



**MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK**

**INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS**

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**Unified Monitoring Report to the Center for Democracy (CFD)**

**International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) Team Members**

**Miami-Dade County, Florida**

**4-6 November 2002**

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**Summary statement**

Under contract from the County of Miami-Dade, the Center for Democracy (CFD) fielded 16 election monitors, which included technical specialists from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), to observe the November 5 general election. Without question, the monitors observed one of the well-managed elections in the United States. The polls opened on time, the equipment worked, the poll workers were well trained. Every person was allowed to vote and have his or her vote counted. The reason for the phenomenal turn around from the September 10 Primary was the cooperation of Miami Dade County, the Elections Department, and civil and community leaders.

The CFD-IFES teams visited 141 precincts that represented all demographic groups throughout the County and took steps to cover precincts that had experienced problems during the September 10 primaries, as well as those which were the subject of complaints to the Center and the County on Election Day. The teams talked to precinct clerks, county employees and election

staff. The teams observed how the public was served, if there were operational difficulties, how the equipment functioned, the time it took to vote, how questions/issues were managed, and the knowledge the poll workers had of the duties they were assigned. At each polling place they visited, the teams had also the opportunity to talk to voters to inquire about voter confidence and satisfaction.

The statement issued by the Center for Democracy on November 6 summarizes the general findings of the monitoring mission. Specifically:

- Improved poll worker training combined with the support of county personnel with the requisite technical skills greatly enhanced the performance of the precinct election boards.
- The provision of sample ballots helped a majority of voters better understand their choices on Election Day and facilitated the voting process at polling places.
- Absentee and advance voting appeared to alleviate congestion in the polling sites on Election Day.
- The decision to set up the iVotronics machines and prepare the polling places the day before elections was essential to the timely opening of the polls on November 5.
- These and other tangible steps to improve the election process were noted by voters and apparently contributed to relatively high turnout and levels of confidence that everyone's vote would be counted.

Election Day proved largely uneventful. It did not observe any major problems that might have undermined public confidence or called into question the legitimacy of the election results or the professionalism of the precinct election boards. The Special Election Task Force, County Government, Elections Board, Miami-Dade Police Department, poll workers, Election Reform Coalition, and voters should be commended for their combined contribution to a successful election. The massive and coordinated effort mounted after the September 10 primaries yielded the intended results on Election Day. The challenge now is how to smoothly transition into a situation whereby the Supervisor of Elections office is primarily responsible for the conduct of elections and how to reduce inputs while sustaining flaw-free elections in Miami-Dade County.

Our analysis is professional, direct, and thorough, and our criticism and recommendations constructive. We have divided this report into various categories to adequately address the important issues of the election and the important issues facing Miami-Dade County in future elections.

## **Observation, Monitoring and Post-Election Issues**

### **Polling Site Advance Preparation**

The procedures used to have the voting equipment operational for Election Day were nothing short of extraordinary. Beginning at 4:00 pm on November 4, the day before the election, designated polling place workers were assigned to load and set up the voting equipment at each of the 553 polling locations in Miami-Dade County. These personnel included:

- Clerk (Election Authority)
- Assistant Clerk (Election Authority)
- Quality Assurance Manager-QAM (county)
- Technical Support Specialist-TSS (county)
- Verification Specialist-VS (county)
- Uniformed Police Officer (police department)

Working at the direction of the Police department, Supervisor of Elections and County Manager, polling place workers were tasked with getting the room, equipment and materials operational and ready for the November 5 official opening of the polls for voters. The uniform police officer did not assist but provided security, not only during the advance preparation the day before the election, but they stayed overnight in the polling place room to secure everything until they left when the poll officially opened at 7:00 am on election day.

CFD had teams at eight polling stations throughout the county to monitor the advance preparation process. They witnessed the procedures used to set up the polling stations. While most polling stations took an average of 4-5 hours to set up, CFD did witness one polling place (#562) which was not operational until 11:45 pm, nearly 8 hours after beginning the advance preparation procedures.

Some of the problems encountered during the advance preparation process included:

- Compared to the normal amount of time most polling stations in the United States take to set up equipment and documents for opening, the time needed to accomplish the advance preparation was extremely high. Most of this was due to the fact that the ES&S iVotronic devices each took from 8-70 minutes to activate—and that they had to be activated separately and sequentially. The county-wide person-hours required for such preparation was astronomical.
- Disagreements between county employees and the Clerk over how to organize the room, where to put the voting devices and inspector tables, and who made the final decisions.
- While the Clerks were technically in charge (and most had years of experience in the position), in the end, the Quality Assurance Managers asserted themselves to insure that the written procedures established for the advance preparation were followed.

- While most polling places followed the tasks outlined on the “Before the Polls Open Checklist”, some polling places did not. At one polling site (363/374) the ballot box for provisional ballots was not sealed, the stub envelope not taped to the ballot box, nor the ballot box seal recorded on Certificate #1.
- In one polling station, the Clerk arrived considerably late (5:30 pm), holding up the process; in another, the Clerk left unexpectedly and other workers had to wait until she returned to continue the set up process.
- County-City communication problems: In polling station 363/374, the local community center, operated by the City of Hialeah, had possession of the equipment and election materials. The City refused to release it to the poll workers because they were not informed that the polling station was to be set up the day before. It took the intervention of county officials to finally get the materials released at 5:30 pm.
- Some polling places had booting up problems, which caused delays. Most poll workers (and specialists) were under the impression that the ADA machines were to take 35 minutes to boot up and the regular booths 5-6 minutes, the reality was that ADA machines took 65-70 minutes and regular devices took about 6-10 minutes. One polling place with 18 machines (2 ADA, 15 regular and one demonstration) needed 4 1/2 hours just to boot up the iVotronics.
- In many polling stations with two precincts, there was not adequate signage provided to direct voters to the right line or table.
- Polling place workers had minor problems with the some materials: broken seals, malfunctioning flashcards, and inoperable voting machines.
- In several polling places we observed, initial calls to the troubleshooting hotlines went unanswered or were busy. It took some poll workers over one hour to finally make contact with a real person who could offer assistance.
- Voters showed up at polling places before the election, with the belief that they could vote early at their own polling station (in one location 50 people showed up).

While many of these issues can be addressed with better logistical planning for this type of advance preparation, in our section on Voting Equipment issues we address this issue in more detail and present options to eliminate the setting up of polling stations the day before the election.

## **Recruitment and Training**

The following comments are based on Election Day observations, input from poll workers, and a review of written training and reference materials.

Significant deficiencies were identified in poll worker training efforts prior to the 10 September 2002 primaries. It may be a misnomer to use the term training in this case. Poll workers were provided with nominal written guidelines and were sent home to study certain passages deemed to be of particular importance. They were, in affect, assigned homework, rather than being provided with professional training opportunities that were interactive and “hands-on” or that served to build poll workers’ confidence. Such an approach was essential given procedural innovations and the introduction of new election technologies.

Following the debacle on 10 September, significant effort and resources were poured into recruiting and training poll workers for the general election. This function was assumed by the Miami-Dade police department and nearly the entire county government and was realized within an extremely limited timeframe. The Assistant Supervisor of Elections did, however, contribute to the development of a polling place procedures manual during a drafting marathon that lasted 38 hours.

By and large, poll workers interviewed were quite satisfied with the training that they received in the weeks prior to the general elections. In particular, they noted that:

- Written materials were vastly improved relative to those provided for the primaries. In addition to the polling place procedures manuals, reference and training manuals were targeted to each job function on the precinct election boards.
- The emphasis shifted away from independent study and toward training sessions presented and facilitated by training professionals. The number of training hours per job function increased significantly.
- Poll workers had more opportunities to ask questions and gain “hands-on” experience with the iVotronics equipment.

In addition, the support of thousands of county workers brought a degree of technical expertise and professionalism to precinct election boards that was previously missing.

Poll workers we interviewed offered a variety of recommendations:

- The size of training groups should be smaller.
- Training should be offered more routinely and not just at the time of elections.
- Training sessions should not be so concentrated, for example four hours over two days rather than eight hours in one day.

- Training sessions and reference materials should be offered in the same languages as the ballot.<sup>1</sup>
- More opportunities should be provided for “hands-on” time with the iVotronics equipment and for question and answer sessions.
- Confidence and morale-boosting efforts should be built into the training program.
- As noted elsewhere in this report, some counties use mock-elections not only as a means of conducting voter education but also poll worker training. Beyond the immediate value of the simulation, trainers can identify issues that need to be highlighted during “refresher” training sessions. This approach might be considered by Miami-Dade.
- The manuals could be made more user-friendly (more on this below).

With respect to the manuals, poll workers were happy to have more rather than less information (comparing what was provided prior to the 10 September primaries and the 5 November general elections). At the same time, they found the presentation, at times, to be rather dense and not always clearly organized. On Election Day, many had difficulty quickly locating the information that they needed. Further refinements might help:

- Improved layout would greatly enhance the readability of the manuals.
- Visual aids should be included to illustrate the points being made in writing. To the greatest extent possible, these should be specific to the text, rather than generalized clip-art.
- Information on any given issue should be consolidated in one section so that poll workers do not have to refer to several different sections to get the “whole picture.”
- Sample forms should definitely be included, but only once the manual has explained what the form is, under what circumstances it is used, and who is responsible for completing it. If the forms are color-coded, the sample forms should be also.
- Checklists need to be reviewed to ensure that they are comprehensive and straightforward. For example, some items were left off the closing checklist, resulting in confusion over who was responsible for delivering the secrecy screen for provisional balloting and the ballot box to the collection center. Checklists might also be organized according to job title so that poll workers could more readily determine what they had to do once the polls closed.

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<sup>1</sup> Even though poll workers are required to speak and write English, for many this is not their native language, which may mean lower comprehension skills. Some language-based problems during the training sessions were noted.

- If certain tasks must be completed in sequential order, this must be clearly delineated for poll workers.
- Keep elderly poll workers in mind when selecting a font style and size.
- Some sort of quick-reference guide should be prepared to help poll workers deal with a range of situations that might arise in the precinct on Election Day.
- The polling place procedures manual prepared by the Florida Department of State Division of Elections should be used as a reference in preparing county specific procedures manuals. The utility of providing it on top of the training, procedures, and reference guides prepared by the county is questionable.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Elections Department at this point in time is the sustainability of the recruitment and training effort:

- The Miami-Dade Police Department needs share all possible information and resources used for recruiting poll workers and developing and implementing the training program with the Elections Department.
- The Elections Department needs to maintain an active list of professional trainers within county government who could be accessed for the development of training materials, design of a training curriculum, and conduct of training sessions.
- The participation of county workers was essential to meet the increasingly technical requirements and complex tasks of election administration at the precinct level. It would be ideal if the county triangle of the QAM, TS, and VS could be maintained in the future. If it is not feasible to second these workers for future elections, every effort must be made to recruit them as volunteers. Data on county workers who served as poll workers for this election should be incorporated into the Election Department's database.
- In general, recruiting efforts will need to be more focused on finding potential poll workers with the necessary technical expertise to administer modern elections. Differentiated skill sets should be identified for the different positions within the precinct election boards and recruitment efforts targeted appropriately.
- Efforts to recruit high school seniors to work in the polls should be enhanced. This generation is familiar with technology and does have something to contribute to election administration at the precinct level. This model has been successfully used in other jurisdictions.
- Consideration might also be given to closing schools on Election Day, as is done in the state of Maryland. This would open up a new pool of potential poll workers, i.e. teachers, as well as provide more and, perhaps, better polling site locations.

- The Elections Board might also explore the possibility of introducing a professional training and certification program for poll workers in conjunction with an area university. Certification programs do require more of a time commitment on the part of poll workers. However, courses can be offered routinely. If successful, such programs can create a stable nucleus of election professionals that can be relied upon from election to election.

## **Polling Site Issues**

*Location and management.* Most places observed were at ground level, with parking availability, and mostly disabled accessible. In general, space was ample with wide entrances and easily to handle doors. Two persistent issues undermined these positives: a) locating the polling place inside a school that is holding classes, and b) conflict between the site managers and the County Elections Department.

a) The presence of students, teachers and parents, unnecessarily augmented the flow of people in the voting area. Often the lines were cut through by passer-byes and during class changes the level of noise increased significantly (#784). Although no one complained about this issue, it was clear that voters and school users at times competed for the space. We were informed that Miami-Dade County had closed its schools November 1 for some kind of teacher training or retreat. It would have been logical for the County to have coordinated this event with the Elections Department, so the schools could have been dedicated solely to the elections. Future elections should coordinate County-wide teacher events with elections to minimize the presence of those not involved in the elections at schools.

b) Some schools, mostly primary schools, did not want polling places on their grounds. These schools had a difficult time dealing with the safety of young students and the large number of outsiders visiting the premises. This was made evident when a primary school teacher, fearing a driving accident, blocked the parking lot to voters at the end of the school day with her car. This action generated serious conflict between the school and campaign workers. The police had to be called to solve this conflict. The poll place remained open, and poll workers were not aware of the incident until it was resolved. (#740)

Two other polling places had disagreements with the site management, and both were managed by the City of Hialeah. The afternoon of Monday, November 4, when poll workers arrived at the youth center (double precinct #364/374) to prepare the polling place for Election Day, they encountered resistance. The center was still in operation, and the equipment that had been delivered earlier was locked away. The center staff had not been notified of the early set-up and refused to cooperate. It took several hours of higher level negotiation between the Elections Department and city officials for the poll workers to be able to prepare the room. It should also be noted that at this place the precinct clerk abandoned the site and needed to be located at her home after the situation was solved.

At another location (#359), the city of Hialeah assigned a very small room as the polling place -- this information was provided by the clerk. To get to the polling place, voters had to walk through a very large, empty hall. Why the City limited the polling place to the small room was



not made clear. The space was so ill-suited for the 19 voting booths and voter registry tables that disabled voters using a wheel chair were forced to vote at the verification specialist's table. In addition, due to the space constraints, poll workers and the voting public were so intermingled that it was difficult to easily recognize who was who. Due to the confines of the site the integrity of the process was compromised. Communications among the different county departments seemed open and unimpaired; this example needs to include the county's different municipal governments and their components.

*Other location issues:* In two primary schools, the poll place was located well inside the school grounds and far away from the public entrance; a classroom (#740) and the school library (#360). This isolated the voters from the campaigning outside and even from some significant problems [see *b*) above], but the actual voting location was not evident and required that the voter paid close attention as they zigzagged through the school property.

At least in one school location, after the school closed, air conditioning services were cut off and by evening the polling place's temperature was very uncomfortable (#422).

One of the most enigmatic polling place observed, where 75% of the voters were 65 or older, served two precincts (#348/356). Although this polling place was meant to serve an elderly population, it was not well suited for the elderly or disabled. The polling place was well-signed, no curb by the entrance, doors that could be operated mechanically, with the voting booths immediately at the entrance. In spite the apparent accessibility, all the amenities and helpful staff, the place was not very user-friendly. The place was located in the lobby of a community center; a space so small (16" X 20") that half of its staff of ten spent most of their time in the adjoining room, a theatre. The space was so crowded with the voter registry table, voting booths, lobby and place furniture, that it made it difficult for several voters to be in the polling place at the same time. It was particularly difficult for those using a wheelchair or a walker. Luckily, the place only served about 500 voters.

One of the most ill-suited places we visited was #441. It must be pointed out that the poll workers were competent and that criticism is directed at the physical limitations of the locale. This precinct is located on the second floor of an old shopping mall with little parking, above the campaign headquarters one of the candidate, and no signs or Deputy Sheriff directing voters in need towards the elevator. The elevator was neither near the entrance of the polling place nor readily visible; to use the elevator also meant to overcome a curb and navigate long narrow halls. How to get to the polling place was supposed to be evident. Once in the polling place, the location was a windowless, very small banquet hall with poll workers, waiting lines and voters crossing each other's paths constantly. Lighting was artificial. A section of the polling place that appeared to be a small dance area was lit with color spot lights; thankfully the small disco ball above it was not functioning. The space was very cramped and a mirrored wall reflected the open side of the voting booths. Although the campaign headquarters of the candidate was well inside the 50-foot no-campaigning zone, it was argued that this did not apply because of the two-story situation.

The Elections Department would be well advised to undertake an audit of locations currently being used for polling sites:

- Some of these locations are not adequately accessible for elderly voters and voters with disabilities.
- Some spaces are too small and or awkward to accommodate poll workers, voters, and the iVotronics equipment, which contributes to congestion in the polling, site and undermines the efficiency with which voters can be processed.
- Most precinct clerks are well aware of whether or not their polling site location meets the needs of the precinct election board and the voters. Their input should be sought when assessing whether or not a certain location is adequate. In some cases, clerks are also aware of other facilities in their communities that might provide more suitable space.
- Consideration might also be given to closing schools on Election Day, as is done in the state of Maryland. This would provide more and, perhaps, better polling site locations as well as opening up a new pool of potential poll workers, i.e. teachers.
- In addition, persons in charge of facilities where polling sites will be located need to be fully informed about when election materials and voting machines will be delivered, how they should be stored, and when and to whom they should be released as well as any special arrangements that need to be made to clear the facility of people and/or excess furniture, particularly if this is going to result in an interruption of services provided by the facility. These persons should also be provided with basic information about the elections, including contact sheets with addresses and phone numbers so that they can respond to voters who come the facility prior to Election Day with inquiries.

Although the places had many positives, the design of some polling places we visited made crowd management a full-time task rather than a natural flow. Efficient polling place set-up options should be included in the precinct clerk's training.

Use of space was not optimal at all polling places. At some, booth and voter registry tables were placed often in such manner that they occupied more space than necessary or made the remaining space awkward. Most of the time voters had to pass the booths to sign the registry and then walk forward through the registry lines to reach the booths. Where booths and the voter registry tables were parallel, often the registration lines backed into the polling booths and the to-vote lines into the voter registration tables.

*Signage.* Many polling places we visited did not have adequate signs to point to or show the best entrance to the polling places. Just locating the address from a car would not guarantee that the location was indeed a polling place. Often, our teams had to drive into a parking lot or back of a building to locate the entrance of the polling station.

Signs for disabled voters indicating them where to go were either missing or not easily observed. Many signs that provided important information to the voter were placed away from voting lines. The 50-foot campaign-free line was inadequately marked; a rock, a bush or other existing object approximately marked the 50 feet. At times it was not clear where the 50-foot no-campaigning

zone ended. This distance does not appear to be sufficient; candidate/political party volunteers and materials very visible from polling places and the campaigning felt too close. The Elections Department and County Government should lobby for a change to at least 100 feet. The situation of precinct #441 where polling places and campaign sites are co-located should not be permitted for future elections.

*Positive poll worker attitude.* **We do want to make note that at all polling places we visited, poll workers were at all times helpful to all voters.** Two polling places were particularly noteworthy, #309 and #360. These places had fully engaged precinct clerks who ran service-oriented operations. As we recommended in our pre-election report, we strongly urge the County of Miami-Dade to recognize these 10,000 champions of democracy in public ceremony to give them the recognition they truly deserve.

## **Disability Issues**

The Miami-Dade elections board made clear advances in addressing the needs of voters with disabilities. For example:

- Nearly all polling places were accessible;
- The iVotronics equipment provides greater opportunity for independent voting by blind citizens and for curbside or lap- or table-top voting for individuals with physical disabilities; and
- Outreach efforts were made to educate voters with disabilities on the use of the new equipment.

However, these efforts fell short of ensuring individuals with disabilities equal access to the election process.

*Physical Accessibility:* Citizens with disabilities must have an opportunity to vote in public at all polling stations.<sup>2</sup> All polling stations should use as their main entrance one which is fully accessible to voters with disabilities. In too many instances, voters with mobility problems were required to navigate steps, or wheel or walk additional distances to reach an accessible entrance. Furthermore, the signs at the polling station did not adequately or precisely direct voters to the alternate accessible entrance.

It is recommended that the election authorities work collaboratively with disability organizations, such as the Center for Independent Living of Miami-Dade, to ensure that polling stations for future elections use main entrances that are fully architecturally accessible.

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<sup>2</sup> District 2, Precinct 245. Bible Baptist Church, 9801 NW 24 Avenue. Polling site is not accessible for individuals using wheelchairs. Voters navigate a small step (about four inches) upon entering the site's only doorway. Observers witnessed an elderly wheelchair user unable to enter the polling site. Polling workers treated this as a curbside voter. The voter did not have the option of voting inside the polling station, a right guaranteed to all other voters. At Polling stations 248 and 254, the main entrance was not accessible.

*Secrecy and the Voting Equipment:* It is encouraging to see so many individuals with mobility limitations – particularly the elderly -- vote at tables and curbsides using the iVotronic machines. However, when the machines are used in such a portable manner, they are not equipped with portable privacy screens. This design flaw must be corrected, so as to ensure that voters using the portable feature of the equipment retain their right to vote in secret.

*The Voting Equipment and Individuals with Low-Vision:* It is unfortunate that the voter is not able to adjust the font size at the polling station. This makes independent voting difficult for voters with low vision.

*Outreach and Voter Education:* Election authorities need to take additional steps to reach more voters with disabilities. For example, election authorities should:

- Lend voting machines to key disability organizations for a period of several weeks prior to future elections; and
- Provide training to key staff of these organizations so they can over an extended period of time provide training to voters with disabilities who meet at or receive services at these key centers.

For example, the election authority spent 2 to 3 hours training about 60 to 70 blind individuals at Miami-Dade’s Lighthouse for the Blind. This same commitment of time could have been used to provide training to key Lighthouse Staff, who could then have over several weeks time (with equipment in place) provided training to several hundred voters with disabilities. This same level of effort is undertaken by election authorities in other Florida jurisdictions.

Similar outreach efforts could be used to ensure that voters with hearing impairments, and voters with intellectual disabilities have an equal opportunity to use and test the voting equipment.

## **Ballot Security and Accountability**

Several steps might be taken to improve ballot security and accountability at the precincts:

- The CFD-IFES team observed several cases of voters walking around with the red voter authorization slips after their electronic ballot had been activated and after they had actually cast a ballot. In these cases, the authorization slips were collected only because voters turned them in, not because the inspectors took them back. Often, authorization slips were placed at the front of the registration where voters could easily take them . . . some did. In some crowded polling sites and during peak hours, the team could image that a voter who had not been properly processed could cast a ballot (either by taking an authorization slip from the registration table, getting one from a voter who had already cast a ballot, or fraudulently duplicating the slip). Voter authorization slips should be treated as secure election materials. They should not be easily to duplicate. They should be kept beyond the reach of voters until issued by an inspector. And inspectors must be diligent in collecting the slips immediately upon activating a voters’ electronic ballot.

- The assignment of only one person, the Technical Specialist, to take the zero and results tapes and the flashcards from the iVotronics machines to the collection centers was surprising. For greater security and to avoid allegation of manipulation of results, the team would recommend that two people accompany the results pouch to the collection center, preferably from two different political parties or representing both sides of an issue or candidates on the ballot.
- To immediately determine whether all of the election results have been downloaded from the iVotronics machines and whether or not these results are accurate, the precinct election board should prepare a ballot reconciliation by comparing the number of voters who cast a ballot with the number of voters who signed the voter registry.
- In some polling places, they were not certain that election results from that precinct could be shared with observers. We believe it should be made clear that all observers, including those of political parties, candidates and issue questions have a right to copy the results from the tape which is printed at each polling site after the voting results are taken from each iVotronic machine after the close of the polls. This openness would make the process much more transparent and allow the ability of the observers to check the official results from the polling place to determine if they match (and to receive an explanation when they don't).

## **Absentee Ballots**

The suggestion was made that return absentee envelopes have the election office address in the return area to prevent ballots being back to voter (especially when cost of postage exceeds regular stamp). It is an idea worth serious consideration.

Absentee ballots may not be dropped off at the polling place – they must be returned only to the election office. The voter has the option of surrendering the absentee ballot and voting again on the machine. When they do this it is a problem for some because they want to see the voted absentee ballot to help vote the machine. This process requires phone calls to the election office and seems to be added work for the voter. What is the reason that voters cannot drop their voted absentee ballots at any polling place? This would make it easier for voters and reduce work at the polls.

What to do with a surrendered Absentee ballot needs to be addressed, and needs to be included in future training. These ballots were not handled uniformly. When a voter arrived with an Absentee ballot wishing to vote in person instead, some poll workers kept the ballots for proper record keeping, while others returned the ballots to the voter for disposal; some poll workers threw away in the garbage without making any notations. At polling place 562, when voters brought in their voted absentee ballots and asked to vote in person using the machines, the Clerk tore the voted absentee envelope and contents into many pieces –then discarded them in the wastebasket. She then made a note on their record and allowed the voter to use the iVotronic machine.

## Voting Equipment Issues

It appears that the voting devices sold to the county while voter-friendly, are certainly not poll worker friendly. The County should insist that ES&S upgrade the machines to allow for faster loading of the data and to make them easier for poll workers to set up and operate. One of the most expensive components of the November 5 Election was the necessity to set up the machines the night before the election and assign policemen to guard the machines overnight. The machines appear to be equipped with extremely slow processors. We recommend that the county inquire of ES&S to determine the exact speed of these processors. They are the root cause of many of the problems described in this report.

It is obvious that the computer chips used in the iVotronics are not designed for the long ballot in three languages used for the November 5 election in Miami-Dade County. If faster and more capable chips were installed on the voting devices that allowed for their activation in less than one minute for each machine (including ADA machines), then there would be no need for advance activation the day before the election (and no need for the exorbitant personnel cost that goes with that advance activation requirement).

An upgrade of the processors would significantly speed the process of loading the machines. For this election, because of the slow activation, it took each polling place an average of 4-5 hours to set up a polling place. This is definitely not a good practice to repeat in future elections. Unless the county is willing to continue to incur the significant expense required to prepare the polling stations and activate the iVotronics the day before the election, it is recommended that Miami-Dade consider several options to eliminate this procedure and save costs. It is estimated that the Advance Preparation procedure alone adds at least \$500,000 to the cost of the election. The County should return to a 1-1½ hour poll opening process. Under normal conditions in most US jurisdictions, poll workers should spend no more than one hour preparing the polling place before voting begins. Unless the time period for loading the iVotronic machines is reduced significantly, the County will always be stuck with expensive elections.

If upgrading the electronic machinery is not an immediate option, the County has another option it might consider.

- a. **Load the ballot on the machines at a central warehouse:** Ballot pages on each machine could be loaded by election workers at the warehouse prior to delivery to the polling stations. A relatively small group of technicians could load the ballot pages and styles as soon as candidate qualification is closed and the design of the ballot is known. While this process may take several weeks, it could begin shortly after the ballot style are known and would avoid the cost of a technician in each polling station. It would also help identify problem machines well in advance of polling day.

On election morning, before the voting begins, the Polling Election Board (PEB) could still do a zero printout to verify that no votes in each machine and determine ballot pages were accurate.

Another option would be the following:

- b. **Upgrade machines and load the ballot on the machine at the polls.** If the iVotronics devices were upgraded to allow activation of each machine in less than one minute, then loading can be accomplished election morning. This option will require a significant upgrade in the technical knowledge of the Clerk but it would eliminate the Technical Support Specialist and the need to set up the polling station the night before the election. At least one full day of hands on training would be required to ensure that Clerks understand how to load and unload the iVotronic machines. This training should include the trainees loading and unloading the machines several times not just once. Clerks should not be certified to work at the polls until they have mastered this exercise.

Perhaps our preferred option would be for the machines to be upgraded so that the ballot styles can be loaded quickly at the warehouse before delivery to the polling stations. The less preparation that has to be done at the polling stations the better.

Some other equipment issues encountered included:

- There is no notice on the screen that a machine is running on battery power rather than electrical connection – is an enhancement planned for the future?
- There is no display that shows status or minutes remaining for the load. If lights were used, a red light would mean the ballot was not loaded, a flashing yellow could mean it was completed.
- The activator can be removed before the ballot is fully loaded. ES&S should explore a system where the activator would not be able to be physically released from the voting machine until all information was downloaded.
- ADA units took 60-70 minutes to activate. Many sites had two ADA units. Some team members were told by ES&S technician that there is an installation shortcut that only takes a few minutes. If there was a known shortcut, why was it not given to all the polling places?
- ADA units can provide an audio ballot with nothing on the screen or a regular ballot that does show on the screen. We did not see (and it did not appear from manual) that there was an audio ballot with the screen showing. If not, then this might be a problem. Voters with limited hand/arm movement might not be able to reach the screen but could use the audio and the directional buttons – in which case they would like to see the screen.
- At many of the polls we visited, poll workers were taking machines out of the booth and setting on a table for voters who needed to sit. They were appreciative but this did not provide privacy screens. Seems it would be a good idea to have ADA booth with

shorter legs so voter could pull up a chair and sit. This would benefit elderly as well as those using audio since it takes so much longer to vote audio ballot.

- The demonstration units and ADA machines appeared particularly sensitive and proved less reliable on Election Day. This needs to be rectified. The majority of the polls we visited seemed to have had a minor problem with these machines that required calls for assistance. It gave the impression that these machines were not carefully tested before deployment. It seems that they would be generic and all would function the same way. This caused unnecessary delays for poll workers.
- It is our understanding that the font size is determined before Election Day and that there is no way to adjust this at the polls. Some voters wanted to see the ballot in a larger font. We realize that the larger the font, the more screens the voter must go through. However, isn't there a way to allow a choice of a large font at the polling place? One voter had glasses on and had to take out a magnifying glass.
- A few voters complained that they touched one candidate and another lit up on the screen. In checking out these complaints, polling place workers told the CFD team that the voters were not pressing in the right areas or used a larger portion of a finger than the tip to make a selection for their candidate/issue. We were told that in each case the voter ended up touching their right choice and that the final summary before they hit the vote button confirmed it. Polling place workers took these machines out of service temporarily and recalibrated where the X's should go.
- There seems to be no consistent check or awareness of calibration. When the machines are activated the night before, they have to press the screen to move through the process. Some TS said that if there was a calibration problem they would not be able to set up. That may be true but it seems that it would be good to be able to view the actual ballot on each machine and test vote to ensure that calibration on the entire ballot is okay. While some poll workers were aware of the calibration, some were not.
- Too many voters walked away from the machines without hitting the vote button. This should be addressed through improved design and better voter education campaigns.
- The method needed to reset the iVotronic machines was unduly cumbersome (using a bent paper clip or opening the machine and disconnecting the battery).
- The methodology for the logic and accuracy testing of the voting machines should be analyzed to determine what alternative options might have been implemented. For example, it was not clear as to whether there was any testing of the PEBs and the accurate capture of results during the transfer.
- The decision to accumulate the results from each voting machine on a single PEB for the polling station as a whole should be reevaluated to determine whether such a strategy provides the best option for an audit if an apparent disparity were to emerge or if a



challenge to the results were to be lodged. An audit might be easier to accomplish if the results for each machine was captured separately.

### **The Involvement of the Police Department on Election Day**

During the election, poll places were managed by poll workers. As mentioned in the pre-election assessment report, the police had little interaction with the public. If the Supervisor of Elections was indeed fully in charge of the Elections, the perception among poll workers was that the police had organized and was supervising the elections from the Command Center.

Indeed, the team observed the activity of the leadership of the police department on election day at their Command Center from 5:00 – 7:30 am. It was crystal clear the police were in charge of insuring that all polling places opened on time—and they did. They had a sophisticated and well-organized system to track the opening of each polling place--and it worked perfectly. It should be noted that the Supervisor of Elections office had just one person at the police command center --and that person did not arrive until 6:00 am.

The police were out-of-sight in all poll places we monitored except three. Two in heavily Cuban-American precincts (#309 and #359) and one in a polling place serving the elderly (#348/356). Precincts #309 and #359 are served by the same police station of the Hialeah Police Department.<sup>3</sup> Precinct #309 had a patrol car parked at the entrance of the polling place and #359 received regular visits by the police. The police officer at #309 stated that her station supervisor had assigned her and several other police officers to specific polling places and asked them to be very visible because this visibility provided a sense of security among voters. This relates directly to the pre-election assessment report where it was noted the high level of comfort of the Cuban-American community with the police.

Polling place #348/356 was located in a community center that also housed a small police station. Seventy-five percent of the voters in this double-precinct polling place are of age 65 or over. The police at that station did a good job of staying out of sight. The police's presence was of no visible impact.

While mentioning the police, it should also be noted that each polling station had workers called “Deputy Sheriff,” who were not associated with the police department. These Deputy Sheriffs were stationed at the polling stations, most often right outside the entrance. Each had a printed name badge that said “Deputy Sheriff.” While it did not appear they were at the polling station in a law enforcement capacity, some voters might conclude that a “Deputy Sheriff” is indeed a law enforcement officer. Since there was a concern with some members of the Miami-Dade community over law enforcement intimidation of voters at the polls, we would recommend that the practice of having these Deputy Sheriffs at the entrances of polling places be eliminated or their titles changed to a non-threatening connotation.

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<sup>3</sup> The Miami-Dade County Police Department serves the entire Miami-Dade County area, yet several of the county's constituent cities also have their own independent police department with jurisdiction only within city limits; such is the case in the City of Hialeah.

## **Public Information and Outreach**

In its preliminary statement, the Center for Democracy noted the success of voter education and outreach efforts in getting voters to the polls and informing them about the election process and their choices on Election Day. In many polling places, the CFD-IFES team observed voters coming to the polls with their sample ballot.

It seems that it was an unusual step to mail sample ballots for this election and it was generic (everything on the ballot). Although it is costly, it is a good service to voters to mail their specific sample ballot so they know exactly what to review. That mailing could also contain information on where to find a voter's polling place. Continued investment in voter education is strongly encouraged. Some target audiences and messages may require particular attention:

- In nearly every precinct visited, the CFD-IFES team observed voters or heard reports of voters who were confused by the sample ballot. While certainly not a majority, some voters did not understand that the sample ballot contained all races in the county. As a result, they thought certain portions of their electronic ballot were missing. This misunderstanding slowed the voting process and contributed to some frustration and lack of voter confidence. Elderly voters seemed particularly affected. If possible, sample ballots should be specially tailored to each jurisdiction. If this not a possibility, the Elections Department should explore ways to improve the design.
- At each site visited, the CFD-IFES team found that some voters had to be redirected to the proper polling site. This likely affected first-time voters, those who have not voted for a long period of time, and those who have either moved, been affected by redistricting, or changes in polling site locations. If the Election Board mails out some sort of voter education materials, such as a sample ballot, to all registered voters, this should include the number, name, and address of their assigned polling site.
- Additional information may be required on special voting services such as advance, curbside, provisional, and assisted voting as well as the availability of special machines for voters with disabilities. In the case of advance voting, voters should understand that there are select number of locations where this can be done, i.e. that anyone can go to these sites and that voters cannot necessarily show up at their assigned precinct and expect to vote early. With respect to curbside voting, few elderly voters or voters with disabilities seemed to be aware that this was an option. Some were informed only after they had reached the registration desk inside the polling station. Voter education messages affecting elderly voters and voters with disabilities should be targeted to the communities where they live.
- The provision of demonstration units of the iVotronics at public places frequented by voters was a good idea. The number of places where demonstration units are set up and

the length of time they are available for voters to familiarize themselves with electronic voting should probably be expanded.

- Some counties in Florida used mock elections as a means of educating voters, training poll workers, and identifying potential problems and glitches prior to Election Day. Hillboro County (Tampa) had particular success with this approach with some 14,000 voters participating.<sup>4</sup> The Election Department may want to give some consideration to whether or not this is a feasible option for Miami-Dade County.
- The Elections Department should seek input from the different County communities and groups (e.g., disability groups, Cuban-American, African-American, Haitian-American, etc.) on ways to improve the elections process.

### **The Cost of the Election**

The success of November 5 was also dependent on money. Miami Dade County spent millions of dollars on ensuring that the election had more than adequate resources. Aside from the cost of new voting equipment, the County enlisted the resources of almost every department. The police played a major roll in logistics, County employees played major rolls in ensuring that Election Day ran well at the polls. Volunteer clerks and assessors were instrumental in ensuring that voters were taken care of as they came to vote.

While Miami Dade should be congratulated for the successful administration of the November 5 Election, we are compelled to ask: “Is it sustainable for future elections?” With the other pressing needs on the Miami Dade budget, our answer at this point is “No.” Efforts should be made to reduce cost of the elections, and eliminate the need for significant police and County employee involvement in the process.

The financial and human resources applied to the November 5 Election made the election one of the most expensive per voter in the United States. Aside from the cost of the new voting equipment, the County:

- Assigned hundreds of police officials to manage the logistics of delivery of the materials to the polls.
- Because of the time required to set up and activate the voting equipment, materials and voting equipment were delivered to the polls the day before the election, requiring police security overnight until the polls opened the next morning.
- Trained approximately 4,000 county workers (many for several days) and assigned them to polling stations as assistants and technicians to ensure that the equipment stayed up and running during the day. These same individuals were also required to assist the poll workers in the set up of the polling station the day before the election.

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<sup>4</sup> Information provided by Linda Edgeworth, who participated in phase I of the Center for Democracy assessment in Miami Dade and as an observer for the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Tampa.

In future elections, the voting public will demand the same high quality of service as they experienced in the November 5<sup>th</sup> election. The monitoring team believes there are a number of steps the County can take and still maintain the quality of expertise displayed in the November 5<sup>th</sup> elections. Below are a number of options the County should consider. The options listed below are also designed to remove the police and County employees from the process and put the Elections Department back in its rightful place of administering the election process.

- *Training for Assist Clerks in use of laptop computer:* The stationing of a county employee in the polling station for the sole purpose of occasionally checking names on the voters' register is a considerable waste of resources. Starting a computer, opening a database, and typing in a potential voter's name is not a difficult task. It does, however, require some understanding of the laptop computer. This can be accomplished through training of the Assistant Clerk. As with the iVotronic machines, training is the key. The Assistant Clerk should undergo extra training in the use of the laptop computer and the checking of voter names in the database. Hands-on use of the laptops during training is essential.
- *Elimination of the Quality Assurance Manager:* With a properly trained poll worker staff this position is simply unnecessary.
- *Upgrading of Precinct Election Board Members key staff:* The most important component of all of the options outlined above is an upgrading of the key members of the Precinct Election Board – Clerks and Assistant Clerks. In the 141 precincts visited by the observation team, we witnessed a variety of skills in Clerks and Assistant Clerks. In some precincts the Clerks seemed alert and well versed in Election Day procedures. However, in a number of precincts, the opposite was found. Simple questions about the process were referred to the Quality Assurance Manager. To lower the cost of elections, the normal Precinct Election Board members will need to take over the duties of the County employees. There is no reason this cannot occur. Unfortunately, in some instances current Clerks and Assistant Clerks will need to be replaced with people that have a higher degree of education and skills. Obviously it would be an extreme hardship on the county to fund all future elections to the same extent as the November 2002 General.
- *County workers at polls:* There are other existing models of county poll worker programs. For example, Los Angeles has a fairly new but increasingly successful voluntary program. Employees get their normal daily salary but no overtime. In place of overtime they receive the same compensation as other poll workers. It is sometimes a challenge to place these employees in the same jobs as other poll workers when there is a long existing "team". However, the unique triangle concept introduced by Miami-Dade would simplify the placement and eliminate any conflicts with other poll workers.
- *Teachers:* The Education and Elections Departments could coordinate to close schools on Election Day; this will allow the Elections Department to heavily recruit

poll-workers from the pool of available teachers, who would make excellent qualified staff used to make decisions and work with large groups of people.

- *High School Students:* There are several states now with programs that allow students to actually work at the polls. The program in California has been in place for 5-6 years. San Bernardino County hired 3200 poll workers--with 1000 of those positions filled with students. They make great poll workers and have the energy and computer knowledge to be a major asset. Older poll workers have come to embrace this concept and look forward to having students. The California law requires students to be high school seniors, at least 16 years of age, grade point average of 2.5 on 4.0 scale, and U.S. citizen. They get the same pay as other poll workers and schools consider it community service and learning experience. This could be coordinated with the closing of schools and Election Day work could also count as school credit.

With careful selection and thorough training of Clerks and Assistant Clerks, an upgrading of the iVotronic machines so that they can be loaded much more quickly, the County can eliminate much of the costs associated with the November 5<sup>th</sup> election. The options outlined above will also put the Elections Department back in full control of the election process where it belongs. The options will require the Election Department to spend more time and effort on recruitment and training. However, the reduction in the cost of the elections and the reinstatement of the Elections Department as the agency in charge of elections is well worth the effort.

### **Transfer of Election Management Responsibilities to Election Structures for Future Elections**

As Miami-Dade moves forward, it will be essential for the Elections Board and the Police Department to work together in taking stock of this truly unique election. They will need to jointly:

- Assess the efficacy and feasibility of various approaches to election management and administration;
- Determine which approaches can be replicated and where alternatives need to be found;
- Identify and apply lessons learned and best practices;
- Ensure a transfer of knowledge and capabilities to the Elections Board concerning aspects of election planning and preparation that were assumed by the police department, for example poll worker recruitment and training.
- Facilitate a smooth transition toward full resumption of election management functions by the Elections Board, and;

- Develop an action plan for the transition period and preparation for the next elections in 2003.

Information and experience sharing within Florida should be facilitated through the Association of Election Supervisors. Association members are likely already focused on election reform in the state and should maintain a focused dialogue aimed at replicating successful approaches to election management, poll worker recruitment and training, voter information and outreach, the application of new technologies, and so on. Hillsboro County has been recommended as a model for others to follow.<sup>5</sup>

Some tasked with administering elections at the precinct level also have useful ideas and comments. Their expertise and experience should also be tapped as the Election Board proceeds with further enhancements and refinements to the electoral process. De-briefings or focus groups might be conducted among a cross section of poll workers to solicit their feedback. Or, if this is not feasible, evaluation or questionnaire might be sent to them. Beyond the value of collecting useful information, such an exercise would serve to build a sense of “ownership” in the electoral process among poll workers.

As an emergency measure, and in response to the recommendations proposed by the State’s Inspector General, the County Commissioners and County Manager devised an extraordinary organizational plan to prepare for the November 5 Elections. Ultimately a decision was made to step beyond the constitutional scheme by superimposing an alternative structure with the Director of the Police as the key official responsible for the planning, logistics and organization of the election. In addition, the plan drew heavily on support from the County’s human resources to support the effort. At the time of the election costs associated with imposition of the super-structure, and impact on County operations and services as a whole were still unknown. Once assessed, it is likely that costs and impact will prove prohibitive as a standard for the conduct of future elections. Indeed, virtually all interlocutors with whom the Center for Democracy’s assessment team met acknowledged that it was not likely that such a super-structure could or should be sustained for future elections.

Nonetheless, the 2002 plan provided Miami/Dade County the overall success it sought for these elections and, just as importantly, resulted in a number of positive consequences beyond the administration of this specific election.

- Facing the challenges left in the wake of prior elections created a new awareness among County Commissioners and administrators as to what it takes to produce a creditable election.
- Perhaps for the first time, these extraordinary events brought the County, its leaders and its departments together as an integrated team with a common goal.
- This year’s plan provided innovative solutions to problems experienced in the past.
- The urgency of overcoming past deficiencies once and for all illuminated avenues of partnership that can effectively be drawn upon in planning for an event of such magnitude.

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<sup>5</sup> Hillsboro recommendation provided by Linda Edgeworth, who participated in phase I of the Center for Democracy assessment in Miami Dade and as an observer for the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in Tampa

One of the major issues which Miami-Dade County must address in the post-election period is how to ensure that the positive measures that were defined and implemented to ensure the success of the elections can be replicated in the future, without the extraordinary realignment of lines of authority that were imposed for these elections. It is important to ensure that elections once again be fully entrusted to the constitutional authorities and institutions where they are properly and legally vested. Devising a methodical and comprehensive plan for accomplishing this important goal should be made a top priority in the weeks immediately following certification of these elections.

There should be three objectives:

- to realistically define the lessons learned from this experience, both positive and less than positive;
- to see how the successes can be retooled to work equally successfully within the framework of normalized election structure in the future; and,
- to define a more tailored strategy for utilizing the resources of other County Departments only to the extent they are actually needed, and only to the extent that they augment rather than supercede the resources and staffing of the Election Department itself.

### **Documenting the 2002 Experience**

It will be important that planning, logistics and procedures implemented for the management of these elections be fully documented. The best time to build the framework for the transition back to normal election management structures is now, while the recent experience is still fresh, and while those who were directly involved are still in a position to reflect and to document their experiences and strategies accurately and insightfully.

The Director of Police indicated that his team would be writing a detailed report outlining the positive elements of the process, as well as those areas where difficulties arose. It was anticipated that, if he chose to do so, the Supervisor of Elections would write a similar report independently. Ideally, such a report would be written jointly with both departments participating. In the event they are written separately, there should at least be an interdepartmental working group to go over the reports so that a final consolidated operational plan can be developed that could serve as a blueprint for preparing for future elections.

Given the short time frame and the complete overhaul of the administrative structure just six weeks before the election, there are likely to be issues raised by each counterpart regarding what they believe were gaps in communication, confusion as to where ultimate responsibility for various components lay, unnecessary duplication of efforts, and instances where disparate views or technical omissions were unsatisfactorily resolved. It will be extremely important that such issues are explored and that they are not set aside. Rather, achieving consensus through candid and constructive dialog now can help to ensure that potential solutions can be defined, refined and effectively drawn upon in the future.

### **Examples of the Elements to Be Reviewed**

## Recruitment of Polling Station Workers and Short Term Staff

Concern regarding the capacity of “volunteer” poll workers from the general public and a historic pattern of “no show” workers on Election Day led to addition of 3 county employees to oversee operations at the polling stations and the recruitment and training of about 20% more poll workers than usually needed.

- While the backup of these extra poll workers ensured that there would be no polling station understaffed, the solution did not address the underlying conditions that have led to a pattern of “no shows.” Before the next elections there should be an assessment of the conditions that have contributed to or resulted in such unacceptable patterns of behavior. If necessary, the investigation should involve contact with other counties to determine if they experience similar difficulties and if so how they deal with it, or, in contrast, if they do not, why not.
- Likewise, the addition of 3 county employees to oversee each polling station should also be evaluated to determine the extent to which such measures are absolutely necessary. The introduction of new technologies and the lack of sufficient time to groom “volunteer” poll workers from the general public to fulfill these roles may have made such measures appropriate for the 2002 General Elections. However, before the next elections there should be plenty of opportunity to reassess how to achieve the same level of expertise without requiring a tri-level structure of oversight by county employees. Indeed other counties using touch screen voting machines for the first time have found other ways of managing the process with fewer specialists, especially at the polling station level. Those that have succeeded in this area could be invaluable resources on which to draw to see how their strategies might be employed in Miami-Dade County as well.
- A realistic assessment should be made of the use of the automated phone call system to recruit election workers. The Assessment Team was advised that the automated call system resulted in a backlog of callers attempting to make contact, and long delays because poll workers were all instructed to respond in the same time period. The advantages and disadvantages of this system should be reevaluated to determine if alternative strategies should be employed.
- Consideration should be given to expanding outreach to potential sources of polling worker “volunteers” with the goal of finding a more reliable and committed pool of workers who may also have a “skill set” that suits the new technologies that characterize election day voting procedures at the polling stations. Such sources could include civic and professional organizations, the business community, universities and business schools. A public relations campaign scheduled over a longer period of time before Election Day could result in creating a new pool of “volunteers” from which to draw in future elections.
- A firm policy decision should be made to prohibit anyone who has not completed training to work on Election Day.



## Interrelationship of the IT Department and Systems Development in the Election Department

It would be productive to ensure that counterparts from the County's IT Department and the Systems Development Division of the Elections Department engage in a dialog to identify where their cooperation was the most productive, and where the relationship and division of tasks could have been improved. On a task-by-task basis, experts from both departments should take the opportunity to reassess some of the choices and decisions that were made.

- An inventory should be undertaken to determine where the involvement of the two departments resulted in a duplication of efforts. The preparation of the timekeeping system for payment of polling place workers and temporary election staff may be an example.
- A formal proposal should be devised as to the specific support role, if any, IT should play in future elections, including:
  - o the level of staff support that should be provided to the Election Department;
  - o the clear the chain of authority and the manner in which decisions shall be made, especially when counterparts have different views;
  - o how program development and maintenance tasks should be appropriately divided;
  - o the participation of key personnel in each department in the design of specifications, evaluation of bids and proposals, hardware procurement decisions, installation and testing.

## Production of Materials and Training

At the time of the Center for Democracy's visit, there appeared to be an absence of sufficient input from the Elections Department in the production of the training manual for poll workers. In fact, there seemed to be a general acknowledgement that the production of the manual was not within their competence for the 2002 General Elections and Election Department personnel were awaiting the receipt of copies in their office.

- It is recommended that a thorough review of the training manual take place to assess the organization of the information, whether or not the information was complete, and whether improvements should be incorporated for future elections.
- Although there are many positive attributes, there are areas of the manual that are somewhat disjointed and difficult to follow. It is understandable given number of changes that had to be integrated in the days before the election and the lateness of the hour when the manual had to be finalized.
- However, while the issues are still in focus, and the experiences encountered by election workers, Quality Assurance Officers, Verification Specialists and Technical Support Officers are still fresh in everyone's mind, a working group should be assigned to refine the manual within the next several weeks. Although it is likely that amendments will be necessary before the next election, having a sound and comprehensive blueprint in hand will mean that

the revision process should be accomplished easily, efficiently and earlier in the schedule next time.

- The working group should also assess whether separate manuals should be created for specialists such as those whose primary responsibility will be demonstrating or setting up and closing down the voting machines. A legitimate question exists as to whether their training should focus exclusively on these responsibilities, or whether there is a justifiable need for them to also learn about the all the other functions and responsibilities of election officials at the polls. Likewise, this decision should be reflected in the training they receive. It may be preferable to devise their training to focus exclusively on their critically important functions as technicians responsible for the proper maintenance and operation of the voting machines. Similar decisions should also be made regarding the election workers who will be responsible for the verification of voters' registration status and eligibility.

### Logistics Support and Election Services

As the IG recommended, the support of emergency services such as the police can be an invaluable resource in the organization of an election. Their expertise in "event" planning and "crisis management," their access to logistic support and communications, and their capacity to provide security make them the logical partners for Election Day planning.

- The report devised by the Police Director and his staff, and ideally with input of the Election Department, should include a formal proposal identifying the level of support and the manner in which these services can still be provided without placing the full burden of election management on the Police in the future.
  - o In particular, security for the voting equipment set up the night before the election was one of the most important decisions contributing to the success of the 2002 General Election. The proposal should include a recommendation as to whether the police should continue to provide this service or whether a contract with a commercial security service should be pursued for this function and incorporated into the election budget in the future.
  - o Likewise, the recommendations should include exploration of the police's capacity to make arrangements for the phone banks, transport of sensitive materials in future elections and coordination of the "war room" on Election Day.
  - o Most importantly, the proposal should outline the capacity and willingness of the police to continue to serve as an advisory resource to assist the Election Department in creating a comprehensive work plan, defining backup plans and devising rapid response strategies during the pre-election planning period for future elections.
- Where county employees are solicited a policy should be embraced to ensure that in the future, they are recruited on a voluntary basis. Such a procedure was successfully implemented in other counties, and could help to ease tensions and resentments that were encountered in some instances during the 2002 elections.

## **Reorganization of the Election Department**

If the Election Department is to reassume its independent oversight of the elections, it will be important for the County administration to facilitate its reorganization so that it is sufficiently equipped and resourced to meet the challenges at full capacity. A number of measures should be considered.

- An election administration management consultant/specialist should be assigned to review the current management structure within the department to determine how it should be altered to accommodate new requirements. The Center for Democracy's assessment team noted, for example, that the Department has a lateral management structure. Additionally, division heads are practitioners themselves, meaning that they cannot devote themselves to their managerial roles.
- The level of full time staffing should be reassessed. In the past 12 years the size of the department has remained virtually unchanged. In fact, in a period of dramatic increases in the reliance on technology and computerization, the staff of Systems Development funded under the Elections budget has actually declined when the number of their staff assigned to the IT Department is taken into consideration. If they don't already exist, for example, the Department could benefit from the addition of a professional level Director of Operations, Outreach Officer and Training Officer.
- A comprehensive review of current job descriptions should be undertaken to determine the degree to which they remain relevant, or the degree to which they must be rewritten to accommodate the new demands of the current political and legal environment, and the conversion to new technologies. In each case it should be determined whether an appropriate skill set is reflected in the job requirements.
- A significant number of current Election Department employees have been with the Election Department for a long time meaning that the institutional memory and foundation knowledge of the election process remains intact. This circumstance can be an invaluable asset. However, an assessment should be made to determine the degree to which management, technical or motivational training may be warranted. Determinations may also have to be made as to where personnel changes may be required, to maximally capitalize on residual expertise in a new organizational structure or through reassignment or replacement.
- A study should be undertaken to determine how the facilities of the Department could be improved to accommodate their special needs. Within the offices themselves, there is need for more secured storage for sensitive documents and files. Hallways and walkways between work areas should not be cluttered or obstructed with boxes or trays of correspondence, returned mail, registration applications, voted ballots or other important documents.
- Proper warehousing will also take on a new importance for the storage and security of voting machines and polling station materials. In particular, there is a need for a professional

warehouse manager to ensure that equipment is maintained in proper order, and organized for easy distribution and intake during election cycles. Until an election is certified and the data in voting machines is cleared, it is important that they be stored in polling station order. The Assessment Team was advised that during the Primary Election, the storage of voting machines after Election Day was in disarray making it difficult to identify and locate the individual machines associated with specific polling stations for which the results had to be reconstructed to correct errors in the results as they were originally reported.

- The hardware and software used by election staff in their daily work should be assessed to determine where upgrades are warranted. For example, in the Supervisor of Elections' Office it was noted that Windows 98 was still in use.
- A review of the election year budget for the department should be review to determine where budget allocations should be realigned for the next election. For example, a mandatory issuance of new voter cards and voter information packets should be considered. In addition, the addition of temporary professional level staff may be warranted to accommodate the increase demands for poll worker training and voter outreach functions. Some of the costs incurred by the police and other Departments of the County during these elections may have to be incorporated in the Election budget if some of the services and resources introduced this year are to be sustained in future election years.
- The Department has been lax about formalizing internal procedures in writing. The Department should be directed to use the interim between elections to write internal procedural guidelines or manuals for its own staff, and especially for training temporary workers hired for peak election periods. For example, formal training manuals should be prepared for a number of specific functions including the processing of absentee and provisional ballots, guidelines for the Canvassing Board in determining the eligibility of voters or the validity or invalidity of paper ballots, the processing of undeliverable mail to voters, and the procedures for holding recounts of absentee or provisional ballots in the event of a challenge.