



STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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To: Council Members, Town of Cary
Re: Instant Runoff Voting

Dear Council Members:

The North Carolina State Board of Elections has prepared a procedure to process Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) optical scan ballots using the fully certified Model 100 voting equipment to sort and tabulate the votes. The attached is an overview of the optical scan IRV tabulation methods that are in effect for the 2009 IRV Pilot Program subject to State Board of Elections revisions.

Sincerely,

Gary O. Bartlett

Instant Runoff Voting Single-Seat Contests ES&S Optical Scan Tabulation Procedures Version ID OS1-2009.1.1

Overview

The purpose of this document is to instruct election officials in North Carolina in the steps required to use existing voting tabulation equipment and current versions of both software and firmware to allow a complete electronic sort and count of IRV ballots for the purpose of determining a winner in a single-seat contest.

The procedure detailed herein makes use of functionality in HPM allowing the creation of a subset election from an existing election (basically a copy of the existing coding), with subsequent modification of the coding to restrict the M100 tabulators and Unity ERM to evaluating only the runoff contest, and tallying and reporting votes for only the runoff candidates.

Due to equipment limitations, this procedure requires two distinct ballot scan runs. In the first run, ballots are scanned solely for the purpose of identifying ballots containing overvotes within any of the three choice selections in the runoff contest, so that those ballots may be properly segregated. A ballot with an overvote in the second choice selection may still count as a first choice vote; a ballot with an overvote in the third choice selection may still count as either a first choice or second choice vote.

The second scan run requires the use of three PCMCIA cards per Unity precinct, one for each of the selection options in the runoff contest. Using the first card, a ballot's first choice selection is evaluated and the ballot accepted if a valid first choice vote is detected; otherwise the ballot is rejected so that it can enter the queue for the second choice. Similarly, the second card is used to accept or reject ballots based on the evaluation of the second choice selection, and the third card for the third choice selection. Any ballots rejected by the M100 using the third card are counted as undervotes. The procedure allows for the simultaneous use of three M100 tabulators per precinct, if desired.

Alternately, a jurisdiction using optical scan ballots for Instant Runoff Voting may use the SBE approved 2007 Pilot Program method of hand sorting and hand tabulating the ballots after the first round of vote tabulation.