



ELECTION BULLETIN

To: All Town Clerks
From: Kathy DeWolfe, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance
Date: January 22, 2004

Re: 2004 Elections Voting Machines Update (including information for paper ballot hand count towns)

All but 3 towns currently using machines have chosen to accept the new Accuvote voting machines for use in the March 2, 2004 Presidential Primary. The remaining 3 towns and any other towns that vote to allow the use of voting machines at the March 2nd Town Meeting will receive the Accuvote machines and training in May or June. We will schedule training after Town Meeting with at least 1 month notice to all interested clerks.

We have added some training dates before town meeting to make it easier for clerks and election officials to attend. Clerks who already use Accuvote machines are welcome to attend any training session if you would like a refresher on the machine. Please let Kathy DeWolfe know which training you plan to attend. Kathy DeWolfe will also attend all training sessions to be available to answer any additional election questions.

Tina Bryson from LHS Associates will be making appointments with all new Accuvote Town Clerks to deliver the tabulator optic scan part of your machine. She will also confirm that each town has received all necessary equipment in working condition.

Accuvote Training Schedule:

Tuesday, February 3rd, Williston Town Office, 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 or 5 p.m.
Wednesday, February 4th, Killington Town Office, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Tuesday, February 10th, Bennington Town Office, 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 or 5 p.m.
Tuesday, February 24th, St. Johnsbury Town Office, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Tuesday, February 24th, Winooski Town Office, 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 or 5 p.m.

Hand count/Paper ballot Towns:

Towns that hand count ballots can continue to hand count all ballots in 2004 and the majority of ballots in future years. However, in 2006 and future years, every polling place in the state is required to make a voting system available to blind and visually impaired voters so that the voter can vote independently and privately. In order to protect the secrecy of the vote, at least 10 voters will need to use the machine for the blind and visually impaired so that the vote results cannot be connected to one or two individuals. However, in towns that enjoy the camaraderie of hand counting, the BCA and election officials can continue to hand count the majority of the ballots for as many years as the town so chooses.

If your town checklist is over 1000 and your BCA and Selectboard want to change to start using a regular Accuvote vote tabulating machine, an article needs to be passed at an annual or special meeting as follows: "Shall the Town of XXXXXX vote to allow the use of voting machines (vote tabulators) to count ballots at elections?" If you pass an article to allow the use of voting machines in 2004, please email or fax us so that we can make sure that you are advised of the training dates. The state will pay for the full cost of the voting machine for the town. (\$5850) **However, each town is responsible for all programming costs to use the tabulator for each election.** It is estimated that most towns pay between \$1500 and \$1800 for programming for the September Primary, approximately \$1200 to \$1500 for the General Election (or more if you put your JPs on the machine ballot). You are not required to use the voting machine for town meetings but many towns choose to use them. Programming costs for town meetings vary depending upon the number of races and ballot questions. As you can see, a Town would need to budget at least \$2800 to \$4000 for every other year just to use the machines for the Primary and General Elections. If your town cannot afford or does not want to budget for the programming costs, do not plan to use a voting machine. Please email or call Kathy DeWolfe if you have any voting machine questions.