are in place to cancel the registration of deceased voters. The Secretary of State sends periodic lists of deaths of Sacramento County residents who died outside of the county, but within California. Registrations are also cancelled from this information as well as lists of felony convictions received from the courts. Voter Services receives mail daily indicating that a Sacramento County registrant has registered in another county or another state. Voter registrations are cancelled based on this information.

Voter Services updates voter files in compliance with state and federal law and has department procedures in place for this process. However there is no set calendar in place to establish when the major file maintenance processes will take place and the procedure manual is not in good order. This could lead to problems with the file maintenance program. As an example an NCOA file was run in early December 2007. Conducting systematic list maintenance procedures within 90 days of an election violates the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act. This file was run to correct voter registration records less than 60 days prior to the Presidential Primary Election. Voter's records were changed and confirmation cards were mailed to over 18,000 voters between December 11 and December 13, 2007. Making large changes to the voter file within 60 days of an election could result in inadvertent changes that keep an eligible voter from receiving a sample ballot and other election material.

Counties utilizing the pre-primary election residency confirmation procedure in Elections Code section 2220 must complete the process by the 90th day immediately prior to the primary election. Elections Code section 2222 allows the NCOA process in-lieu of the full residency confirmation. Elections Code section 2222 does not set a 90 day deadline but it would be prudent to comply with it.

5-8	Concern: The timing of file maintenance may be in violation of legal requirements. There is no calendar established to ensure that the file maintenance procedures are done on a regularly scheduled basis and that they do not violate legal deadlines.
	Recommendation: The VRE should review NVRA section 8c2A regarding the timing of file maintenance. The Voter Services Election Manager should consult with the management team each year to establish a file maintenance schedule for the upcoming year. A plan detailing which methods of updating as-well-as timelines and responsibilities should be prepared and monitored.

Petition Processing:
The Voter Services division processes petitions for initiatives, referendum, recalls, candidate nomination and those seeking to submit signature-in-lieu of filing fees. The primary responsibility for processing initiative, referendum and recall petitions is with the Registration section while the Vote by Mail section handles nomination petitions. This process includes receiving the signed petitions, determining the raw number of voter signatures filed on a petition, setting up the petition in the computer system, establishing the random signatures to be checked on petitions (where applicable), verifying if the signatures filed are valid or invalid and reporting this information.

Initiative, Referendum and Recall Petitions:
The California Constitution establishes the right of the people to the initiative, referendum and recall processes, which, respectively, allows the voters of the state to place issues on the ballot to propose laws, repeal laws or remove elected officials from office through a petition process. These petition processes are also available to voters at the local level. The Registration section is responsible for the signature verification process on these petitions.

The Secretary of State notifies counties whenever a statewide petition goes into circulation. Voter Services enters this information into an electronic spreadsheet program to monitor which petitions may be filed. At the time the reviewers were in the office there were 40 statewide petitions in circulation. While reviewing the petitions in circulation it appeared that several of them could be filed during the vote by mail voting period for the February Presidential Primary election. There did not seem to be a plan in place in the office to handle such a contingency. By contacting the Secretary of State office it became clear that only one of the petitions in circulation would be filed during the busy election period. However, Voter Services should develop a plan to handle multiple petitions that could be filed during a busy election period.

The most common statewide petitions filed are initiative petitions that seek to place a measure on the ballot proposing a new state law. Petitions are circulated in sections and filed with county election offices. When the petitions are filed in the office the filer is provided with a receipt that notes the estimated number of sections (pages) and estimated number of signatures on the petition.

Elections Code section 9030 provides that an election official has eight working days to determine the total number of signatures filed. Petition sections are taken into the office work area where staff separates the pages according to the number of signatures on each page. When this step is completed data on the number of pages and number of signatures on each page is entered into a module in the EIMS. The EIMS then produces a report with the total number of unverified signatures on the petition. This is called the “raw count”. The raw count for statewide petitions is forwarded to the Secretary of State who determines if sufficient signatures have been

filed statewide to possibly qualify the measure for the ballot. For local petitions, Voter Services determines whether sufficient signatures have been submitted to qualify the measure for a city or county ballot. Petition sections are placed in stacks in trays that are stored on carts that can be taken into a secure room when the petition is not being reviewed.

If it is determined that a sufficient number of raw signatures have been filed to possibly qualify the measure for the ballot, Voter Services runs a report in EIMS that selects a random sample of petition signatures to be verified. Elections Code section 9030 requires the election official to verify 3% of the signatures on the petition or 500 signatures, whichever is larger. Staff members use the random number report to determine which of the signatures on the petition will be randomly examined for validity. Signatures are verified in a petition module in EIMS. Staff must enter the voter's name or address into the system to determine if the voter is registered to vote at the address on the petition and if the signature on the petition matches the signature on the voter's affidavit of voter registration. State law provides that this process must be completed in 30 working days.

After all random signatures have been verified, the Registration Supervisor runs a report from EIMS that details the total number of valid and invalid signatures on the petition. For statewide petitions, these numbers are filed with the Secretary of State. An estimate of the total number of valid signatures based on the random sample is calculated. If the total number of valid signatures is 95% or less than needed to qualify the measure, the petition fails, and no further action is required. If the total number of valid signatures is 110% or more than needed to qualify, the measure qualifies for the ballot, and no further action is required. However, if the total number of valid signatures is between 95% and 110% of the number needed to qualify, a full examination of every signature is required.

In the past six months Voter Services has processed six statewide petitions. These petitions contained a total of 196,635 raw signatures. During the random sample verification process 5,900 signatures were verified. One petition went to a full signature check requiring staff to verify the validity of 45,469 signatures. Since 2004 Voter Services has processed 46 petitions and verified 187,184 signatures. According to staff in the Secretary of State office there have been no problems with the VRE filing timely and accurate reports regarding statewide petition signatures.

A similar process is utilized for county, city and district initiatives. However, these petitions are handled entirely in the office with no interaction with the Secretary of State.

Nomination and Signature-in-lieu of Filing Fee Petitions:

Staff from the Vote by Mail section handles the verification of signatures on candidate nomination and signature-in-lieu of filing fee petitions. Vote by Mail staff is used for

this process, as the candidate filing period is normally a time when Vote by Mail is not busy.

When a candidate files these petitions with the Candidate Services division, they are transferred to the Vote by Mail section for signature verification. A verification process similar to initiative petitions is utilized by staff to determine the validity of signatures filed by the candidate.

Procedures are in place and utilized for each step of the candidate petition process. In addition to the VRE procedures manual the staff utilizes the signature verification guidelines approved by the California Secretary of State.

5-9	Concern: Voter Services has no plan in place to handle multiple statewide petitions that could be filed during a busy election-planning period.
	Recommendation: Voter Services should develop a plan to handle multiple petitions that could be filed during a busy election-planning period. This plan should include how to hire and train staff; as well as plans to set up additional workspace if necessary.

Provisional Ballots:
The Registration section is responsible for receiving voted provisional ballots and determining if the ballot should be counted and, if so, preparing valid ballot for counting.

Elections Code section 14310 requires that any voter who comes to a polling place on Election Day claiming to be properly registered to vote and whose eligibility cannot be determined by poll workers must be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are cast for a number of reasons. A voter who requested a ballot by mail but either did not receive it or lost it may come to the polls to vote. A voter in this category would have his or her record on the poll roster noted as a vote by mail voter. Poll workers are instructed to have a voter in this situation cast a provisional ballot. Other reasons for casting provisional ballots are that a voter is on the list of inactive voters, the voter is in the incorrect polling place and not on the roster, the voter is a first time voter who registered to vote by mail and does not have identification required by HAVA, or the voter is not registered at all.

Prior to 2004, if a voter cast a provisional ballot in a precinct other than his own, the ballot was not counted, even if the ballot cast contained some candidates or issues upon which the voter was eligible to vote. In 2004 the Elections Code was amended to provide that if a voter is otherwise eligible to vote in that county, an election official

must count the votes for all candidates and measures for which the voter was eligible to vote.

This change in the law has resulted in an increase in the number of provisional ballots counted and required a new step in the provisional ballot process. If the voter is eligible to vote and has voted a ballot containing candidates and issues on which the voter is entitled to vote, the ballot is counted during canvass period. If the voter is eligible to vote but has voted a ballot containing candidates and issues on which the voter is not entitled to vote, the ballot is counted for only those candidates and issued on which the voter was entitled. This requires staff to remake a ballot marking on the contests on which the voter was eligible. If the voter was not eligible to vote, the ballot is not counted.

Provisional ballots are the same as the ballots cast by all voters in the polling place except that the provisional ballot is sealed into an envelope before being deposited in the ballot box. The provisional voter must complete the provisional ballot envelope with his or her name, address and signature.

Poll workers return voted provisional ballots on election night in plastic envelopes. When the envelopes arrive at the election office they are sorted into precinct order and the contents verified.

During the official canvass, staff from the Registration section reviews each provisional ballot envelope to determine if the voter was eligible to vote and that the voter's signature matches the signature on the voter's affidavit of voter registration. Before processing provisional ballots to determine if they will count, voting history must be given to polling place voters. Voting credit is entered into EIMS using an automated system. Each voter record printed in the poll roster has a bar code that identifies the voter. Staff goes through each precinct roster and scans the bar code, using a scanning gun, for each voter who has signed the roster at the polls on Election Day. This information goes directly into the EIMS so that any inquiry on a voter will immediately show that the voter voted at the polls on Election Day.

Vote by mail ballots that are turned in on Election Day are also processed prior to provisional ballots and the records of these voters also show voting credit when their ballot envelope is processed. These steps must be done prior to processing provisional ballots to ensure that a voter does not vote twice.

Each provisional ballot envelope must be individually checked to see if the voter was eligible to vote. This is done through a module in the EIMS system. Once eligibility is determined, envelopes are sorted by precinct, opened and inspected. This process is conducted in a manner as to protect voter confidentiality. Damaged ballots and ballots with write-in votes are separated for additional processing. The ballots ready to be counted are kept in precinct order and given to Voting Systems and Technology to count.

In the 2004 Presidential General Election 13,186 provisional ballots were cast in polling places on Election Day. Of these 9,251 were valid and counted as cast. An additional 1,463 ballots were cast by eligible voters but had to be remade as the voter had voted out of precinct and on one or more contests on which he or she was not eligible to vote.

In the 2006 Gubernatorial General Election 6,191 provisional ballots were cast and 4,599 were valid and counted as cast. An additional 766 ballots were cast by eligible voters but had to be remade as the voter had voted out of precinct and on one or more contests on which he or she was not eligible.

Voter Service is utilizing the procedures in place for the processing provisional ballots. Based on interviews with staff there appear to be no problems in the provisional ballot area. However, it is important to note that the audit team was not in the office during a time when provisional ballots were being processed.

	Concern: None
	Recommendation: None

VOTE BY MAIL

The Vote by Mail section of Voter Services is responsible for the vote by mail process (formerly known as absentee voting). The vote by mail process involves several different categories of voters. These categories include:

1. Permanent vote by mail voters: Voters who have applied to automatically receive a vote by mail ballot in all elections;

2. Regular vote by mail voters: Voters who apply to vote by mail in a specific election;

3. Special vote by mail voters: Voters who are currently out of the area serving in the military forces of the United States and spouses and dependents of a member of the military forces, voters serving on a merchant vessel of the United States, and voters who are temporarily residing outside the territorial limits of the United States or the District of Columbia;

4. Federal vote by mail voters: U.S. citizens permanently living outside the United States and who no longer have a residence in the U.S. may register and vote by mail for federal offices only from their last county of residence immediately prior to their departure from the United States.

5. Mail ballot precincts: Any precinct with fewer than 250 voters can be designated as a mail ballot precinct by the Registrar of Voters.

The vote by mail process includes maintenance of the list of permanent mail voters, maintaining lists of military and overseas voters, processing applications, and mailing ballots to voters in a timely manner prior to an election. In certain cases ballots may be faxed to military and overseas voters and Voter Services handles this process.

Vote by Mail staff must accept and account for returned voted ballots, by verifying voter signatures on vote by mail envelopes, and opening and assembling the voted ballots for counting. This process must be completed while at all times protecting the security and privacy of the ballots.

The Vote by Mail section also handles voters who vote in person in the office of the Registrar of Voters and the processing of nomination petitions.

The California Elections Code was changed in 2002 to allow any voter to become a permanent vote by mail voter. Previously only elderly and disabled voters were

allowed to request permanent status. Since that time the number of permanent vote by mail voters has steadily increased. As of November 2007, there were over 205,000 permanent vote by mail voters in Sacramento County representing approximately 34% of the registered voters. In the 2006 Primary Election, 55.4% of all ballots cast were cast by mail and in the 2006 General Election, 50.2% of all ballots cast were cast by mail. In raw numbers, 113,826 VBM ballots were cast in the 2002 General Election. That number increased to 160,445 for the 2004 General Election and 184,815 in the 2006 General Election. It is reasonable to expect that the number of vote by mail ballots cast in the 2008 elections will exceed 200,000. This increase in vote by mail has required Voter Services to automate their processing.

Mailing:

An outside vendor, AdMail located in Sacramento, handles the initial mailing of vote by mail ballots for permanent vote by mail voters. Voter Services provides this vendor with an electronic file of the permanent voters and the envelopes and ballots needed. The vendor addresses the voter envelopes and then utilizes an automated inserting machine to insert the correct precinct ballot, instructions and return envelope into the envelope for mailing. The vendor also mails these ballots. Voter Services sends county staff to AdMail during this process to help with quality control.

This initial run of ballots consists of over 200,000 in a countywide election. Vote by mail ballots that are mailed to voters whose addresses are within the Sacramento area are mailed via third class mail with a special "Election Material" logo approved by the Postal Service. With use of the approved logo the Postal Service promises 1st class delivery at third class rate. Mailing via third class reduces the postage cost per envelope from $.41 to $.198. Assuming an initial mailing of 200,000 ballots mailing via third class reduces the cost from $82,000 to $39,600, a saving of $42,500. The VRE should be recognized for utilizing this cost saving method.

There was a major problem with the vote by mail process in the 2006 General Election. Each ballot consisted of two cards in due to the large number of candidate contests and ballot measures. Each voter should have received an "A" ballot card and a "B" ballot card. However, after the mailing had gone out, it was discovered that some voters had received either two "A" cards or two "B" cards. Voter Services staff investigated and found that the ballot printer for that election (Eagle Printing) had inadvertently packed some shipping boxes with mixed "A" and "B" cards in them. AdMail completed some of the work inserting the ballots on a graveyard shift when there was no county staff present to assist with quality control. Staff from AdMail did not conduct adequate quality control and in cases where the ballots were packed incorrectly they mailed either two "A" cards or two "B" cards instead of one "A" and one "B".

After Voter Services investigated and identified the problem a letter was sent to every voter who received a ballot from the initial run. Voters were asked to check their

ballots and call the Registrar of Voters if they had incorrect ballot cards. Over 1,000 voters called and were told to destroy the old ballot and new ballots were mailed. This was a reasonable solution to this problem.

New procedures have been implemented to ensure that this problem is not repeated. The Registrar has established new quality control procedures that requiring: (1) all boxes of ballots to be checked before they can be placed in an inserter; and, (2) county staff be present during this process.

However, the vendor works 24-hours per day and it is often not possible for the county to send staff during the graveyard shift. The mailing vendor has developed a bar coding program for the ballots that would match ballot type, precinct and card type to the outgoing envelope. This program has been developed but has not yet been installed or tested. This situation will not be a problem in the February 2008 Presidential Primary because there will only be a one card ballot. However, it is likely that there will be two ballot cards in either the June 2008 Primary Election or the 2008 Presidential General Election where this problem could reoccur if further steps are not taken.

Military and overseas ballots are mailed from the VRE office beginning 60 days before the election. Official ballots are mailed to these voters if they have been printed. When they are not available, the staff can request ballots printed by the ballot on demand printer in Voting Systems and Technology. These ballots can be printed in each ballot type and can have non-federal races marked over for federal only ballots. The Vote by Mail section has procedures in place for federal and overseas voters and also utilizes the resource manual produced by the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO).

Requests for Ballots:

Daily requests for mail ballots are received by mail and by fax. They are entered into the EIMS system. Applications received from sample ballots of voters have a bar code that can be read into the system while other applications must be keyed into the system.

Envelopes are printed once or twice daily, for voters processed that day, during the vote by mail period that begins 29 days before the election and ends seven days before the election. Ballots are inserted into the envelopes either by using an in-house inserting machine, or in cases of small groups, inserted by hand. The Registrar of Voters contracts with a mailing firm (Quicksort) that picks up the trays of ballots at least once a day during the vote by mail period and mails the ballots. Quicksort is a contract vendor used by the county mailroom to presort, meter, pick up and deliver mail to the post office. There is normally a high volume of daily ballots that they pick them up from the VRE office, meter and presort them and take them to the post office. They are mailed non-profit for the first three weeks, then after that go out first class to ensure they get to the voters on time.

In-Person Voting:

Voters may also vote in person in the office of the Registrar of Voters beginning 29 days before an election up to the close of polls on Election Day pursuant to Elections Code section 3018. Section 3018 also allows the election official to establish satellite locations for in-person voting. The VRE does not open satellite offices but has staff available to process applications and issue ballots to voters in the office. The VRE utilizes a paper ballot voting system. Satellite offices are not utilized due to the difficulty stocking and securing remote locations with paper ballots for hundreds of ballot types.

Voters enter the office into a large well-lit lobby. Applications for ballots are given to a vote by mail clerk at the counter who enters the voter into the EIMS, produces a return envelope for the voter and retrieves the correct ballot. The staff of Campaign Services assists with this process. Ballots used for this process are stored in a secure room near the front counter. Private voting booths are available in the lobby as-well-as AutoMark voting devices for voters with disabilities. Voters who cast ballots in the office deposit the voted ballot envelopes in a locked ballot box that is located under the front counter. These ballots are processed and counted the same as the voted ballots received by mail.

Returned Ballots:

Voted ballots returned by mail are received on a daily basis until the close of polls on Election Day. Ballots that are voted in or returned directly to the office by the voter are placed in a locked ballot box at the front counter. This ballot box is brought back to the processing area two to three times per day up to the close of polls on Election Day.

In the processing area all ballots envelopes are reviewed to ensure that the voter has signed. State law requires that the signature of the voter on the vote by mail envelope be checked to ensure that it matches the signature on the voter's affidavit of voter registration. Envelopes without signatures, which can be up to 2,000 in a major election, are sorted and filed alphabetically in trays. Voter Services staff makes telephone calls to these voters informing them that they must come into the office to sign the ballot or it cannot be counted. If staff is unable to reach a voter by telephone a letter is mailed. This procedure could be a problem for many vote by mail voters who cannot travel to the election office. Many counties mail these ballots back to the voter requesting a signature.

Ballot envelopes that are signed and ready for processing are placed in trays and taken to the warehouse area where they are sorted using an automated Pitney-Bowes sorting machine. This is one of the new automation tools installed by Voter Services to improve the speed and accuracy of processing vote by mail ballots.

As the ballots go through the sorter the envelopes are scanned to capture the signature and other information on the back of the envelope. The scanned information is downloaded into the EIMS by batch. The EIMS system then combines the scanned information with the signature of the voter on the voter's affidavit of voter registration. Operators are able to view and compare on their computer terminal both the original signature of the voter and the signature on the vote by mail envelope without handling the actual voted ballot envelope. This greatly improves the speed with which signatures can be verified. It appears that in the processing of returned ballots, staff is also comparing addresses. A past communication from the Secretary of State's office directed counties not to check addresses.

Voted ballots are kept in a secure locked cage in the warehouse until the signature verification process is complete. Prior to installation of this system, operators were required to handle the actual ballot envelope to view the signatures. The new process greatly enhances security by keeping the voted ballots in their envelopes in a secure locked cage until they can be processed.

Once all signatures have been verified the ballots envelopes are ready to be opened. The Pitney-Bowes sorting machine is again used to sort ballot envelopes into precinct order for opening. A recent change in state law requires counties to tally vote by mail ballots by precinct. Prior to the installation of the Pitney-Bowes machine, vote by mail ballots had to be hand sorted in a time consuming process that was fraught with error. The new process is fast and accurate.

Ballot envelopes are taken to another room in the office to be opened and inspected. Damaged ballots and ballots with write-in votes are separated for special processing. More information on this process is in the Precinct Operations Chapter. Ballots ready for counting are placed in trays in precinct order in preparation for counting. Prior to being taken to the counting room the voted ballots are stored in a secure room. The secure room used to store the voted ballots is the same room used to store signed petitions. Due to the increase in vote by mail, this room is no longer large enough to handle the volume of ballots in a major election. This could be a problem during the Presidential General Election.

Counting:

California law allows counties to begin processing vote by mail ballots beginning seven working days before an election. Processing entails all steps up to and including running the ballots through ballot readers. However, no reports of vote totals may be generated until the close of polls on election night. When counting begins the voted ballots are taken in trays to the vote counting room where they are counted, sealed in boxes and stored there. Staff is able to ensure that the correct number of ballots have been counted by comparing the reports from the Pitney-Bowes sorting machine on the number of envelopes sorted, the EIMS system for the

number of signatures verified and reports from the ES&S voting equipment on the number of ballots counted.

Detailed procedures are in place for the entire vote by mail process. The procedure manual for vote by mail is in chapter order and numbered for easy use. It is the most useful procedure manual in the Voter Service section and could serve as a model for updating the procedure manuals in the other Voter Services areas.

There are also procedures in place for serving military and overseas voters. CACEO produced an excellent manual on military and overseas voting that Sacramento County utilizes. It is important to note that the VRE played a leading role in producing this statewide manual. Diane Jones, Voter Services Election Manager for Sacramento County VRE served as the Chair of the subcommittee of CACEO that produced this manual.

5-10	Concern: An error occurred in 2006 resulting in over 1,000 voters receiving either two “A” ballot cards or two “B” ballot cards in the initial mailing of ballots to permanent vote by mail voters and voters in mail ballot precincts. While new procedures put in place by the county will help they are insufficient to ensure that it is not repeated.
	Recommendation: Voter Services should work with the mailing vendor, the Voting Systems and Technology division and the printing vendor to install and test the bar code program to ensure quality control and prevent sending the wrong ballots when multiple ballot cards are involved. This must be done before the next election where voters will receive more than one card ballots.
5-11	Concern: Voters who return vote by mail envelopes without signatures are either phoned or sent a letter informing them that they must come into the office and sign the envelope in order for the ballot to be counted. This could be a major problem for voters who are not able to travel to South Sacramento to the election office.
	Recommendation: Voter Services should develop a plan to re-mail the unsigned ballot envelopes to vote by mail voters with instructions to sign and return by mail, if time allows, or to take the signed envelope to a polling place on Election Day. Staff should consult with County Counsel to ensure that their instructions are clear and comply with legal requirements.

5-12	Concern: VRE may be improperly disqualifying returned vote by mail ballots when addresses do not match the voter file.
	Recommendation: Review past communications from the Secretary of State, contact Secretary of State's office, and/or other counties to determine the exact guidelines for verifying returned vote by mail ballots and update procedures accordingly..
5-13	Concern: After the voted ballot envelopes are opened, the ballots are placed in trays and stored in a secure room waiting counting. Voted ballots are transported on carts to the voting room when they are ready to be counted. Voted ballots, waiting to be counted, are stored in the same room as signed petitions. There has been a huge increase in the number of mail voters since this office was constructed. The ballot storage room is no longer large enough to adequately store the voted ballots in major elections.
	Recommendation: Plans should be made to establish a larger secure storage area for voted ballots after they are removed from their envelopes and before they are taken to the counting room.

VOTER ASSISTANCE

The Registration section of Voter Services is responsible for staffing and operating the phone bank beginning seven days before each major election to respond to calls from the public for voter registration questions and problems. They are also responsible for responding to e-mails on Election Day. Currently no one is assigned responsibility for answering e-mails on Election Day.

In the days leading up to, and including Election Day, thousands of voters have questions pertaining to the election, primarily involving whether they are registered and where they vote. Assistance is available by calling the office - numbers are printed on the sample ballot, in the telephone book and on the department website. The website also allows a voter to check polling location on their own or send an e-mail to the department for assistance.

Phone Bank:

Telephone services for the department are provided by the County Office of Communication and Information Technology (OCIT). There are three trunks of lines coming into the building and 72 individual lines. These trunks and lines are shared with the Sheriff's Department that is located in the same building.

Prior to an election the system allows up to 40 lines to be routed into the Registration unit for the election phone bank. These lines are activated seven days before an election and all calls to the department's main phone number, which is published in the telephone directory and on the cover of the sample ballot booklet, go to this phone bank. This effectively bypasses the regular automated answering system whereby a caller can press "0" to speak to an operator or other numbers to be transferred to a specific section. This process also fails to make use of the IVR system that can automatically direct a voter to his or her polling place without speaking to an operator.

The IVR system can answer 40 lines simultaneously and direct a voter to his or her polling place without the assistance of an operator. These 40 lines are in addition to the 40 lines going to the phone bank. The IVR system is the only part of the telephone system that can produce statistics regarding the number of calls received and it has been shown that it is not being fully utilized. The majority of voters calling on Election Day are attempting to locate their polling place and an automated answering system that could also transfer callers to the IVR would speed the process and ensure that operators were available to assist with the more difficult election questions.

Approximately one month prior to every election the registration supervisor determines the number of phone lines needed to serve the public during the last

seven days before the election. This determination is based on prior election experience. However, the current telephone system (excluding IVR) does not provide statistics on the total number of calls received on Election Day resulting in the supervisor having no empirical information on which to determine need.

The system allows for up to 40 additional lines to be added. The registration supervisor places an order for the number of phone lines to be added to the registration pool area with the Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager has the lines installed and the registration supervisor recruits and trains the temporary employees to handle the telephones on Election Day.

Up to 32 additional temporary staff are added to the registration section to augment permanent staff in handling telephone calls during the last seven days before an election. The Registration Supervisor provides four to six hours of training to the temporary staff, conducting training for three to four people at a time. The reviewers were not in the office at a time when this training was conducted but this does not appear to be an efficient method of training. Training on three to four temporary staff at a time for four to six hours would take several days.

Training includes how to answer the phone, how to look up a voter in the voter file and determine the voter's polling place, and how to answer frequently asked questions. Each temporary staff member answering Election Day telephones is provided with a notebook containing frequently asked question, information about elections and contact information for neighboring county election offices and the Secretary of State. The notebook provided to the temporary staff is helpful but may not contain sufficient information thus requiring a high level of supervision on Election Day to ensure that voters receive accurate information.

It is not possible to view statistics from the current telephone system to determine exact needs. There is no information available for such basic information as how many calls are received on Election Day; what was the average wait time; or how many callers hung up before being served. This lack of empirical data makes it nearly impossible for the staff to adequately prepare to serve the public. The VRE is dependent on the OCIT for telephone service. OCIT operates the telephone system for the entire county government. The VRE and OCIT should immediately make plans to upgrade the telephone system that will provide information regarding the volume and use of the phones on Election Day. This is essential to enable the VRE to adequately plan and to successfully serve the public on Election Day.

In addition, the staff answering Election Day calls does not keep adequate records of types of calls received to determine what questions are asked most frequently or what problems are most common. Without this information it is difficult to train temporary staff properly or to know where automation might be of more assistance.

Election Day response to voters is a critical customer service area for any election department. Election staff must be available to respond to and solve voter problems quickly to ensure that voters are able vote on Election Day. Sacramento County has an excellent facility in place to add additional phone operators for this service.

However, the current phone system has limitations that need to be addressed. In the 2004 Presidential General Election the phone system was overwhelmed and some callers had wait times of over 35 minutes. Improvements have been made to the system since then but there has not been an election with as high of a call volume since them. It is extremely important that the telephone system be prepared for the volume of calls that will come in for the Presidential Primary and General Elections in 2008. In an interview with Pat Groff, Director of OCIT, he agreed that the phone system is a problem and "seems to be a struggle every year." The VRE and OCIT should immediately address this issue.

E-mail:

Voters may also contact the department using e-mail. Voters who go to the VRE web page can click the "contact us" icon. The voter is taken to a page with a listing of telephone numbers or another icon that allows the voter to send an e-mail to the department. During interviews with staff it was discovered that no one is available to respond to these e-mails on Election Day. This is a problem as more people use the Internet and e-mail for communication. The department should immediately make plans to have staff available to monitor and respond to these e-mails on Election Day.

5-14	Concern: Temporary phone staff is trained by the registration supervisor in small groups of three to four employees. Each training session takes from four to six hours. This is not an efficient method of training when up to 32 temporary staff are hired for major elections.
	Recommendation: Conduct larger training classes for Election Day phone banks of 16 to 20 temporary telephone workers utilizing a training room, conference room or the registration pool area.
5-15	Concern: Temporary staff answering phones during the last seven days before an election is provided with a notebook containing frequently asked questions and other information. This is an excellent tool, but the current notebook does not contain sufficient information and is not as user-friendly as it could be. Therefore, more permanent staff time is needed to supervise which takes them away from solving more difficult problems.
	Recommendation: The notebook used by Election phone bank operators should be reviewed and updated to contain more detailed information for temporary staff.

5-16	Concern: Seven days prior to the election ALL telephone calls made to the main number for the VRE automatically come into the registration phone bank. A majority of calls coming to the phone bank are likely asking for a polling place location but they are not being transferred to the IVR system.
	Recommendation: Incoming calls during the seven days prior to the election should be answered by an automated system that will transfer voters who need polling place information directly to the IVR system and other calls to operators for assistance. The VRE currently uses an IVR system for this purpose that can handle 40 calls at one time. Statistics from the IVR indicate that there have never had more than 30 calls on the IVR at one time. This automated system should be used to free up operators to assist voters with other services.
5-17	Concern: The public may not be aware of the number to call for IVR assistance in locating their polling place. Even though the IVR number is inside the sample ballot, the front cover of the sample ballot only lists the general number that goes to the phone bank.
	Recommendation: Until the phone system can be changed/improved, redesign the front cover of the sample ballot pamphlet to more clearly show the phone numbers and include both the general number and the IVR number.
5-18	Concern: Voters are able to send e-mails to the VRE through the website. On Election Day there is no one available to answer the e-mails that come in from the public. It is unclear if some of these requests via e-mail could be because the phone lines are busy or there are long waits.
	Recommendation: The VRE should have dedicated operators on Election Day who monitor and respond to e-mail requests from voters.
5-19	Concern: The current Election Day phone system is old and has several problems, including a limited number of trunk lines into the building. The system does not provide useful statistical reports that would provide the VRE necessary information to determine phone needs in future elections. Because of this limitation it is unclear if the current number of telephone lines is sufficient.
	Recommendation: The VRE and OCIT should conduct a complete study of the phone system to determine if the current system has sufficient incoming lines and to make improvements to statistical reporting and enhanced customer features.

Chapter 6

VOTING SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Note: The following abbreviations are used throughout Chapter 6 and are listed here as an easy reference for the reader.

DFM = Vendor for the Election Information Management System
EIMS = Election Information Management System Provided By DFM
ES&S = Vendor for the Voting System
IT = Information Technology
L & A = Logic and Accuracy
OCIT = County Office of Communications and Information Technology
VRE = Voter Registration and Elections Office
VST = Voting Systems and Technology Division

OVERALL DESCRIPTION

The Voting Systems and Technology division (VST) is one of four divisions in the Voter Registration and Elections office (VRE) and reports to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. The VST consists of six positions: one Election Manager; two Information Technology Analysts – one for hardware and one for software; and three Senior Information Technology Technicians.

In general, the VST team is responsible for operation of all technology related to the mission of the department. The VRE is the "owner of the data" and the VST supports operation of all the applications indicated below. The Office of Communications and Information Technology (OCIT) is generally responsible for maintaining and upgrading support for these applications, although VST does perform some database operations as well.

VST is generally responsible for supervision and maintenance of the technology functions in the VRE, including maintenance and operation of desktop computer systems and networks; monitoring and enforcing administrative security procedures for the video monitoring system; managing and coordinating Information Technology (IT) programs in conjunction with the conduct of primary, general, municipal, special, Mello-Roos, retirement, and internal county elections; optimization and continuous improvement of office IT systems and resources; reviewing and evaluating system applications developed by vendors for use in office programs; and coordinating software releases and upgrades.

VST is responsible for routine office IT functions such as operating system log-in directions, daily data back-up procedures, email operation and retention procedures, creation of email user accounts, and printer installation.

VST is responsible for the operation of IT equipment and procedures for a wide range of programs necessary for the secure and accurate conduct of elections, including: integration of the Election Information Management System (EIMS) with election program functional requirements; the Unity software used for ballot and sample ballot layout; maintenance and operation of the statewide voter registration database interface; use of the QuarkXPress software used for ballot design; basic maintenance of the VRE web site; the phone system; campaign disclosure software; voting equipment; voting equipment security systems; systems for inventory and tracking of voting equipment; the Pitney-Bowes mail ballot sorting equipment; disaster planning; logic and accuracy testing; central processing of vote by mail ballots; election day support; ballot tabulation; reporting of election results; retirement board elections; off-site data storage; polling place look up systems for both phone and web site access by voters; and other miscellaneous programs.

VST is a critical participant in the preparation, conduct, and management of election processes. The team has a variety of program responsibilities that affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the VRE. Election processes in which VST participates include: ballot design, layout, printing, and proofing; candidate qualification; candidate campaign disclosure requirements, sample ballot production and distribution; management of voter registration information to appropriately assign voters to voting locations; management of the vote by mail voting process; provision of information to the public through the VRE web site; tracking and other security measures related to voting equipment; ballot tabulation, and; reporting of election results. In addition, all of these processes must be administered with a transparency that encourages public confidence in the integrity of the election process.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

Administering an election requires coordination and implementation of multiple processes under tight timelines with no margin for error. Technology is a critical component in the success or failure of this coordination and implementation. The process of election administration has, in the past decade, become more and more dependent on technology. Voting equipment, election management processes such as ballot layout and mapping, and other processes are no longer manual in nature. On the one hand, this technology enables the VRE to be more productive, to do more work with fewer resources. On the other hand, it requires that the personnel and salary structures adapt to ensure that appropriate personnel can be recruited and retained.

The VST program manager expressed concern that the current job classification structure does not provide adequate opportunities for career advancement within the VRE, and that current employees may begin looking elsewhere for new opportunities.

In addition, concern was expressed that there are not enough positions within the VRE to ensure that each critical position have a back-up who is able to step in should the current occupant relocate or for any other reason not be available. Additionally, concern was expressed that the current salary structure could result in some IT job classifications receiving a higher salary than the manager who is supervising those positions. Finally, the Chief Information Officer for Sacramento County indicated that the Election Manager position should be upgraded and reclassified to an IT Manager level in order to appropriately reflect the duties of that position, and to enhance opportunities for retention at that position.

VST appears to have excellent management. The Election Manager who supervises VST is universally regarded by stakeholders who were interviewed for this report, as having exceptional technical skills and management ability.

The current VST staff similarly appear to be very capable, motivated, and technically adept at their program functions, and have been proactive in managing their responsibilities. For example, the VRE requested OCIT to conduct a review of the security of the network infrastructure for the department. OCIT issued its "Network Audit Findings" report on October 10, 2007. The audit addressed the security of the public kiosks, the network infrastructure, public areas, and wireless networks. The audit report indicated:

- Wireless network: "The Voters Registration facility does not allow for wireless connectivity …None of the access points found are a threat to the integrity of the Voters network… The recommended action is to continue monitoring of wireless devices …,

- Front lobby: "There is no recommended action …"

- Media room: "There is no recommended action …"

- Telco closet: "There is no recommended action for the Telco Closet or network equipment."

- Public access kiosks: The publicly accessible kiosks (there are three in the VRE) were evaluated against the "Public Access Computers Security Policy and Standards" that were recommended by the Information Technology Policy Board and became effective on March 1, 2007. Of the three kiosks, the first provided access only to a PowerPoint presentation and no action was recommended. The second kiosk had been removed prior to the audit to address a security concern, the concern was fixed, and the unit is back in service. The third kiosk provides access to financial disclosure information via the FileNet application and was, at the time of the audit, connected to the Wide Area Network, posing a possible security risk. The audit made several recommendations to address this

vulnerability and these recommendations have been evaluated and improvements have been identified and are in the process of being implemented.

The audit report concluded that: “Overall there are no concerns for network vulnerabilities at the Voters (VRE) location.”

It should be noted that the countywide policy for review of publicly accessible computers is itself a positive program and includes physical standards, network standards, and operating system standards. The policy and standards generally require that: (1) each computer be secure against theft or malicious use; (2) public access be restricted to approved uses; (3) any new or modified system be reviewed prior to public use; (4) the new or modified system undergo a post-installation review to verify compliance with county policies; (5) regular, ongoing security audits be conducted on publicly accessible equipment, and; (6) non-complying equipment be removed from service. A Security Perimeter Team is required to be established to conduct periodic assessments, and to identify necessary or useful staff training.

There was some concern expressed by staff that OCIT, though generally responsive, is not as “customer service” oriented as might be desirable, and that fees for service at times appear higher than reasonable.

The VRE currently encourages IT personnel from within the department to participate on countywide committees on IT related projects, so that these employees can increase their skill levels.

It should also be noted that the county is in the process of implementing a document-imaging program to facilitate public access to materials. This development has particular application for the VRE’s ability to make financial disclosure information easily available to the public, the media, candidates, and others. More information on this system is contained in the Campaign Services Chapter.

In the course of interviewing staff and stakeholders, several concerns about VST and its role and function were articulated or discovered, including:

SALARY COMPACTION: The potential for some IT staff to be compensated at a higher level than the VST Election Manager.

FRAGMENTATION OF RESPONSIBILIITY: Not all election technology functions report to the VST; for example, the GIS mapping position reports to the Precinct Operations Manager.

PROCEDURES: VST has general responsibility for the management and maintenance of the data driven systems that are the foundation of all election administration processes, as well as the functioning of routine office technology. The

VRE has developed and maintains procedures for each of these functions. In their current form, these procedures appear to be more of a collection of separate program descriptions, rather than an integrated manual that a new employee could use to understand and perform required procedures.

CROSS TRAINING AND PROGRAM BACK UP: Technology is integrated into virtually every aspect of election administration and the loss of one or more key personnel at a key phase of election planning could result in unacceptable levels of program risk. Though current personnel appear capable of performing each function, it is not clear that there is adequate staffing to insure that each critical function has a qualified back up in the event that the program lead is not available when needed.

RELATIONSHIP TO OCIT: The relationship between OCIT and VST is mostly positive, with VST staff indicating that OCIT staff “are always there when we need them” in critical times. There was some concern expressed by VST staff that OCIT, though generally responsive, is not as “customer service” oriented as might be desirable, and that fees for service at times appear higher than reasonable. In addition, concern was expressed that requests for assistance to OCIT many times involve changes or improvements that could be implemented more cost-efficiently and effectively by VST staff, suggesting that there might be opportunities and advantages to increased devolution of specific responsibilities from the central office to those who operate election programs. As an example, changes to the VRE web site require a request to OCIT when many of these changes could be easily handled by VST staff. The division of responsibility could be reorganized to streamline operation of departmental programs, to provide greater flexibility to the department in carrying out its mission, and to reduce unnecessary wait times and expenses related to requests to OCIT.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION: Given the central role technology plays in the successful administration of the election process, the current limits on the ability to recruit and retain qualified IT personnel, and to provide them with opportunities for advancement within the department, represents a potential vulnerability for the VRE. Current employees have limited opportunities for professional growth; potentially leading to consideration of other employment opportunities either within the county or outside county government altogether.

6-1	Concern: Staff and stakeholders expressed multiple concerns about recruitment, retention, salary compaction, fragmentation of responsibility, training, and the need for cross-training and back-up positions.
	Recommendation: The VRE should establish goals for recruitment, training, and retention of VST staff. In addition, the VRE should conduct a top-to-bottom review of the job classifications and salary structure for VST to determine if the current salary structure, job descriptions, training, and opportunities for advancement are sufficient to reduce risk of program failure and vulnerability to errors or omissions that compromise the integrity of the election process. Finally, the VRE should consider consolidating responsibility for the proper functioning (as distinct from the operation of the program itself) of all office technology, including GIS, under the Election Manager position responsible for VST.
6-2	Concern: Given the importance of the web site as a tool for the VRE to conduct outreach, education, and communication with the public, the current division of responsibility for the web site between OCIT and the VRE may not provide the flexibility to maximize the effectiveness of this tool.
	Recommendation: An inter-departmental team consisting of personnel from the VRE and OCIT should be formed to evaluate which program responsibilities can be effectively transferred to the department level.
6-3	Concern: Current procedures for programs for which VST has responsibility do not appear to be sufficient either in detail or organization.
	Recommendation: The VRE should review the procedures for each of the program functions, eliminate duplication, and integrate these into a comprehensive VST Procedures Manual that is updated on an annual basis.

VOTING SYSTEM

The VRE purchases, operates, and maintains hardware, firmware, and software necessary for preparation of ballots and other materials, as well as for voters to cast their ballots for candidates and measures, and to tabulate these votes.

Events in the 2000 presidential election in Florida, as well as subsequent elections, have resulted in tremendous change throughout the country in the equipment used by voters to cast ballots. These changes include: the decertification by the Secretary of State of the punch card voting system previously used in Sacramento County; the passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 requiring, among other things, that voters with disabilities be able to vote "privately and independently; the requirement that all voting systems produce a paper record of the voter's vote selections; and the enactment by the voters of California of the Voting Modernization Bond Act. Taken together, these changes imposed new requirements on voting systems, provided funding for replacement of older systems, and resulted in a rapid evolution to voting systems that rely on higher levels of technology than their predecessor systems.

The transition to new voting systems has been controversial and difficult for election officials in terms of managing this change. The requirements from the state and federal government for the operation and security of proposed replacement systems have been a moving target. Much of this change is coming very close to an election and this can have disastrous consequences. An election office typically makes it a rule not to change systems close to an election and instead try to install changes when there is sufficient time to test for any unexpected problems. The VRE has successfully navigated this change thus far by selecting a paper-based, optical scan system that avoids some of the controversy related to the so-called "touch screen" systems that were decertified and recertified by a previous Secretary of State, been the subject of litigation, and most recently have been subjected to a "top to bottom" review by the current Secretary of State.

The Registrar of Voters and her staff received very complimentary evaluations from County staff, including from the County Counsel's Office and the County Administrator's Office, for her successful, non-controversial, and low cost solution to the issue of replacing the prior voting system. The controversy in other counties and states over "touch screen" voting systems has resulted in damage in those jurisdictions to the public's confidence in the integrity of the voting process. Sacramento County, because of its careful and deliberate selection process, has been able to avoid this costly and contentious controversy and instead concentrate its efforts and resources on managing the voter education and poll worker training necessary to the successful transition to a new system.

Procedures for the operation of voting systems are adopted by the Secretary of State in conjunction with certification of the voting hardware, firmware, and software. Sacramento County has purchased an optical scan voting system from Election Systems and Software (ES&S) Corporation. This equipment includes:

- 1,000 M100 Precinct Scanners (version 5.0.0.0)
- 5 M650 Central Scanners (version 1.2.0.0)
- 1,000 Automark Voter Assist Terminals (version 1.0) to meet the requirement for a minimum of one voting machine in every polling place that permits voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

The hardware, software, and firmware, including the procedures to operate them, were certified by the Secretary of State for use in California elections. Sacramento County elected to purchase this system from among the list of systems similarly certified by the Secretary of State.

Upon purchase, the county participates in a process of "acceptance testing" to ensure that the equipment that is being delivered is in good working order. The vendor also conducts acceptance testing to verify that the equipment that was shipped is the equipment that was received.

Once the voting system is installed, the vendor assists in "knowledge transfer" to county employees so that they, not the vendor, can perform the necessary tasks to set up the election, including designing and laying out the ballot, counting the ballots, and reporting the results. In general, VST staff should be encouraged to operate and maintain voting equipment.

The VRE verified that the current software being used was the same version certified by the Secretary of State and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

The Secretary of State recently conducted a "top-to-bottom review" of electronic voting equipment used in California elections. This review did not include the voting system used by Sacramento County. In order to prepare for the February 5, 2008 Presidential Primary Election, the VRE indicated to the Secretary of State that November 1, 2007 was the "drop dead" date, after which it would not be possible to make changes to the voting system for the February 5, 2008 election. No review was conducted.

The Secretary of State, on December 7, 2007, issued "Additional Conditions for Use of Election Systems and Software, Inc. Optical Scan Voting Equipment." This document included 40 detailed requirements. After consulting with County Counsel, the Registrar of Voters on December 14, 2007 wrote a letter to the Secretary of State, with copies to each member of the Board of Supervisors, stating that

Sacramento County would be unable to administer the election if it were to comply with these additional conditions at this late date. Sacramento County prudently decided to not use the M100 precinct ballot counters, but instead bring all the ballots back to the election office for central counting. Although this meant the ballots might be counted slower, it assured that all ballots would be counted fairly and accurately.

The process of setting up an election, including creating a ballot, configuring an election, establishing election night reporting systems, and reporting certified election results to the Secretary of State, is performed using "Unity" software, a product of Election Systems and Software (ES&S) that was purchased in conjunction with the voting equipment. The vendor (ES&S) used this software to set up the first election in Sacramento after the system was purchased. Staff indicates that the vendor did not supply, including for subsequent elections, a User Manual and Procedures document that was sufficient to permit the VRE to perform the required election tasks. Staff also indicates that the vendor was reluctant to provide knowledge transfer to enable staff to perform these tasks. The vendor received payment for providing this function to the county. As a matter of public policy, it is generally deemed inappropriate for a vendor or other private interest to control any aspect of the elections process. In order to ensure that, in an election that depends on technology, that technology should be operated and controlled by the county. County staff should be trained as soon as possible after purchase of new equipment to run the election processes independently of the vendor.

The VRE, again apparently without the cooperation of the vendor, attempted to establish a "User Group" of counties using the Election Systems and Software voting system. The VRE, specifically the VST division, proactively contracted with a technical writer to develop a user manual for the voting system. Sacramento County now codes its own ballots and the vendor is only available on an "as needed" basis. The recent staff turnover in vendor staff both validates the decision of VST to develop its own expertise on the Unity system, as well as indicates a need for further knowledge transfer in this direction. The Secretary of State now requires every vendor to establish a "User Group" among client counties using their voting system in California.

The VRE tabulates election results and reports results for candidates for federal, state, and statewide offices and measures to the Secretary of State. The VRE has established procedures for reporting election results for federal, state, and statewide candidates and measures to the Secretary of State on election night, during the canvass, and upon certification of the results by the Board of Supervisors.

Interviews with Secretary of State Staff indicate that the VRE is prompt, accurate, helpful, and responsive in all aspects of reporting election results to the Secretary of State office, including participation in system test procedures prior to the election.

The Election Systems and Software (ES&S) voting system includes the functionality to create “ballots on demand”. Counties typically estimate the number of ballots they will need, and arrange to have these printed by a certified printer. This process often results in purchasing more ballots than are actually needed.

Instead of estimating the number of ballots of each ballot style required for specified voting purposes, the ES&S system enables the county to print only those ballots that are actually needed by voters. This functionality has been approved by the Secretary of State, in conjunction with procedures for the use of the ballot on demand process. Because of potential adverse public perceptions of elections officials, in effect, printing ballots in the “back room,” it is important that the procedures for ballot on demand be rigorously defined, precisely documented, and scrupulously adhered to in order to protect the security and integrity of the election process.

The VRE has established apparently separate procedures for the use of the ballot on demand functionality of the ES&S system. The procedures were last updated in May of 2007. The VRE procedures address the production and security of these ballots, and include procedures for accounting for ballot stock, inventory control, video monitoring of the storage area, daily reports and activity logs.

Use of the ballot on demand functionality requires integration with the Unity software. The security of the ballot on demand process rests principally on procedural securities such as the use of seals, badges, access codes, logs, requirements for locked doors, and video monitoring of stored materials. Ballot on demand systems can provide flexibility to the elections official to print ballots for military and overseas voters; typically ballots are not printed and available in a timeframe that enables the ballots to be sent to and returned by military and overseas voters before the close of the polls on Election Day. The ability to print ballots on demand is also useful for voters who come to the office of the election official and request a vote by mail ballot. Ballot on demand is also useful for emergency situations where it is not feasible to commercially print, or reprint, ballots. The VRE uses the ballot on demand functionality on a very limited basis.

The VRE is required by statute to test, prior to and after the election, voting equipment to ensure that it is accurately counting ballots. The VRE established procedures for the conduct of the “Logic and Accuracy” testing (commonly referred to as L & A) required by state law to verify that voting equipment accurately tabulates votes. These procedures were last revised in May of 2007. The procedures address certification of election reporting with the Office of the Secretary of State, creation of test decks, and conduct of the L & A test process for the M100 precinct ballot tabulators, the 650 central tabulator, and the Automark machines. The procedures do not include provision for solicitation of public observation or appointment of the Logic and Accuracy Board.

Although effective security measures appear to be in place, the procedures do not address security measures for the machines between when the L & A test takes place and when the machines are delivered to the polling place inspector for use on Election Day. The procedures do not appear to include a description of the manner in which a test deck is constructed, including the number of ballots in the test deck, and a listing of what potential errors would be identified using this type of test deck. The procedures specify that a post election L & A test is done on 10% of the M100 precinct vote tabulators, as well as all of the M650 central count machines. The Election Code does not require a post-election L&A test of ballot counting equipment. However, section 2.7.1 of the procedures adopted for use of the voting system when it is certified by the Secretary of State do require a post-election L&A procedure. This requirement does not specify that the procedure should only be done on 10% of the machines. The VRE may want to consider extending the current post-election test to include all of the precinct and central count machines.

VST provides Election Day technical support to polling places for issues or problems related to voting equipment. This assistance is provided both by phone and by special "rovers" with IT background and experience. Many of these IT Rovers are recruited from OCIT and are available to assist poll workers in solving problems. In general, if the problem is faulty equipment, the IT Rover will secure and replace the equipment rather than attempt to service it in the field.

The Registrar of Voters is a member of the ES&S national User Group.

6-4	Concern: The voting equipment, including the Automark, and as adopted by the Secretary of State upon certification of the voting procedures for use of the Election Systems and Software equipment, are the controlling procedures for the use of that system. These procedures do not, at the present time, appear to be integrated with other county procedures relating to voting equipment.
	Recommendation: Incorporate the procedures for use of the voting system, as adopted by the Secretary of State, into county procedures for voting systems, and use these procedures as the foundation and basis for operation of the voting equipment.
6-5	Concern: It appears that under current procedures the vendor (ES&S) conducts the "acceptance testing" for new voting equipment. According to the VRE, they are not permitted to conduct this testing themselves, though they are permitted to observe.
	Recommendation: The Voting System procedures should clearly indicate that the VRE staff is responsible for acceptance testing of voting equipment.

6-6	Concern: There has been considerable public controversy across the country over whether vendor or elections officials are, in effect, conducting elections. Without the skills or knowledge to program the voting equipment, many election officials rely on the vendor to set up the election, lay out the ballot, conduct the Logic and Accuracy tests, and tabulate the results. It is a fundamental election administration principle that elections be conducted by public officials, not a private interest. According to VST staff it appears that the vendor was, at best, uncooperative, in transferring the knowledge necessary to operate the Unity system to the VRE personnel.
	Recommendation: The VRE office should advocate that the Secretary of State require, as a condition of voting system certification, that the procedures adopted with each voting system include a requirement that the vendor, by a date certain, effectively train county staff and provide the knowledge transfer to enable staff to conduct the election independent of the direct participation of the vendor, including a User Manual that the county agrees is sufficient for this purpose.
6-7	Concern: The expense and time required to test and certify new voting equipment by the federal and state governments, or to upgrade existing voting equipment to incorporate procedural improvements identified in the course of using that equipment, has become much more difficult. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for the VRE personnel to obtain from the vendor upgrades and improvements that enhance the operation of the voting for voters and election officials.
	Recommendation: The VRE should support efforts to streamline the voting system certification process, or to establish testing facilities in California.
6-8	Concern: Staff indicates that it is often difficult to contact the vendor, or to obtain assistance in solving problems or issues relating to voting equipment. In addition, the vendor does not permit the VRE to conduct maintenance operations on the voting equipment. This lack of responsive customer service was frequently mentioned when the subject of the voting system was discussed.
	Recommendation: This is a very serious issue. The VRE should develop potential options for action items to address problems with vendor support and present them to the Board of Supervisors for approval and direction. Actions could include: (1) Tracking all instances of insufficient vendor response; (2) Requesting the Secretary of State to establish minimum requirements for vendor customer service as a condition of certifying voting equipment; (3) Including performance metrics in vendor contracts; and, (4) Requiring a performance bond that would

	be used for a third party to respond should the vendor be unable to do so. Some or all of these actions may have budgetary and trade secret/intellectual property implications.
6-9	Concern: The election on November 6, 2007 revealed a problem with the procedures to prepare voting equipment for use on Election Day. The internal clocks on the M100's provided to each polling place were set one hour off the correct time. This did not affect the operation of the equipment, or the use of the equipment by voters.
	Recommendation: The procedures for conducting the Logic and Accuracy Testing, as well as the checklist for verifying the readiness of voting equipment for use on Election Day, should be updated to ensure that the problem of internal clocks on the M100's being set to the incorrect time does not reoccur.
6-10	Concern: Display of election results on election night, and subsequently, is, at best, limited, and does not include features common to systems at the Secretary of State and other county election offices. The apparent cause of the limited functionality is the Unity software supplied by Election Systems and Software.
	Recommendation: Upgrade the election results display function of the Unity software, or otherwise arrange for improved presentation and functionality. It may be advisable to consult with an expert in web design in order to optimize presentation. The same company that is providing the new on-line training system for poll workers has an excellent election result display system.
6-11	Concern: Use of ballot on demand systems can give the impression of election officials printing ballots "in the back room."
	Recommendation: In the interest of transparency, and in order to avoid any possible misperception, it may be appropriate to engage the public in a demonstration of the ballot on demand system, possibly through constituting a task force of IT experts and members of the public with appropriate expertise to review and comment on these procedures and, as above, seek approval from the Secretary of State for any modifications.

6-12	Concern: It appears that the county has adopted procedures separate from those adopted by the Secretary of State in certifying the Election Systems and Software system. The procedures adopted by the Secretary of State are the controlling procedures.
	Recommendation: The procedures adopted by the VRE for the voting system appear to be well thought out and substantial. However, they should be compared against the Secretary of State procedures and, the VRE should seek approval from the Secretary of State for any variations or modifications. The procedures for the use of the ballot on demand functionality, as adopted by the Secretary of State, should be included as a part of the procedures for use of the voting system as a whole, rather than as a stand-alone section.
6-13	Concern: Despite efforts by the VRE to solicit public observers of the Logic and Accuracy testing, often there are no representatives of the public present for this very important procedure.
	Recommendation: The procedures for the Logic and Accuracy testing should be strengthened to include a process for recruiting members of the public to participate as members of the Logic and Accuracy Board, as well as to observe the Logic and Accuracy process.
6-14	Concern: It is not clear that conducting post election Logic and Accuracy tests on 10% of the precinct vote counters is consistent with the requirements of the Elections Code.
	Recommendation: The VRE should review section 2.7.1 of the voting systems procedures adopted by the Secretary of State for use of the M100 and M650 voting equipment and revisit the policy of conducting a post election Logic and Accuracy procedure on only 10% of the voting machines and consider whether post election testing should be done on 100% of the precinct voting machines.
6-15	Concern: The current procedures for testing voting systems do not appear to be complete in terms of all the required testing.
	Recommendation: The procedures testing voting systems should be reviewed for completeness. Possible additions include a provision for security of the voting equipment after the Logic and Accuracy testing is performed, and a detailed description of the manner in which a test deck is constructed.

ELECTION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EIMS)

The foundation of most VRE functions is the Election Information Management System (EIMS). This system controls the information needed for ballot layout, voter registration, list maintenance, printing of rosters, the vote by mail voting process, development of the sample ballot, etc. The EIMS must integrate with the Unity system, the GIS system, and the Secretary of State's CalVoter statewide voter registration system.

Sacramento VRE contracts with DFM Associates to provide the EIMS software, and to upgrade and improve that software to more efficiently and effectively conduct elections.

DFM provides EIMS services to a number of counties and has formed a "User Group" among these counties to identify and prioritize improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs. The User Group, in turn, has an Executive Committee, consisting of county representatives, to manage the work of the User Group. Sacramento County is an active participant on the User Group and has established an excellent relationship with DFM executive and technical staff.

According to the Secretary of State, DFM's EIMS has been successfully integrated into the "interim solution" for the statewide voter registration database, and meets all the procedural requirements of that system.

Sacramento County VRE requested and was selected as a beta site for implementation of an optical/intelligent character recognition system for the voter registration process that automates the upload of voter information into the registration database so that actual data entry is limited to only that information that cannot be scanned. VST staff indicates a reduction of approximately 25 - 50% of staff time necessary to process voter registrations.

The DFM software includes many features that enhance the ability of the VRE staff to meet statutory and regulatory responsibilities. For example, the "Possible Duplicate Wizard" assists staff in identifying duplicate voter registrations, thus enhancing the accuracy of the voter file. This provides greater confidence in the integrity of the voting process, and reduces the cost of election administration because services are only provided to persons who are actually registered to vote.

There have been some problems reported with the use of the EIMS system. Most notably, in the primary election in 2006, candidates for Republican County Central

Committee in the 4th Supervisorial District were placed on the ballot in such a way that there was confusion as to which office they were running for. Although these problems were addressed by the VRE staff, they reinforce the need for increased proofing and materials review procedures.

DFM produced a "User Manual" for the EIMS system; last updated in 2001. DFM routinely makes changes and improvements to the EIMS, and pushes these changes out to its clients, including the VRE. However, DFM does not routinely and simultaneously update the User Manual to reflect these changes and improvements. Instead, DFM relies on its on-line help service, as well as its Customer Support unit, to respond to questions and problems. According to staff, the on-line and Customer Support services from DFM are very timely and effective, and the absence of an up-to-date User Manual for the EIMS is only problematic when there is a new employee.

6-16	Concern: DFM does not maintain a current version of its "User Guide" manual for use of the EIMS system.
	Recommendation: The VRE should advocate for an up-to-date User Manual to accompany each new build or revision to the DFM election information management system.

OTHER SYSTEMS AND HARDWARE

Statewide voter registration database:

Each of the 58 county elections offices is required to maintain a file of voters registered in their county.

Pursuant to Chapter 913, Statutes of 1995, the State is required to establish a statewide voter registration database. Prior to enactment of this requirement, each county separately maintained its own voter file. The "CalVoter" system was constructed by the Secretary of State to meet the requirement of Chapter 913 for a database linking the voter registration records of each of the counties into a statewide database. This law also required that voter registration forms include a space for voters to provide a unique identifier such as a driver's license number, to assist in identifying duplicate registrations.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) further requires that this database be defined, and maintained by the state, and that the database represent the official voter registration record for purposes of eligibility to cast ballots in any election.

The current CalVoter system, developed to implement the 1995 state law, and as modified, does not support compliance with the federal requirements. The State is currently in the process of developing a new statewide voter registration database --- referred to as VoteCal --- that complies with federal requirements. The Registrar of Voters and the VRE staff participated on the state committee that has developed the draft "Request for Proposal" for the new VoteCal system.

The current CalVoter system also does not comply with the federal requirement that data indicating felony convictions be available to the VRE from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

As previously mentioned, the VRE is a beta site for an Optical/Intelligent Character Recognition process to automatically upload voter registration information to the statewide database. This system significantly improves the processing of voter registrations, and reduces staff time necessary for this task.

6-17	Concern: Development of the new VoteCal system will require substantial changes to the business rules for local election officials, and the unknown specifications regarding the design, operation, and maintenance of the new system constitutes a significant uncertainty for the county in terms of procedures and resources. Although recently released, the Request for Proposals for the development of the VoteCal system was delayed from its original release date by the State. The construction and operation of this new system will represent a fundamental shift in responsibility for voter registration data from the county to the state level and as such, the development of the procedures for the use of the VoteCal system, as well as the timing of the required steps to build the system, represent a critical challenge and current uncertainty for the VRE. This uncertainty is especially serious when paired with possible new conditions for the operation and use of optical scan voting equipment.
	Recommendation: Continue to participate in the formation of technical and policy requirements for the VoteCal system identify implementation issues, estimate potential costs, and track actual costs associated with the project in order to ensure appropriate reimbursement to Sacramento County.

Quarkxpress:

The VRE designs ballots used by voters on Election Day, as well as various materials (such as posters, flyers, etc.) to communicate with and/or educate voters. These functions are performed using Quarkxpress software.

The VRE has established procedures for the use of this software. These procedures were last revised in March of 2007.

This software enables the VRE to design and layout ballots, as well as to design voter education and other useful materials, resulting in avoidance of significant costs that would otherwise be incurred if this work were to be performed outside the office, and reduced time to produce these materials.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

Web Site for Voter Registration and Elections:

The county maintains a web site to provide the public with information about its various functions and responsibilities. The county web site contains a link to the VRE.

The VRE web page provides information on how to register to vote, how to find your polling place, and other election related information.

Voter education is one of the primary functions of the elections office and includes providing voters with information on how to register to vote, election dates and times, how to use voting equipment, how to find a polling place, results from prior elections, how to run for office, voting by mail, and other information.

The federal Voting Rights Act requires that Sacramento County provide information and materials in Spanish as well as English. The home page on the VRE web site includes a prominently placed option to view the contents in Spanish and, if this option is selected, all the subsequent pages with information on election dates, how to register to vote, forms to register to vote, vote by mail voting, campaign services, and other materials provided by the office are presented in Spanish.

Election results are provided to the public via the VRE web site on Election Day, and voters can also use the web site to view the results of past elections. The current Unity software is only able to upload this information to the web site in specified formats; thereby limiting the VRE' ability to provide enhancements the public might be interested in viewing. For example, some web sites include a program that immediately identifies every "close contest" so that voters (and the media) do not have to search the entire web site to determine which contests are of greatest interest. The Unity vendor has indicated that the system software cannot be upgraded without the entire voting system undergoing federal and state certification testing.

Among other positive features, the VRE web page permits a Sacramento County resident to verify whether he or she is registered to vote, and to allow a voter to "look up" their vote by mail ballot status

The county is apparently developing a software application to permit departments to make content changes to their web pages, and the VRE staff has been trained to implement this new system.

6-18	Concern: Under current procedures, the VRE staff must request OCIT to make any changes to the VRE web page, including minor content changes. Changes are made on a fee for service basis. This is a significant barrier to the VRE being able to communicate with voters and provide the information they need. Election-related information can change and/or need to be updated on a daily basis.
	Recommendation: The VST staff should be given the necessary permissions to make content changes on the VRE web page. An inter-departmental team consisting of personnel from the VRE and the county Office of Communications and Information Technology should be constituted to evaluate which program responsibilities can be effectively transferred to the department level.
6-19	Concern: The Sacramento County homepage does not include an obvious link to the VRE. Users must navigate through one of two alphabetical listings to find the VRE. One, the “Department Index” pathway, does not include an entry for “Elections” - a voter can only find the VRE by scrolling through the alphabetical listings to “V” where he or she will find “Voter Registration and Elections.”
	Recommendation: Add a link to the county web homepage to reach the VRE through “Elections” on the “Department Index” pathway. Many persons, when looking for election related information, may not intuitively think to look under “Voter Registration.”
6-20	Concern: The county web site does not provide the public with easy access to election results.
	Recommendation: Redesign the county homepage to provide a clear link to the VRE, at least for the four weeks before and after the election.
6-21	Concern: The VRE web site includes a significant amount of information useful to voters. However, it does not, in appearance or design, make finding this information as easy as it might. Some stakeholders interviewed for this report indicated that they found it difficult to find information on the VRE web site. The web site is also limited in its ability to provide election results to the media, voters, and other interested parties.
	Recommendation: Consider retaining a web site consultant to review the VRE web site and recommend improvements to navigation, presentation, and content, including upgrading the presentation of election results.

Vote by Mail Ballot Envelope Sorter:

The VRE is required by statute to tabulate and report vote by mail votes according to the precinct in which the voter resides. This requires sorting the voted vote by mail ballots when they are received by the election official.

The VRE purchased, using HAVA funds, a Pitney Bowes envelope sorter for processing of vote by mail ballots, and has developed procedures for the use of this equipment. The procedures were last updated in March 2007.

The Secretary of State informed the VRE that HAVA funds could not be used for purchase of vote by mail ballot sorting equipment. However, after meeting with the VRE, the Secretary of State agreed to revisit the issue, and discovered that a portion of HAVA funds could be used for this purpose, with the result that this equipment was purchased with federal funds.

The envelope sorter is also capable of identifying duplicate voted ballots.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

CONTROLS

Voting Equipment – Inventory Control:

The VRE is responsible for the security of voting equipment, and for demonstrating the required "chain of custody" for this equipment throughout the election process.

The VRE developed and updates procedures to track the movement of IT equipment, as well as an Asset Tracking System for voting equipment. These procedures were last reviewed in May 2007. Tracking of IT equipment such as desktop and laptop computers, cell phones, servers, disk drives, and other equipment cites a "Computer Equipment and Storage Media Disposal Policy and Standard" adopted by the Information Technology Policy Board on February 2, 2006. The purpose of the policy is to provide a consistent guideline throughout the county departments for equipment disposal practices and prevention of identity theft and other crimes.

1. Office Equipment: The procedure adopted by the VRE appears to be the verbatim policy as adopted by the Information Technology Policy Board and provides an appropriate structure for ensuring that computers and other equipment are properly accounted for and replaced. VST maintains a database of all equipment covered by the policy. VST cleans the computer before it leaves the VRE to go into surplus property

2. Asset Tracking: the VRE maintains a software system to track the location of voting equipment. This is of particular utility and application during the conduct of elections. The system uses a bar code application to track the location of each Model 100, the PCMCIA card (the memory card that contains election specific information necessary to process and tabulate ballots) associated with each voting machine, and each Automark through six stages of the election: the Logic and Accuracy process; when the equipment is picked up for delivery to the precinct official; when the equipment enters into the possession of the precinct official; when the equipment is returned to the election official on election night; when the ballots from that equipment have entered the tabulation system; and, when the equipment is returned to the warehouse. The different stages are color-coded on the monitor display for easy visual identification.

6-22	Concern: The Asset Tracking system does not currently include additional information such as the equipment model number or software version information. This information would assist the VRE in detecting any unauthorized alterations to software or firmware.
	Recommendation: The Asset Tracking system for accounting for voting equipment could include information on the model number, software and firmware version numbers, and other information that would assist the VRE in detecting unauthorized alterations or intrusions.
6-23	Concern: It is reported that the full effectiveness of the Asset Tracking system is occasionally compromised through failure to follow procedure. Specifically, the system relies on the VRE staff at each stage of the election cycle to scan the bar code on the voting equipment. Failure to do so creates a gap in the tracking system, along with uncertainty over whether a piece of equipment has gone missing.
	Recommendation: Staff training procedures should emphasize the importance of scanning the bar code for equipment in the Asset Tracking system at each stage of the election process, and provide for feedback or consequences for failure to do so.
6-24	Concern: It is reported that the software vendor for the Asset Tracking system plans to add the ability to determine exactly where each piece of equipment is located when it is in the warehouse between elections.
	Recommendation: The VRE should follow up with the software vendor for the Asset Tracking system to ensure that the vendor upgrades the software to provide the ability to determine exactly where each piece of equipment is located when it is in the warehouse between elections.
6-25	Concern: The VRE has loaned voting equipment to other counties. This is a positive practice because, from the point of view of the goal of accurate and successful elections in California, in a time of short supply of voting equipment, the loan is an appropriate assistance. It is a potential issue of concern because it raises questions of chain of custody for the voting equipment, and makes it more difficult for the VRE to absolutely ensure that no tampering has taken place with that equipment.
	Recommendation: The VRE should consider strengthening its security and chain of custody procedures for voting equipment that is loaned to other counties.

Hardware and Software Back up:

Storage of important election information should include provision for off-site storage of a duplicate copy in the event the original data is destroyed, lost, or compromised.

The VRE has established procedures, and updates those procedures, for the regular off-site back up of critical data. The VRE accomplishes this through agreement with Iron Mountain and Veritas.

Routine office data, such as email, is backed up by OCIT.

	Concern: None.
	Recommendation: None.

RETIREMENT BOARD ELECTIONS

The Voter Registration and Elections conducts elections for the Sacramento County Retirement Board.

VST has developed and maintains procedures for these elections. The California Elections Code does not govern these elections. The VST, rather than Campaign Services, manages and coordinates these elections because, unlike most elections, the tasks associated with Retirement Board elections are limited almost entirely to ballot layout, ballot printing, and tabulation of votes: all tasks that are primarily conducted by the VST division.

	Concern**:** None.
	Recommendation: None.

Chapter 7

OUTREACH SECTION

OVERALL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Outreach section of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE) is a stand-alone section that is not part of any of the four divisions/program functions within the office. The Outreach section reports directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. There are two full time employees in the section: (1) Election Supervisor who serves as Outreach Coordinator and (1) Election Assistant.

The Outreach section is responsible for assisting in voter registration and voter education. California Elections Code sections 2103 and 2105 direct that each county encourage voter registration and maintain voter registration at the highest possible level. Counties are directed by the Elections Code to "enlist the support and cooperation of interested citizens and organizations" to encourage voter registration and also to take steps to minimize obstacles to registration by non-English speaking citizens.

In addition, sections 4f4 and 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) require certain jurisdictions to provide election material in languages other than English where the number of United States citizens of voting age in a single covered language group within the jurisdiction:

- Is more than 10,000; or
- Is more than five percent of all voting age citizens; or
- On an Indian reservation, exceeds five percent of all reservation residents; and,
- The illiteracy rate of the group is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

Based on results of the 2000 Federal census, Sacramento County is now a "covered" jurisdiction under section 203 of the VRA for Spanish. The requirement went into place with the publication of the Federal Register on July 26, 2002.

Congress also passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. HAVA requires that the states implement several new programs and procedures. HAVA requirements that impact the Voter Outreach section include providing voter information, and educating voters regarding new identification requirements and procedures for filing complaints.

OVERALL BACKGROUND AND OBSERVATIONS:

The Outreach section is the only non-administrative unit in the office that is not part of one of the four program functions of the office and reports directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. The Outreach Coordinator is classified as an Election Supervisor and is the only supervisor who does not report to an Election Manager. This structure is awkward and does not provide sufficient supervision or direction to the Outreach section. The section works independently of the other programs making it difficult for Outreach staff to be involved in the overall mission of the office. Likewise, staff in other program function areas has little contact or information on the important work being done by the Outreach section.

The Outreach section needs more supervision and integration into the work of the VRE than is being accomplished under the current organizational structure. It is inefficient for the Outreach Coordinator to be reporting directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters and not to an Election Manager. Lack of appropriate supervision has resulted in errors being made and staff not being properly informed of election issues.

As an example, one document provided to the review team by the Outreach section stated that the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was adopted in 1933. This appears to be an innocent typographical error as the NVRA was actually adopted in 1993. A letter from the Outreach section sent to City Clerks contains a typographical error. While these were not serious issues they are examples of why additional supervision is necessary that can carefully review material being prepared by the Outreach section.

The organizational structure of the office needs to be changed to move the Outreach section into one of four functional program divisions of the office. The most appropriate place for the Outreach section is with the Voter Services division. The Outreach section should become a section in the Voter Services division with the Outreach Coordinator reporting to the Election Manager of Voter Services just as the Registration and Vote-By-Mail supervisors do.

The staff from the Outreach section should likewise be physically relocated from their rather secluded spot in the office to the Voter Services part of the office. This will require some modification of the workspace, but is necessary to include the section in the work of the office. This organizational and workspace change will result in better supervision and ensure that the outreach function is included in the overall work of the VRE. This structure will also provide more opportunity for cross training of Voter Services staff in outreach activities and vice versa.

There is no policy and procedure manual for the Outreach section. This lack of procedures would leave any new staff member with no information on how to do his

or her job. A complete procedure manual should be prepared for the Outreach section.

Community Registration Events:

The Outreach section participates in numerous events to encourage voter registration and to educate voters about the election process. Examples of activities include providing registration services at new citizen ceremonies, student mock elections, voter registration at numerous community events and business locations and advertising campaigns, such as one currently underway with Sacramento Regional Transit buses. The Outreach Coordinator networks with other counties through the Voter Outreach Committees of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO).

The Outreach Coordinator has participated in meetings of both the Mother Lode Region and Bay Area Region Outreach committees and is currently working with the Bay Area Committee on a public service announcement project. The section is also currently working on a program to identify new homeowners and contact them to ensure that they register to vote. The Outreach Coordinator has used professional practices information from the Election Center and modeled her work on a program in Clay County, Florida.

The Outreach staff should be recognized for their efforts and successes. Several members of the Board of Supervisors commended Outreach staff for participating in numerous community events and representatives from the League of Women Voters stated that Outreach staff was very cooperative in their efforts to register and educate voters. However, when asked for an outreach plan by the reviewers the Outreach Coordinator could provide little more than a list of activities without any coordinated plan as to why any particular activity was undertaken. The Assistant Registrar of Voters provided a copy of the outreach plan filed with the Secretary of State under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), but it also lacks clear goals and objectives. The Outreach section needs to prepare a comprehensive voter outreach plan that contains goals, objectives and methods to monitor whether the goals are being met.

Bilingual Registration and Election Materials:

A major responsibility of the Outreach section has been to provide voter registration and publicly available election information to the Spanish-speaking community of Sacramento County. One of the two full time employees in the section is bilingual English/Spanish. Special efforts have been made to attend community events where voter registration services and election information is provided to Spanish-speaking citizens.

As stated above, Sacramento County has been required to provide Spanish language election material under the minority language provisions of the Voting

Rights Act (VRA) since July 2002. Section 203 and Section 4(f)4 of the VRA require that when a covered state or political subdivision provides registration or voting notices, forms, instruction, assistance, or other material or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them "in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language." Moreover, Elections Code section 12303 directs the election official to make appropriate efforts to minimize obstacles to registration and voting by citizens who do not speak English.

There are clear requirements under state and federal law for Sacramento County to provide bilingual services. However, when questioning staff about programs to assist Spanish-speaking citizens, both the Coordinator and Election Assistant stated that these efforts were required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). In reality, Spanish language assistance is required by section 203 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) and to a lesser degree sections 2103 and 12305 of the California Elections Code.

The Outreach Coordinator stated that when conducting the Latino Voter Forums last year, they determined that many people who attended were not U.S. citizens and so this year they were going to concentrate on assisting people to become citizens. While it would be appropriate for county staff to provide voter registration and election information to individuals and groups working with prospective citizens, there is no statutory authority for the county election office to be directly involved in the citizenship process. Outreach staff must be trained to understand why they are undertaking outreach activities, what they are required to do by law, and what is and is not appropriate work in this area.

We want to bring special attention at this point to the Voting Rights Act (VRA). The United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) enforces this federal law. The USDOJ has filed enforcement actions against at least four California counties, Alameda, San Benito, San Diego and Ventura, in the past several years. The importance of compliance cannot be stated strongly enough. The Outreach section plays a critical role in this area by ensuring that all registration and publicly available election material is also available in Spanish and working with community groups to better understand and address the needs of Spanish-speaking citizens. The Outreach staff should contact the four counties mentioned above for information and assistance on how to remain in compliance with the VRA.

The Outreach section established a Latino Task Force to advise the VRE on methods to increase participation in the Latino community and among Spanish-speaking citizens. Establishment of such a task force is appropriate under both the California Elections Code and the Voting Rights Act (VRA). One of the major efforts undertaken in 2006 by the Outreach Section and the Latino Task Force was a series of Latino Candidate Forums. The name was subsequently changed to Voter Education forum. Candidates for public office were invited to speak at these forums and a representative of the League of Women Voters moderated. Two forums were held with limited participation by both the public and candidates. Of the twenty people

attending, approximately fifteen were involved in setting up the event or were candidates, leaving only five or six actual attendees.

It must be noted that the VRE received complaints from some elected officials that the forums appeared to be partisan in nature as mainly candidates from the Democratic Party participated and that the moderator represented a group that takes positions on ballot measures. There were also complaints that Republican candidates had not been invited. However, the printed agenda from the forums show that a representative of Chuck Poochigian, Republican candidate for Attorney General, spoke at one of the forums. Upon review it appears that the forums were planned with the best of intentions and without any partisan intent. However, we can find no statutory authority for an election department to conduct candidate forums. It would be appropriate for county staff to provide voter registration and election information to groups conducting candidate forums; however we do not believe that it is appropriate for a county election department to sponsor such events. These types of events should be left in the domain of outside groups, such as the League of Women Voters and campaigns.

Elections Code section 2103 directs county election officials to "enlist the support of interested citizens and organizations" in order to promote and encourage voter registration. The Outreach section made such an effort by establishing the Latino Task Force. However, there is no other advisory or working group that assists the VRE in this regard. Outreach staff stated that it was difficult to get people to participate in these activities. However, it was not clear that Outreach staff has been consistent with invitations and notices of meetings. The VRE has a mailing list of interested individuals and organizations that could be called upon in such an effort to establish an outreach advisory committee. The current mailing list contains 60 names and should be expanded and an Outreach advisory group established to work with the Voter Outreach section on planning and conducting voter registration and education efforts. It should be noted that there are two elected officials on the current outreach mailing list, both Democrats and only one who represents Sacramento County. The mailing list should be expanded to include, at a minimum: the League of Women Voters; city clerks within Sacramento County; political party central committees; county supervisors and all elected legislators representing Sacramento County.

School Programs:

The Outreach section has worked with the Sacramento City Unified School District to conduct a very innovative student mock election program in SCUSD schools. Department staff has worked with the coordinator from the school district to provide ballots and voting equipment to allow students to vote in the mock election using the actual equipment that they will use as voters. This program has been successful in the Sacramento City Unified School District and for the first time will expand to one school in the San Juan Unified School District in 2008. This program should be

expanded to the other school districts in Sacramento County and should be incorporated into efforts to recruit student poll workers.

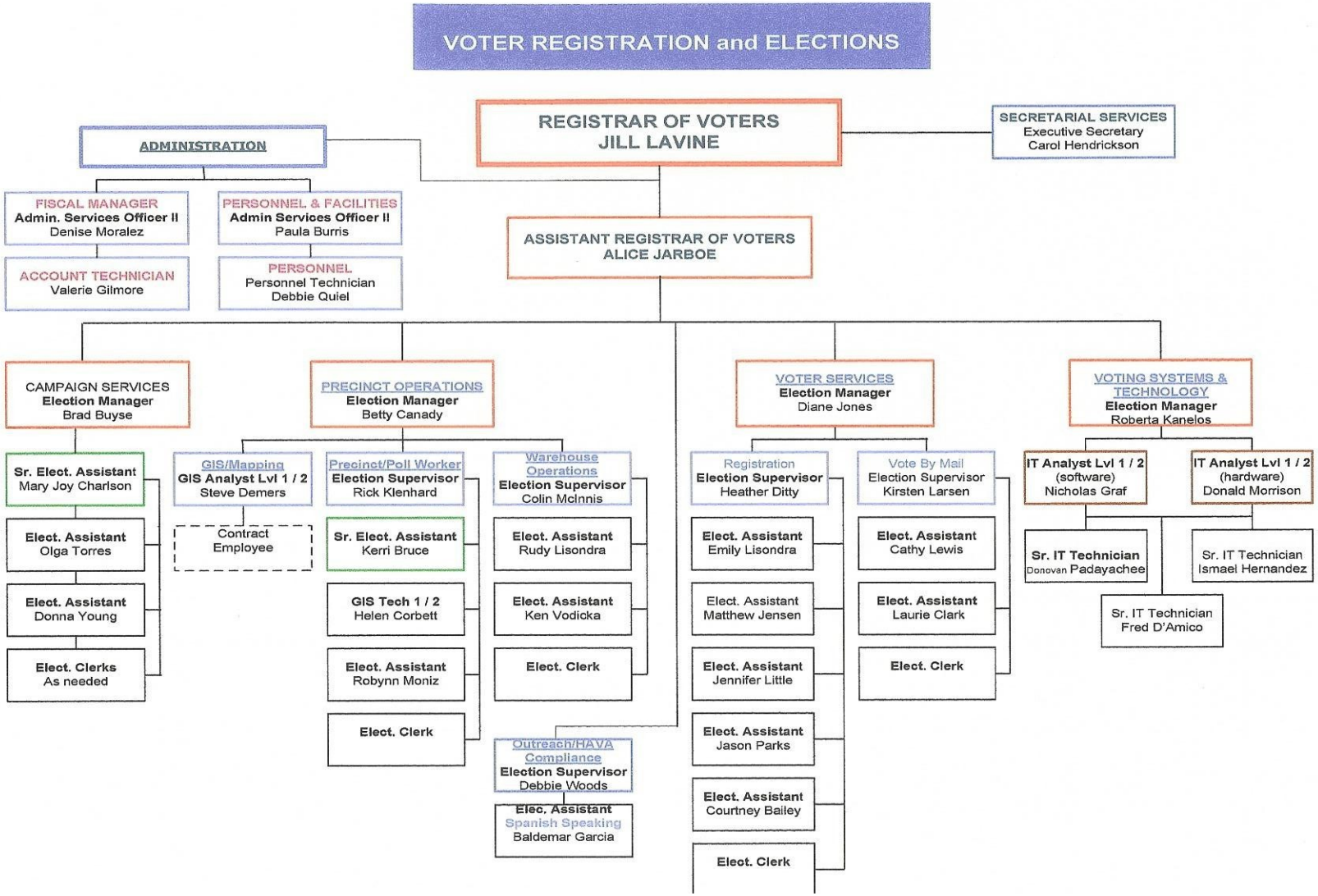
It must be noted that the Outreach section has only two full time employees and it has not had sufficient staff to expand this program in the past. However, if the organizational structure of the VRE is changed to place Outreach into the Voter Services division there will be more staff available to be trained for programs such as student mock elections. Special efforts must also be made to partner with outside organizations, such as: the League of Women Voters in order to expand the school mock election program.

7-1	Concern: The Outreach section is the only section in the office that is currently not part of one of the four program function areas in the office, The Outreach section reports directly to the Assistant Registrar of Voters. This structure does not provide sufficient supervision for the section and makes it difficult for the Outreach staff to be part of the overall work of the VRE.
	Recommendation: The organizational structure of the VRE should be changed to place the Outreach section under the Voter Services division reporting to the Election Manager of Voter Services instead of the Assistant Registrar of Voters. In addition, the workspace for the Outreach staff should be moved from the current location to the Voter section.
7-2	Concern: The Outreach section has no overall Outreach Plan that contains clear goals and objectives. The outreach program at this point is little more than a list of activities with no clear purpose.
	Recommendation: The Outreach section needs to develop a comprehensive Outreach Plan for each year that includes clear goals, objectives and methods to monitor if the goals are being met.
7-3	Concern: Outreach staff is not adequately trained in the reason why they are conducting outreach, nor do they have clear direction on what activities are appropriate.
	Recommendation: Outreach staff should be provided training as to why they are conducting Outreach programs with clear direction on what activities are inappropriate. Outreach staff should contact other California counties that are covered under the VRA for information and assistance on how to remain in compliance.

7-4	Concern: As part of the outreach to Spanish-speaking citizens, the VRE sponsored two Latino Candidate Forums in 2006. These forums resulted in complaints of partisanship by the VRE as mainly candidates of one political party participated. While we believe that the forums in 2006 were planned with the best of intentions, we find no statutory mandate or authority for the county election department to sponsor candidate forums.
7-5	Recommendation: The VRE should refrain in the future from conducting candidate forums in order to maintain its impartial role in the election process.
	Concern: The Outreach section established a Latino Task Force to assist in outreach to the Latino community but there is no other Outreach advisory committee in the county.
	Recommendation: The Outreach section should establish an Outreach Advisory Committee made up of interested individuals and organizations from the community.
7-6	Concern: Currently the Voter Outreach section works with the Sacramento City Unified School District on a student mock election program. The program will be extended to one school in the San Juan Unified School District in 2008, but there are several other districts in the county that are not part of this program.
	Recommendation: The student mock election program should be expanded to the other secondary schools in Sacramento County. Staff should seek the support of groups like the League of Women Voters. The VRE will need to find a means of supporting these efforts.
7-7	Concern: There is no policy and procedure manual for the Outreach section.
	Recommendation: The Outreach section must prepare a complete policy and procedure manual for the section.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX B

BENCHMARKS 1-7

Sacramento County
Benchmarks 1

County	County Population	Eligible to Register	Voter Registration	Citizens Registered	Voters who voted 2006 General	Voters who voted 2006 General	Ballots Cast 2006 General	By Mail 2006 General
Alameda	1,530,620	975,918	682,522	69.94%	61.23%	43.20%	202,773 - 48.8%	212,865 - 51.2%
Contra Costa	1,044,201	692,604	470,408	67.92%	63.36%	45.16%	158,705 - 51.5%	149,501 - 48.5%
El Dorado	178,689	127,513	99,136	77.75%	68.13%	54.63%	33,715 - 49%	35,125 - 51%
Fresno	923,052	529,463	346,236	65.39%	54.09%	34.68%	96,391 - 53.7%	83,187 - 46.3%
Placer	329,818	233,633	178,539	76.42%	70.78%	55.10%	62,078 - 49.4%	63,584 - 50.6%
Riverside	2,070,315	1,259,597	711,703	56.50%	51.78%	32.39%	231,173 - 59.1%	159,785 - 40.9%
Sacramento	1,415,117	921,551	597,073	64.79%	58.96%	40.61%	193,063 - 52.4%	175,099 - 47.6%
San Bernardino	2,039,467	1,216,859	724,682	59.55%	47.68%	29.95%	220,250 - 61.5%	138,167 - 38.5%
San Francisco	817,537	587,186	408,070	69.50%	60.66%	43.93%	145,371 - 57.3%	108,348 - 32.7%
San Joaquin	680,183	410,483	240,341	58.55%	52.21%	34.97%	82,352 - 58.3%	58,807 - 41.7%
Santa Clara	1,820,176	1,099,722	677,323	61.59%	59.01%	41.22%	258,157 - 58.3%	184,354 - 41.7%
Solano	423,970	271,787	165,132	60.76%	64.58%	39.05%	53,158 - 50.4%	52,256 - 49.6%
Ventura	826,550	520,148	378,005	72.67%	57.70%	43.92%	123,133 - 54.6%	102,527 - 45.4%
Yolo	197,530	127,419	87,701	68.83%	61.29%	44.65%	30,025 - 54%	25,562 - 46%

2006 population figures from the California State Association of Counties

Registration figures from December 7, 2007 Report of Registration California Secretary of State

Turnout figures from November 2006 Statement of Voter California Secretary of State

2/19/2008

Sacramento County
Benchmarks 2

	Number of Cities	# of School Districts	# of Special Districts	# of Ballot Types 2006 General	Languages	Polling Places 2006 General	Poll Workers 2006 General	Student Poll Workers 2006 General	Bilingual Poll Workers 2006 General	Inspector Payment	Clerk/judge Payment
Alameda	14	23	19	149	E,S.C	825	3,500	1,058	448	$120	$95
Contra Costa	18	19	34	247	E,S	340	2,244	126	193	$100	$80
El Dorado	2	16	86	42	E	106	445	106	0	$120	$95-$105
Fresno	15	35	70	192	E,S	308	1,818	638	198	$175	$150
Placer	6	18	**	**	E	**	**	**	**	$100	$85-$90
Riverside	24	27	29	318	E,S	605	2,602	280	450	$125	$90
Sacramento	7	22	35	178	E,S	571	2,855	153	55	$100	$75
San Bernardino	24	38	50	245	E,S	407	3,063	736	921	$135	$100
San Francisco	1	2	2	11	E,S,C	561	2,800	1,200	1,000	$145	$122
San Joaquin	7	15	35	163	E,S	417	1,697	100	76	$175	$130
Santa Clara	15	34	17	177	E,S,C,V,T	786	3,200	700	854*	$150	$105
Solano	7	7	3	25	E	103	567	65	not tracked	$120	$75
Ventura	10	21	29	126	E,S	321	1,339	148	360	$125	$90
Yolo	4	5	21	**	E	**	**	**	**	$105	$90

** Placer and Yolo County Clerks did not respond to repeated requests for information

E= English
C= Chinese
S= Spanish
V= Vietnamese
T=Tagalog

*C-158
S-413
V-228
T-55

2/19/2008

Sacramento County
Benchmarks 3

County	Voting System	Voting System Accessible to Persons with Disabilities	EIMS
Alameda	Sequoia Optical Scan	Sequoia AVC Edge Touch Screen	DIMS
Contra Costa	ES&S M100, M650 Optical Scan	AutoMark	DFM
El Dorado	Premier AccuVote Optical Scan	Premier AccuVote TSx Touch Screen	DIMS
Fresno	Premier AccuVote Optical Scan	Premier AccuVote TSx Touch Screen	DFM
Placer	Premier AccuVote Optical Scan	Premier AccuVote TSx Touch Screen	DIMS
Riverside	Sequoia Optech, 400c Optical Scan	Sequoia Edge II Touch Screen with verivote printers	DFM
Sacramento	**ES&S M100, M650 Optical Scan**	**AutoMark**	**DFM**
San Bernardino	Sequoia 400C Optical Scan	Sequoia AVC Edge II Touch Screen	DIMS
San Francisco	Sequoia Insight Optical Scan	Sequoia AVC Edge II Touch Screen	DIMS
San Joaquin	Premier AccuVote Optical Scan	Premier TSx Touch Screen	DIMS
Santa Clara	Sequoia Optech Optical Scan	Sequoia Edge II Touch Screen	DFM
Solano	ES&S M100, M650 Optical Scan	Auto Mark	DFM
Ventura	Sequoia Insight Optical Scan	Sequoia AVC Edge Touch Screen	DFM
Yolo	HART BallotNow Optical Scan	HART eSlate electronic	DIMS

ES&S – Election Systems and Software

Sequoia - Sequoia Voting Systems, Inc.

Premier – Premier Voting Systems, Inc.

Hart - Hart InterCivic

EIMS – Election Information Management System

DFM - DFM Associates

DIMS – Data Information Management Systems

2/19/2008

Sacramento County
Benchmarks 4

County	2007-2008 Annual Budget	Full Time Staff	CACEO Members	CERA Graduates	CalPEAC Graduates	# Admin Staff	# CS Staff	# PO Staff	# VS Staff	# VST Staff	# Outreach Staff	# of other Staff
Alameda	$14.37 million	28	3	0	0	4	3	9	7	3	2	0
Contra Costa	$13.70 million	26	12	0	7	3	4	10	5	3	1	0
El Dorado	$1.13 million	7.5	8	0	5	1	1	0.5	1	2	1	1
Fresno	$3.50 million	19	4	0	2	4	6	5	part of CS	4	part of PS	0
Placer	$5.18 million	25	5	0	2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Riverside	$11.27 million	38	11	2	7	8	2	9	9	5	0	5
Sacramento	$12.99 million	38	30	6	19	7	4	9	10	6	2	0
San Bernardino	$11.69 million	40	7	1	2	9	7	11	8	5	0	0
San Francisco	$19 million	24	10	0	5	4	3	2	7	3	2	3
San Joaquin	$7.28 million	19	7	0	6	3	3	2	5	4	2	0
Santa Clara	$21 million	50	10	3	7	11	4	6	5	3	4	17**
Solano	$4.3 million	12	4	0	3	2	3	3	3	1	0	0
Ventura	$2.7 million	14	2	0	1	2	4	2	3	1	0	2
Yolo	$1.99 million	6	6	6	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Full time staff listed for Yolo County does not include, County Clerk, Managers or data processing positions.

*Placer and Yolo County clerks failed to respond to repeated requests for information.

** Training 1.5
Warehouse - 6
VBM - 2
Mapping - 2
Ballot Layout -5

2/19/2008

Sacramento County
Benchmarks 5

County	Election Official	Elected or Appointed	Dept Head Salary	Assistant Dept Head Salary	Lead IT Position Salary	Manager Salary	Supervisor Salary	Clerical Salary
Alameda	Registrar of Voters/Director of Information Technology	appointed	$126,110 to $153,254	$99,029 to 120,494	$74,963 to $100,360	$60,611 to $73,570	$51,730 to $62,733	$43,290 to $51,617
Contra Costa	County Clerk/Recorder/ROV	elected	$146,913	$101,495	$67,204	$76,815	$61,475	$47,007 to $57,132
El Dorado	County Recorder-Clerk/ROV	elected	$115,773	$57,866 to $70,325	$59,342 to $72,134	NA	NA	$33,613 to $56,514
Fresno	County Clerk/ROV	elected	$107,900	$49,742 to $94,184	$59,526 to $103,492	$48,074 to $103,492	$35,204 to $42,796	$26,468 to $32,162
Placer	County Clerk/Recorder/ROV	elected	$96,696 to $125,892	$80,292 to $108,744	$60,756 to $79,104	$68,736 to $89,484	$39,168 to $50,988	$24,660 to $46,236
Riverside	Registrar of Voters	appointed	$107,776 to $188,441	$81,423 to $127,851	$54,877 to $89,130	$64,893 to $89,130	$37,655 to $50,798	$23,467 to $30,553
Sacramento	Registrar of Voters	appointed	$108,117 to $119,204	$88,155 to $97,196	$53,204 to $76,818	$53,204 to $76,818	$40,298 to $48,964	$27,461 to $37,020
San Bernardino	Registrar of Voters	appointed	$124,150	$80,704 to $103,224	$68,016 to $86,944	$36,941 to $47,154	$29,661 to $39,728	$25,647 to $36,046
San Francisco	Director of Elections	appointed	$165,000	$100,000	$110,000	$72,000	$62,000	$50,000
San Joaquin	Registrar of Voters	appointed	$102,466	$80,262	$72,800	$67,314	$46,696	$30,108
Santa Clara	Registrar of Voters	appointed	$92,400 to $177,600	$64,392 to $122,616	$116,796 to $127,536	$78,528 to $97,416	$60,324 to $77,016	$20,268 to $56,364
Solano	Registrar of Voters/Director of Information Technology	appointed	$157,466	$90,596 to $110,121	$49,560 to $60,240	NA	$52,966 to $64381	$32,477 to $42,405
Ventura	County Clerk/Recorder	elected	$144,890	$72,107 to $100,950	$44,065 to $61,965	$56,351 to $78,891	$39,495 to $54,626	$27,461 to $38,398
Yolo	County Clerk/Recorder	elected	$106,013	$54,960 to $66,792	$42,432 to $51,432	NA	$36,432 to $44,280	$22,476 to $41,028

2/19/2008

Single salaries listed indicate either a single salary classification or the top step on a scale.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY
Benchmarks 6

County	Voter Registration	Cos to Purchase Voter File	
Alameda	682422	350	
Contra Costa	470408	250	
El Dorado	99136	150	
Fresno	346236	33	
Placer	178539	125	
Riverside	711703	35	
Sacramento	**597073**	**406**	
San Bernardino	724682	150	
San Francisco	408070	3	Fee set by Charter
San Joaquin	240341	125	
Santa Clara	677323	479	
Solano	165132	92	
Ventura	378005	25	
Yolo	87701	70	

Registration figures from the
December 2007 Report of Registration

2/19/2008

Benchmarks 7

Note: County/Cities are listed by election; from the lowest registration to the highest

County	City	Voter Registration	Cost of Last Consolidated Election	Cost Per Registered Voter	
Yolo	Winters	2,973	$5,458.00	$1.84	June 6, 2006 Consolidated Primary
Santa Clara	Los Altos Hills	5,540	$10,121.00	$1.83	June 6, 2008 Consolidated Primary
Alameda	Albany	9,207	$11,785*	$1.24	June 6, 2006 Consolidated Primary
Sacramento	Sacramento	108,970	$46,730.00	$0.43	June 6, 2006 Consolidated Primary - 4 Council Districts
San Joaquin	Stockton	109,165	$38,664.00	$0.35	June 6, 2006 Consolidated Primary
Fresno	Reedley	6,993	$2,074.00	$0.30	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Solano	Dixon	7,036	$14,000.00	$1.99	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Placer	Auburn	7,991	$10,739.00	$1.34	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Ventura	Port Hueneme	8,560	$5,871.00	$0.69	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
El Dorado	South Lake Tahoe	8,570	$11,835.00	$1.38	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
San Bernardino	Barstow	8,785	$4,820.00	$0.55	November 7, 2007 Consolidated General
Contra Costa	Pinole	9,282	$13,355.00	$1.43	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Sacramento	Galt	9,294	$10,121.00	$0.63	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Riverside	Rancho Mirage	9,765	$2,680.00	$0.27	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
San Bernardino	Colton	17,044	$9,925.00	$0.58	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Fresno	Fresno	24,652	$4,722.00	$0.19	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General - 1 Council District
Alameda	Union City	26,074	$33,375*	$1.27	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Yolo	Davis	35,489	$47,667.00	$1.34	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Ventura	Camarillo	38,861	$14,189.00	$0.37	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Sacramento	Citrus Heights	40,724	$21,627.00	$0.53	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Contra Costa	Concord	53,672	$42,845.00	$0.80	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Placer	Roseville	54,957	$73,646.00	$1.34	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Riverside	Corona	55,115	$117,631.00	$2.13	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General
Alameda	Oakland	182,541	$262,919*	$1.44	November 7, 2006 Consolidated General

2/19/2008

*Costs in Alameda County do not include translation, typesetting or printing. These costs are billed directly by the vendor to the cities.

APPENDIX C

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are listed in the order presented in the text of the review. They have been prioritized as follows:

Priority 1 These recommendations are more serious in nature and could have the greatest impact on the election office. They should be implemented before the 2008 Presidential General Election. Priority one recommendations are checked with an "X".

Priority 2 These recommendations be examined and/or implemented as soon as practicable following the 2008 Presidential General Election.

The majority of the priority one recommendations can be accomplished with little if any additional cost other than staff labor costs. Several recommendations have the potential to provide major cost savings in terms of avoiding legal challenges, re-printing and re-mailing election materials, etc. Those that would increase costs are noted.

CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL TOPICS

BALLOTS AND SAMPLE BALLOTS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-1	VRE should establish a general policy of not permitting contests to "wrap" from one column to another. This may have potential cost implications if this policy requires an additional ballot page. In addition, VRE should consider graphic arts training for those persons responsible for ballot design. The principles of graphic design will enhance staff's ability to, within legal requirements; construct "user friendly" formats that are clear and easy to use by voters.	X

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
	If an exception to the policy is necessary, it should be the result of a considered decision, rather than the default procedure for the ballot layout software. If an exception is made, it should be noted and the candidates in the contest advised. In this circumstance, at a minimum, ballots should be designed so that if a contest does "wrap" to the next column, there is a "footer" instruction at the bottom of the first column for the voter to find the remainder of the candidates for that contest at the top of the next column, and a corresponding "header" instruction in the second column that specifically identifies the contest the listed candidates are in. In addition, VRE should request and, if necessary, amend the contract to require that the vendor provide the functionality within the Unity software to permit increased flexibility in ballot layout and design. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Difficult to assess and would change depending upon the election. In some instances it would increase costs. VRE may already have some data on this subject.	
1-2	Proofing of ballots and sample ballots is a critical and complex function. Given the complexity, and the short timeframes and deadlines for ballot production and printing, it is nearly impossible to never make a mistake. However, the potential for error can be minimized or reduced to nearly zero by adopting enhanced proofing and quality control procedures. The cost of additional proofing procedures represents a good investment when measured against the cost of correcting an error (which can involve completely reprinting ballots or sample ballots). VRE should consider the following: • Using permanent staff to conduct some or all of the proofing. Though there are advantages to having "fresh eyes" from persons who are not employees of VRE conducting the proofing, there are also significant advantages to having experts with training and experience in the election process involved in a central manner; • Maintaining, using, and regularly updating a checklist of proofing tasks that includes ballot layout and format issues as well as potential spelling, capitalization, and other grammatical errors. This checklist should require an affirmative sign-off for each item. The checklist and proofing procedures should be updated as necessary following each election; • Consulting with Secretary of State staff responsible for proofing the state ballot pamphlet to determine additional proofing procedures; • Seeking professional training for permanent staff on proofing techniques; • VRE should convene a meeting of the Mother Lode Area Association counties on the subject of proofing techniques; and,	X

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
	Producing, and regularly updating, a procedures manual for the various election materials requiring proofing. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor costs for training. Major savings in cost avoidance for printing errors.	
1-3	Given the central importance of accuracy for ballots and sample ballots, the Registrar of Voters should designate one manager to be responsible for oversight of this process. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
1-4	VRE should establish a policy that staff would, to the extent practicable (i.e. it may not be practical to observe printing around the clock), be on site during the printing process for ballots, sample ballots, and vote by mail ballots, and procedures for quality control during this observation. In addition, VRE might want to include in bid specifications for printing of ballots, sample ballots, and vote by mail ballots, incentives for combined bids on these materials, and should establish preference credit for vendors who meet the printing requirements and are located in areas that are convenient for VRE staff observation.	
1-5	VRE should continue to support legislation to clarify VRE interpretation, and to specifically permit the elections official to exclude voters who have received status as permanent vote by mail voters in the calculation of the required limit of 1,000 registered voters in a precinct.	
1-6	VRE should revisit its decision to print monolingual versions of the ballot, and continue this practice only if it is the only practical approach. FINANCIAL IMPACT: VRE has studied this subject and has data on additional costs. However, if the method is challenged by the Department of Justice, there could be legal costs involved.	X

COMMUNICATION

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-7	VRE should document each instance of past lack of a timely response, and institute a system to document each instance of a lack of service, or poor service, by any of the various vendors with which they have significant contracts, and upon whose customer service the successful conduct of an election might depend. Vendors should be alerted that this record is being maintained, and that, if a pattern of poor service emerges, the county will take appropriate action, including legal action if warranted. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-8	It may be appropriate for recommendations/requests to the vendor to go through an internal vetting process that enables staff to discuss the potential recommendation and determine if it is one the department would like to see implemented. Such a vetting process should also probably include, if VRE determines that the recommendation has value, whether it can be accomplished internally, if not, it should be distributed to the other counties in the DFM User Group prior to submittal to the vendor and at this point a priority assigned. This procedure would assist the User Group in representing a united front to the vendor in terms of the relative priority of recommendations. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
1-9	VRE should adopt a goal that, for every election procedure for which there is a requirement for notification of the public of an opportunity to observe that procedure, that VRE will make every effort to recruit appropriate observers, and will aggressively pursue every reasonable avenue to meet that goal.	X
1-10	At a minimum, Manager Meeting minutes should identify "action items" and should assign a specific person to each task. The list of action items should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting as "Old Business," and, in order to ensure accountability, those action items should remain on the agenda for future meetings until those items have been accomplished. The agenda for each meeting should also include a requirement to verify that each program manager had communicated back to his or her staff the contents of the previous Manager Meeting. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
1-11	Although the initiation of post-election debriefing meetings is itself a professional practice, it can be improved. The Registrar of Voters should consider implementing a system to track and record issues, events, errors, and professional practices *throughout* the election cycle to ensure that the post election debriefing meetings include all such actions taking place at any time during the preparation and administration of the election. In addition, the "action items" identified at these meetings should be tracked to completion at weekly Manager Meetings. This is of particular importance when these action items require the updating of the Election Calendar and any procedures manuals. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
1-12	As a complement to the existing practice of sending staff to the New Law Workshop, the Registrar of Voters should consider an All Staff Meeting to discuss new laws. The focus of this meeting could be, in addition to the general description of the change, on the details of implementation: What adjustments need to be made to office procedures? Which procedures manuals and publications need to be updated? Are revisions to the Election Calendar necessary? Does the new law require a change to information on the VRE web site? Etc.	

LEGAL ISSUES

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-13	VRE should prepare a written plan to ensure compliance with the minority language provisions of the VRA. The plan should include, but not necessarily be limited to the following: • Complete an inventory of all written materials dealing with voter registration and elections that are provided to the public; • Have all written materials in the inventory professionally translated into Spanish, including materials on the VRE web site; • Establish a policy to ensure that new forms are translated as they are created and that existing material is updated as laws change; • Prepare a glossary of election terms in Spanish and ensure that these terms are consistently used; • Ensure that all people who need Spanish language election materials receive them by including a request box on all forms and notices mailed to voters where voters can request Spanish language material and mail back, as well as procedures for in-office request for information; • Ensure that there is at least one staff member fluent in Spanish on duty in the office at all times; • Establish a written plan to identify polling places where Spanish speaking poll workers are needed; • Establish a written plan to detail how to recruit and place Spanish speaking poll workers and how to ensure that workers who purport to be Spanish speaking can actually speak the language; • The plan must also identify how the County will deal with problem poll workers who display hostility or frustration with non-English speaking voters and whose presence at the polls might discourage participation by non-English speaking voters; and Establish a complete and accurate record-keeping effort of all actions done to comply with VRA. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor or none	X
1-14	The Registrar of Voters should be more proactive in efforts to encourage agencies to participate in voter registration efforts. This would include enlisting the support of the Board of Supervisors and	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
	Chief Executive Officer to emphasize the legal requirements and to personally encourage participation.	
1-15	The VRE should consider a system of accounting for changes to documents and the web site by utilizing the "track changes" function on office word processing software to create a record of which changes were made to each document and when.	
1-16	Examine whether the county accessibility committee fully meets the requirements of the Voting Accessibility for the elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 and if not, reconvene the VRE Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-17	Ensure that laws proposed by the US Congress, as well as regulations, guidelines and standards adopted by the Election Assistance Commission and other federal agencies, promulgated to implement these laws, are monitored for their effect on Sacramento County.	

ELECTION PLANNING

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-18	A new election calendar system should be implemented and all Election Managers should be required to use it. If the calendar introduced by Voting Systems and Technology has the necessary capabilities it could become the model. If not, there is commercial software available that could simplify the process. One such program is sold by the company supplying poll worker on-line training. It would be useful to consider templates for different types of elections – primaries, generals, local, mail ballot, etc. That would eliminate unnecessary items. The calendars should be sortable by division. Although it is beneficial to have all tasks listed in one calendar, it might be useful to have some tasks designated to a sub-category that was available, but not shown, on the main calendar screen/document unless requested. These would be the small tasks that Election Managers know do not affect another section within the department. These calendars should be updated electronically as tasks are completed and ideally notify the manager if an item missed the deadline.	

PROCEDURES

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-19	Most election offices do not have the time or expertise to develop thorough documented procedures. VRE should consider hiring a contractor to oversee this process, work with Election Managers, and teach this skill. It would also be helpful to develop professional flow charts as a visual tool. Before any procedure is included in the manual, it must be thoroughly tested. Someone other than the writer must actually perform the task using the procedure. FINANCIAL IMPACT: This could be as much as $200,000 if done by an outside contractor, or minor if VRE staff were trained in methods to accomplish this goal.	X
1-20	VRE should adopt a process to regularly (i.e. annually, after the legislature leaves for the year) meet to review new laws with a specific purpose of determining if procedures need to be updated, publications need to be updated, and/or the web-site needs to be updated. This should also be done as part of the review process after each election.	

STAFF MORALE AND RECOGNITION

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-21	Examples of various recognition programs are listed in this section, but there are no specific recommendations.	

ELECTION DISASTER RECOVERY

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-22	Amend the procedures in the Emergency Plans to ensure that the Emergency Contact List is checked and phone numbers tested and verified prior to each election. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
1-23	Amend disaster procedures to include a requirement to train and remind staff of these requirements prior to each election. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-24	VRE should adopt a goal of, if necessary, being able to seamlessly relocate from their current building to another location on Election Day if a disaster or emergency shuts down election headquarters. The alternate location should be identified prior to the election, procedures should be adopted to ensure rollover of phone and computer processes to the new location, and staff should be trained to relocate, and practice that relocation, prior to each election. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor or None	X
1-25	VRE should review with law enforcement and, if appropriate, revise their procedures for bomb threats to clarify which agency has decision-making authority in case of a bomb threat.	
1-26	Mail handling procedures should be updated to include specific instructions and procedures for election-related mail (i.e. suspicious envelope that appears to contain completed affidavits of registration) as well as a schedule for reviewing the procedures with staff prior to each election. These procedures should protect both the voter's rights and the safety of the office staff.	

STRATEGIC PLANNING

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
1-27	Making decisions regarding voting systems and automation of office functions would be aided if a strategic plan enumerating the vision and goals of the department were in place. The department, perhaps in conjunction with a trained facilitator, should develop a strategic plan developing a vision for the next three to five years.	

CHAPTER 2 - ADMINISTRATION SECTION

FISCAL SERVICES

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
2-1	It may be appropriate to retain the current Fiscal Manager on a consulting basis when she retires for the exclusive purposes of training the next Fiscal Manager and to developing detailed procedures.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
2-2	The Personnel Manager, in an interview, indicated that the position of Fiscal Manager should be upgraded to the level of an Accountant and we feel this is something that should be studied.	
2-3	The fee for recount board members should be reviewed for compliance with state law. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X

PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
2-4	The Board of Supervisors should consider a comprehensive review of the positions, job qualifications, and job descriptions within the VRE to determine if the classifications, salary levels, benefits, and, opportunities for advancement are sufficient to recruit and retain staff, including providing redundancy or qualified back up for critical positions. This review should address the issue of technological changes in the election process, and whether current job classifications are adequate to ensure the accuracy of the election process, as well as enable independence from vendors, and permit the VRE to take advantage to the Internet and other tools to provide information and services to the county. It should be noted that, should these positions be upgraded, there may be equity issues in terms of the pay structure for the current program managers in the "Election Manager" positions, as-well-as possibly the Assistant Registrar of Voters. Interviews indicate that although current staff appears highly qualified and there are no current vacancies, VRE could be vulnerable if experienced staff were to leave.	
2-5	It may be appropriate to consider the consolidation of all technology positions under one Election Manager in Voting Systems and Technology, thereby integrating that position into the technical staff. This could benefit the VRE by enhancing the professional interactions and exchanges on the Voting Systems and Technology team.	
2-6	The organizational structure of the department should be changed to place the Outreach section under the Voter Services division reporting to the Election Manager of Voter Services instead of the Assistant Registrar of Voters. In addition the workspace for the outreach staff should be moved from the current location to the Voter Services section. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor cost for space change.	X
2-7	Include temporary help (as well as regular employee overtime) hours and tasks in regular and monthly budget tracking and monitoring reports made available to managers and policy makers. This	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
	information should be included in the annual budget development process.	
2-8	Some agencies will work with employers to develop classifications that meet client needs. The temporary agency in San Bernardino developed a specific category and was able to provide warehouse workers, even though the cost was higher to reflect the added liability. San Bernardino County uses three agencies to meet their needs so that they do not rely too heavily on one agency. This method prevents getting referrals "from the bottom of the list".	
2-9	VRE should consider developing a career development and training program for each employee, and including funding for this program as a line item in the budget.	
2-10	Activate the Mother Lode Area Association with regular (quarterly) meeting to discuss election topics and determine professional practices in other counties on a variety of topics, including: use of GIS technology for election purposes; ballot and sample ballot proofing procedures; warehouse operations; disability access; materials for inclusion in candidate handbooks, etc. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
2-11	The installation of appropriate cooling equipment for the election servers as well as an alarm system should be a priority, and the county should ensure that this installation takes place between the February and June elections in order to be operational for the June election. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Unknown	X
2-12	Examine the potential benefits from upgrading the Warehouse Operations position to include management of warehouse construction and maintenance projects.	
2-13	Investigate the feasibility, efficiency and effectiveness of providing a limited range of information and services at remote sites, potentially through the existing network of Neighborhood Service Centers. Santa Barbara County currently operates two remote offices.	

CHAPTER 3 - CAMPAIGN SERVICES DIVISION

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
3-1	Expand development of the on-line campaign disclosure system to include additional data sorts for types of contributors. In addition, provide on-line *filing* of documents. This will save time and labor in the election office, provide faster lookup to the public, and provide better customer service to filers.	
3-2	Create a better and more automated system for tracking financial disclosure filings. The system should notify when filings are late, generate reminder letters, and track status. Based on this, and when necessary, the VRE needs to fine and report on non-compliance.	

PHONE AND COUNTER SUPPORT

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
3-3	Discuss options to more appropriately involve the Outreach section of the office in overseeing registration drives, issuing, materials, training, tracking, etc.	
3-4	Discuss feasibility of developing a tracking system for phone systems that would provide needed information.	
3-5	Investigate the use of credit and/or debit cards for those purchasing services. This is a nice customer service but may require countywide policy decisions. It is understood that this was looked at several years ago but times change and it might be more feasible now.	
3-6	Print and laminate basic terminal use procedures – including options available, how to get print copies, etc. These procedures should be printed in English and Spanish.	

ELECTION ASSISTANCE

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
3-7	Since candidate statements are in electronic format after scanning, consideration should be given to making them available to the public on-line.	
3-8	It was mentioned by members of the Board of Supervisors that the county had established regional sites that could perhaps be used for providing certain election services. It might be possible to at least set up certain days/times for issuing nomination papers, although the candidate would still have to	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
	come to the election office for filing.	
3-9	Campaign Services could conduct candidate information classes (Running for Office 101) that explain the procedures, requirements, services available, etc. It is understood that this has been tried in the past with minimal participation. We realize that experienced candidates have little need for such classes but with the right promotion this could make a difference in encouraging participation by inexperienced candidates.	
3-10	The VRE lobby is large and has comfortable seating areas. It would seem a more pleasant experience to ask candidates to sign in on a log and then call them to the counter in that order.	
3-11	Discuss with the election information management systems vendor the possibilities of automating this service.	

ELECTION OBSERVERS / ELECTION SUPPORT

#	Priority 1	Priority 1
3-12	Request an enhancement to the EIMS that would automatically generate certificates of election by merging information from different sources.	
3-13	Investigate the feasibility of enhancing the program that scans memory cards to include the ability to record any problems in that same program.	
3-14	Take aggressive action to identify all key observation points and to recruit and train official observers to monitor each point. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None to minor if it becomes necessary to pay observers.	X

MEDIA

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
3-15	Gather statistical pages used in media packages and on-line from other counties in order to develop a reporting format that will better serve your public and media. This should show the growth of vote by mail voting and the percentage of the vote that is vote by mail versus at the polls. This could be complicated by the various types of mail ballots – requested, permanent vote by mail voters, military, etc.	
3-16	Either mail the handbook to all media contacts, or at least send a notice that it is available and what is posted on the website. Conduct a media briefing before major elections where recent changes and what is unique or different about the election can be highlighted. This would provide time for questions and answers and to obtain input from the media of what would make their job easier and more effective.	
3-17	Send a special notice (or highlight it in the Media Handbook) that informs the media of what they may and may not do. Determine the permissibility of cell phones, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA's), cameras, flash drives, etc. There needs to be some decision making regarding electronic "gadgets" when anyone enters the actual ballot counting room.	
3-18	Investigate backup media plans for a major event. Monitor media activity and be prepared to consider adding staff in the future to focus on this activity.	

CHAPTER 4 - PRECINCT OPERATIONS DIVISION

GIS MAPPING

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-1	Since the GIS Analyst is strictly providing technical support, and not involved in consolidating precincts, it would seem that this function should be under the Voting Systems and Technology section.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-2	The current GIS Analyst appears to be very capable and the VRE has designated a GIS Technician as a back up to this position. However, it may be useful to consider forming a "user group" of sorts, or a list serve, with GIS personnel in other county election offices in order to benefit from the expertise and experience of a group of professionals engaged in similar work. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
4-3	The responsibility for producing and sending letters to voters, upon approval of administration, should be with the section of the Department most familiar with the details.	
4-4	Duties of the part time GIS Technician need to be better defined and explained and consideration should be given to increasing the use to full time as the next census approaches.	

PRECINCT/POLL WORKER

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-5	Explore the option of obtaining additional insurance for polling places, if requested by polls owner, from outside sources. This added cost can then be shared with the jurisdiction(s) participating in the election.	
4-6	The VRE should consider reconstituting the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, and possibly expanding its duties to also advise on HAVA related accessibility issues. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
4-7	Include a warning to Inspectors in the worksheet, to make sure that the Clerks chosen are not candidates or immediate family members of candidates who will appear on the ballot in that polling place.	
4-8	Work more closely with the Central Committees to get their support in nominating poll workers.	
4-9	Develop a system that informs all applicants of whether they have been chosen as poll workers. Mail is expensive, but perhaps the availability cards could state a date at which time those *chosen* will be posted on the website and if their name is not present, that they are thanked for volunteering and the VRE hopes to be able to contact them again in the future. If not on the website, perhaps a way for them to obtain the information through an automated feature of the telephone system.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-10	The success of the County poll worker program could be improved by asking the Chief Executive Officer and members of the Board of Supervisors to directly encourage other County departments to voluntarily participate and recognizing these employees post election.	
4-11	Contact Fresno, San Bernardino, San Francisco, Placer or Los Angeles Counties for information on their student poll worker programs. They will help to recruit teachers by making the teacher's job easier, provide ideas on recognition, provide ideas on how to make the best use of students who volunteer, and how to train and obtain feedback. This same program should be integrated with a general outreach program to young people through the schools, and could be used to begin a student program for students to work at the tally center on election night. In some counties, students volunteer (no pay) for this task and it has been a great success. It is noted that the counties with successful programs have devoted an employee to this task. To be more effective, the VRE should consider adding personnel.	
4-12	Examine methods used by other counties to determine the need for bilingual poll workers. Discuss the intent of the Voting Rights Act and whether the current methods are meeting the intent of the law. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Potential cost avoidance of legal challenge.	X
4-13	Poll Workers interviewed during the November 2007 election had the following recommendations that should be incorporated into the training program: Slow down a little; encourage "stupid" questions or set aside time to ask for questions; and, provide more time for hands on training in the setting up of equipment. Continue with plans to purchase on-line training. Continue with efforts to enhance the Poll Worker's Manual.	
4-14	Develop a comprehensive list of items to be tracked to ensure that poll workers are performing all vital functions – from attending class, to Election Day, to return of election ballots/supplies, to canvass, etc. Create forms for tracking this information that can be scanned into spreadsheets. This should not be difficult, as most of the items require yes and no answers. Another alternative is to build on the system in place for poll worker training class evaluations that uses ballot-counting equipment to tally results.	

WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-15	Consider consolidating forms control under one person who can coordinate with anyone needing forms. This person should be trained in forms design and be responsible for any bids for printing (not including the sample ballot or ballot card). An inventory system should be developed showing what forms are in use, assigning an identifying number, and using this information in job procedures.	
4-16	Develop a system where drop off site receipts are pre-printed with non-standard items included, or a user-friendly listing is prepared for the person assigned to complete the receipt. The forms used for receipt should be compatible with other forms used to track performance of poll workers.	
4-17	Set up a mock drop off site at the VRE well in advance of an election; actually walk through the steps, documenting procedure as you go. This will point out missing or incorrect information. Look at this from the standpoint of the poll worker. Also, yourselves in the "shoes" of a new Supervisor who has never performed this task before and do not "assume" something will be done unless it is written down. Try assigning workers by number and give specific tasks to each number. As you walk through the process, you will see where people are crossing paths unnecessarily or where something is being missed. More detail is needed for what the Supervisor is responsible for doing and how it should be done. This document should incorporate some of the detail, pictures, and presentation as is used in the Precinct Manual. Once this is done and procedures are developed, incorporate a mock up drop off site into the site supervisor-training meeting. On Election Night, instead of showing items or pictures of items to be removed from vehicles, try packing a vehicle with items and doing a dry run with newly trained staff so they can walk through the process without pressure. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
4-18	We are informed of steps taken by the VRE to ensure that all polling places are accounted for, including: calls from poll workers, dispatching of coordinators, and ability of Asset Shadow System to record receipt of election materials. However, the procedures for the drop off site do not mention these steps and appear to give the site the authority to close at a specific time. Drop off sites should not close until all precincts are accounted for unless other arrangements are made - other than making the poll worker drive to the VRE. Drop off sites should have to receive permission to close from the VRE.	
4-19	If lighting is insufficient at drop off sites, examine whether it could be supplemented with battery operated lighting inside the trailers.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-20	Examine the conditions of the existing voting systems contract and determine whether there is any flexibility, either now or in the future, for more involvement of VRE staff. Voting system vendors should not have control of any portion of the operation and maintenance of voting equipment, except as support for the VRE staff.	
4-21	As a secondary check, before destroying documents, a form should be used to obtain permission for destruction from the Registrar of Voters. The Registrar of Voters would be responsible for checking with all involved to be sure there is nothing affecting the destruction date.	
4-22	Create a policy and procedure specifically for record retention and destruction. This policy should detail who does what, how to properly label, and enter items into the system. It would also include procedures regarding how and when destruction takes place. There was nothing in the documents we reviewed that explained the difference between recycling and confidential recycling.	

ELECTION DAY SUPPORT OF POLLING PLACES/POLL WORKERS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-23	Investigate existing trouble tracking systems in San Francisco and King County, Washington. The San Francisco system allows the election office to track and display calls on a scrolling screen so the Registrar of Voters can track each problem to resolution and identify trends such as numerous polling places running short of ballots. We also encourage research into ways to implement the system in a user friendly way and for staff to make the commitment to its use. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor if developed in-house and moderate if purchased.	X
4-24	Investigate, along with OCIT, the feasibility of using the reverse 911 system to communicate with polling places in an emergency. This system calls out to pre-determined telephone numbers and provides the same message to all. It is the same system that recently saved so many lives in the fires that swept Southern California. Rather than residents calling for help, or telephone banks trying to call out, the system called the residents to notify of evacuations. This could be used to supplement existing systems.	
4-25	Discuss the operation of multiple phone lines in Precinct Operations and then work with OCIT to develop a more streamlined telephone system that reduces the numbers for Coordinators to call.	

OFFICIAL CANVASS OF ELECTION RESULTS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
4-26	The VRE has investigated the use of electronic poll books and believes funding is available through HAVA. Although there may be some problems currently with obtaining approval from Secretary of State, this is a tool that could make a major difference. Electronic poll books record voting history and the voter's signature at the time they are given a ballot. It is then, a simple matter to apply the voting history after the election. Electronic poll books also are able to direct any voter to the correct polling place, thus reducing the number of provisional ballots.	
4-27	Investigate the possibilities of merging information contained elsewhere into precinct specific worksheets.	
4-28	Discuss with staff involved in recounting ballots why they prefer the different methods and make a decision on the one that works best. Then, ensure that the agreed upon method is adhered to and any changes are made to the recount procedures.	
4-29	Contact vendors and search for pens that "fill the bubble", when marking ballot cards during the remake process, but do not bleed through. Also, if filling in bubbles by hand, consider using a plastic template to keep from going out of the lines.	

CHAPTER 5 - VOTER SERVICES DIVISION

OVERALL DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-1	Voter Services needs to complete a reorganization of procedures to establish a manual in chapter numbered order, with a table of contents to make it more usable for staff. Care must be given to ensure that each section has sufficient detail to be useful to employees. Consideration should be given to hiring an outside professional to prepare the manual and to train staff how to maintain and update it.	
5-2	Require the EIMS vendor to maintain up-to-date user manuals for the system. This can be done as an individual customer or through the vendor user group.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-3	Designate at least one position in Voter Services as a required bilingual English/Spanish position so that when a vacancy occurs, permanent bilingual staff can fill the position. In the interim ensure that one or more temporary staff members during election season is bilingual English/Spanish. It is important to have someone in the section at all times who can assist Spanish-speaking voters. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor costs for pay differential for bilingual.	X

REGISTRATION

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-4	Train all staff members on all aspects of scanning and entering registration data into the EIMS and all jobs within the section.	
5-5	Maintain affidavits of voter registration received from 17-year olds in the office and process when the person will be 18 by the date of the next scheduled election. All forms sent to voters should be reviewed for legal accuracy and contain a code citation. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
5-6	A complete review of staff classifications and salaries should be completed for the registration section either by the County Human Resources Department or an outside consultant. The review should also study whether additional permanent staff is needed.	
5-7	The Voter Services Election Manager should ensure that the VRE policy of briefing staff after Manager Meetings is carried out on a regular basis. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
5-8	The VRE should review NVRA section 8c2A regarding the timing of file maintenance. The Voter Services Election Manager should consult with the management team each year to establish a file maintenance schedule for the upcoming year. A plan detailing which methods of updating as-well-as timelines and responsibilities should be prepared and monitored. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
5-9	Voter Services should develop a plan to handle multiple petitions that could be filed during a busy election-planning period. This plan should include how to hire and train staff; as well as plans to set up additional workspace if necessary.	

VOTE BY MAIL

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-10	Voter Services should work with the mailing vendor, the Voting Systems and Technology division and the printing vendor to install and test the bar code program to ensure quality control and prevent sending the wrong ballots when multiple ballot cards are involved. This must be done before the next election where voters will receive more than one card ballots.	
5-11	Voter Services should develop a plan to re-mail the unsigned ballot envelopes to vote by mail voters with instructions to sign and return by mail, if time allows, or to take the signed envelope to a polling place on Election Day. Staff should consult with County Counsel to ensure that their instructions are clear and comply with legal requirements.	
5-12	Review past communications from the Secretary of State, contact Secretary of State's office, and/or other counties to determine the exact guidelines for verifying returned vote by mail ballots and update procedures accordingly. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Cost avoidance of challenged election.	X
5-13	Plans should be made to establish a larger secure storage area for voted ballots after they are removed from their envelopes and before they are taken to the counting room.	

VOTER ASSISTANCE

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-14	Conduct larger training classes for Election Day phone banks of 16 to 20 temporary telephone workers utilizing a training room, conference room or the registration pool area.	
5-15	The notebook used by Election phone bank operators should be reviewed and updated to contain more detailed information for temporary staff.	
5-16	Incoming calls during the seven days prior to the election should be answered by an automated system that will transfer voters who need polling place information directly to the IVR system and other calls to operators for assistance. The VRE currently uses an IVR system for this purpose that can handle 40 calls at one time. Statistics from the IVR indicate that there have never had more than 30 calls on the IVR at one time. This automated system should be used to free up operators to assist voters with other services. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Unknown	X

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
5-17	Until the phone system can be changed/improved, redesign the front cover of the sample ballot pamphlet to more clearly show the phone numbers and include both the general number and the IVR number.	
5-18	The VRE should have dedicated operators on Election Day who monitor and respond to e-mail requests from voters. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor	X
5-19	The VRE and OCIT should conduct a complete study of the phone system to determine if the current system has sufficient incoming lines and to make improvements to statistical reporting and enhanced customer features. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Unknown but could be substantial.	X

CHAPTER 6 – VOTING SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

OVERALL DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-1	The VRE should establish goals for recruitment, training, and retention of VST staff. In addition, the VRE should conduct a top-to-bottom review of the job classifications and salary structure for VST to determine if the current salary structure, job descriptions, training, and opportunities for advancement are sufficient to reduce risk of program failure and vulnerability to errors or omissions that compromise the integrity of the election process. Finally, the VRE should consider consolidating responsibility for the proper functioning (as distinct from the operation of the program itself) of all office technology, including GIS, under the Election Manager position responsible for VST.	
6-2	An inter-departmental team consisting of personnel from the VRE and OCIT should be formed to evaluate which program responsibilities can be effectively transferred to the department level.	
6-3	The VRE should review the procedures for each of the program functions, eliminate duplication, and integrate these into a comprehensive VST Procedures Manual that is updated on an annual basis.	

VOTING SYSTEM

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-4	Incorporate the procedures for use of the voting system, as adopted by the Secretary of State, into county procedures for voting systems, and use these procedures as the foundation and basis for operation of the voting equipment. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
6-5	The Voting System procedures should clearly indicate that the VRE staff is responsible for acceptance testing of voting equipment.	
6-6	The VRE office should advocate that the Secretary of State require, as a condition of voting system certification, that the procedures adopted with each voting system include a requirement that the vendor, by a date certain, effectively train county staff and provide the knowledge transfer to enable staff to conduct the election independent of the direct participation of the vendor, including a User Manual that the county agrees is sufficient for this purpose.	
6-7	The VRE should support efforts to streamline the voting system certification process, or to establish testing facilities in California.	
6-8	It is critically important that the VRE develop potential options for action items to address problems with vendor support and present them to the Board of Supervisors for approval and direction. Actions should include: (1) Tracking all instances of insufficient vendor response; (2) Requesting the Secretary of State to establish minimum requirements for vendor customer service as a condition of certifying voting equipment; (3) Including performance metrics in vendor contracts; and, (4) Requiring a performance bond that would be used for a 3rd party to respond should the vendor be unable to do so. Some or all of these actions may have budgetary and trade secret/intellectual property implications. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
6-9	Update the procedures for conducting the Logic and Accuracy Testing, as well as the checklist for verifying the readiness of voting equipment for use on Election Day, to ensure that the problem of internal clocks on the M100's being set to the incorrect time does not reoccur.	
6-10	Upgrade the election results display function of the Unity software, or otherwise arrange for improved presentation and functionality. It may be advisable to consult with an expert in web design in order to optimize presentation. The same company that is providing the new on-line training system for poll workers has an excellent election result display system.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-11	In the interest of transparency, and in order to avoid any possible misperception, it may be appropriate to engage the public in a demonstration of the ballot on demand system, possibly through constituting a task force of IT experts and members of the public with appropriate expertise to review and comment on these procedures and, as above, seek approval from the Secretary of State for any modifications.	
6-12	The procedures adopted by the VRE for the voting system appear to be well thought out and substantial. However, they should be compared against the Secretary of State procedures and, the VRE should seek approval from the Secretary of State for any variations or modifications. The procedures for the use of the ballot on demand functionality, as adopted by the Secretary of State, should be included as a part of the procedures for use of the voting system as a whole, rather than as a stand-alone section. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
6-13	The procedures for the Logic and Accuracy testing should be strengthened to include a process for recruiting members of the public to participate as members of the Logic and Accuracy Board, as well as to observe the Logic and Accuracy process. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None to minor if observers are paid.	X
6-14	The VRE should review section 2.7.1 of the voting systems procedures adopted by the Secretary of State for use of the M100 and 650 voting equipment and revisit the policy of conducting a post election Logic and Accuracy procedure on only 10% of the voting machines and consider whether post election testing should be done on 100% of the precinct voting machines. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Additional labor costs.	X
6-15	The procedures testing voting systems should be reviewed for completeness. Possible additions include a provision for security of the voting equipment after the Logic and Accuracy testing is performed, and a detailed description of the manner in which a test deck is constructed.	

ELECTION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EIMS)

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-16	The VRE should advocate for an up-to-date User Manual to accompany each new build or revision to the DFM election information management system.	

OTHER SYSTEMS AND HARDWARE

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-17	Continue to participate in the formation of technical and policy requirements for the VoteCal system identify implementation issues, estimate potential costs, and track actual costs associated with the project in order to ensure appropriate reimbursement to Sacramento County.	
6-18	P;rovide VST staff the necessary permissions to make content changes on the VRE web page. An inter-departmental team consisting of personnel from the VRE and the county Office of Communications and Information Technology should be constituted to evaluate which program responsibilities can be effectively transferred to the department level.	
6-19	Add a link to the county web homepage to reach the VRE through “Elections” on the “Department Index” pathway. Many persons, when looking for election related information, may not intuitively think to look under “Voter Registration.” FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor	X
6-20	Redesign the county homepage to provide a clear link to the VRE, at least for the four weeks before and after the election.	
6-21	Consider retaining a web site consultant to review the VRE web site and recommend improvements to navigation, presentation, and content, including upgrading the presentation of election results.	

CONTROLS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-22	The Asset Tracking system for accounting for voting equipment could include information on the model number, software and firmware version numbers, and other information that would assist the VRE in detecting unauthorized alterations or intrusions.	
6-23	Staff training procedures should emphasize the importance of scanning the bar code for equipment in the Asset Tracking system at each stage of the election process, and provide for feedback or consequences for failure to do so.	
6-24	Follow up with the software vendor for the Asset Tracking system to ensure that the vendor upgrades the software to provide the ability to determine exactly where each piece of equipment is located when it is in the warehouse between elections.	

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
6-25	Strengthen the VRE security and chain of custody procedures for voting equipment that is loaned to other counties.	

CHAPTER 7 – OUTREACH SECTION

OVERALL DIVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendation	Priority 1
7-1	The organizational structure of the VRE should be changed to place the Outreach section under the Voter Services division reporting to the Election Manager of Voter Services instead of the Assistant Registrar of Voters. In addition, the workspace for the Outreach staff should be moved from the current location to the Voter section. FINANCIAL IMPACT: Minor cost for space change.	X
7-2	The Outreach section needs to develop a comprehensive Outreach Plan for each year that includes clear goals, objectives and methods to monitor if the goals are being met. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
7-3	Outreach staff should be provided training as to why they are conducting Outreach programs with clear direction on what activities are inappropriate. Outreach staff should contact other California counties that are covered under the VRA for information and assistance on how to remain in compliance. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
7-4	The VRE should refrain in the future from conducting candidate forums in order to maintain its impartial role in the election process. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
7-5	The Outreach section should establish an Outreach Advisory Committee made up of interested individuals and organizations from the community. FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	X
7-6	The student mock election program should be expanded to the other secondary schools in Sacramento County. Staff should seek the support of groups like the League of Women Voters. The VRE will need to find a means of supporting these efforts.	
7-7	The Outreach section must prepare a complete policy and procedure manual for the section.	

APPENDIX D

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

The Election Center prefers the term “professional practices” to “best practices”. The use of “best” implies that it is the best of all that is available, which is not realistic.

The listing that follows includes applicable professional practices or the need for a professional practice. Where the review team was aware of a professional practice, or could locate one, it has been noted. In some instances we have indicated that VRE should do further research the topic. The items listed as “Sacramento County” are practices that the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Department (VRE) and/or County government has developed and can serve as models for other jurisdictions.

There are several good resources for investigating and obtaining additional information. One of the best is by networking with other election officials. This is something that VRE does quite effectively. In addition, on-line professional practices are available at:

Election Center website:	electioncenter.org
Election Assistance Commission website:	eac.gov

It should be noted that the Registrar of Voters currently sits on the Election Center Professional Practices Committee, and reviews submissions from all over the country. This exposure to new ideas and ways of doing things is extremely beneficial to Sacramento County. One result is that many of the “professional practices” recognized by the Election Center are already being implemented in Sacramento County.

CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL TOPICS

Ballots and Sample Ballots

1. Research	Process of proofing ballots and sample ballots.
2. Research	**Rules for laying out/designing ballots** (e.g. no wrapping, visual arts training, etc.).
3. Cook County Illinois	**Redesign of election materials**. See 2004 Election Center Professional Practices. The paper is called "Rethinking Design" relating to a prize-winning redesign of election materials by graphic arts students and changes to law.
4. Research	**On-site observation and quality control of the printing process** – especially during graveyard shifts.

Communication

1. Sacramento County	**Information Alert** process between county departments, Chief Executive Office, and Board of Supervisors to alert to critical issues.
2. Research	**Vendor accountability in contracts.**
3. King County Washington	An aggressive program to **recruit public observation of election processes**.
4. Sacramento County	**All Staff Meetings** held to address emergency situations and actions to provide counseling, etc.
5. Maricopa County Arizona	**On-line database** accessible throughout the department for capturing and categorizing the various pieces of information related to the election. See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. The database allows for recording the source of the information, and assigning resolution to the appropriate manager who receives instant notification."
6. Forsyth County Georgia	**The "Power of Promotion**". See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. This describes how an elections office can successfully market itself." This program can be effective in communicating with the public concerning the basic duties and responsibilities of the elections office, and can also integrate into an outreach program.

7. Pierce County Washington	Innovative program to recognize a segment of the community that is absolutely essential for the conduct of elections, but rarely acknowledged as such. They created and provided to each postal carrier a **"Postal Carrier Appreciation Pin**" to be worn on their lapels. The pin features the official election mail insignia, and the slogan, "You really deliver." See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices.

Legal Issues

1. Research	**Implementing the VRA minority language provisions** – i.e. Check off system including web requests to register to vote.
2. Research	**Counties that "translate" materials into plain language** to reduce number of words needed to be translated into Spanish, thereby lowering cost (Spanish is 1/3 longer than English).
3. Research	**Counties that use "track changes" software** to create a record of changes made to documents and their translations.
4. Harris County Texas	**Language assistance**. See 2005 Election Center Professional Practices. The paper is entitled "Harris Votes! Language Assistance Program." It details how Harris County implemented their Vietnamese language requirements for the 2004 elections.
5. Los Angeles County	**Program** to make agency registration more effective.
6. California Secretary of State	**Practice to identify major employers with overseas operations**, schools with study abroad programs, and other means for identifying and making communication easier with military and overseas voters.
7. Monterrey and San Diego Counties	**Ballots to military and overseas voters**. They are asked if they want to receive a ballot electronically and if so, a secure system is set up to email them their ballot so they can return it in time to be counted. The VRE method of overseas voters downloading a sample ballot from the website may or may not be just as effective.
8. Sacramento County	**Development of manual through CACEO for military and overseas voting**. It is used throughout state.

9. Sacramento County	**Ballot on demand**. Allows VRE to send real ballots sixty days prior to an election, as required by law, to military and overseas voters instead of waiting for the printer to supply them.
Legislative Advocacy	
1. Sacramento County	**The significant level of VRE involvement in CACEO** and the benefits derived from networking.
Election Planning	
1. Research	**Election Planning software**. The vendor currently supplying on-line poll worker training has a software product that facilitates election planning. While we do not endorse any vendors, this resource is mentioned as an example. The vendor can supply names of current customers.
2. Montgomery County Maryland	**Bringing together county resources that can be utilized for the election**. See 2005 Election Center Professional Practices. The paper is called "Election Task Force" by Sara Harris, Deputy Election Director. Their Election Task Force is a made up of representatives of county departments, public schools, and police departments. They begin meeting six months before a major election. They help plan for security and other election needs. It brings together county resources that can be utilized for the election.
Procedures	
1. Research	Any jurisdiction or office that has **professional up to date, user-friendly, procedures** and work flowcharts – also any professional writing resources. This would be a good topic for the Mother Lode Area Association and good reason to activate these meetings.
Staff Morale and Recognition	
1. Sacramento County	**The "Guess What I Saw" Program**. It is a good tool for increasing morale and recognizing special people.

CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL TOPICS

Election Disaster Recovery

1. Johnson County Kansas	**Disaster plan**. This is an excellent plan that was a joint effort with several county agencies including the Sheriff's department.
2. Montgomery County Maryland	**Methods of communicating with polling places**. This is a good resource for methods of communicating with polling places in the event of problems on Election Day. An Election Center Report prepared for the County, included a survey and responses of election offices throughout the nation on this topic (available on Election Center website). The county was in the process of implementing a Reverse 911 system.
3. California Secretary of State's Office	**Relocating essential election processes**. This is a good plan, as well as a process to practice and test the plan, for relocating essential election processes in case of an emergency on Election Day.
4. St. Landry Parish Clerk of Court, Opelousas, Louisiana	**Catastrophic Record Damage**. Many of the southern states have experienced major disasters that have affected election administration. At the Election Center Annual Conference August 2007, a session was conducted on "Catastrophic Record Damage" by Charles Jagneaux.
5. Rutherford County Tennessee	**Nextel Communication link to precincts on Election Day**. See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. This program utilizes cell phones with walkie-talkie capability after information following 9/11 indicated that landlines and regular cell phones were ineffective in the event of a disaster.

Strategic Planning

Research	**A facilitator**, either from within Sacramento County government or from the private sector, to facilitate development of a **strategic plan** for the VRE, as well as a process for maintaining the strategic plan. Internet resource: strategic planning in smaller nonprofit organizations -A Practical Guide for the Process, by: Dr. Jan W. Lyddon, PhD. Western Michigan University.

Fiscal Services	
1. Sacramento County	**"Real time" budget tracking system**. Used for purchases and other expenditures to assist in monitoring progress against the budget as adopted.
2. Sacramento County	**Revision of HAVA funding guidelines**. Proactive efforts to provide the Secretary of State with the information required to revise HAVA funding guidelines, resulting in the County obtaining funding from HAVA for warehouse improvements, cell phones, sorter, etc. VRE efforts benefited all counties throughout the state.
3. Sacramento County	**Leadership role**. In county efforts to estimate and obtain reimbursements for state mandated elections.
Personnel and Facilities	
1. Research	**Jurisdictions where position classifications and job descriptions have been updated to account for new technology**. Activating and working with the Mother Lode Area Association might be useful.
2. San Bernardino County	**Use of special classifications and multiple contracts for obtaining temporary employees**.
3. Sacramento County	**A leader in providing training and networking opportunities**. The number of participants and graduates is exceptional.
4. Sacramento County	**Customer Service Academy** as a countywide plan.
5. Sacramento County	**An exceptional election facility**. Particularly security, warehouse, data entry area with drop down screens, and private meeting room in front office.

1. Election offices in the City/ County of San Francisco, County of San Bernardino, Los Angeles City Ethics Commission, and Center for Governmental Studies (Bob Stern at stern@cgs.org)	**Information and ideas for campaign disclosure reporting.** San Bernardino County recently won an award for their system that allows both filing and viewing of disclosure documents. In addition, their software supports automated tracking of late filings and sending of reminder letters.
2. San Bernardino County and Santa Barbara Counties	**Remote site operations.** San Bernardino sends staff to remote areas to allow candidates to take out nomination papers. Santa Barbara operates two remote site offices on a permanent basis.
3. San Bernardino County	**Information classes for candidates** to educate them and their campaign staff regarding the process of running for office, services available, and any changes in law. These classes are extremely helpful to candidates running for office the first time and who may or may not have experienced campaign managers
4. Research	**Automated phone system** that tracks the number of calls per menu item.
5. Sacramento County	**Customer Service.** During the nomination period Campaign Services sends runners to the city clerk offices to pick up nomination forms that need signature verification. This helps the city and improves workflow – preventing backups.
6. King County Washington	**Election observation.** Although King County Washington operates under different laws than California; they could be a good source of information on observation. Because of the long period of processing absentee ballots, they have resorted to a system of paying observers who are nominated by the political parties. They have observers assigned to all vital processes. The idea of paying observers would be new and an added cost but a small one if it increases confidence in the process. On the other hand, it could pose concerns about the independence of the monitors.

7. King County Washington	**Full time public information officer.** Due to the amount of media attention to elections, the county has devoted a good deal to creating an excellent media plan. They have one individual permanently assigned as a Public Relations Officer. This person also has a network of other public relation officers from other departments who are assigned to the election office on Election Day. Borrowing on a media plan from Miami-Dade, they have developed a comprehensive media plan that could prove beneficial.

1. Fresno, San Bernardino, Santa Clara Counties	**Student poll worker programs.** Many counties have extremely effective student programs such as Fresno where they had a need for 750 and received 900+ applications. San Bernardino County has attracted 850-900 student poll workers in addition to other students who work in the tally center on Election Night. Santa Clara received 1200 student poll worker applications for February 2008
2. Rutherford County Tennessee	**Using High School Students as Poll Workers".** See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. Although from a different state, with different laws and procedures, review of this may complement discussions with California counties such as San Francisco and Fresno to improve the current student poll worker program in Sacramento County
3. Montgomery County Maryland	**"Future Vote Initiative"** to train and assign students to assist at polling places on Election Day. See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. Although from a different state, with different laws and procedures, review of this Professional Practice may complement discussions with California counties such as San Francisco and Fresno to improve the current student poll worker program in Sacramento County.
4. Kankakee County Illinois	**College Student Worker Program** to provide "tech-savvy" young persons as poll workers on Election Day. See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices. Sacramento County, with the proximity of several colleges, is well positioned to adopt a similar program that would provide benefits both to the conduct of the election as well as provide a mechanism for outreach to college students.
5. Los Angeles County	**County poll worker program.** The county has an excellent program and involves employees from all levels of the County working at the polls, including the CEO and some members of the BOS and/or their staff. It has proven to be a valuable and learning experience that demonstrates the difficulty of the job in a way that words cannot convey.
6. Sacramento County	**Poll worker training manual.** The Precinct Operations division formed a focus group of Coordinators and poll workers and sent out the revised manual to them for review and input. The input was instrumental in developing an excellent manual

7. King County Washington	**Poll worker training manual.** Their manual includes some good tips on "managing" a polling place and assigning jobs.
8. Guadalupe County Texas	**Created a "Palm Pilot" feature in their training program for poll workers** that enables them to view training materials and videos at their convenience, permits them to review materials multiple times, and is useful on Election Day at the polling place if questions arise about procedures such as opening the polls, provisional voting, etc. See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices.
9. Research	**Basic skills** and/or language proficiency testing of poll workers.
10. Sacramento County	**Distribution of election supplies.** Supplies for polling place pick-up sites are packed in trucks that are provided and driven by Sacramento City Unified School District at no charge. This cooperative venture provides training opportunities for the school and a great service to the County.
11. King County Washington and San Bernardino County	**Drop off site procedures**. Both these jurisdictions have good operations that might provide useful information. San Bernardino's operation includes support from the Sheriff's reserve at each site.
12. Sacramento County	**Election Day emergency supplies.** The use of stationary supply vehicles at the same locations used for pick up and drop off of supplies is a good method of having supplies readily available in the field. The method used of Coordinators going to and from the vehicles, rather than staff at the vehicle site going to the polls, is very efficient.
13. San Francisco County, King County Washington, Shelby County Tennessee, and Maricopa County Arizona	**Election Day trouble report tracking.** These systems compile information that is available on-line within the election office to provide up to the minute information on any problems or trends, assignments and resolutions. San Francisco has a "war room" with scrolling screen of issues. King County has a unique command center approach that allows operators to handle calls faster while data entry personnel ensure the systems are updated. Maricopa was the winning entry in the 2007 Election Center professional practices program.

14. Montgomery County Maryland	**Communication with polling places.** They are using a Reverse 911 concept. Some jurisdictions use their trouble tracking systems to send out mass e-mail to polls with cell phones. There is a long list of methods from jurisdictions throughout the nation. These are available on the Election Center website.
15. San Bernardino County	**Tracking poll worker performance.** The county has several "check points" where information is recorded and then electronically merged into a complete record. They also produce roster reconciliation sheets with key information included to reduce added manual entry. If forms used to gather information are similar to ballots, they can be tallied using vote-counting equipment.
16. Montgomery County Maryland	**3-phase program to evaluate poll worker performance**. See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices. Integrated this with their efforts to recruit and train poll workers. Phase 1 consists of an in-depth analysis of Election Day documents returned by poll workers. Phase 2 consists of a Performance Report for each poll worker. Phase 3 is a peer-to-peer survey conducted after Election Day. Although Sacramento County currently evaluates poll worker performance, they might benefit from examining the integration of this evaluation with poll worker recruitment and training efforts.
17. The City of Richmond, Virginia	**"Machine Specialist Program".** See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. This program identifies potential poll workers to receive special training on voting equipment. These poll workers are responsible for determining when a problem can be solved at the polling place and when to call a technician.
18. Johnson County Kansas	**Track information on poll workers.** See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. They developed an automated system that integrated with Precinct Operations to both track information on poll workers and also to send *personalized* letters and notices to poll workers.

19. Harris County Texas	**GIS program to assess service delivery during "early voting**." See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices. Although Sacramento County does not currently use "early voting" this innovative program is an example of the cross-fertilization that is possible through construction of a list-serve or other network of GIS technicians.

1. Sacramento County	**Faster entry of voter registration data**. VRE is a beta site for the DFM, Inc. optical character recognition system for voter registration card processing reducing labor time and costs. This system has reduced the amount of time it takes to enter a new voter into the voter registration file by reducing the keystrokes needed to only those that cannot be read by the computer. This saves an estimate 25% to 50% of staff time.
2. Santa Clara County	**Use of postal Address Change Service (ACS).** Santa Clara County California presented a Professional Practices paper to the Election Center in 2007 entitled ***The Miracles of Address Change Service (ACS)*** detailing the successful use of the ACS process. Sacramento County could use this information to determine how ACS might be used more effectively here.
3. Sacramento County	**Money saving methods of mailing election materials.** The County saves money by using the postal approved election logo that identifies mail as election material and sorting mail for bulk rates. Even though the VRE does not mail first class, due to the expense, the election logo and sorting results in delivery times similar to first class mail.
4. Sacramento County	**Automated sorting to precinct order.** The purchase of the envelope sorter (with HAVA funds) permits faster automated sorting of mail ballots to precinct order.
5. Sacramento County	**Secure storage of petitions.** VRE has a secure storage room for signed petitions. Petitions are stored in mail trays and trays are placed on rolling racks that are taken into a locked and alarmed room that has internal security cameras installed. Each night while a petition is being worked the sections are returned to the secure room for overnight storage. After signature verification is complete the trays of petitions are locked in cabinets in the secure room where they remain until after the election on the petition issue. After the election the petitions are boxed and stored in the warehouse until they can be legally destroyed.
6. Research	**Election Day phone bank operator training** and resource manuals.

7. Research	**Automated phone system,** distribution of Election Day phone calls, and responding to Election Day emails.

1. Sacramento County	**Security audit.** The request by the VRE for an audit from the county Office of Communications and Technology to determine security of the network infrastructure was a proactive and collaborative effort. The audit report identified minor needs for improvement and provided assurance that the systems were secure.
2. Sacramento County	**Choice of voting system.** The VRE has received widespread praise from for the choice of a paper based voting system that has allowed the county to avoid many of the costly problems associated with touchscreen voting at this time.
3. Santa Clara County	**Voting equipment tracking system.** Santa Clara uses an election barcode tracking system (software product) for this type of tracking but it has additional features that VST should investigate. See 2005 Election Center Professional Practices
4. Sacramento County	**Use of HAVA funds.** The county was creative and diligent in pursuing unique ways of improving the election process, such as the purchase of the mail ballot envelope sorter.
5. Sacramento County	**Responsibility for programming vote count systems.** The VRE went to great lengths to achieve the knowledge transfer to do this in-house rather than rely on a vendor. In addition, they developed their own user manual for the Unity system. This is proving to be especially valuable in the wake of a reduction of staff by the vendor.
6. Research	**Acceptance testing.** Discuss with ES&S User Group how elections staff can increase participation in the acceptance testing process, and discuss with legal and purchasing staff potential modifications to the vendor contract to facilitate this expansion.
7. Research	**Web site designs and functionality.** Conduct a review of state and county web sites to determine which provide the best features in terms of customer service, and meet with Secretary of State (as well as staff from other counties) staff responsible for construction and maintenance of the web site for reporting election results to determine potential enhancements.

8. Sacramento County	**Participation** in the process of defining the business rules for the new statewide voter registration database

CHAPTER 7 – OUTREACH SECTION

1. Marin County and Cook County Illinois	**Outreach plan and advisory committee.** Marin County California has prepared a comprehensive voter Outreach plan that contains clear goals and objectives. This plan could be used as a model to develop a plan for Sacramento County.
2. Sacramento County	**Student voting project.** This student voter registration, voter education and mock election program with Sacramento City Unified School district has been very successful and is a good collaborative effort between the VRE and the school district.
3. Indian River County Florida	**"Register at Work" outreach program.** See 2007 Election Center Professional Papers. This program was established in partnership with their Chamber of Commerce and permits the elections office to send voter registration information directly to over 1,000 businesses in order that they can register their employees, and also operates as a poll worker recruitment program.
4. Martin County Florida	**Community outreach program for minority populations.** See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices - "Count Me In!". The program included education concerning requirements to register to vote, voting absentee, provisional voting, and user of voting equipment. The program also provided hands-on demonstrations of voting equipment, and established relationships with various community organizations. Sacramento County may want to examine this program for its potential utility in meeting the minority language requirements of the federal Voting Rights Act.
5. Okaloosa County Florida	**Research and focus groups with students.** In an effort to be effective in its outreach program to schools and young people, they conducted research and focus groups to determine how best to design the program. The result was a video production. Both the process and the product may be of use to Sacramento County in designing its own outreach efforts.

6. The City of Henderson, Nevada	**Local youth vote campaign.** See 2007 Election Center Professional Practices. They implemented a "Join the Party" program. The program includes presentations to schools, a video, and other materials. Although from a different state, with different laws and procedures, review of this Professional Practice may complement discussions with California counties such as San Francisco and Fresno to improve the current student poll worker program in Sacramento County.
7. Johnson County Kansas	**Reaching out to voters using text messaging and podcasting**. See 2006 Election Center Professional Practices. These new techniques utilize communication tools that an increasing number of voters, particularly tech savvy young voters, use as information sources in their daily lives. This is a novel program to get in on the ground floor of an emerging communication system, and the VRE is well positioned, with its IT staff, to develop a similar program.
8. Pinellas County, and Okaloosa County Florida	**"Vote in Honor of a Vet"** program to encourage high school students to register and vote, and to educate them about the sacrifices that veterans have made for their country and the importance of honoring these sacrifices through civic participation.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW LIST AND SUMMARIES

INTERVIEW LIST

COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

Board of Supervisors	Roger Dickinson
	Roberta MacGlashan (with Ted Wolter)
	Don Nottoli
	Susan Peters
Chief Executive Officer	Terry Schutten
County Counsel's Office	John Whisenhunt, Assistant County Counsel
Countywide Services Agency	Penny Clarke, Director
Countywide Services Agency	Kerry Aiello, Public Information Officer
Legislative Advocate Office	Therese Gallagher, Legislative Coordinator
Office of Communications and Technology	Pat Groff, Chief Information Officer
Voter Registration and Elections	All permanent staff were interviewed. Program managers and key staff were interviewed multiple times.

EXTERNAL:

David Becker	Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Voting Section, former staff attorney
Pollie Brunelli	Director Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense
Donnetta Davidson	Commissioner, United States Election Assistance Commission
Barbara Hopkins	League of Women Voters
Catherine Ingram-Kelly	Secretary of State's Office, Program Manager Voter Registration
Greg Larkin	Chair, Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee
Jana Lean	Secretary of State's Office, Program Manager Voting Modernization Board/Candidate Statements
Craig MacGlashan	Chair, Sacramento County Republican Central Committee
Bruce McDonald	Secretary of State's Office, Program Manager VoteCal
Evelyn Mendez	Secretary of State's Office, Program Manager Candidates and Elections
Tony Miller	Secretary of State's Office, Chief of Political Reform Division
Chris Reynolds	Secretary of State's Office, HAVA Coordinator,

Donna Schalansky	Former Chair, Sacramento County Republican Central Committee
Joanna Southard,	Secretary of State's, Program Manager Initiatives and Ballot Pamphlet

VENDORS:

Lou Dedier	Election Systems and Software (ES&S)
Bruce Krochman	DFM Associates

CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS:

Ken Decio	Member Board of Directors, Sacramento Suburban Water District
Roger Dickinson*	Member, Board of Supervisors
Manny Hernandez	School Board Member Sacramento City Joint Unified School District
Gay Jones	Sacramento Metro Fire District Board of Directors
Greg Larkin	Democratic Central Committee
Craig MacGlashan	Republican Central Committee
Roberta McGlashan*	Member, Board of Supervisors
Don Nottoli*	Member, Board of Supervisors
Susan Peters*	Member, Board of Supervisors
Genevieve A. Shiroma	Board Member, Sacramento Municipal Utility District
Kenneth D. Steiger	County Assessor
Donald Wilson	School Board Member, Center Joint Unified School District

* These individuals were interviewed in two capacities – one as a member of the Board of Supervisors and one as a candidate.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE INTERVIEWS

Each employee was given a chance, in private interviews, to expand on the employee questionnaire and bring forward any concerns, recommendations, or questions. The following questions were asked to generate discussion and provide insight. The responses have not been summarized.

1. What do you like best about working in this office?

2. What do you like least about working in this office?

3. What ideas do you have for improvement?

4. What happens in the office when someone makes a mistake? – If you made a mistake that affected a voter or an election, what would you do and who would you tell?

5. Anything to expand upon from employee questionnaire?

CANDIDATE INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

This was a random selection of six candidates that ran in a variety of races – e.g. school district, county office, water district, etc. In addition, during interviews with members of the Board of Supervisors we asked these questions.

QUESTIONS ASKED:

1. **How many times have you run for office? What offices?**
   Answers ranged from one to nine times.

2. **Did you receive a candidate guide? Was it helpful? How could it be improved?**
   All answered "yes", it was helpful and no suggestions for improvement.

3. **Were the filing forms clear and understandable?**
   - All answered yes.
   - The VRE knows the rules and applies them uniformly – they are polite and helpful, but firm about applying the law.

4. **Was the staff helpful? All answered yes.** Comments:
   - Forms are clear, process is fine -had no problems or glitches.
   - Counter staff very helpful – any questions were answered –computer terminal in lobby very useful to check on disclosure – office was very good.

5. **Did you have to wait in line or make an appointment to file your papers?**
   No comments – consensus was that process was good.

6. **When you had questions or issues, was it easy to reach someone for an answer?**
   Comments:

   - It was routine; you need something from the office, you go there, you get it.
   - Always able to call staff – Brad gave me his business card with his cell phone number and I would call him.
   - Always got to talk to a live person and got my questions answered – staff provided information that was knowledgeable and accurate.
   - Staff was very easy to work with.
   - Counter staff was very helpful.
   - I could reach someone on the phone or in person. They also responded very well to my consultant.

7. **Do you purchase services from the VRE? Are you satisfied with the product and the cost?**
   - Two did not purchase.
   - Comments:

- My consultant did most of this. I did buy a hard copy of precinct results, after the election to look at voting trends – this information is invaluable – it does not cost too much, is affordable and cost-effective**.**
- I wanted my campaign consultant to purchase the list of registered voters in the district to identify high propensity voters but county wouldn't sell it to them.
- Campaign consultant took care of this - unaware of any issues re. cost or service.

8. Is there anything that the office has done especially well that you would like to recognize?

Comments:

- Liked old office but new one has very good parking, nice offices, a welcoming atmosphere, the staff is attentive, they provide excellent customer service and everyone gets the same level, no playing favorites. The "Black Book" is very handy.
- They are very helpful, not at all standoffish. Jill LaVine herself called me when I had the ballot problem. They have great customer service. Jill and Brad are very customer service oriented and very responsive. I have dealt with lots of other ROV's and Sacramento is great.
- My experience is very much on the positive side. The first time out the woman who helped me was a godsend; I was intimidated by the process. She was thoughtful, helpful and patient. She put me completely at ease and took all the stress out of the process. Jill and Brad are very responsive.
- I had a very positive experience. The staff are responsive and informative, they treat their customers well and provide good public service.
- General impression is that it is a very well run office. I have always had good rapport with them. VRE has always been very helpful.
- Cheerful, open, easy to work with.
- Very proactive with candidate reminders and will call you to let you know you need more signatures or did you remember that there was a deadline coming up, etc.
- During the canvass – the process is very transparent; the ROV went out of her way to show everyone what the procedures were. There were lots of security checks, making sure there were always at least two people with the ballots, for example. They treated both sides equitably and were very good at interpreting voter intent when required.
- They navigated the purchase of a new voting system very well. Their decision to not go the touchscreen route has saved the county in both grief and dollars.
- They are spectacular at community outreach – every event I go to there is someone there from the VRE handing out information, registering voters, and demonstrating voting equipment.
- They have upheld the integrity of the election process; the public has confidence in them. They do a geat job and if there is an error or mistake, they deal with it honestly.

9. What could be done to improve the process?

Comments:

- Satellite office for filing – perhaps downtown.

- Put more information on line – anything that is possible – for example precinct maps.
- Enforcement of fines and penalties for not filing, or late filing, campaign disclosure documents. There are a lot of scofflaws out there.
- More information about campaign filing; like what you have to do if you raise or spend more than $1,000 – what new reports do you have to file, etc.
- Improve the website with forms and information - good public education tool and it should be more taken advantage of. Could improve by taking their outreach program to more schools more often.
- I used to get, but don't anymore, reminder letters when it was time to file campaign disclosure information. That would be good to reinstate.
- I ran for small office – think filing fees may be high for office with minimal pay.
- Nice if paperwork to be filed with FPPC were simpler.

10. How would you rate their customer service (1-5 with 5 being outstanding and one poor).

Two candidates ranked 4, eight candidates ranked 5.

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARIES

COUNTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

Questionnaires were sent to minor party county central committees/county councils and none were returned. Personal interviews were conducted with the Democratic and Republican Central Committee Chairs. The Republican chair recommended speaking with the former chair since he had only had this position since April 2007 and the former chair had served for nine years (her comments appear at the end of this summary). Notes taken during interviews have been used to provide comments as close to verbatim as possible.

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

		Democratic	Republican
1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep you informed of election related dates and deadlines, changes in law, new procedures, etc. Comments: Democratic = Department is strong in this area. Committee has lots of interaction. Republican = Well informed by staff.	4	4
2	**Accessibility**: Do you have adequate access to Department personnel and are they helpful to you on election matters? Comments: Democratic = The department is very accessible. Brad (Buyse) never fails to get what I need or put me in contact with the right person. Republican = He personally receives good service and is not aware of any person receiving poor service. Reference was made to a Republican Central Committee contest being left off the ballot and said that "to the credit of staff" the issue was addressed immediately by the department and resolved. However, the error required reprinting sample ballots and there was concern about the additional cost.	5	4
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily	4	3

		Democratic	Republican
	understood, accurate and timely) Comments: Democratic = Very timely Republican = Interaction with staff has been positive.		
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs of your committee/council? Comments: Democratic = Very good. Democratic Central Committee is happy with Registrar of Voters. Republican = Another concern raised regarding the formatting of his race for central committee. Suggested contact with former central committee chair for details.	4	2
5	**Impartiality:** Do you feel the services of the Department are provided in an impartial manner? Comments: Democratic = Department has never indicated partiality. Republican = Department is impartial.	5	5
	OVERALL Comments: Democratic = They are champions. The Department's work helps them (central committee) accomplish their goals. Republican = Without ballot problems he would rate them a 4.	5	3

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**

   Democratic= Cannot recall any problems.

   Republican= They were identified earlier.

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department**.

   Democratic= Department is very responsive – they always return calls the same day, usually within an hour. Staff is tremendous in helping us. They never hesitate to help us in the office.

   Republican= The people I have encountered were very helpful and efficient. He was very impressed that the Registrar and two assistants attended the swearing in of new members and assisted with the first meeting. Outreach to the community - pleased that they come out to do voter registration at community events but not sure how well the department reaches out to explain problems. The department provides them training in voter registration.

3. **What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to your committee/council or the public?**

   Democratic= The website can be difficult to find the info needed – public may have that same concern. Information is usually there but hard to find.

   Republican= Candidate training would be nice. Recommends a training session on how to run for office. Nice if Registrar or staff were to come out and meet with the central committee prior to nominations to provide information – but acknowledges they have not invited them to do so. Recommends better literature to assist with campaign finance requirements that are confusing. He is concerned about ballot issues from the past and feels these issues need to be addressed.

4. **Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.**

   Democratic= Works with six different county election offices, Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, El Dorado, Amador and Nevada. Has been working with the department for seven years. Sacramento is "the jewel" of the election offices. Cannot say enough good things about them – top-notch staff.

   Republican= none

We communicated online with Donna Schalansky, former chair of the Republican Party Central Committee for nine years. Ms. Schalansky provided information on the ballot problems of the past. In addition, she had the following comments:

> "I do want to emphasize, however, that these issues (ballot problems) in no way reflect on the day-to-day dealing with Ms. LaVine and her staff. She and her staff have always been very professional, pleasant, helpful, and responsive to any and all requests from our office and we have enjoyed a positive working relationship with the County elections

offices during the past 15 years. The problems, I believe, are more “back office” issues and perhaps quality control issues.“

CITY CLERK QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(7 sent and 4 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep you informed of election related dates and deadlines, changes in law, new procedures, etc.	3	5	5	5
2	**Accessibility**: how accessible is staff at the Department" (i.e. do you have a contact person, is it easy to reach someone when you need help)	4	5	5	5
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	5	5	5	5
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs? Are they complying with legal requirements?	5	5	5	5
5	**OVERALL**	5	5	5	5

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**

   - None
   - None
   - Communication issues/problems 10 years ago but resolved with staff changes

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department**.

   - Can completely rely on VRE to be expert
   - Expert collaboration on Freeport election
   - Brad Buyse is always an excellent resource
   - Staff always available to address questions or provide clarify.
   - Contact person, Brad Buyse wonderful, always willing to help

3. **The Department conducts the election for your city and the city is assessed a fee for service. Does this fee accurately reflect the value of the services you receive?**

   - Yes
   - Yes
   - Fees will increase by 37% in 2008. Does not have information to evaluate how it is adjusted.
   - Has concerns regarding considerable increase each year but feels receive they receive good value for money.

4. **What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to your city?**

   - Like updates on changes to election law or new procedure
   - Likes contact list that indicates areas of staff responsibility.
   - N/A
   - None

5. **Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.**

   - More proactive line of communication where department provides regular updates on process and procedure changes, fee increases and legal issues that may affect us.
   - Elections staff are extremely supportive and responsive to questions and needs.

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(51 sent and 6 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in six categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep the public informed of election related information, dates, deadlines, etc.?	5	3	5	5	5	3	4 or 5
2	**Accessibility**: Does your group have adequate access to Department personnel and are they helpful to you on election matters?	5	3	5	5	5	3	5
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	5	5	5	5	5	3	5
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs?	5	3	5	5	5	3	5
5	**Impartiality:** Do you feel that the services of the Department are provided in an impartial manner?	5	5	5	5	5	2	5
6	**OVERALL**	5	4	5	5	5	3	5

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**
   - The Department has been very beneficial to our voter education forums and we have not experienced any problems.
   - None.
   - We get no advance information or very little. We are ignorant of what to ask.

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department**.
   - The excellent organization, cooperation, community outreach by Registrar of Voters staff is greatly appreciated. The Registrar of Voters and staff are always accessible and participate in events upon request. ROV has been a guest speaker.
   - I enjoy that people can use the machines and practice voting. This helps them become familiar with the process of voting because they know it is not real until the Election Day. This helps motivate them and feel more comfortable. Also learning the process of how one can vote, where, when, how was helped a lot.
   - We partner with the department on a student voter education program. They are part of our planning committee and have freely come up with ways they can assist.
   - They are wonderful, especially in reaching out to ethnic groups.
   - Someone comes to our group and asks for registrations.

3. **What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to the public?**
   - Outreach coordination.
   - I believe the Department does a good job.
   - None – they do an outstanding job for us.
   - None
   - Better Spanish speakers on candidates and candidate positions.

4. **Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.**
   - I personally commend the ROV for keeping Sacramento County voting paper trail.
   - We enjoy having the Department of Voter Registration and Elections. Baldemar (Garcia) has been very beneficial and essential to our voter education forums.
   - They have provided additional training to accommodate students.
   - We have constant access to personnel in a number of different ways: 1) planning committee members; 2) mock elections; 3) special trainings.
   - Their services are excellent – they always go beyond.
   - Need Spanish information and speakers in Spanish. Need system education in Spanish – something other than how to fill the forms.

LATINO TASKFORCE QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(20 sent and 4 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep you informed of election related dates and deadlines, etc. Is the meeting frequency and time allotted sufficient?	5	2	5	5
2	**Accessibility**: Does your group have adequate access to Department personnel and are they responsive to your needs and concerns?	5	2	5	5
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	5+	2	5	5
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. Are the efforts by the Department leading to an increase in voter registration/participation?)	4	1	*	5
5	**OVERALL**	5	1	5	5

* Written comment – "No. But not their fault".

Note: One respondent had differing views and included the following comments as they relate to the questions above.

Communication = "Can't recall receiving too much info on these issues (from taskforce leader)".

Accessibility = "Not enough reminders to members of meetings, etc. Ideas presented not given consideration". "They go with own set of ideas".

Efficiency = "Even though I missed only one meeting, ideas were brought forth that had already been decided upon which I knew nothing about."

Effectiveness = "Absolutely not that I am aware of."

Overall = "Their intentions are good. Performance bad. Frustration high. Sorry to be negative but I am being honest with my opinion. I very much wanted it to succeed but it failed miserably." The writer goes on to describe the forums, suggestions for a grass roots movement, and ends by saying "they want to succeed (staff) but don't listen to others suggestions".

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**
   - None
   - Staff kept taskforce members informed and followed through on directions.
   - None

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department.**
   - Counter service staff is wonderful!
   - The department seems to be well organized and functioning efficiently. The leadership is open to new strategies when traditional ones don't work – e.g. getting Latinos to participate in the electoral process.
   - The Latino Voter Education Project is the League's most recent effort with the ROV. League representatives were invited by Debbie Woods, Outreach coordinator, and Baldemar Garcia to share our voter education and participation experience and skills in regularly scheduled group meetings with Latino community leaders. The commitment and professionalism by ROV staff was impressive as they worked to encourage community leaders to help with voter outreach efforts within their Latino communities. But success was limited due to poor attendance. The voter outreach programs that were held had excellent candidate and issue presentations. But the challenge of voter attendance remains a challenge also experienced by many community groups, including the League. The format we explored and probably works best in terms of attendance is the community fair that may be tried this election season. The education forum is limited but it provides an opportunity to meet prospective voters.

3. **What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to the public?**
   - Earlier and more frequent updates of voter roles, precinct maps, etc.
   - Services presently provided are first rate. It was a pleasure to work with Debbie (Woods) and Baldemar (Garcia).

4. **Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.**
   - Not only was I a member of the Latino Taskforce, I was the (omitted) of the (omitted) Party and an elected representative. My evaluations are based on my cumulative experience**.**
   - According to recent report by the Great Valley Center, "Latinos report a lower level of political engagement than the general population". To increase voter participation, the Latino Task force was formed with very disappointing outcomes. Staff of the department did it's best.

- The ROV booths at many community events and visiting with different groups is the best for reaching voters by taking the service to the people. Difficult to get voters to come out to events.
- Working with the other community groups, i.e. the LWV, also expands the ROV staff. The Late Night Voter registration project was so effective in reaching voters before the deadline that it seems worth trying again.
- Perhaps more publicity on TV, or cable about voter education would also be good at getting voter attention. Publicizing the ease of voting by mail is also important to remind voters of this convenient option.

MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(12 sent and 3 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep the media informed of election related dates and deadlines, etc.? If there is a problem, are you notified?	5	2*	5
2	**Accessibility**: Do you have adequate access to Department personnel and are they helpful to you on election matters?	5	5	5
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	5	4	5
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs?	5	4	5
5	**OVERALL**	5	4	5

*Attempts to clarify reasons for this rating were unsuccessful. We questioned if it was related to the request for disclosure documents online – something that was not available at the time of the review but planned by the election department within the next few months.

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced with the Department that were not satisfactorily resolved.**

   A year back there were some problems with the ballots, but the staff seem open and honest in dealing with the issue.

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department**.

   - The department is always available for media questions – particularly on election nights when newspaper deadlines are especially tight. Officials even give out their cell numbers for quick access. Under the direction of registrar of voters Jill LaVine, the department is outstanding in ensuring that the election process is transparent and performed to the letter of the law.
   - The staff is friendly and courteous.
   - We are always provided with the most current info, and make themselves available for interviews. It is a pleasure to partner with them to keep the public informed.

3. **What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to the media or public?**

   Disclosure statements should be available in electronic form, including making them available and sortable online.

4. **Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.**

   No comments received.

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(21 sent and 7 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep you informed of election related dates and deadlines, changes in law, new procedures, etc.	5	4	3	5	4	4	3
2	**Accessibility**: how accessible is staff at the Department" (i.e. do you have a contact person, is it easy to reach someone when you need help)	4	5	3	5	5	5	4
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	5	4	3	4	4	4	3
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs?	4	4	3	-	4	5	-
5	**OVERALL**	5	4	3	5	4	4	3

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**
   - None
   - We are in two counties – getting results was a major problem.
   - None
   - None

2. **Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department**.
   - Availability of information on county voter website.
   - The department was very accessible and returned calls promptly.

- Department staff is very helpful and positives with dealing in the complex system of voter registration and elections.
- Jill LaVine and her staff are always accessible.

3. The Department conducts the election for your district and the district is assessed a fee for service. Does this fee accurately reflect the value of the services you receive?

- Yes
- The fee seems excessive; however, I'm not fully aware of everything the department does as far as the elections are concerned.
- I believe it is fair – I just don't think school districts should have to pay for a public election.
- Yes
- Yes

4. What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to your district?

- None
- Hard to say since I've only been through one board election.
- Website has good info document entitled "How to Place a Measure on the Ballot". However the timeline/calendar is written for candidates and is difficult to follow for school bonds.
- None
- None

5. Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.

- None
- Thank you for allowing input
- Most of our information comes to us from the County Office of Education.

SPECIAL DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

(39 sent and 8 returned)

RATINGS:

Recipients were asked to rate the Voter Registration and Elections office in five categories using a scale of 1-5. 5=excellent; 4=very good; 3=average; 2=poor; and 1=unsatisfactory.

1	**Communication**: How well does the Department keep you informed of election related dates and deadlines, changes in law, new procedures, etc.	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4
2	**Accessibility**: how accessible is staff at the Department" (i.e. do you have a contact person, is it easy to reach someone when you need help)	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	5
3	**Efficiency**: How efficient is the staff at the Department in providing services? (i.e. is the information provided easily understood, accurate and timely)	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4
4	**Effectiveness**: How effective are the services? (i.e. compatibility of systems or coordination/joint projects. Are they meeting your needs?	4	5	3	5	4	5	-	4
5	**OVERALL**	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4

WRITTEN COMMENTS: Anything written in the comment section has been included below. In some instances, no comment was received. Comments have been recorded as close as possible to verbatim.

1. **Please identify and explain any problems you have experienced in terms of the election process as it relates to the Department.**
   - No problems
   - None
   - The district has had no problems to date.
   - We have had candidates complain that they were not informed that there were short term positions versus long term positions and that they had to apply for one or the other.
   - None

- None. Experience with department has been positive. Election department staff have been timely, responsive and helpful.

2. Please identify and explain any positives that stand out to you in terms of the election services provided by the Department.

- I have only had this position through one election and found the staff to be very helpful. Our district also went through a re-organization on which involved boundary voting issues and the staff was again very helpful.
- The department staff seems to be very knowledgeable about the process.
- Timely information on the election process and elected officials names and term.
- When I call for questions, I get the same person and they seem to have knowledge of our district without any delay.
- Knowledgeable staff
- In 2006 we faced a ballot initiative requiring voter approval of a proposed annexation. Staff did a great job keeping us informed and explaining the process. When there were irregularities in the signature process, staff promptly referred the matter to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

3. The Department conducts the election for your district and the district is assessed a fee for service. Does this fee accurately reflect the value of the services you receive?

- Yes
- It has been accurate.
- In comparison to other districts, I believe the fee is reasonable.
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- I am uncertain since billings do not include a detailed accounting of costs. Also it is unclear why special election costs are so much higher than regular elections.

4. What recommendations do you have for ways in which the Department could provide better service to your district?

- None
- No recommendations at this time.
- More detail on invoices.

5. Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.

(no comments received)

SACRAMENTO STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

(EXAMPLE – SUMMARY APPEARS ON FOLLOWING PAGES)

Name: _____

Note: Identifying information is for the review team only and will not be distributed to others.

Section you currently work in:_____

Section(s) you have worked in the past:_____

Answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 = strongly agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

_1 I feel that I was well trained to do my job.

___2. If I need more training I am confident that a request for additional training would be properly considered.

_3. I am given opportunities for training.

_4. There are opportunities for promotion and advancement in the office.

_5. I can go to my supervisor with questions or problems without fear.

_6. Managers are accessible and able to answer my questions.

_7. I feel that managers are well trained to do their jobs.

_8. I am kept well informed about issues affecting the office.

_9. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis.

_10. Staff meetings are productive and help me do my job.

_11. I can express my concerns and suggestions openly.

_12. My suggestions are listened to and given proper consideration.

_13. There is enough staff in the office to get the job done.

_14. All staff members are treated fairly.

_15. The office works on a non-partisan basis.

_16. The office emphasizes quality customer service.

_17. The office (physical layout) is suitable for the job we do.

_18. I have the tools I need to do my job well.

_19. The atmosphere in the office makes it easy to get my job done.

_20. This is a good place to work.

Overall – on a grading scale of A to F, I would grade this department ____

Questionnaires are being sent to all permanent employees and will be followed by short individual interviews. At that time you may want to expand on some of the responses provided above. The following three questions will be part of the interview and are being provided now to allow you time to give them serious consideration. Do not answer them on this questionnaire.

1. What do you like best about working in this office?
2. What do you like least?
3. What ideas do you have for improvement?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

TO RETURN, place in blank sealed envelope and drop in Audit Box on Carol Hendrickson's desk.

DUE BY 5:00 P.M. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2007

RESULTS OF STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

	QUESTIONS ASKED	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I feel I was well trained for my job.	43%	41%	14%	0	3%
2.	If I need more training I am confident that a request will be properly considered.	76%	16%	8%	0	0
3.	I am given opportunities for training.	73%	27%	0	0	0
4.	There are opportunities for promotion and advancement in the office.	31%	19%	22%	11%	17%
5.	I can go to my supervisor with questions or problems without fear.	89%	5.45%	5.45%	0	0
6.	Managers are accessible and able to answer my questions.	78%	19%	3%	0	0
7.	I feel that managers are well trained to do their jobs.	54%	38%	8%	0	0
8.	I am kept well informed about issues affecting the office.	38%	38%	8%	0	0
9.	Staff meetings are held on a regular basis.	59%	24%	14%	3%	0
10.	Staff meetings are productive and help me do my job.	51%	24%	16%	8%	0
11.	I can express my concerns and suggestions openly.	57%	32%	8%	3%	0
12.	My suggestions are listened to and given proper consideration.	65%	24%	11%	0	0
13.	There is enough staff in the office to get the job done.	30%	35%	19%	8%	8%
14.	All staff members are treated fairly.	41%	38%	8%	10%	3%
15.	The office works on a non-partisan basis.	81%	11%	8%	0	0
16.	The office emphasizes quality customer service.	73%	19%	5%	3%	0
17.	The office (physical layout) is suitable for the job we do.	51%	30%	16%	3%	0
18.	I have the tools I need to do my job well.	46%	41%	10%	3%	0
19.	The atmosphere in the office makes it easy to get my job done.	49%	27%	19%	5%	0
20.	This is a good place to work.	68%	24%	8%	0	0