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Receipts Reflect Fears Over Electronic Votes

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE, Calif., Feb. 25 ? The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted today to invest \$20 million in 5,000 voting machines that produce paper receipts, a move that reflects concerns about the trend toward electronic voting machines.

The vote makes Santa Clara the first county in the nation to purchase the so-called voter-verified paper backup system.

The popularity of electronic voting machines is growing as counties replace the kinds of antiquated systems blamed for Florida's 2000 presidential election debacle. At least 1 in 10 voters nationwide cast ballots in the last presidential election using electronic machines.

Computer scientists in Silicon Valley are calling for a halt to the trend, at least until voting machines are redesigned to produce a paper record of every vote.

The intent is to provide more protection against hackers, or political operatives, who might tamper with the results.

"Silicon Valley is looked to for answers in technology, and you've got a ton of engineers out here who understand security issues better than anyone," said David Dill, a computer science professor at Stanford University who led a petition drive demanding a paper trail. "I hope people notice the fact that we are taking this seriously."

Putting faith in systems that create no paper records, they said, could open the door to election fraud of unprecedented proportions.

Sequoia Voting Systems of Oakland built prototypes that produced paper receipts. Sequoia has offered to add the printers without raising the price of the \$20 million contract.

Congress has set aside \$3.9 billion for states to overhaul their voting systems.