

Voting Machine Purchase Deadline Looming - counties must meet January 20 deadline to contract for new equipment.

Due to federal and state requirements for voting machines, counties must choose new voting equipment right away. Counties must have new equipment delivered and precinct workers trained before early primary voting begins in April.

You have a choice of

- optical scan systems with ballot marking devices,
- Direct Record Electronic systems (DREs) which are also known as touchscreen or pushbutton electronic or,
- hand counted paper ballots

In this letter we address the funding source, purchase costs, operating costs, information about upcoming demos, and additional background information on voting systems.

DETAILS ON FUNDING - CONSIDER THE PURCHASE COST AND THE OPERATING COSTS

Purchase Cost

Each county is eligible for up to \$12,000 per precinct for machines, plus \$1.00 per registered voter up to \$100,000 for software.

This is enough money to pay for new optical scan/ballot marking systems for each county.

Counties that want the more expensive touchscreen or direct record machines will have to pay the difference of at least 2 to 3 times more - from their own budget.

Text of the law: <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2005/Bills/Senate/HTML/S223v7.html>

Financial analysis from the state government -- using data supplied by the State Board of Elections <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2005/FiscalNotes/Senate/PDF/SFN0223v4n1.pdf>

Operating Cost

Once you purchase the equipment, your county budget will pay the costs of that operating equipment.

Counties that use electronic voting equipment (touchscreen or pushbutton) spend about 30-40% more than optical scan counties, on an annual basis. This can be a real budget buster for some.

ANALYSIS OF NET ANNUAL EXPENDITURES BASED ON VOTING SYSTEM TYPE

Precinct-Based Optical Scanners							
Wake County				Durham County			
Year	Expend	Reg Voters	Cost/Voter	Year	Expend	Reg Voters	Cost/Voter
'04	\$1,455,458	460,821	\$3.16	04	\$556,923	175,322	\$3.18
'03	\$1,951,178	415,649	\$4.69	'03	\$703,031	158,916	\$4.42
'02	\$1,232,426	403,050	\$3.06	'02	\$506,287	154,950	\$3.27
'01	\$1,539,268	426,375	\$3.61	'01	\$668,777	152,324	\$4.39
'00	\$1,250,349	411,121	\$3.04	'00	\$547,576	156,131	\$3.51
'99	\$1,434,369	377,435	\$3.80	'99	\$437,795	150,984	\$2.90
6 Year Total:	\$8,863,048			6 Year Total:	\$3,420,389		
Average:	\$1,477,175		\$3.56	Average:	\$570,065		\$3.61
Direct Record Electronic Voting Machines							
Guilford County				Mecklenburg County			
Year	Expend	Reg Voters	Cost/Voter	Year	Expend	Reg Voters	Cost/Voter
'04	\$1,569,894	290,129	\$5.41	'04	\$2,400,533	470,849	\$5.10
'03	\$1,776,383	268,368	\$6.62	'03	\$2,549,260	426,212	\$5.98
'02	\$1,298,271	276,492	\$4.70	'02	\$2,266,099	442,055	\$5.13
'01	\$1,285,192	274,357	\$4.68	'01	\$2,195,750	434,335	\$5.06
'00	\$1,181,877	279,221	\$4.23	'00	\$2,457,602	467,875	\$5.25
'99	\$1,101,522	267,650	\$4.12	'99	\$1,670,825	433,121	\$3.86
6 Year Total:	\$8,213,139			6 Year Total:	\$13,540,069		
Average:	\$1,368,857		\$4.96	Average:	\$2,256,678		\$5.06

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON VOTING SYSTEMS Touchscreens verses Optical Scanners

Optical Scan + ballot marking device for each County cost \$10,000 - \$12,000 per precinct

- State grant will pay completely for Optical Scan and Ballot Marking Devices
- Meets state, federal law
- Meets disabled requirements
- Disabled find this most user friendly
- Cost 30-40% less to operate annually
- One optical scanner serves at least 3,000 voters in a day

Touch-screens or pushbutton DREs - would cost \$20,000-\$40,000 per precinct at least

- County will pay \$thousands or \$millions above the HAVA funding
- Not required by state or federal law
- Does not meet most disabled requirements, may require replacement in 2007
- Uses ballot on a reel, thermal paper, violates secrecy of vote
- 20% failure rate in live test of ballot on reel this July in California
- This type DRE had blank paper ballots at end of day in Ohio 2005 elections
- Proven to have a higher undervote rate based on North Carolina 2004 election data
- DREs cost more to own and operate, based on real study of NC counties, over 6 year period
- One DRE serves no more than 170 people in a day with less than 5 minutes each to vote

In 2004, Guilford County NC's Board of Elections(touchscreen county) spent \$114,436 in operating expenses than Wake County's BOE, (an optical scan county) yet has 170,692 less registered voters!

See cost comparison of 2 large optical scan counties and 2 large DRE counties

<http://www.ncvoter.net/affordable.html>

It isn't wise for the State/County to waste \$Millions of hard earned tax dollars.
Nor should the State/Counties cut services to voters by consolidating precincts.

Financial analysis of meeting NC VVPB law and HAVA -- using data supplied by the State Board of Elections

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2005/FiscalNotes/Senate/PDF/SFN0223v4n1.pdf>

DREs cost 30-40% more to operate, NC study

<http://www.ncvoter.net/affordable.html>

DREs cost 40% more to operate, Florida study

<http://www.votersunite.org/info/costcomparisonextended.asp>

DREs require about 20% more poll workers, 10% more precincts

<http://www.cs.duke.edu/~justin/voting/VotingForumUU.ppt>

Ballot on reel touch-screens (Diebold) 20% failure rate, systems crash, printer jams

http://www.votetrustusa.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=96&Itemid=30

http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/voting_systems/vstaab_volume_test_report.pdf

Lucas Co., Ohio -paper record was blank on the two busiest voting machines at one polling site. The

<http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051120/NEWS09/511200359>

Blind voters **prefer** ballot marking devices to **touch screen** machines.

<http://www.yesweekly.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&ArticleID=603&TM=48903.21>

Verified Voting Foundation recommends optical scan and ballot marking for disabled

<http://www.verifiedvotingfoundation.org/article.php?id=6254>

DREs have higher undervote rate in NC

<http://www.cs.duke.edu/~justin/voting/totals.html>

DREs have high undervote rate and phantom votes in NM

<http://www.votersunite.org/info/newmexicophantomvotes.asp>

Dr. Rebecca Mercuri recommends optical scan at this time

<http://www.ncleg.net/committees/jointselectcomm /january72005mee /mercurinlegisl/mercurinlegisl.pdf>

North Carolina State Board of Elections website

<http://www.app2.sboe.state.nc.us/>

Regional Demonstrations scheduled Dec 12, 13, 14, and 15

The regional demonstrations as set out in the attached memo are designed for the county boards to meet their requirements under GS 163-165.9.

The demonstrations will be held at the following locations:

Fayetteville Technical Community College - December 12th, 2005

Willis Building Auditorium in Greenville - December 13th, 2005

Marriott in downtown Greensboro - December 14th, 2005

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College - December 15th, 2005

All demonstrations will begin at 2:00 pm and end at 7:00 pm