

ELECTION CENTER

The National Association of Election Officials

Date: December 5, 2005

To: Members, Metropolitan King County Council

From: Ernest Hawkins, Director, Consulting Services,
The Election Center

On October 14, 2005, your Council authorized The Election Center to observe your November 8, 2005 Election and to report on our findings.

The following report is a comprehensive summary of what we observed. We have included our concerns and suggestions. Where appropriate, we have also commented on outstanding practices and progress on our audit report suggestions that were presented to you on October 3, 2005.

If you desire, we are prepared to make a verbal report to your Council and to answer any questions that you may have regarding the report.

Thank you for this opportunity to observe your election process.

Respectfully submitted,



Ernest R. Hawkins, Director
Consulting Services

OBSERVATION REPORT NOVEMBER 8, 2005 GENERAL ELECTION

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INTRODUCTION

SCOPE

On October 3, 2005, The Election Center presented an audit report of King County election operations to the council. Actual on-site audit observation took place early June through late August of 2005. Therefore, there was no opportunity to observe an actual election. At the conclusion of the audit presentation, the council asked if The Election Center would return to observe the 2005 General Election. As a result, the original contract was amended to include observation to determine whether:

- The operating practices used by the Elections Section in the Records, Election and Licensing Services Division of the King County Department of Executive Services are consistent with legal requirements, applicable professional practices, and King County elections procedures.
- The Election Section has made progress toward the recommendations in The Election Center's October 3, 2005 management audit report on the county's elections operations.

METHODOLOGY

A three person consulting team was assigned to this project, made up of individuals who had participated in the original audit: Dwight Beattie, Ingrid Gonzales, and Connie Schmidt. The contract amendment was finalized on October 14, 2005. Observation took place October 24 through 27, and November 3 through 11. Key tasks related to the election were observed with the exception of those that had taken place or concluded before October 24th.

ASSISTANCE: The Elections Section staff was extremely helpful in providing requested documents and scheduling. All staff interviewed was open and informative. The observation team felt it had complete cooperation and did not run into any “road blocks”. During the course of the observation, in addition to speaking with permanent and temporary staff, we also had the opportunity to speak with members of the Citizens Election Oversight Committee, the turnaround team, public and paid observers, and media.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION

- The operating practices used by the Elections Section are consistent with legal requirements, applicable professional practices, and King County elections procedures.
- The Elections Section has made progress on the audit report recommendations. The observation team focused on recommendations that were directed specifically to the Elections Section. The Executive response to audit recommendations indicated for the most part work would take place in 2006. The observation team found that a great deal of time and effort has already gone into making change as quickly as possible. We observed considerable progress that is highlighted in the report to follow.

OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE: The election office of the 21st century is a far cry from that of the 20th century. Time, technology, and the law have dramatically changed the face of elections. Election administration is no longer a “clerical” function that is managed by hiring ever-increasing numbers of temporary workers. Ten years ago, elections were cyclical – peaks of extreme workloads and pressure followed by valleys where the office could de-brief, look at new opportunities, implement new procedures and technology. That is no longer the case, especially with the legally established election schedule in Washington. The Elections Section has good technology and good people. It needs help to recruit and keep new employees. It needs help to eliminate the biggest obstacle of all, which is the necessity to conduct business in 4-5 different facilities, many with insufficient space and accessibility.

Consolidation is critical to an efficient, accurate, secure and transparent election. We said above that we encountered no “road blocks” during the observation of the general election. That is true, as it relates to people. However, a major roadblock for the observation team and for the public is the use of multiple facilities. We expended a great deal of valuable time traveling from one facility to another and back again. In one instance we even went to the wrong facility.

The audit report emphasized the importance of a consolidated facility. During the course of the observation, this became even more obvious. We observed many processes that require an incredible amount of duplication, added quality control, transportation, increased staffing, and security. People and materials move from one facility to another and sometimes back again. Staff appears to be taking appropriate steps to conduct an election under these circumstances but it is an incredible challenge. The variety of facilities is inefficient, costly, and makes it extremely difficult to build an election team that communicates quickly

and efficiently. The distribution of tasks among a variety of facilities also makes it difficult for the public to observe.

King County has the opportunity to design a modern election office, with state of the art security, good public accessibility, and safe and spacious working conditions that allow for public observation. The longer this is delayed, the more likely it is that the county will continue to experience election problems, in spite of the best efforts of staff.

A properly staffed, trained and compensated workforce is essential.

King County has taken steps to address the change in workforce by adding such positions as Public Information Officers, Quality Control Managers, professional Trainer, Information Technology Manager, and Webmaster. There is more work to do. The audit report recommended seeking more outside assistance in evaluating positions, salaries, and hiring. The Independent Task Force recommended a Turnaround Team. It is hoped that between these two recommendations, a realistic examination of the electoral process and staffing will take place. This will be an opportunity to take a fresh look at ideas to build a modern day election office workforce. The election office is a “fishbowl” and employees work under constant stress, deadlines, and public scrutiny. Any mistake, large or small, is front-page news. Under these circumstances it is difficult to recruit and hire the best people for the job. In many cases the position description and salary range do not match the actual job requirements and required skill sets. This often results in the loss of good employees. The studies already complete and to be completed in the future, will hopefully address these issues.

CAUTION: The attached observation report encompasses all processes observed, along with: concerns; suggestions; outstanding practices; and any progress on audit recommendations. It is a lengthy report. We want to caution those who read the report that the length and number of suggestions is not an indicator of how well the Elections Section is run. It is fair to say that a review of any large election operation would produce a report of this length. The vast majority of the suggestions and concerns are relatively minor. However, the nature of elections is that, given the right circumstances, small problems can become major. For that reason we felt it was prudent to list all suggestions – big or small.

OBSERVATION REPORT

FACILITIES

A major change took place beginning approximately October 17, 2005. A new location was added – TEA (Temporary Election Annex). It is called TEA because the building is scheduled to be demolished in two years; therefore, it is not a permanent solution to the facilities issue. This was the same location used for the 2004 and 2005 recounts. There are three floors – floor 1 for check-in and safekeeping of personal items; floor 2 for absentee processing; and floor 3 for polls training, help desk and canvass. All operations formerly performed at MBOS, with the exception of ballot tabulation, were moved to TEA. In addition, all poll worker training, the Help Desk (number used by poll workers for assistance), and canvass operations (which were originally at headquarters, then moved to EDC in primary), was moved to TEA. It was felt that the move was necessary in order to complete duties as required by law, and for the health and safety of employees and the public.

It was a testament to King County government that this move came off in time. It took a great deal of cooperation from many different people and departments. In a matter of weeks, a complete facility was outfitted with security cages, cameras, motion detectors, furniture, phones, computers, etc.

The move provided much needed space for election operations as well as for observation. Workspace was set up in quadrants with roped off areas, making “movable walls” which allowed for a quick reconfiguration when workloads shifted. The open space also made it much easier for supervisors to manage the operation when they could see all aspects of the workflow at the same time, making it much easier to manage by “walking around”. Parking was much improved; there were adequate restroom facilities and an area for lunch. Also on the plus side, TEA provided a proper facility and made it possible to distribute workloads appropriately, while still providing observation and security. However, it added another facility to an already long list. It also necessitated added logistics for moving ballots, people, etc. In spite of these drawbacks, we felt it was a positive move.

The lack of a consolidated facility and sufficient space results in the widespread use of ballot on demand (not enough space to store stock), redundant security measures, and long drives for employees who work at multiple sites. Most importantly it makes it almost impossible for the director to walk around, observing processes first hand, speaking with employees, and fostering teamwork. As it is, the Assistant Superintendent of Ballot Processing and Delivery has offices (temporary tables) at Headquarters, MBOS, and TEA. He is constantly moving among these facilities – resulting in a major loss of productive time. We observed a management meeting where it was not possible to get all managers together and they had to rely on phone connections.

Headquarters is not easily accessed on the weekend when the election office is open to the public. We attempted to visit on Saturday, walked around looking for unlocked door, and then noticed that the posted sign said entrance was on Third Avenue. In the rain we crossed the street, went around the block and entered through the sheriff's security station, walked through the tunnel, and went up to 5th floor – quite a gauntlet. Voters who are not accustomed to visiting downtown, who have had to find parking, would find this to be an obstacle. This was on the last day that voters who had been challenged for residence could appear at the office to correct their address. We saw no voters in the office.

Concerns	There are too many distributed facilities – consolidation is needed ASAP.
Suggestions	Provide consolidated facility designed for the election office of the 21 st century. Continue to use TEA until consolidated facility is provided. Investigate ways to provide weekend entrance at Fourth Street entrance.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #21-1	We did not inquire about the status of this recommendation. (Not part of this observation.)

SECURITY

We saw a good system of check-in and badging at TEA and MBOS. Coats, purses, laptops not allowed in work areas. Cages are opened and closed for the day by two staff with observers present. The addition of TEA required additional security measures. This included two new cages / going to the ceiling - one on the second floor controlled with lock and seal the other on the third floor (the last installation) with electronic key. Cameras and motion detectors were installed in cages and video is monitored continuously. On-site Sheriff Deputy presence was visible and effective. Many of the security measures taken are costly duplications resulting from separate facilities. Executive response to the audit stated that the REALS division will contract for a professional security assessment during the first quarter of 2006. Concerns listed below should be passed along during this process. If there is a delay, action should be taken as soon as possible.

<p>Concerns</p>	<p>Headquarters has no controls over entry to office space. Controls are needed for election processes - and safety of personnel. On election night an unruly person was at the front counter and forcibly removed by security. He could easily have made his way into the staff area if security had not been there at that moment.</p> <p>TEA cage on 2nd floor used for absentee ballots - badges are required but access is not continuously monitored. The door to the cage is left open and individuals go in the cage alone and pull un-voted ballot stock to be used for duplication or inserting. Un-voted ballots and blank stock are stored in the same cage areas as voted ballots.</p> <p>Cages at TEA go to ceiling but they are drop ceilings with removable panels and large space between floors. This is not a critical problem as long as Sheriff deputy is present.</p>
<p>Suggestions</p>	<p>Add locked gates at both sides of front counter. Require any visitors to sign in and receive badge. Challenge anyone within office space without a badge.</p> <p>Assign a two-person team (or multiple teams) to control ballot stock in the cage. Requests come to them; they pull and log what has been removed. This will reduce the number of people in and out of the cage. If possible, install additional cage walls to</p>

	<p>separate between un-voted and voted ballots.</p> <p>Extend cage beyond ceiling tile to next floor.</p> <p>Until new consolidated facility with state of art security is provided, continue with same level of Sheriff deputy security.</p>
<p>Outstanding practices</p>	<p>Good use of Sheriff deputies where ballots are present.</p>
<p>Progress on audit report Rec.#21-2</p>	<p>Electronic keying installed in new cage at TEA where canvass takes place.</p> <p>New camera installed at MBOS aimed at cage.</p> <p>Uniformed security personnel present 24/7.</p> <p>Cages at MBOS extended to ceiling and windows and vents secured.</p>

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

A new IT manager is adding another layer of technical expertise. Concerns voiced during the audit are beginning to be addressed. Validation queries have been developed to run against data stored in the DIMS system. There is greater control on running reports from Crystal Reports – the software is only available on IT staff desktops. New requests for reports must go to IT for evaluation, development and testing. IT staff are being cross trained on the use of GEMS and were involved in the election setup and testing – thus reducing reliance on one employee while at the same time assuring separation of duties.

Recent software version upgrades from DIMS were not installed prior to the election because during testing some glitches were discovered. They are also looking to involve other staff members in testing of modules and obtaining group consensus that systems are functioning correctly prior to deployment of new software versions.

Concerns	<p>DIMS software may not have security rights to individual fields on the voter record. Testing is currently underway.</p> <p>Multiple locations require the GEMS software to be on several computers.</p> <p>Would like to see more security surrounding the tabulation computer.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Test this theory in the test server environment. Request the vendor to develop user security rights to individual fields on the voter record.</p> <p>If facilities are combined, install GEMS on one computer and manage that computer in a controlled secured room. The room should be monitored by video camera and access restricted and controlled. Two employees should be required to be present at all times, including requirements to sign log sheets with date/time and reason for being in room. One facility would eliminate the need to move GEMS data from one computer to another.</p> <p>Install cameras focused on computer.</p>
Outstanding practices	---
Progress on audit report Rec. #22 & 23	There is a new Information Technology manager. Staff is becoming more knowledgeable of DIMS and GEMS. There are greater controls over requests for

	<p>software applications and modifications. Policies are being set in place requiring version upgrade analysis and testing prior to deployment. We do not know if there has been any progress in developing a strategic information technology plan for Elections– this was not scheduled until 2006 and was not directly related to the election.</p>
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PUBLIC/PAID OBSERVATION

The list of observer opportunities is extensive and complete – 29 tasks. If the parties feel that other tasks should be observed or that more paid observers are needed, the election staff is willing to meet and discuss. Observers are given thorough orientation and are trained on specific procedures along with staff. Although all procedures were not present for observers when we arrived, it was noticed that a concerted effort was made to make them available in the days that followed. At TEA, this was done by creating a “library” for easy access. The move to TEA made observation much easier by increasing the space.

Observers were conscientious about their duties, paid close attention to the processes being observed, and followed the rules. A suggestion basket was available at TEA for observer suggestions or comments. However, the observer at EDC did not have this option and had questions/suggestions that needed to be passed along. Some of the comments were not related to processes but the concept is good. A post election de-briefing of paid observers would be beneficial. Absent this, a survey type form would be useful to gather input. Observers we spoke with had no complaints regarding the observation process, felt they had been sufficiently trained, had adequate access, and were receiving answers to their questions from supervisors.

Concerns	--
Suggestions	<p>Would like to see specific procedures handed to all observers when they appear for “duty”. Once they have observed training following the procedures, they can be retrieved and put in the “library”.</p> <p>De-briefing or survey to gather input.</p>
Outstanding practices	<p>There is more political party observation in King County than we have witnessed in any jurisdictions in which we have experience. The Elections Section is very open, follows procedures carefully, and is conscientious about providing answers to observer’s questions. The concept of paying observers plays a role in the level of participation.</p>
Progress on audit report Rec. #20	<p>Communication with the parties regarding observation appears sufficient. Observers were informed of new procedures and important issues.</p>

PRE-ELECTION TASKS

MEDIA OPERATIONS

Assistance from other county offices in providing public information officers expands the ability of the Elections Section to provide information and assistance to the media. This is especially important given the number of facilities in use. The current PIO (public information officer) has a good working relationship with the media, provides opportunity for input, responds to inquiries and requests, and is looking at new and better ways to provide information – to media and public alike. There is a media briefing room and dedicated phone lines for media inquiries. While we were there, media briefings were held the day before the election and election night.

Concerns	There was no signage at TEA directing media to briefing area.
Suggestions	<p>Ensure that location is properly signed so that media does not need to wander around looking for it.</p> <p>Seek examples of media handbooks from large media counties – L.A. and New York. Provide handbook earlier in process – e.g. 30 days out.</p> <p>Support addition of a second Public Information Officer within the Elections Section.</p>
Outstanding practices	<p>Media plan is based on Miami-Dade County. It is an example of the benefit of sharing countywide resources and learning from experiences of other jurisdictions.</p> <p>Pre-election briefing was moved to TEA, which allowed media to have a tour of the new facility.</p>
Progress on audit report Rec. # 6	Media plan implemented in primary and refined during general election. It is being further examined and refined on a continuing basis.

ELECTION CALENDARS/MEETINGS

An election calendar was difficult to obtain since it was being updated or revised. We should have been able to obtain this document immediately and use it to identify observation opportunities. Without it, we had to identify and question the appropriate source. This should be the central controlling document of the election to ensure that nothing has been overlooked and that delays or changes are immediately known and rectified. It appeared that the current calendar had not yet reached the level of completeness and usefulness to ensure confidence in users.

One person is maintaining the calendar using Microsoft Project, updating it daily. In order to assure that tasks are being tracked and updated, he has been cutting and pasting to develop individual task lists and distributing these to applicable staff members. While this may be working, it is a time consuming task for a high level manager. We were disappointed not to be able to obtain a listing of daily activities/deadlines.

There is a system of weekly meetings – one with top management (non-election matters) and the other with top management and all supervisors (based on the election calendar). Two meetings in one week can be difficult with facilities spread out. The management meeting we observed did not have full attendance and there was no time to call and find out if the missing members planned to attend. One person was connected by phone. Even though this meeting is supposed to be for non-election matters, it did focus on the election. It seems that it might be a better use of time to have only one meeting day and meet every week with all top management and supervisors. This becomes a good training ground and team building activity. If there are specific issues that require only top management attendance, conduct that meeting when the other one is finished.

Concerns	<p>The election calendar was still undergoing updates and revision two weeks prior to the election.</p> <p>Group meetings are essential but result in a serious decrease in productive hours due to transportation to headquarters.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Contact other large jurisdictions for models of calendars that are sequential, include E- days, and can be run in a merged version or specific to a group.</p> <p>Eliminate unnecessary management only meetings or combine with other calendar meetings.</p>

Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #5	No apparent progress.

WEBSITE AND AUTOMATED PHONE SYSTEM

The Elections Section has a good website with many useful items. Daily absentee statistics are posted by city and jurisdiction – in the past these were by legislative district only. Campaigns can download voter ID and use this to get out the vote. This is a popular feature. Portions of the site are bi-lingual and they are working at increasing this service. The PIO has several ideas for improving the website including customizing how election results are provided. However, she is waiting on the hiring of a new web master.

The automated phone system is modified in the days immediately preceding the election to reduce the wait and immediately offer callers the option of finding their polling place. This is standard procedure among election offices.

Concerns	None
Suggestions	None
Outstanding practices	<p>Voter guide available by ballot type on-line. This allows voter to determine choices before going to the polls.</p> <p>Foresight in hiring webmaster. Many offices try to do this with existing staff. This is something that requires up to the minute skill to be as effective as possible.</p>
Progress on audit report	N/A

VOTER REGISTRATION

Staff is current with entering registrations and scanning. Obituaries are being reviewed daily, along with vital statistics reports received weekly or monthly. Voter records with missing signatures have been identified and voters notified. Some have responded and they were down to 2,000 before the primary. If these voters do not update their registration and an absentee ballot cannot be processed, another letter will be sent plus up to three phone calls. DIMS has an exact match for duplicates with first and last name, address and date of birth, but now they are using variations of possible duplications too. They are working these lists but it is time consuming. The Republican Party challenged over 2,000 voter records as being duplicates. Those voters received a letter but since this was not the same type of challenge as questionable addresses, the letter was not certified and the voters were not forced to vote a provisional ballot at the polls.

A pre-election challenge of 1900 voters, alleging that they were illegally using mail drops for their residence address, had a major impact on the election. Certified letters were sent, procedures changed at the polls, and a series of hearings scheduled. Known mail drops are flagged in the system and if a voter registers at one, he/she is sent a letter. This is standard procedure in most election offices. It appears that many of the address challenges submitted were for voters living in condos or apartments with a centralized mail drop. Many voters were angry at being challenged when they were properly registered. A few came into the office to correct a situation that they did not know was illegal. More information will be available after the hearings.

Concerns	None
Suggestions	None
Outstanding practices	New law requiring calls for non-matching signatures is resulting in voters updating their registrations which avoid possible delays in the future. Media coverage encouraged voter action to correct address problems.
Progress on audit report Rec. #9	Signatures were scanned and as much work as possible was done to correct voter registration files before the election.

EXCEPTION NOTIFICATION

Law passed last year requires notification of voters when the signature on their absentee ballot does not match that on their voter registration. Voters are receiving a letter and up to three phone calls. The phone bank has organized this process and logs in the calls. Work hours have been modified so that voters receive calls during the day, evening and weekend. This is a thorough process that definitely goes the “extra mile” to ensure that a voter’s ballot is counted.

Concerns	This is a time consuming process. In a presidential election when volume is higher, it will be difficult to conduct all phone bank operations in the current space.
Suggestions	Factor space for phone bank into plans for a consolidated facility.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

ABSENTEE APPLICATIONS

Applications come by mail, phone, e-mail and in-person. They are being processed and ballots mailed out in accordance with legal deadlines. A concern during the audit was how crowded the lobby was and long lines of voters were during the 2004 elections. It was informally discussed with staff and suggested that voter's registering to vote in person not be asked to wait in a second line in order to receive a ballot. Instead, once a voter registers, he/she is informed that a ballot will be mailed out the next day. If the voter wants a ballot immediately, it is provided. The process was much smoother. The lobby area is so small that they could not have comfortably served more than 8-10 people at one time – which were the maximum we observed. This number grows significantly in a presidential election. Staff was professional, friendly and helpful.

Concerns	Application form is English/Chinese combined. This made it difficult to read and voters were missing required information.
Suggestions	Print applications with English one side and Chinese the other.
Outstanding practices	Signatures of in-person applicants are being checked as the request is entered into the system. If the signature needs updating, it is done at that time, reducing future non-matching signature issues.
Progress on audit report	N/A

BALLOT ON DEMAND

Except for the issue with the key accessibility, we were satisfied that good progress has been made towards improved procedures which were in place and being followed at Headquarters. Teams of two staff members hand-numbered the ballot stock in advance since vendor was unable to do this. Logs were created for batches of twenty and each number is accounted for. Stock is kept in a locked cabinet behind counter where ballots are issued. The key, however, is kept in a drawer which is accessible to others. This situation needs to be corrected.

We were not satisfied with progress at TEA. Stock was only partially numbered – ran out of time. The stamp used to number is sitting on top of the desk – not secured. Numbered stubs are being torn off before use and there are no procedures for using the stubs for balancing and the number is not included in the log. Several blank ballots with stubs removed were left lying on desk – in case they were needed. There was no separation of duties. The same employee has access to the blank stock, numbered stamp, GEMS software, printer, and maintains the log of ballots printed. This person is also responsible for inserting ballots to be mailed out. The computer and printer are in an unsecured area and the printer is used for printing a variety of paperwork, other than ballots.

Ballot on demand was also being used at MBOS for duplicating ballots that could not feed through tabulators. Stock was numbered and logs were being maintained. When the system prints a ballot for a specific voter, there are no problems. When it prints by ballot type, it automatically prints both an English and Chinese ballot, requiring logging of one spoiled ballot each time. This is something they will work to rectify before future elections.

Although we saw progress since the audit began, there is still work to be done to secure this process. We observed good written procedures at Headquarters but none were available at TEA or MBOS. It should be noted that if there was one consolidated facility, adequate printed ballots (from vendor) could be stockpiled for various uses. This would reduce the need for ballot on demand to a few exceptions where stock runs out and there is no time to obtain more from vendor. However, it would be one system for producing such ballots and it could be more easily secured.

Concerns	Control of the process at TEA is inadequate.
Suggestions	Upgrade procedures immediately to incorporate features listed in the audit report.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #11	We were able to confirm that Headquarters had made many of the changes as described in the audit report. There is still important work to be done at TEA and MBOS.

PHONE BANK

Phone bank activity took place on the second floor at headquarters. The phone bank has been in constant operation since the primary. There was sufficient space and equipment with 36 operators on duty. When more than ten calls back up in the system, the calls are routed up to the fifth floor. This happened occasionally for short periods of time. The phone bank performs several functions: answer general calls from voters; call out to voters with non-matching signatures; and answer calls from challenged voters. Five phone lines were installed specifically for challenged voters. This was a new and unique situation related to 1900 address challenges lodged before the election. Non-matching signature calls continue until the day before certification.

Supervision is much improved with two supervisors present. The process has been “professionalized” with procedures and forms, spreadsheets and communication boards. Training is completely different. In 2004 they had one hour of training versus one week now. Calls are being logged and work is consolidated to provide a means of determining peak volume and assist in staffing.

Concerns	Space will not be sufficient in a presidential election.
Suggestions	There may be no solution to space absent moving to a new facility. Explore ways to monitor call volume through phone provider.
Outstanding practices	Temporary employees go through a human resources screening process that tests skill levels. This has resulted in better staffing. In addition to task training, employees receive customer service training and orientation.
Progress on audit report Rec. #13	The audit report recommended consolidating the phone bank and providing sufficient space. This is dependent upon obtaining a new and larger facility.

ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESSING

A great deal of time was spent at TEA observing the entire process. This included receiving at post office, transport and sorting at PSI, transport and processing at TEA, and transport for counting to MBOS. It was too late to observe insertion at Diebold. We carefully reviewed documented procedures and logs and observed training and actual work to ensure procedures were being followed.

It is our understanding that if TEA is used in the future, ballot tabulation will be moved from MBOS to TEA. Since the lease on MBOS expires in May, this will likely be the case. Such a move would reduce duplication of security and eliminate transportation from TEA to MBOS. This would eliminate the problem of duplication of ballots & ballot on demand at MBOS and two different supervisors. However, it will use valuable space. Some changes will be necessary to accommodate the increased volume of 2006 elections.

We were surprised by the move to TEA but agree that it was well worth the effort. The process was much better than what had been described in the past and workers and observers alike were very grateful. We knew that work was being done on procedures but were impressed by the amount of progress. There are only a few areas/tasks that still need procedures. We also saw desk procedures for quick reference.

There was good supervision – sometimes from employees on loan from other departments. Some procedures were being used for the first time but they were documented and well understood by supervisors. Training was provided, and people started slowly with more experienced people shadowing. Work was checked for accuracy. The training was adequate but could be improved. This will be an area for the new Trainer to focus. There were many paid observers who were diligently observing all processes.

An excel spreadsheet tracks ballots from PSI through the end of processing. This can then be compared to ballot counts from the GEMS computer for final reconciliation.

While observing the duplication process, we suggested that after ballots move to MBOS for tabulation, that they continue to track any ballots by batch numbers that are pulled for duplication due to problems with the scanner reading the ballot. This suggestion was implemented and we observed it happening on Election Day. A copy of the excel spreadsheet was installed on a desktop at

MBOS and ballots pulled for duplication were being tracked and recorded by batch number.

<p>Concerns</p>	<p>During sort at PSI, we noted several yellow envelopes in reject bin. They were envelopes from the primary. We were initially told that they would not be processed. We voiced concern that they could contain a ballot for this election and should be looked at. At the time we left Seattle, we were told this was being discussed.</p> <p>Movement of ballots from TEA was difficult and potentially a safety hazard in loading.</p> <p>Use of MBOS required a second ballot duplication and ballot on demand operation with different supervision.</p> <p>Training was accurate but boring and was primarily accomplished from reading the procedure manual.</p> <p>Voters are told to completely fill in the circle for their vote to count. During duplication, the procedure at TEA was to draw a thick line through the circle. This did not completely fill in the circle. During Logic and Accuracy testing we were told that they did not run cards through with partial markings and that Diebold would not provide guidelines on how much must be filled in for the vote to count. This was discussed with staff prior to departing Seattle and they were going to look into it or run some test cards. The three precinct manual recount provided to the parties had been completed and balanced perfectly. If this contained any duplicated ballots, it would support the procedure.</p>
<p>Suggestions</p>	<p>Envelopes from prior election should be examined to determine if the proper ballot for the present election was enclosed. This examination could be done by staff or by the canvass board.</p> <p>If it is required in the future to move ballots from TEA to MBOS, an easier and safer method has to be found for loading trucks.</p> <p>Support move of MBOS to TEA to eliminate transport, and secondary duplication and ballot on demand.</p>

	<p>New Trainer should focus on training programs for this area.</p> <p>Add to the existing excel spreadsheet the number of ballots rejected during tabulation by batch, and sent for duplication.</p> <p>Add test cards to the L & A test to include partially marked cards – especially those with line through the voting circle.</p> <p>During the opening process, move tables together so that two people are working in close proximity to each other, rather than individually and separated by aisles.</p>
Outstanding practices	Procedures are well constructed with the underlying focus on quality control through two person teams and second and third checks. The process is extremely complex and the systems developed are very good.
Progress on audit report	N/A

TESTING OF ACCUVOTES

This was conducted at EDC with observers present. On the day we were there only one observer was present. Procedures were posted and the process was well organized. Memory cards had been programmed before observation began.

Memory cards specific to a polling place were organized ahead of time along with test ballots representing all precincts within the polling place. We voiced a concern that the cards and decks were laid out on a table overnight. Our concerns were considered and the procedure was changed to lock them in the cage.

Test decks are prepared by marking the last candidate in each race. We suggested preparing a test deck with votes for every candidate resulting in a pre-determined pattern. The test deck for polling place AccuVotes should also include absentee ballots.

The observer voiced an interest in understanding the “big picture”. It would be helpful to put together a document that discusses the many steps involved in preparing and testing devices and software. This would include post election, maintenance, diagnostic testing, AccuVote testing, and Logic and Accuracy.

It appears that required tests are being properly conducted. There is much discussion concerning what is sufficient testing and what additional measures should be taken. The observation team is not attempting to make those determinations. As in most tasks related to an election, procedures are constantly changing. The election office should be open to discussion from the public about ideas and concerns, and input should be evaluated by a properly qualified technical staff. Since this is a process governed by the Secretary of State, it would be a statewide effort.

Concerns	<p>No absentee ballots were in the test deck – only provisional. We were told that timing holes are the same on both.</p> <p>Test cards were not prominently marked “Test”.</p> <p>No test cards were run with partially filled in circles.</p> <p>We were not certain that memory cards for each AccuVote had received extensive L & A testing to assure that the download from GEMS was valid. Currently the testing involves marking the last candidate’s name.</p>
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Suggestions	<p>Include absentee ballots in test decks.</p> <p>Have vendor imprint bold “test” across ballots.</p> <p>Include partially marked cards – e.g. line through circle – to validate duplicating procedures.</p> <p>Enhance AccuVote testing before L & A to check each candidate.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

SUPPLY PREP AND DELIVERY

Supplies are assembled and disbursed from EDC. We observed the assembly line packing that seemed efficient. Most items had been prepackaged in clear plastic envelopes. Supplies are then staged for delivery. Saturday is for the City of Seattle poll workers to come to EDC where supplies are loaded into their cars. Sunday is for all other polls. Supplies are picked up by poll workers, at the same location (called a depot) to which they will be returning election night.

Saturday was a rainy day. Most poll workers did not have to get out of their cars. The exceptions were those scheduled to receive the “Ask Ed” experimental device (see (“Definitions” at the end of this report) This was issued to approximately 50 polling places. They had to come in and sign extra paper work before the device was issued. There seemed to be a little delay related to reports not printed in the expected format and the need to use a conversion chart.

Concerns	<p>When poll workers had to come into the office, it required them to leave their vehicle in the rain.</p> <p>Staff knew what they were doing but it had some bottlenecks. It took more time than it should have to locate the right numbers on bags. This is partially because they use Alpha sorts and a complicated numbering system. Also, logs that had to be signed off sometimes had the number of the polls in another car. This delayed the other car until the first car finished the log.</p>
Suggestions	<p>They know who will receive the Ask Ed, so it would seem more efficient to have it with the supplies/or close by and be loaded by the workers. Paperwork could be signed in the car.</p> <p>Ask the Quality Control Manager to review and make recommendations regarding workflow.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

LOGIC AND ACCURACY (L & A)

The test was conducted properly at MBOS on November 7, 2005. The observers and public were given an Agenda and were informed of what the process entailed, how the test would be conducted, and how they would close. There were two paid observers and one public observer. Paul Miller from the Secretary of State's office was present and participated in the test. The test is to demonstrate that the system counts ballots and that results match pre-determined results. The pre-determined results were calculated by Mr. Miller and he gave them to the observers along with an explanation of the logic. A Diebold representative was on site for support if needed.

The tabulation computer is networked to the AccuVote scanners in the room using central count. This computer has a copy of the GEMS election database for tabulation purposes. It is not networked outside of MBOS and is not connected to the Internet.

There is a second computer located on the side of the room, which also has a copy of GEMS as well as other programs stored on it. The County's IT staff member uses this computer to customize vote total reports and to upload results to the Internet. Ballot count data is fed into this computer by CD. Nothing from this computer goes back the other way to the primary tabulation computer.

All forty AccuVotes were used in the test. There were backup devices in the cage that had been previously tested with observers present and were available if needed. The test deck was divided among all devices. The L & A test, securing of ballots, and backup to CD were done in accordance with legal requirements.

At one point the test results did not match and the test deck was re-run. This was likely due to card handling. However, before re-running the test the observers were asked to check each race to help narrow down the problem. This took a great deal of time. There was one person reading the test results and another checking them off the pre-determined results. It was slower than necessary because the bulletin was not printed in the same format as the pre-determined results. One had overs and unders and the other did not – thus changing location on the page.

A discussion took place with the IT manager regarding a need to test the vote tabulation system as a complete "unit" – GEMS, touch screen, Accuvote, central count, etc. to assure that an update in one version of software/firmware/hardware to any of these components results in the same expected outcome for vote totals. We were assured that they were reviewing other county/state models for using

hashing to validate GEMS memory cards and election specific memory card downloads.

Concerns	<p>Observers were slow to start checking results, even though they had done it before.</p> <p>It took longer than necessary to run this test because proofing was done by only two people.</p> <p>When the bulletin format did not match, it slowed down proofing.</p> <p>Space limitations at MBOS made it impossible for observers to see each tabulation operation. You could not walk down aisles without potentially disconnecting equipment.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Observers should be provided with written procedures detailing how to check results.</p> <p>Hire more observers and split the bulletins so that each team of two only has a few pages to review.</p> <p>Those conducting the L & A test should have a script of exactly what they will do and in what sequence. That would ensure that settings are done correctly and that a step is not overlooked. It would also be good to rehearse the test before observers are present. We are not sure if that is possible or if the Pre-determined results are available in advance. It appears that SOS pre-determined results should be produced in the over and under format since the second test needs to check for this.</p> <p>Ensure that when a new facility is obtained, space for observation of this process is considered. This process will only grow in the years to come.</p>
Outstanding practices	Secretary of State's office prepares pre-determined results and participates in each county's certification.
Progress on audit report	N/A

POLL WORKER RECRUITING

The majority of recruiting took place before observation began. However, we did interview staff. Recruiting is complicated by legal requirements for politically split boards and party requirements for the inspector to match the party that received the most votes in the prior presidential race in the county. Staff is obligated to fill positions with names given by parties so they cannot fill them early. Often the parties supply names of people who do not want to work and by the time this is known, it is late in the process. It is then necessary to recruit by phone and often voters do not want to work if they must be designated as a particular party judge. To completely fill every position would require approximately 4,000 people. The office is unable to meet that goal and does not have a backup list to use on Election Day. Consequently when workers do not show up - 80 were no shows in primary- they are forced to move workers from one polling place to another. This might suffice in a low turnout election but will be troublesome in a presidential year.

There are many programs that assist counties in finding poll workers, such as students and county employees. These are more difficult to implement in Washington because of the party requirements.

In the audit report there was concern that the number of bi-lingual poll workers was not adequate. Much was done since that time such as placing bi-lingual employees in charge of recruiting rather than the Poll worker Section, which is already overloaded. Efforts included personal phone calls, attendance at many outreach events, public service television, etc. Bi-lingual staff worked late to place and receive calls from bi-lingual poll workers. The most effective tool they had was when former Governor Gary Locke did a PSA asking for community support. This resulted in an immediate flood of phone calls. Bi-lingual workers do not have to meet party requirements. It should be noted that staff's motto of "aim to exceed expectations" worked well. They needed to recruit 103 and actually recruited 115 – with more being added to fill vacancies when someone drops off. 63 people are returning from the primary election. This was a great effort.

Concerns	Requirement that entire board be split by party is hurting the process and contributing to a shortage of poll workers.
Suggestions	<p>Consider changing state law to set aside two positions, per polling location, for each party and allowing the rest to be filled without party affiliation.</p> <p>Develop a pool of standby persons to fill in one Election Day. Train them ahead of time and pay them</p>

	<p>for standby. San Francisco has an excellent poll worker pool program.</p> <p>Explore student and county poll worker programs used by other jurisdictions to fill non-party positions.</p> <p>Explore earlier deadlines for parties to submit names.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #16	They met the recommendation regarding bilingual poll workers.

LOCATING POLLING PLACES

The number of polling places went from 540 in September to 527 in November. This was associated with consolidations to eliminate some of the most inaccessible sites. Any polls that closed were moved to an accessible site.

Even though many polls are located in public buildings, which should by law be accessible, they are not. It can be difficult to obtain such compliance without losing a site altogether. They even have a polling place in a retirement home that was not deemed accessible because the elevator doors were too narrow.

The office is working on hiring an analyst to help obtain accessible sites.

A demonstration of the new voting equipment for the visually impaired was conducted at three polling places. We observed it at the Blind Center. This was a good way to introduce the equipment to the public. Because it takes longer to vote when listening to the ballot (20 minutes or longer) it may be necessary to have more than one device at some polling places.

A discussion with the Secretary of State's office indicates that there was an initial push in the state toward accessible polling places. The responsibility is up to individual counties. Now that many counties totally vote by mail, the issue is not relevant for them. King County has completed new HAVA surveys on polling places and is pursuing a grant to obtain assistance to rectify the situation. However, the county remains vulnerable to potential law suits.

Concerns	There are still a large number of inaccessible polling sites.
Suggestions	Pursue hiring analyst. Use PSA's to locate new polls – perhaps businesses that would donate space.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #17	They have begun moving inaccessible polls. They have begun process to receive funds and hire an analyst to assist in meeting goals.

TRAINING

TEA provided enough space that three poll worker training classes could be conducted at the same time. It was a good location with sufficient parking.

We observed training of poll worker inspectors and judges, troubleshooters, tabulators, those processing absentee ballots, and canvass workers. It was obvious that a great deal of time and effort had gone into improving training and the materials distributed. We believe that in some areas such as poll worker training, it has improved so much as to now be a best practice to other jurisdictions.

It was good to see many things in place that had been suggested during the audit or that were based on materials supplied during the audit from other jurisdictions. This was especially evident in Troubleshooter training with new notebooks and procedures. The help desk also reflected use of ideas from other jurisdictions. The training for troubleshooters, canvass and help desk was combined in the beginning then broken out into specific areas. The combined session gave a one hour overview of poll worker training. This delayed getting to more specific information. We were told that there was not enough room in the poll worker classes for them to have attended earlier.

Poll worker training was excellent. It combined activities and the new facility allowed for a permanent set up of a model polling place. The power point presentation was very well done but was not used as something to just read from. Poll workers were given error logs from the previous election and could ask questions during class. A diagnostic test at the end ensured attendance and pay. There was a good session for sharing tips with other poll workers. Poll workers had many ideas and suggestions and were encouraged to write them down.

A new Trainer has been hired and was visiting sites to get first hand knowledge of what happens in an election. He seemed to have a good grasp of what a professional trainer should do and with his assistance; we believe that the areas that need assistance in developing more effective training will benefit from his experience.

We spoke with people who had been trained and all were appreciative of improvements and quality of materials provided.

Concerns	Training in some areas was not as strong as others. They had a good beginning but need help in refining.
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	Poll workers had ideas but many will not be submitted in a class atmosphere.
Suggestions	<p>Utilize skills of new Trainer to improve training in certain areas.</p> <p>Try to find space for troubleshooters, help desk and canvass staff to attend poll worker training in advance – preferable conducted by same people doing poll worker training.</p> <p>Provide feedback form in poll books for use by poll workers on election day. They can note any special problems and ideas for improvement.</p>
Outstanding practices	Poll worker training was extremely well done and included a section on “how to manage”. This was new and different – great idea.
Progress on audit report Rec. #14	Poll worker training met the audit recommendation. The manual was completely updated between elections.

ELECTION DAY TASKS

POLLING PLACE OPERATIONS

We observed 8 polling places – at opening, mid day and at closing. Included in the observation were accessible and non-accessible polls, bilingual, and those using “Ask Ed” and a demonstration of HAVA compliant voting device for visually impaired.

One poll was on the first floor of the County Administration Building. All went well. They had an excessive number of dropped off absentees and use of provisional ballots because of convenience to the voter.

All poll workers seemed to be working well together and knew the procedures. Tables were laid out correctly, room layout was good, bilingual materials were displayed, and voters were processed according to procedures. Bilingual poll workers were using their verbal skills; however it did not appear that any Chinese ballots were being used by the voters. Two polls had full boards, most were missing one to three but were doing alright because turnout was not high. All inspectors were enthusiastic about the training they had received.

At one polling place it was observed that voters did not know which precinct they lived in. Several times a voter was looked up in each of four separate poll books that are organized by precinct. The inspector had an “Ask Ed” device and used it several times to determine which precinct line to put the voter in.

The only problem we encountered was signage. There were signs immediately the block and found it on a side street, which did not relate to the address of the in front of the buildings but none leading to them. Trying to find the polls at the Blind Center, we drove around, parked and walked, got back in and drove around polling place. At one polling place, in an apartment building near a hospital, we could find no parking. Signs could have helped direct voters that parking in the entry area for voting was permissible.

Some poll workers wanted to share ideas. We did hear disappointment at a few polling places that voters no longer received “I voted” stickers.

Concerns	The auxiliary bin at the headquarters polls was filling up quickly and during the day would require emptying. Printing ballots in Chinese is costly and the amount of
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	<p>usage was low.</p> <p>When voter does not know their precinct number, they may have to go through several lines in a multi-precinct polling place.</p> <p>It was difficult to find some polling places, even in the daytime.</p>
Suggestions	<p>A polling place in a large office building should have an extra drop off box for absentees. This would avoid having to open bins during the day, which causes voters concern.</p> <p>When touch screen equipment becomes a standard at each polling place for the visually impaired, suggest also utilizing this same equipment to provide Chinese ballots and audio ballots for voters, thus eliminating the need to print the Chinese ballots in all ballot styles.</p> <p>Eliminate individual precinct rosters and consolidate poll books for the polls. Divide the book and lines alphabetically. One poll worker could be assigned to pull the appropriate ballot style. This would eliminate the need for a captain's (master) list and would assure that voters get into the correct line.</p> <p>Provide more signage/arrows to be used on corners or other places to help direct voters. With the rainy climate they will need to be coated to resist moisture.</p> <p>Provide suggestion/feedback sheet in poll books for comments from poll workers.</p> <p>Bring back the "I Voted" stickers. These are a fixture throughout the country and serve to encourage others who see them throughout the day to go to the polls and vote.</p>
Outstanding practices	<p>Ask Ed devices are hand held devices that enable the poll worker to look up any voter in the county and determine what precinct or polling place they belong in. This is especially helpful when a voter is in the wrong polls and the ballot is different.</p>
Progress on audit report	N/A

POLL WORKER STAFFING LINE

Four people staffed this phone bank where poll workers call in to report staffing shortages. They had a white board listing polls with spare poll workers and would put polls in need on the board until positions were filled. It was reported that they had used up their pool of poll workers over the weekend. There was a steady flow of calls in the early morning hours – some related to supplies or other problems. Occasionally callers became very upset and the supervisor handled the situation calmly and professionally.

Concerns	<p>There was no pool of extra poll workers.</p> <p>The white board is not an efficient means of tracking problem polls.</p>
Suggestions	<p>This relates to problems described under “Poll Workers” in pre-election tasks. Seek to change party requirements in law that would make it easier to fill vacancies. If the office is unable to fill all positions before election day, they are not going to have a backup pool. Another possibility is to move up the deadline for parties to submit lists of poll worker recommendations.</p> <p>Replace white board with computer projection screen and enter needs on a computer – easier to read and update.</p> <p>Consult with San Francisco where they have a pool of about 150 standbys, inspectors, judges and bilingual.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

HELP DESK

This was relocated from headquarters to TEA where there was a little more room. The phone number is used by poll workers to report problems or ask questions. It is a mix of procedural calls and those where a troubleshooter must be dispatched to fill supply needs or fix equipment. Approximately 18 phones were staffed with six other people performing tasks such as: supervision, runners, dispatchers, recordkeeping.

The desk opens at 6:00 a.m. At 6:30 only 7 phones were busy but at times all were in use. Operators had procedures and flip guides for answering questions. This was an example of utilizing best practices from another county to improve operations – in this case from San Diego. We saw no paid observers but there were several public observers such as from CEOC and the turnaround team. Speaking with observers who had viewed this operation two years ago, we were told that this was a major change for the better.

As calls came in, a pink slip was completed for dispatch and a yellow for procedural. Pink slips were held up for runner pick up or to ask a question. Two runners performed this task and also supervised operators. If the operator had a poll worker on hold and needed to ask a question, they held up the pink slip. Runners could not distinguish between caller on hold and completed call slips to be picked up – leaving caller on hold longer than necessary.

There is a good system for analyzing call slips, dispatching and logging in computer spreadsheet. The help desk was a well-run operation that will get even better as it is refined.

Concerns	Poll workers put on hold when they are in need of quick answers. More space is needed. It was difficult to walk around the tables and observers were in the way of the operation.
Suggestions	Use a separate flag to let runners know caller is holding. These get priority over those already written up. Consult with San Francisco regarding their centralized/computerized help desk. Incorporate needs of help desk into future planning to allow more space. Make the spreadsheet available real time to

	<p>headquarters so that they have a complete picture of the types of problems occurring during the day – helpful for it to sort to specific types of problems.</p> <p>Provide headsets to free hands for writing and looking up information.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. # - n/a	

PUBLIC PHONE BANK

This was discussed above under pre-election tasks. However, we did observe it again on Election Day. Staffing was adequate to the volume of calls coming in. In many jurisdictions it is not possible to answer all the calls even with 40-60 phones. The volume seems to be reduced greatly in King County due to the large number of people voting by mail. Also reducing the volume of calls is the availability of information on-line and by automated phone.

TROUBLESHOOTERS

We were unable to synchronize our poll visits with a troubleshooter. However, we did question poll workers about troubleshooter support and were able to speak with two troubleshooters at a depot.

Troubleshooters were instructed to visit each of their assigned polling places three times during the day. They had notebooks with procedures for what to look for at the first and second visits. All but one of the polling places visited had seen a troubleshooter and it appeared that they had performed different levels of checks – some more thorough than others. Inspectors had only positive things to say about the troubleshooters and felt that they were good support. However, one polling place had not seen a troubleshooter at all and it was nearly 10:00 a.m.

Concerns	There is no record keeping for first and second visits and no method for determining poll worker or troubleshooter performance in this area.
Suggestions	<p>Troubleshooters should have pre-printed checklists for each polling place to ensure that each important item is checked. The information gathered also helps to reinforce poll worker training and other procedures.</p> <p>It is important to know that each polling place opened on time and that no voters were turned away. One way to determine this is a phone bank that calls each polling place early in the morning. Another is to have troubleshooters check and phone in a report for all assigned polling places.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

BALLOT TABULATION – MBOS

We observed counting early in the morning and again at 4:30 in the afternoon until finish just before 5:30 p.m. 35-40 tabulators were in use. Ballots to be counted were brought over from TEA and locked in the cage. Boxes with blue labels have not been counted, yellow seals have been counted, and orange labels for ballots that needed more work. All ballots had been hand counted at TEA and as each batch is fed through the tabulator, the count is balanced to the number from TEA. Paid observers were present along with a small number of public observers.

The goal was to count 140,000 ballots and they actually counted 149,601 – this was over a nine-hour period. They did not finish counting all the boxes that had blue labels because they had to stop at 5:30. Approximately 20,000 ballots remained in the cage. At 5:30 the ballot images were stored to CD and the transfer sheet signed by the political party observers. The CD transfer case was sealed and initialed by observers. The GEMS deck report and the CD are placed inside of a secured transfer bag and sealed for transporting to headquarters by the Assistant Superintendent of Mail Ballot and Delivery.

The tabulation process was well organized and supervised.

Concerns	Unable to complete count due to speed of the machines and early cut off in order to create CD and transport to headquarters.
Suggestions	A consolidated facility would allow more time to count and would eliminate need to produce and transport a CD. Pursue state law that allows early final processing of absentee ballots.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. # 18	The Executive response to the audit suggestion regarding legislative change was that it would be included in the county's 2006 legislative agenda.

BALLOT TABULATION – HEADQUARTERS

The transfer of MBOS ballot images to the GEMS server at headquarters was observed. Paid observers were inside the GEMS room and other observers could view through a window. Seals were broken and signed off on log sheets and the upload completed. The GEMS server is stored in a locked cabinet, inside of a locked room, secured with a numbered keypad locking mechanism. Three AccuVotes are secured in the GEMS room for uploading of any memory cards from polling places unable to modem their results.

King County IT staff test the functionality of the web page and the state system prior to 8 p.m.

Secretary of State staff members were on hand to observe the final tabulation of results. The first unofficial results were posted on the web at 8:20 and updated periodically. Prior to posting, these results were reviewed by the Director, Dean Logan and the Election Coordinator, Harry Sanders. The final unofficial results were posted at 12:20 a.m. on November 9, 2005.

Depot modem lines were tested prior to the election twice. It was known that three depots would not be able to transmit and plans were made to bring memory cards to headquarters. There were perhaps six memory cards from various depots that could not be uploaded. They were tabulated in the central count environment on Wednesday, November 9. A few depots had problems getting started on Election Night but eventually worked fine. The delays for these were the result of late arriving transmission teams (made up of troubleshooters) and the need for additional support from technical staff.

The tabulation process was well organized and supervised. There was good coordination between the City of Seattle depot in parking structure below the office that kept memory cards coming in steadily.

Concerns	Transmitting from depots is not always successful and requires a distributed work force. If they have a problem with any memory cards, the advantage of remote transmitting is lost because the cards must be brought to the office.
Suggestions	Investigate the advantages and disadvantages of remote transmitting. It is not the same for all jurisdictions depending upon size and geography. With a well-orchestrated transportation system, it might be

	faster and more efficient to bring all memory cards to headquarters. San Diego County experienced this same situation and moved from remote to central count.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

DEPOTS

Depots have two functions: 1) receive all supplies from poll workers and 2) transmit memory cards to headquarters. We observed two depots – one on Mercer Island and one in the parking structure at headquarters. There was a vivid contrast between the two. We had several concerns with Mercer Island and thought the headquarters operation was very good.

At Mercer Island, a polling place was located at the same address. It finished at 8:35 and handed over supplies. At 8:45 the first drive-up poll worker vehicle arrived. There was: no signage indicating it was a depot; lighting was poor and difficult to see inside a dark van; no separate work space to unseal and remove memory cards from AccuVotes- it was done on floor of van; and the workflow was confusing. It appeared that there was a log sheet for recording receipt of AccuVotes but we did not see a check off for other supplies and no receipts are prepared or given to poll workers. At different times, workers removed different items from cars and once the poll worker unloaded his own car. A worker then asked him “if that was all”. It would have been easy for items to be left in cars. We saw a paid observer, with good intentions, helping to carry supplies to the van.

Once memory cards were removed in the van they were taken, one at a time, to the lobby for transmitting but sometimes this did not happen immediately and the card was lying there as another bag was placed over it.

Transmitting got off to a slow start because they could not connect until 8:54. After that it seemed to go well.

At headquarters the site was fully staffed with workers in reflective vests. Traffic flow was good, although we did not see any signage on outside indicating entrance to depot. Lighting was very good. A team of three approached each vehicle and removed specific items, which were taken to separate stations. AccuVotes were scanned and inspected for seals then opened and memory cards removed. Cards were placed in plastic cases and when there were a sufficient number, the cases were transported by two staff and two observers to the office for uploading. Poll workers never got out of their cars. This was a smooth and well-organized operation.

Concerns	There were no signs on street indicating where depot was located and no signs at depot. We were told they usually have a sandwich board. Although there were parking lot lights, the van parked
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	<p>in an area that was darker than others because of its proximity to the lobby door for memory cards.</p> <p>Workers moving back and forth among vehicles in regular street clothes, which can be hard to see.</p> <p>There was no “system” for removing supplies and checking off each item (other than the AccuVote) that could lead to items being left in vehicle.</p> <p>One small van was used to house all supplies from eight polls but it was also the “workspace” for unsealing the memory card. Cards could easily have been dropped or damaged.</p>
<p>Suggestions</p>	<p>Each depot should have signs on street directing poll workers to depot site – experienced workers may know but new ones do not. In addition, they should always have a “Depot” sign at the actual location.</p> <p>Park in well lit areas. If not possible, improvise methods of providing sufficient light – including flashlights.</p> <p>Provide all workers with reflective vests as a safety measure and to identify them as election office staff.</p> <p>Develop a procedure for unloading similar to headquarters where one person is assigned to a specific item in all cars. Consider use of check off receipts.</p> <p>Consider taking AccuVote (inside transport bag) directly into the transmitting room. It is a better workspace, with better lighting for unsealing and removing memory cards and at the end of the evening, all bags can be returned to vehicle.</p>
<p>Outstanding practices</p>	<p>--</p>
<p>Progress on audit report</p>	<p>N/A</p>

POST ELECTION TASKS

SUPPLY DEPROCESSING – EDC

We arrived at EDC on November 9th at 10:00 a.m. Red bags (containing provisional and write-in ballots along with poll books, etc.) and blue bags (containing absentee ballots) had already been taken to TEA. Boxes of voted ballots had been removed from black bags, scanned to ensure receipt from all polls, and placed in order on shelves. The next step was to open these boxes with teams of two to be sure nothing is there that should not be and that what should be there is there. As soon as that was done, all the boxes would be transported to TEA in case they were needed in canvass to balance.

The warehouse was set up for the separation of supplies contained in black bags and the inspection of AccuVotes. The process appeared to be under control and organized and workers had procedures in place. Troubleshooters were already being dispatched to check AccuVote bins at polls even before they are picked up for return to the warehouse.

Concerns	All voted ballots were to be moved from EDC to MBOS then back again after canvass.
Suggestions	A consolidated facility would avoid this movement.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

CANVASS AT TEA

Red bags were delivered from EDC the morning after the election and were stored in a secure cage with a Sheriff Deputy present. An extra step was necessary this election to sort out the bags that had challenged voters so they could be worked separately by more experienced workers due to possible complications.

Blue bags went to the second floor for absentee ballot processing. They are sorted (had some ballots from other counties) and hand counted in teams of two with logs, etc. It was a good and thorough process.

Canvass leads met at 10:00 and workers began training at noon. Check-in and badging is required. No bags or coats are allowed. There were paid and public observers present. Training included orientation, demonstrations, and review of written procedures. Workers included inspectors from the polls. They started slowly to avoid mistakes. They worked until 8 p.m. and had processed 125 red bags out of 527. Work was divided into stations with good diagram/flow chart: red bag sort; quality control checks; provisional ballot prep; wand; and poll book reconciliation. As one part draws to an end, more people are moved to other functions. Once provisional ballots are prepared for transmittal, they go to headquarters for research then back to TEA for accounting purposes then to MBOS for counting. Write-in ballots and voted/uncounted ballots are first processed at TEA then sent to MBOS. Miscellaneous supplies go back to EDC and missing items found at EDC are sent to TEA. When the canvass is complete, everything moves out to EDC, headquarters, or MBOS. Does this sound like a lot of movement? It is an incredible journey.

We observed good written procedures and noted procedures posted at each station. We were able to observe most stations in operation. We had a demonstration of wand poll books, which takes place before reconciliation can begin. As suggested during the audit, they obtained pens to replace old wand units because they are more accurate. They put extra steps in place that should ensure accuracy, such as checking the wand screen number to poll book after each wand, and after “dumping” the wand unit, comparing the voter list that is generated to the poll book in teams of two. Since most jurisdictions do not use poll book credit to certify an election, we have never seen this level of quality control.

Canvass procedures and the method of conducting canvass activities were of serious concern during the audit. We brought this to the attention of the Elections Section at that time and they immediately began improvements. Some improvements took place in September when canvass moved to EDC, followed by a de-briefing, and many more changes took place as it moved to TEA. What we saw was very impressive. A retired former Assistant Director of REALS, took

over this responsibility in preparation for the primary. What she accomplished, along with a great many others who helped in this effort, was amazing. What we observed was a well organized and thorough process – well documented and well supervised.

Procedures are complete and are being upgraded as needed. Workers now work in teams of two, there are multiple quality control checkpoints, and procedures are readily available. Missing item lists are kept and researched. Error logs are maintained which will provide feedback to poll workers. The new space allows for good workload distribution as well as space for observers. There are no walls, which provide flexibility for teardown and redesign “on the fly”. Colored labels were on bins indicating what went into each – good for workers and for observers.

The only drawbacks we observed related to distributed facilities and the movement of materials and supplies.

Concerns	<p>TEA is a great improvement but any separate facility increases the need for multiple transmittals of ballots, etc.</p> <p>During red bag sort, employees were instructed disregard broken seals. This should be on record in case a problem is discovered later.</p>
Suggestions	<p>A consolidated facility would eliminate the need for moving ballots, etc.</p> <p>Log broken seals in error log.</p>
Outstanding practices	<p>Canvass procedures and practices are now a model to others. Of special interest is the use of a quality control central hub that tracks a polling place through the entire process.</p>
Progress on audit report Rec. # 19	<p>This has been accomplished.</p>

PROVISIONALS

These ballots are researched at headquarters. Because the volume was lower than in the 2004 elections, research took place only on the fifth floor. Workers were grouped in a network of cubicles. Procedures have been developed and were revised after the primary election. Workers were fully informed and trained.

Ballots are placed in locked and sealed cabinets in the work area until work is completed then they are transported the same day back to TEA. Each morning, the Provisional ballot envelopes that have not been researched, are checked against the log from the previous day to make sure the number is the same as it was when locked up the previous night.

Observers were assigned to observe the Provisional ballot process, however, none appeared on November 10.

Concerns	Working in cubicles in a very tight space, makes it almost impossible for observers to see what workers are doing.
Suggestions	Continue looking for better work space – could this function move to TEA in order to reduce ballot movement. Perhaps some of the computers used for signature verification could be used for this purpose.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

PHONE BANK

The phone bank continues after the election to call voters with non-matching signatures and to respond to calls from challenged voters. Since the volume of calls slowed down, they were using this time to work with potential duplicate lists and review screens for undetected potential duplicates.

CANVASS BOARD

Questionable ballots are sent from TEA to headquarters where the Canvass Board meets to determine action to be taken in accordance with Canvass Board rules. They arrive in sealed boxes with two employees. They were stored, at least temporarily, in a manager's office – which he locked when leaving the office. These ballots needed to be prepared for the Canvass Board by stamping each ballot where (where Canvass Board initials), numbering, and ensuring that the reasons are clear for presentation. Logs are created with each number. When preparation is complete, ballots are stored in a locked vault.

We attended a Canvass Board meeting on November 10th. There were several observers who were allowed to stand behind board as they reviewed individual ballots. However, they did not make verbal challenges to any decisions. The meeting began at 2:00 and finished at 6:00. It was recorded. We do not know how many ballots were brought forward but it was several hundred. The meeting space available was in the middle of the room and workers had to pass by to get to offices, files, or the lunchroom.

We asked what had been done to avoid ballots being misplaced during this process (18 ballots discovered in 2005 recount). We were told that someone new was writing down board decisions and assisting the presenter of the ballots. In the last election some of the writing was unclear and ballots moved back and forth multiple times. We were also told that accounting at TEA had been increased. When finished, a copy of the log goes into the ballot box and is sealed and stored in vault until it is returned to TEA. A visit the following day saw these boxes opened and the log from the previous day being filled in for each numbered ballot – the day before they had only recorded number ranges that had the same decision. This was done in a room with others present but not working on that particular task.

We questioned why the Canvass Board did not go to the ballots rather than vice versa. Mr. Logan raised this question to the board and they agreed to meet at TEA. This is an added burden to busy board members but will eliminate movement of ballots that is of greater concern. In addition, the Elections Section plans to designate a Canvass Board coordinator.

In speaking with an observer, he raised concern over the amount of work performed on absentee ballots versus poll ballots. He suggested that other than certain specific checks, absentee ballots be run as received. In a recount they would receive the same scrutiny as polls ballots to determine voter intent and at that time the party observers would have greater access and ability to challenge. We do not necessarily endorse this idea but believe it would be an idea worth considering at the state level.

Concerns	<p>Ballots brought to headquarters for the Canvass Board should not be left in an office but taken immediately to the locked vault.</p> <p>A room should be set aside for Canvass Board meetings so that they are not interrupted by other activity.</p> <p>Following the Canvass Board meeting, ballot boxes were reopened by one individual for additional work on the logs.</p>
Suggestions	<p>If Canvass Board members move to TEA, there will be no reason for sending ballots to headquarters. They can be prepared at TEA with two people present.</p> <p>Now that Canvass Board meetings will move to TEA, they should be able to locate more appropriate space.</p> <p>Although we understand the reason for the additional work on the logs, the boxes should not be reopened and especially not worked on by one person – even if others are in the room. If the “recorder” at the board meetings used a laptop to record decisions into a spreadsheet, it would be easy to read, and easy to duplicate entries that apply to multiple ballots. A print out could take place immediately and would avoid re-opening the box.</p>
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report	N/A

TRACKING POLL WORKER PERFORMANCE

It is important to everyone that what happens at a polling place is tracked and used for evaluating training and procedures. This ensures the best level of customer service. There are several areas that can be tracked: at the polls; depots; EDC supply de-processing; canvass operations; provisional ballots, etc. To form a complete picture of how poll workers perform, data from each of these functions should be compiled. Work on this has begun and we observed inspectors receiving error logs (written by canvass workers in September) at training for the general election. It was a first and they were very appreciative. Hopefully this beginning will be enhanced in the future.

It is also important to track performance in the DIMS system regarding such issues as not showing up, any personnel problems, etc. This information is used to determine who should or should not be rehired in the future – thus avoiding a repeat of personnel problems in the future.

Concerns	It is hoped that what has begun will be expanded and improved with time. Inspectors will not be coming back soon for another training – how will feedback be given to individual inspectors?
Suggestions	Add information that is tracked at various stages of the process and include in an expanded document for poll workers. Mail feedback documents, along with paychecks if possible, or with a letter of thanks and perhaps a survey to get their opinions and ideas.
Outstanding practices	--
Progress on audit report Rec. #15	Although more work remains, there has been progress. Canvass now records errors and these error logs are returned as feedback to inspectors in training classes. This is a good beginning and can be expanded by incorporating information from other processes such as troubleshooter logs.

REMAINING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit recommendations related to what was observed in the November 8, 2005 election are addressed in the body of this report. Those recommendations that relate to legislation are not covered – the Executive response to the audit stated that they would be included in the 2006 legislative package. Recommendation 1 was for a change in the management structure and Recommendation 2 was for a Human Resource assistance and study. We are aware of no additional progress and are unsure of the status in light of bringing in a turnaround team. Recommendation 3 related to broadcasting the business plan – we are aware of no additional progress. Recommendation 4 related to development of a comprehensive disaster plan. There is a good media/communications plan but work is still needed to detail how the electoral process will continue in an emergency situation such as earthquake, etc. The final recommendation 24-2 encouraged use of best practices and this has been noted in several areas observed.

BOTTOMLINE

We observed a good election, conducted under extremely difficult circumstances – multiple facilities, a changing workforce, and intense public scrutiny. The Elections Section has reason to be proud of the progress that has been made and of the people who have contributed to that progress. They have implemented an incredible amount of change while conducting two major elections and at the same time responding to multiple studies of the office.

There is still work to be done. There always is in every election office throughout the country. We believe the Elections Section understands what needs to be done and that they are diligently working to provide an electoral system that restores complete voter confidence.

We believe that the County understands the need to support the electoral process as evidenced by the outstanding sharing of resources and the addition of several new positions. The most critical issue at hand is to now move forward quickly to provide a proper facility that will protect the integrity of the electoral process and serve the citizens of King County for years to come.

The observation team thanks King County Council and REALS for the opportunity to observe and comment on the November 8, 2005 general election.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX ONE

THE ELECTION CENTER OBSERVATION/PROGRESS REPORT ON 2005 GENERAL ELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: The County Executive, in cooperation with the County Council, should strengthen the management structure of elections by elevating the Elections Section to division status with dedicated elections management reporting to the County Administrative Officer/Director of Executive Services. The following chart shows the proposed structure:

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 2: The REALS Director should request the services of the King County Human Resources Department in performing a study of the Elections Section management and supervisory positions, and develop job descriptions and classifications that will attract high-caliber, experienced candidates to fill vacant positions. (Panels consisting of county personnel, election experts both from within Washington and from other public jurisdictions of a similar size could also be asked to screen and interview applicants to help ensure that the most qualified candidates are hired.) Qualified candidates with proven records of stability and long-term commitment to previous employers should be given strong consideration in future hiring decisions.

Observation/Progress Report: None. However, cover letter references continuing gap in ensuring that the elections function is properly staffed, trained, classified and compensated.

Recommendation 3: The Elections Section management should make the business plan visible by broadcasting all elements of the plan widely among the section staff and ensure that all personnel are advised of their roles and responsibilities for achieving business plan goals and objectives.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 4: Elections Section management should assign staff to develop a comprehensive disaster plan to ensure the rapid and complete response and recovery of the county elections operations before, during, or following an emergency or disaster.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 5: A draft event calendar should be completed and circulated at least six months before a primary or general election in the future in accordance with best election practices.

Observation/Progress Report: No apparent progress.

Recommendation 6: The REALS Division Director should ensure that the elections media plan is fully and effectively implemented to facilitate external communications and to help restore public confidence.

Observation/Progress Report: Media plan implemented in primary and refined during General Election. It is being further examined and refined on a continuing basis.

Recommendation 7: The County Council should consider proposing changes to Washington State law that permit candidate filing to begin and end earlier—possibly 60 days prior to Election Day—to allow for more time to mail absentee ballots for primary elections. In addition, the council should consider proposing an earlier date for primary elections, possibly in early June or late May, and allowing more time (up to 28 days) for the canvass.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 8: No recommendation in original audit document.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 9: The Elections Section should implement procedures to ensure that scanning of new voter registration signatures and correction of all voter registration files are completed before each election.

Observation/Progress Report: Signatures were scanned and as much work as possible was done to correct voter registration files before the election.

Recommendation 10: The Elections Section should update its procedures annually, and create detailed procedure manuals for all critical election tasks. Priority in developing new, easy-to-use procedures should be given to those tasks that are generally assigned to temporary employees. In addition, the Elections Section should ensure that all workers have desktop procedures that contain as much detail as necessary so that employees have readily available information.

Observation/Progress Report: Report notes improvements in several areas including procedures and practices for absentees ballot processing, canvass, information technology upgrades/new versions, phone bank, observers, etc., but more procedural refines also noted in several areas.

Recommendation 11: The Elections Section should continue instituting new control procedures for printing ballots on demand, such as using common ballot stock.

Observation/Progress Report: We were able to confirm that Headquarters had made many of the changes as described in the audit report. There is still important work to be done at TEA and MBOS.

Recommendation 12: The County Council should consider proposing language to amend RCW 29A.80.051 so that the rules for electing precinct committee officers are more closely aligned with those used in the State Constitution for election of superior court judges. If a precinct committee officer candidate files and is unopposed in the primary election, they should be declared the winner without qualifiers (i.e., margin of victory). This will allow precinct committee officer candidates to experience the election rituals of filing for candidacy without unnecessarily adding complexity to the ballot.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 13: The Elections Section should consolidate and locate the entire phone bank in a single area with proximity to other voter services as well as provide sufficient phone lines and space for phone bank staff and supervisors. (Also see related procedural and training recommendations under Recommendation 14.)

Observation/Progress Report: None. However, report noted that consolidating the phone bank and providing sufficient space is dependent upon obtaining a new and larger facility.

Recommendation 14: The Elections Section should continue providing opportunities for hands-on training, role-playing, visualization of new procedures, and questions and answer sessions in the future. In addition, the Elections Section should update its detailed procedure manual annually in the future and distribute it to all poll workers.

Observation/Progress Report: Poll worker training met the audit recommendation. The manual was completely updated between elections.

Recommendation 15: The Elections Section should establish a poll worker performance tracking and evaluation program that can be used to improve poll worker performance through effective coaching, counseling and training. The DIMS poll worker module should be used to facilitate tracking of poll workers and issues so that follow-up actions are appropriately focused.

Observation/Progress Report: Although more work remains, there has been progress. Canvass now records errors and these error logs are returned as feedback to inspectors in training classes. This is a good beginning and can be expanded by incorporating information from other process such as troubleshooter logs.

Recommendation 16: The Elections Section should continue to expand its efforts to recruit sufficient bilingual poll workers in compliance with Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

Observation/Progress Report: They met the recommendation regarding bilingual poll workers.

Recommendation 17: The Elections Section should secure available funding from the Secretary of State's Office to retain a planner to complete a report documenting the accessibility status of its polling sites and to develop recommendations for improvement. Priority should be given to improving or moving poll sites, based on the report recommendations immediately after the 2005 general election to comply with federal accessibility mandates by 2006. The planner should develop an effective notification process and materials for voters to ensure that they know what accessibility improvements to expect or where the alternate accessible poll sites are located well in advance of the spring 2006 elections.

Observation/Progress Report: They have begun moving inaccessible polls. They have begun process to receive funds and hire an analyst to assist in meeting goals.

Recommendation 18: The County Council should consider proposing amendments to state statutes to allow final processing of absentee ballots one week prior to an election, but not releasing the official results until the poll ballots are counted on election night. Alternatively, the Elections Section should explore the cost and benefits of purchasing new tabulators to expedite the ballot count process.

Observation/Progress Report: None, but report noted that legislative change would be included in the county's 2006 legislative agenda.

Recommendation 19: The Elections Section should ensure newly developed procedures are effective through their practical application during the 2005 election.

Observation/Progress Report: This has been accomplished.

Recommendation 20: Elections Section management and the major King County political parties should continue to meet before future elections to discuss the specific election activities to be observed. The parties should be provided complete information on new developments, and any procedural changes for public observers, immediately prior to all future elections.

Observation/Progress Report: Communication with the parties regarding observation appears sufficient. Observers were informed of new procedures and important issues.

Recommendation 21-1: King County should acquire or lease a consolidated elections facility. The facilities should preferably accommodate a warehouse, the mail processing functions and elections administration. The county should discontinue the use of the current mail ballot operation satellite facility as soon as practical, and relocate the existing operations to a consolidated facility. If a consolidated facility is not available, a new facility should be leased to accommodate the space and security needs of the current functions conducted at the mail ballot operation satellite.

Observation/Progress Report: We are not aware of any progress toward consolidated facility.

Recommendation 21-2: The Elections Section should implement the following security upgrades, and develop appropriate procedures as soon as possible:

- Uniformed security personnel should be present 24-hours per day, seven-days per week from the time un-voted ballots are delivered to elections facilities until completion of the canvass and certification of the election or until security is improved.
- Election facilities should be locked at all times when either voted or un-voted ballots are present. The security company should be contacted in order to disable the alarms.
- Entry to an elections facility should be limited to those holding electronic keys. Identification, such as a card key, should be required for entry.
- The caged areas and information technology areas should be electronically secured. Cages should extend all the way from the floor to the ceiling, and the ceiling should be wired. Motion detectors should be installed to monitor the perimeter of caged areas. Unauthorized access to the cage should trigger an alarm. Electronic and video records should be maintained to document who has entered the caged area.
- Video cameras should also be placed in such a way that all elections activity is video taped. No ballots or sensitive materials should be processed or taken beyond the view of a video camera unless they are otherwise secured.
- Security should be assessed at all existing facilities and for any newly acquired facilities. These assessments should be conducted by a certified professional specializing in facility security.

Observation/Progress Report: Electronic keying installed in new cage in TEA where canvass take place; new camera installed at MBOS aimed at cage; uniformed security personnel present 24/7; and cages at MBOS extended to ceiling, and windows and vents secured.

Recommendation 22: The Elections Section should develop DIMS Net system control procedures to ensure that requests for new software applications and modifications are compatible with the DIMS Net data exchange software. The Elections Section should also develop policies and procedures to assure that software modifications incorporated within each version upgrade are analyzed and tested, allowing for possible changes in procedures or training prior to deployment to the county's live voter registration systems.

Observation/Progress Report: There is a new Information Technology Manager. Staff is becoming more knowledgeable of DIMS and GEMS. There are greater controls over requests for software applications and modifications. Policies are being set in place requiring version upgrade analysis and testing prior to deployment.

Recommendation 23: The Elections Section should develop a strategic information technology plan to leverage its DIMS Net and other new technologies to support future election initiatives such as vote-by-mail and regional voting centers.

Observation/Progress Report: We do not know if there has been any progress in developing a strategic information technology plan—this was not scheduled until 2006 and was not directly related to the [2005] election.

Recommendation 24-1: The County Council should pursue a study exploring the programmatic and financial advantages and disadvantages of three election alternatives: exclusive voting by mail; a combination of voting by mail with regional voting centers; and maintaining the status quo. The study should include information from other large jurisdictions including the practical costs and benefits of voting by mail and the security issues involved. The County Council should consider establishing a target date in early 2007 to allow sufficient time for the development and preparation of the study, as well as executive, legislative and public review of the study, prior to making a decision on a vote-by-mail policy. The council should also pursue state legislative amendments to permit early processing and/or tabulating of mail ballots prior to Election Day.

Observation/Progress Report: None.

Recommendation 24-2: The Elections Section should evaluate implementing additional professional practices, consistent with those in Appendix 4. This should occur after filling and assessing the impact of the 14 new management and staff positions recently authorized by the County Council.

Observation/Progress Report: None. However, the report indicates that the Elections Section adopted numerous new best practices, including 11 outstanding practices, in the areas reviewed during the elections operations audit.

APPENDIX TWO

DEFINITIONS

AccuVote	Device used at the polling place. The voter places their ballot in this device and the votes are counted at the polling place. It accumulates votes on a memory card.
Ask Ed	A hand held device, similar to a palm pilot that contains a variety of information useful to poll workers and those on the phone. It contains the precinct number and polling place of all voters.
CEOC	Citizens Election Oversight Committee – formed by King County Council.
Diebold	The company that supplies DIMS, AccuVote equipment and GEMS. They also print ballots and mail bulk absentee ballots.
DIMS	Data Information Management Systems which is part of Diebold. This is the voter registration/election management software – not including ballot tabulation.
EDC	Election Distribution Center – warehouse facility for the election office. AccuVotes are stored and tested here as well as all supplies.
GEMS	Global Election Management Systems – This is the ballot set up and tabulation software provided by Diebold.
HAVA	Help America Vote Act
Headquarters	The Elections Staff facility at the County Administration Building.
IT	Information Technology
L & A	Logic and Accuracy tests required by the state on ballot counting systems and equipment.
MBOS	Mail ballot operations satellite – former site of mail ballot processing and tabulation. Now used for tabulation only.
PIO	Public information officer
PSA	Public service announcement
PSI	Vendor that sorts absentee ballots, both outgoing and incoming.
REALS	The Elections Section is a part of this department – Records, Election Administration and Licensing services/
TEA	Temporary election annex – new to this election, this facility is near the airport and was used for 2004/5 recounts. Several operations moved to this site for the general election including: mail ballot processing; poll worker training; canvass; and help desk.

APPENDIX THREE

OBSERVATION TEAM

DWIGHT BEATTIE

Dwight Beattie was assistant director of elections for Sacramento County for 13 years, assistant director for Santa Clara County for 2 years and the director of elections for Santa Clara County for 5 years. There were nearly 600,000 registered voters in Sacramento and just under 800,000 registered voters in Santa Clara County. He has 27 years experience in administering elections. Since retirement in 2001, he has consulted for the California Secretary of State and with counties. He consulted with San Francisco and Stanislaus counties which had had major problems, and with Sacramento, Santa Clara, Nevada and Solano counties.

INGRID GONZALES (LEAD)

Ingrid Gonzales was employed as a county election official from 1980 through July of 2002 - approximately 22 years. From 1980 to 1994 she was employed by San Diego County (1.3 million registered voters) as: Division Chief of Computer Services and Operations Support; and promoted to Assistant Registrar of Voters in 1989. From 1994 until July of 2002 she served as the Registrar of Voters for San Bernardino County (700,000 registered voters). Following retirement from San Bernardino, Ms. Gonzales contracts with: the California Secretary of State's office; Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, County Clerk; Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; and the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES). Projects included: providing assistance to other counties; training on new voting systems; development of a blueprint for the leadership training academy for California election officials; assisting in the establishment and documentation of a student and county employee poll worker program; development of a user friendly candidate handbook; and observation of elections in other jurisdictions with recommendations for the future. Outside of county government, Ms. Gonzales served as Chair of the Certification Board for The Election Center in providing a nationwide certification program. Ms. Gonzales was a founder of the California Summer Institute training program at Stanford where she also participated as a trainer. She has 20 years of speaking and training experience.

CONNIE SCHMIDT

Connie Schmidt served as Election Commissioner for Johnson County, Kansas for over 9 years. Her retirement in December 2004 followed a career totaling over 31 years of service to local and county government in the State of Kansas. Johnson County is located in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area, and is the largest county in Kansas, with a total of over 340,000 registered voters.

Since retirement she has continued to coordinate the election administrator certification program (CERA) for The Election Center and serves as a member of the NASED Voting Systems Standards Board. She has been a guest speaker at numerous state election conferences, including Missouri, Colorado, California, Ohio, Virginia, Wyoming and New York, and continues to serve as an instructor for The Election Center's state certification programs. She has recently been retained to assist in an on-site Business Process Review of Montgomery County, Maryland Local Board of Elections.

APPENDIX FOUR

PRE-ELECTION

OBSERVATION POINTS

The following pages reflect the observation assignments for The Election Center Team.

(* B=Dwight Beattie; G = Ingrid Gonzales; S = Connie Schmidt)

LOCATION	TASK	EST. DATE	OBSERVER(S) (*)
HDQTRS	Calendar meeting	If possible	B & G
	Review media plan	10/26	G
	Review web site and automated phone system	10/26	G
	Check on military mailing dates	10/26	G
	Voter registration, eligibility, dups, scanning	10/24-26	B & G
	Exception notification/resolution	10/25-26	B
	Av applications-phone, e-mail, letter, in-person	10/24-25	G
	Ballot on demand	10/24-25	G
	Phone bank training Phone bank operation	Too late 10/25 & 11/3	B & G
	Observer meeting/training		
MBOS	Logic & Accuracy	11/3	S & G
	Signature verification	10/25	
	Exception processing	10/25 & 11/3	
	Opening	11/3	
	Ballot on demand	10/26	G
	Inserting absentee ballots	10/26	G
	Train ballot counters	11/3	S & G
EDC	Prep and test Accuvotes	10/25	B
	Supply and AccuVote delivery	11/5-6	S & G
	Troubleshooter training & supplies	11/5	S & G

PSI	Follow AV ballots from post office to PSI and on to MBOS.	10/26	B & G
??	Canvass board	??	G
Other	Poll worker training (review manuals & supplies)	10/25 11/5	B & G S

SECURITY – FACILITIES

OBSERVATION POINTS

Observed by: Connie Schmidt and Dwight Beattie
Dates: To be combined with observation of specific tasks.

LOCATION	TASK
HDQTRS	Security of ballots (BOD)
	Entry to office
	Control of ballot counting facility
	Building security
	Space layout of tasks
	Crowd control
MBOS	Security of ballots (BOD)
	Security of absentee ballots
	Space layout of tasks
	Entry to workplace
	Building security
	Control of ballot counting facility
	Parking issues
	Crowd control
EDC	Security of ballots (Polls)
	Entry to facility
	Building security
	Space layout of tasks
	Crowd control
	Parking issues

OBSERVERS

OBSERVATION POINTS

(* All observer observation will be done by Ingrid Gonzales)

LOCATION	TASK	EST. DATE	OBSERVER(S) (*)
HDQTRS	Observer training (handouts)	If possible	
	Ballot counting	11/8	
	Provisionals	11/9-10	
MBOS	Sig verification	10/25 & 11/9-10	
	Opening	10/25 & 11/9-10	
	Duplication	11/9-10	
	Ballot counting	11/8 - 10	
EDC	AccuVote testing	10/25	
	Canvass operations	11/9-10	
	Emptying of AccuVote bins	11/9-10	
SEATTLE DEPOT	Receipt memory cards & supplies	11/8	
COUNTY DEPOTS	Receipt memory cards & supplies and upload of memory cards	11/8	

ELECTION DAY/NIGHT

OBSERVATION POINTS

(* B=Dwight Beattie; G = Ingrid Gonzales; S = Connie Schmidt)

LOCATION	TASK	DAY –8 pm NIGHT	OBSERVER(S) (*)
HDQTRS	Public phone bank	D	B
	Phone bank for poll workers	D	B
	Election results – web, in-person	N	B
	Supply receipt (City of Seattle)	N	B
	Upload Av count	D	S & B
	Polls count	N	S & B
MBOS	Count of AV & transfer to HDQTRS	D	S & G
EDC	Troubleshooter phone bank	D	S & G
	Follow troubleshooter	D	S & G
	Supply receipt (county)	N	G
REMOTE SITES	Receipt of supplies and memory cards	N	S & G
	Upload of memory cards	N	S & G
	Transfer of supplies and cards to EDC	N	S & G
POLLING PLACES	Determine # (8-10) to be visited – select accessible, non accessible, Chinese required (including opening and closing)	D & N	S,B,G

POST ELECTION

OBSERVATION POINTS

(* B=Dwight Beattie; G = Ingrid Gonzales; S = Connie Schmidt)

Dates – all observation will take place on 11/9-10. Tasks to be divided as workflow develop.

LOCATION	TASK	OBSERVER(S) (*)
HDQTRS	Provisionals	G & B
	Tracking poll worker performance	S
	Unused ballot stock (BOD)	
	Canvass board	G & B
MBOS	Ballot duplication	B
	Unused ballot stock (AV & BOD)	B
	Voted ballot reconciliation	B
	Processing AV's from polls	B
	Checking poll books /double voting	B
	Add on counts	B
	(write-ins if applicable)	B
	Ballot storage/retention (if possible)	B & G
EDC	Deprocessing supplies	S & G
	Sort of red bags	G
	Wanding	G
	Poll book reconciliation	G
	Unused ballot stock	G
	Ballot storage/retention procedures	S & G
	AccuVote bin inspection	S & G
	Ballot duplication	G
	(write-ins if applicable)	G
OTHER	Recount (if applicable)	G

APPENDIX FIVE

THE ELECTION CENTER OBSERVATION FORM

PRE

Observer _____ Date _____
Location _____
Arrival time _____ Depart time _____
Task _____

1. Who was observed (perm. or temp) – name if necessary

2. Describe activity observed

3. Describe concerns/problems (cite code if applicable)

4. Are there any contributing factors or performance barriers?

5. Suggestions/recommendations/best practices

6. Describe procedures provided/available for this task – were there desktop procedures for temporary employees?

7. Did you observe anything positive that stood out?

8. How would you rate the performance of this task? (circle one)

Very good good adequate bad very bad

9. The following was included in the Audit report as a finding or part of appendix 1.

(include referenced data)

Has there been progress or were past problems addressed? Describe:

THE ELECTION CENTER OBSERVATION FORM

ELECTION DAY/NIGHT

Observer _____ Date _____

Location _____

Arrival time _____ Depart time _____

Task _____

1. Who was observed (perm. or temp) – name if necessary

2. Describe activity observed

3. Describe concerns/problems (cite code if applicable)

4. Are there any contributing factors or performance barriers?

5. Suggestions/recommendations/best practices

6. Describe procedures provided/available for this task – were there desktop procedures for temporary employees?

7. Did you observe anything positive that stood out?

8. How would you rate the performance of this task? (circle one)

Very good good adequate bad very bad

9. The following was included in the Audit report as a finding or part of appendix 1.

(include referenced data)

Has there been progress or were past problems addressed? Describe:

THE ELECTION CENTER OBSERVATION FORM

POST

Observer _____ Date _____
Location _____
Arrival time _____ Depart time _____
Task _____

1. Who was observed (perm. or temp) – name if necessary

2. Describe activity observed

3. Describe concerns/problems (cite code if applicable)

4. Are there any contributing factors or performance barriers?

5. Suggestions/recommendations/best practices

SECURITY - FACILITIES

OBSERVATION FORMS

(Observed by: Dwight Beattie and Connie Schmidt)

Location observed: MBOS____; EDC____; Headquarters____ Date observed:_____ Time of arrival_____ departure_____
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Using Recommendation 21-2 of Audit Report, determine if any progress has been made or if any new problems/concerns have developed

1. Uniformed security personnel should be present 24-hours per day, seven-days per week from the time un-voted ballots are delivered to elections facilities until completion of the canvass and certification of the election or until security is improved.

Progress:_____

New:_____

2. Election facilities should be locked at all times when either voted or un-voted ballots are present. The security company should be contacted in order to disable the alarms.

Progress:_____

New_____

3. Entry to an elections facility should be limited to those holding electronic keys. Identification, such as a card key, should be required for entry.

Progress: _____

New _____

4. The caged areas and information technology areas should be electronically secured. Cages should extend all the way from the floor to the ceiling, and the ceiling should be wired. Motion detectors should be installed to monitor the perimeter of caged areas. Unauthorized access to the cage should trigger an alarm. Electronic and video records should be maintained to document who has entered the caged area.

Progress: _____

New: _____

5. Video cameras should also be placed in such a way that all elections activity is video taped. No ballots or sensitive materials should be processed or taken beyond the view of a video camera unless they are otherwise secured.

Progress: _____

New: _____

OVERALL:

Describe any instances where security was lacking (cite election code if applicable).

Were there any performance barriers?

Describe any instances where multiple facilities hampered the process.

Do you have any recommendations/ best practices for improvement?
