

WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

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2016 Election Commission Major Achievements

1. Transition from the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) to the Wisconsin Elections Commission: Senior G.A.B. staff worked with the Department Administration in early 2016 to complete a transition plan from the G.A.B. to the new Wisconsin Elections Commission and Wisconsin Ethics Commission, which was approved by the Joint Committee on Finance. Staff worked to orient new Commissioners as they were appointed and served as ex-officio members of the G.A.B. during the Spring of 2016, prior to the start of the two new commissions on June 30, 2016.

Staff also developed draft memoranda of understanding for shared office space and shared services between the two new commissions prior to the transition date, after which those MOUs were refined and approved by the two Commissions. In preparation for the changeover, staff developed new separate websites and new letterheads for each commission, and made many changes to rename and reformat standard forms and manuals to reflect the new structure and names. Financial staff also worked with DOA to create separate financial accounts for the two new agencies and allocate resources to each according to the transition plan.

2. Administration of Four Successful Statewide Elections and Other Election Events: Agency staff worked in conjunction with more than 1,850 municipal clerks, 72 county clerks, and tens of thousands of other local election officials to successfully conduct the Spring Primary, Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary, Partisan Primary and General Election.

Also, during 2016 staff provided administrative guidance to local election officials for 13 special elections in seven municipalities (five elections in the same newly created village), two school districts and one county. There were no special elections required to fill vacancies for legislative or other state offices. In addition to training and support of local election officials, staff worked with numerous candidates and other organizations to prepare for the elections. Following elections for state and federal offices, staff assembled and reviewed official results from the counties, prepared the official canvass for certification and issued Certificates of Election to the winners.

- Spring Ballot Access Procedures: The Spring Primary and Spring Election included nonpartisan elections as well as the Presidential Preference Primary. In January, staff conducted a meeting of the Presidential Preference Selection Committee, which determines which candidates' names appear on the Presidential Preference Primary ballot in April. Staff assisted state judicial candidates with the filing of ballot access documents. Staff completed the review of nomination papers submitted by 63 candidates for state offices and made recommendations regarding G.A.B. certification of candidates or denial of ballot

access. Staff also processed and evaluated challenges to nomination papers as well as appeals regarding decisions of local filing officers. At the end of 2016, staff conducted the review of nomination papers submitted by 71 candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction and judicial offices at the 2017 Spring Election.

- Fall Ballot Access Procedures: Staff assisted state candidates with the filing of ballot access documents for the Partisan Primary and General and Presidential Election. After the June 1 deadline for submission of ballot access forms, staff completed the review of nomination papers submitted by 365 candidates for state and federal offices and made recommendations to the G.A.B. for certification of candidates or denial of ballot access. In addition, there were two independent candidates for president whose nomination papers required review. There were a total of seven candidates for president. Staff also processed and evaluated challenges to nomination papers as well as appeals regarding decisions of local filing officers.
 - Ballot Redesign: Agency staff continued efforts to improve and standardize the design of ballots to be used in Wisconsin elections. Staff developed proposed ballot designs for the 2016 statewide elections and solicited input from clerks, political parties and legislators. The Government Accountability Board and the Wisconsin Elections Commission continued the practice of approving proposed ballot designs for the four regularly-scheduled 2016 elections and for the Spring 2017 elections.
 - Extended Office Hours: Agency staff members were available to assist local election officials before and after regular business hours in the days leading up to and after regular elections, as well as during the conduct of recounts. Staff was available for 16 hours on the day of the Spring Primary and 17 hours on the days of the Spring Election, Partisan Primary and General Election to assist with issues ranging from the opening of polling places to the reporting of unofficial results on Election Night. Staff also logged every telephone call received during the weeks surrounding each election to track the type of issues which arose and the resolution of those issues.
3. WisVote Launch and Maintenance: The new WisVote system launched on January 11, 2016. WisVote is used by Wisconsin's municipal clerks, county clerks, and thousands of staff in clerks' offices to register voters and administer elections.

WisVote replaced the former Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) which had been in use since 2006 and had reached end-of-life. The WisVote system was developed in-house by agency IT and program staff from July of 2014 through December 2015 using the Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform, which is completely web-based, unlike SVRS. The system was completed for \$2,052,756, which was not only \$100,000 under budget but also far less than the approximately \$3.6 paid to Accenture for the former SVRS system deployed in 2006. The new WisVote system addressed several critical deficiencies of SVRS, most notably improving ease of use, reducing maintenance and hosting costs, and improving stability, security and supportability.

- Data Migration: Once the WisVote system was complete, more than 100 million records needed to be migrated from SVRS into WisVote. Agency IT staff spent the first two weeks of 2016 migrating data related to voters, registrations, addresses, voting history, districts, offices and all other records needed for WisVote to be functional.
 - WisVote Learning Center: Agency staff developed the WisVote Learning Center website to deliver WisVote training to those who would be using the new system. The WisVote Learning Center represents a complete change in strategy for delivering training. While SVRS training was delivered in-person, the WisVote Learning Center is a completely on-line training platform. All users of the former SVRS system were set up with accounts in the Learning Center and were sent instructions to access the Learning Center and complete the required training for WisVote. The Learning Center contains interactive tutorial videos created by agency staff covering all aspects of the WisVote system. It includes a complete training manual written by staff that can be printed by clerks. It includes links to the many WisVote webinars prepared and recorded by staff both before and after the WisVote launch. The website received more than 160,000 page views from 6,296 unique users in 2016.
 - Rapid Felon Updates: The process used to interface with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) was completely redeveloped for WisVote. Instead of the monthly batch files delivered to SVRS, agency staff worked with DOC to create a nightly web service process so that new felon records and any updates to existing felon records are now processed in WisVote every night. This has tremendously improved the accuracy of the matching process in WisVote which compares felon records to voter records, and of the Ineligible Voter Lists that clerks print from WisVote to prevent felons on probation or parole from registering and voting while they are still serving a felony sentence.
 - Ongoing Maintenance: Agency staff deployed 13 updates to WisVote in 2016 after the system was implemented. These updates continued to add new features to WisVote and addressed bugs or suggestions submitted by clerks to improve WisVote.
4. MyVote Wisconsin Website: MyVote.wi.gov is the agency's voter services website for voters to look-up their polling place, view a sample ballot, register to vote, request an absentee ballot and more. Agency staff accomplished the following tasks in 2016 related to MyVote Wisconsin:
- MyVote Rebuild to Interface with WisVote: With the launch of the new WisVote statewide voter registration database, the technical infrastructure of the original MyVote.wi.gov website had to be rebuilt. The user interface of the site looked the same to users as the original MyVote; however, each element of the technical infrastructure was rebuilt and tested in coordination with the WisVote launch. The restructured MyVote site functioned well through the February and April 2016 elections.
 - Development and Testing of the Redesigned MyVote Website: As the first step in the website development process, agency staff finalized the development of detailed prototypes and business requirements for the redesigned MyVote website in 2016. The prototypes

and business requirements were created as a result of a comprehensive website usability study that was conducted in 2015. The final MyVote prototypes and business requirement documents consisted of more than 200 pages of detailed requirements that allowed agency staff to effectively and efficiently coordinate the web development process.

Once the prototypes and business documents were completed, agency staff worked with design agency Knupp, Watson & Wallman (KW2) to redesign and develop the MyVote Wisconsin website. At the same time, the agency's in-house IT developers created the infrastructure for the MyVote site by completing more than 700 tasks to link the new MyVote site to the WisVote database. Agency staff also oversaw the web design process by working with KW2 to create the layout and substantive content of all 278 pages and subpages of the new website. Agency staff also oversaw the web development of the user interface while working with contracted web developers through KW2. Agency staff began the redesign of the MyVote website in January 2016 and launched the redesigned site in June of 2016.

Another major component of the MyVote redesign project was the functional testing of the new MyVote site. Agency staff created and completed more than 1,000 unique test cases prior to the launch of MyVote 2.0. The testing protocol required hundreds of agency staff hours to ensure the site was operating as expected and to ensure that information was being correctly transmitted between the MyVote website and the WisVote database. Completing such a comprehensive test plan was paramount to the successful launch of the redesigned MyVote 2.0 website in June 2016.

- Launch and Training for the Redesigned MyVote: Following the June 2016 launch of the redesigned MyVote Wisconsin website, there were no major problems or issues reported. Between June 2016 and December 2016, the site successfully handled nearly one million unique user visits. More than 150,000 voters completed a voter registration form and more than 50,000 voters used the site to request an absentee ballot. More than 500,000 users found their polling place or viewed their sample ballot. Nearly 6,000 Military or Permanent Overseas voters used the site to download an absentee ballot.

The launch of the MyVote 2.0 website was a significant change for both Wisconsin clerks and voters. To prepare clerks and voters for the change, WEC staff developed numerous training resources. Training materials included a 60-page user manual. Agency staff also published a pre-recorded webinar for clerks in anticipation of the site's launch. After the launch, agency staff continued to develop and publish MyVote training materials for clerks and voter groups.

- Preparing for Online Voter Registration: In 2016 the WEC started to plan for the implementation of an Online Voter Registration system (OVR) through the MyVote website as required by 2015 Wisconsin Act 261. The OVR project required the WEC to work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WI DOT) to interface both the MyVote website and the WisVote database to the WI DOT's database. WEC staff met with WI DOT management and IT staff on a weekly basis over the course of six months to discuss the technical and statutory requirements of the OVR system. WEC also worked

extensively with WI DOT to develop a Memorandum of Understanding which outlined the agreement and shared responsibilities of the two agencies in developing and maintaining the OVR system.

- MyVote/WisVote Address Services: One of the most critical components of both the MyVote website and the WisVote database is the address validation system. The address validation system is key to ensuring that voters receive the correct ballot, are assigned to the correct polling place and appear on the correct poll book. The WEC's former address service was discontinued in July of 2016. WEC staff researched and implemented a new address service provider in June of 2016. Agency IT developers then linked the new address service to the MyVote website and the WisVote database. The new service has greatly increased the accuracy and the positive return rate for all agency systems.

Agency staff also reviewed more than 300,000 addresses that migrated from SVRS into WisVote but were not being used. These were historic addresses where voters had previously been registered but were no longer active and in use. Staff re-verified these addresses to obtain current geographic locations for them and reactivated them for clerks to be able to use. While a small number of these addresses were incomplete and could not be verified, most were rehabilitated and made available for clerks to use.

5. Voter Photo Identification: Following reinstatement of the Photo ID Law after the 2015 Spring Election, agency staff developed and executed an unpaid, earned-media campaign for the 2016 Spring Elections using updated media materials created for the Bring It to the Ballot campaign. Larger-than-expected turnout for the Presidential Preference Primary in April highlighted the need for additional photo ID education. The G.A.B. directed staff to request \$250,000 in § 13.10 funding from the Joint Committee on Finance for a paid photo ID Informational Campaign in advance of the Partisan Primary and General Election. After the request was approved, staff worked with the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association and the KW2 ad agency to place television, radio and online advertising for the campaign. Following the District Court decision in *One Wisconsin Now Institute v. Thomsen*, staff worked with the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation to promote the Photo ID Petition Process (IDPP) by developing new informational materials for voters.
6. Recount: There were three recounts ordered for the 2016 General Election that WEC staff was required to coordinate: Iron County District Attorney, State Senate District 32, and President of the United States. For all offices, the recount confirmed that the candidate who appeared to receive the most votes on Election Day was the winner. Although all recount efforts require significant preparations and coordination, the Presidential recount certainly required the most, given the abbreviated timeframe to complete the recount by the federal safe harbor date.

The hard work of many individuals contributed to the success of the first statewide recount for President in Wisconsin. Election officials completed the statewide recount of almost 3 million ballots in roughly 12 days. The very small number of changes in totals, given the overall number of ballots cast, confirms that Wisconsin's Presidential Election was fair, accurate and transparent, and should promote public confidence in the election results as well as our election administration system and procedures. Recounts can serve as a good roadmap for additional

training of local elections officials, and staff will incorporate lessons learned into 2017 training efforts. In addition to the hard work and dedication of the county clerks, county boards of canvass, county and city elections commissions, municipal clerks, deputies, tabulators and other election workers to ensure the recount was completed accurately and by the established deadline, the Commission staff also dedicated significant time, effort and resources to ensure the recount went as smoothly as possible and finished on time. Further information is provided in the Presidential Recount Report at the December 14, 2016 Commission meeting.

7. Electronic Registration Information Center: 2015 Wisconsin Act 261 required the agency to enter into an agreement with ERIC, a consortium of states which share data from their voter registration and motor vehicle agencies. ERIC has two goals: to identify voters who may be eligible to vote but are not registered, and to identify voters who are registered but whose registrations are inaccurate or out of date.

In 2016 Commission staff focused on voters who were potentially eligible to vote but were not registered by identifying voters who have a Wisconsin driver license or state ID card, but who did not have a current voter registration. Once identified, the Commission contacted potential voters and provided them with voter registration information.

The ERIC Membership Agreement requires that participating states reach out to voters who may be eligible but are unregistered once every two years, ahead of the fall General Election, no later than October 1. To meet this requirement, WEC staff designed a postcard mailer and coordinated the printing and mailing of the ERIC notification. The postcard directed recipients to register to vote using the MyVote website or to contact the WEC for more information. In September 2016, the commission mailed 1,238,538 postcards, and approximately 209,102 voters who received them registered to vote for the 2016 General Election.

Agency staff anticipated that the mailing of the ERIC postcards would significantly increase email and phone inquiries from voters. To prepare for the increased volume of calls, the WEC contracted with the Beyond Vision call center in Milwaukee. Agency staff trained Beyond Vision representatives to answer questions about voter registration and voter eligibility. Overall, the Beyond Vision call center answered 2,388 ERIC related phone calls. The WEC also hired and trained eight temporary employees through a staffing agency to assist with the influx of calls and emails resulting from the ERIC mailing. The temporary employees answered more than 5,000 ERIC related email and phone inquiries between September 23 and November 8, 2016.

8. Election Security and Contingency Planning: In 2016, agency staff took unprecedented actions to ensure the General Election was safeguarded from malicious attacks. Wisconsin Elections Commission staff partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Division of Enterprise Technology (DET) to ensure that Wisconsin's election-related IT systems were prepared for the November Election. Wisconsin was one of several states to work with DHS National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center to perform a Cyber Hygiene Assessment. Through this program, DHS performed continuous security and vulnerability scans of Election Commission IT infrastructure and systems to assess their vulnerability to cyber-attacks.

Elections Commission staff partnered with Wisconsin Emergency Management, DET and Wisconsin's Adjutant General to help ensure that Wisconsin was prepared for the heightened security required to ensure a smooth election process. DET issued an enterprise-wide change freeze from October 25 to November 11, barring any IT system changes across all of state government without prior approval from the agency-head and the state CIO's office. Commission staff also hosted a joint meeting with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Wisconsin Emergency Management, and representatives of the Milwaukee and Dane County district attorney offices to discuss election day preparedness and to designate emergency points of contact in their respective offices for emergencies that may occur on Election Day.

Staff updated the Election System Security and Emergency Preparedness manual to be used as a resource for election officials in preparation for the Presidential Election. The manual describes various emergency situations and is intended to help election officials identify and respond to a wide array of unplanned occurrences that can take place leading up to Election Day.

In response to the anticipated additional traffic to WEC IT applications, primarily WisVote and MyVote, the server capacity was increased. The capacity has been doubled for the MyVote website as well as for the WisVote database that powers the site. Capacity for the agency's main website was also enhanced. Thanks to the significant advance planning and partnerships with both state and federal partners, there were no security events reported leading up to and including on Election Day.

9. Training and Guidance: The agency provides training to local election officials, including county and municipal clerks, chief inspectors, regular election inspectors, special voting deputies, election registration officials, special registration deputies and local boards of canvassers.
 - Webinars/Videos: Agency staff continued to produce timely election administration training sessions on rapidly changing legislative requirements and procedures, WisVote computer application training, teleconferences and training modules using webinar and Storyline software. Staff has produced 22 educational videos relating to election administration and WisVote topics and processes, including the implementation of the voter photo ID law and other court decisions, the development and use of Online Voter Registration and an introduction to WisVote for new users of the system. The webcasts and related materials are posted on the WEC website for clerks and other local election officials to use at their convenience.
 - In-person and Online Trainings: Agency staff continued to provide initial training classes for new municipal clerks and new chief inspectors using a combination of live webinars conducted by staff and in-person training classes conducted by certified clerk-trainers. Staff and clerk-trainers delivered 46 Baseline Chief Inspector training classes and trained more than 1,510 new and current chief inspectors and municipal clerks (current chief inspectors and municipal clerks are allowed to take the course once per two-year term as a refresher). Trainers also conducted six Municipal Clerk Core training classes and trained 185 new municipal clerks and current clerks seeking refresher training. Training for the

statewide voter registration system is available in the WisVote Learning Center via interactive tutorials and webinar overviews. Previous users of SVRS were automatically issued credentials for the Learning Center website and approximately 730 new users were issued either read-only, data-entry or clerk access roles, depending on their job duties in WisVote.

- Training Manual Updates: Agency staff updated the Election Day and Election Administration Manuals to reflect new laws approved by the state legislature, including 2015 Wisconsin Act 261, and recent court decisions. Staff also updated the Recount Manual prior to the statewide Presidential Election Recount, and the MyVote Wisconsin and WisVote Manuals to reflect the redesigned websites.
 - Clerk Association Presentations: Agency staff continued its successful practice of attending the annual and district conferences of the Wisconsin County Clerks Association, Wisconsin Municipal Clerks Association, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin League of Wisconsin Municipalities and Wisconsin Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute to provide legislative updates, education and training on clerk and local election official duties and to solicit input on pending legislative proposals and other procedures.
 - Clerk Communications: Agency staff continued a commitment to effective and timely communication to local election officials through a series of “Clerk Communications” which are posted to the agency website and categorized according to their priority. In 2016, staff prepared and posted 139 such communications (compared to 80 in 2015) on a variety of topics including legislative changes, election preparations, the status of the Voter Photo ID law and required tasks to be completed in WisVote. Complete and accurate communications typically require the drafting and editing work of several staff members.
 - Answering Questions: Agency staff also responded to specific requests for information from local election officials, ranging from the thousands of phone calls the agency receives every year to formal requests for guidance. In addition to addressing these questions as they arise, staff notes what questions arise with the greatest frequency and incorporates them into future training webinars, manual updates and clerk conferences.
 - Election Calendar: Agency staff created and published the annual, comprehensive Calendar of Election Events that includes all election-related tasks and deadlines for Election Administration and WisVote. It is a key tool used by local clerks and staff and is available publicly on the WEC website.
10. WisVote Checklists: WisVote staff provided two checklists to clerks for each of the four statewide elections in 2016.

Checklist I assisted in preparation of the election, including guidance for contest, candidate and reporting unit setup in WisVote as well as completing voter data quality review, absentee ballots tracking (which became a statutory requirement in 2016) and printing poll books and felon lists.

Checklist II provided instruction for post-election activities, including Election Night tasks such as entering provisional ballots into WisVote and posting unofficial Election Night results. Checklist II also provided other post-election guidance for recording voter participation and entering Election Day Registrations in WisVote and reconciling and reporting election statistics using the EL-190 form.

11. Election Readiness: In conjunction with the Checklists, beginning six weeks prior to each of the four statewide elections held in 2016, staff used a series of daily quality check reports designed to identify counties or municipalities that had not yet completed a step in their election preparation. Staff conducted outreach by telephone and email to assist clerks in meeting election readiness deadlines in WisVote. Clerk completion of WisVote election setup is critical to the voter experience on the MyVote website because until the setup is complete, voters cannot find their polling places, review sample ballots, or, in the case of military and overseas voters, download their ballots online.

Municipalities whose voter rolls had potential data quality issues were also identified. Prior to mailing absentee ballots and again prior to Election Day, staff alerted clerks to potential problems with voters registered in their municipality. The alerts identified voters who may be deceased or may have a felony conviction and voters who may have duplicate voting records. Staff also provided notice and guidance for ensuring voters would vote in the correct ward and receive the correct ballot by identifying potential problems with the voters' address. Identifying and clearing up these potential problems resulted in more accurate poll books.

In addition to providing the checklists and other clerk notifications, WisVote staff answered clerk questions, both those generated by these communications, as well as general questions regarding election-related tasks in WisVote. It was a common occurrence for individual staff members to respond to several dozen calls and emails daily. Questions typically range from very basic and simple questions about how an action might be completed in WisVote to specific questions that might require investigation by a team of staff.

After the elections, WisVote staff followed up on post-election data quality issues such as provisional ballots that were issued but did not show if they were counted or rejected, and reviewing voters who had more than one election participation record in an election. For the duplicate participation check, the goal was to determine whether the duplicate participation was in error and, if so, to correct it on the voter record and determine if such an occurrence can be prevented in the future. Consequently, if no error was found, the voter may have committed voter fraud by casting more than one ballot in an election. A team reviewed the data, categorized each instance for follow-up, and provided instructions for clerks, who then completed the investigation.

12. General Customer Service: Agency staff answered phone calls and in-person questions from clerks, candidates, incumbents, media and members of the general public on a variety of election-related subjects. In 2016, the front desk answered more than 5,700 phone calls and the Help Desk answered more than 7,100 phone calls and processed thousands of email

inquiries and requests for technical assistants. The agency maintains a general website and specific program websites for the public, which continue to provide a great deal of information to customers, especially near elections:

- Main Agency websites: gab.wi.gov and elections.wi.gov received 6.5 million page views from nearly 1.6 million unique users.
- MyVote website: myvote.wi.gov received 6.5 million page views from nearly 900,000 unique users.
- Voter ID microsite: BringIt.wi.gov received more than 392,000 page views from more than 172,000 unique users.

13. Voter Outreach: Agency staff completed the following tasks to ensure voters received the information they needed to participate in the 2016 elections:

- Social Media: The agency increased its presence on social media in 2016. The agency's following on Twitter increased to more than 3,600 and agency Twitter posts generated more than 3.8 million user impressions. The agency's following on Facebook also increased to more than 2,000, and agency Facebook posts generated around 3.1 million total impressions, including some paid and targeted Facebook posts.

Agency staff developed and used a pre-set social media plan for 2016. The social media plan outlined Facebook and Twitter content and images in relation to important deadlines and events in the 2016 election cycle. A suggested social media plan for 2016 was also provided to clerks and voter groups to use on their own social media pages.

- Voter Materials: Agency staff created and updated more than 40 voter handouts, guides and other materials on a variety of voting topics. In addition to voter handouts, agency staff also developed video presentations on voter topics. Each handout and video was updated at least three times throughout 2016 to reflect changes made by the courts, new legislation and as a result of the agency transition.
- Voter Outreach Kits: In 2016, agency staff developed a voter outreach kit for the use of clerks and voter groups. The outreach kit included news releases, voter guides, presentation materials, a social media plan and links to agency resources. Each component of the kit was updated at least twice in 2016 to reflect changes made by the courts, new legislation and as a result of the agency transition.
- Voter Outreach Presentations: Agency staff made in-person presentations to organizations and audiences about election laws and procedures, especially focusing on the Voter Photo ID Law. In assessing speaking opportunities, staff developed an approach that relies on the assistance of local election officials and community organizations to train organization staff and volunteers to disseminate information regarding the ID requirement. Public presentations were made throughout the year, including several events sponsored by organizations serving persons with disabilities.

- Services to Military and Overseas Voters: In 2016, the agency staff continued its commitment to assisting Military and Overseas voters (UOCAVA voters). In 2016 there were three federal elections that required agency staff to monitor the transmission of each UOCAVA ballot and report the transmissions to the U.S. Department of Justice. To ensure each ballot was sent on time, agency staff monitored each ballot request and sent thousands of emails and made hundreds of calls to clerks. For the April 5, 2016 Election, 1,063 UOCAVA ballots were requested by the Federal deadline. Of those ballots, 99.93 percent were reported to U.S. DOJ as sent timely. For the August 9, 2016 Primary, 2,565 UOCAVA ballots were requested by the Federal deadline. Of those ballots, 98.6 percent were reported to U.S. DOJ as sent timely. For the November 8, 2018 Election, 5,129 UOCAVA ballots were requested by the Federal deadline. Of those ballots, 99.94 percent were reported to U.S. DOJ as sent timely.
- To further assist UOCAVA voters, agency staff sent regular email reminders to UOCAVA voters to inform them of upcoming deadlines. Agency staff also created three clerk guide documents that outlined the procedure for fulfilling voter requests made using federal forms such as the Federal Write In Absentee Ballot, Federal Postcard Application and the National Voter Registration Application. Agency staff also presented information about UOCAVA voters and deadlines at each of the clerk conferences in 2016 and during multiple clerk webinars. Agency staff was also involved in the Council for State Governments' (CSG) Overseas Voting initiative and was active in creating the Policy Recommendations document that outlined best practices for communicating with UOCAVA voters. The CSG report was distributed nationally to state election officials and legislators.

14. Voting Equipment Testing and Approval: Agency staff evaluated several applications for approval of Engineering Change Orders (ECO) to previously-approved voting equipment systems. After staff evaluation of the ECO applications and their compliance with adopted standards, the Director and General Counsel of the former Government Accountability Board, in consultation with the former Board Chair, approved the ECO applications of Dominion Voting Systems and ES&S as *de minimis* changes to the voting equipment.

Addressing the need to replace aging electronic voting systems, several counties reported the purchase of new voting equipment for their municipalities in 2016. Agency staff updated agency records documenting the particular equipment used in each county and also attended some meetings in which equipment vendors introduced the equipment to local election officials.

15. National Election and Voting System Standards: G.A.B. and WEC staff actively participated in national efforts to define standards for future voting systems and IT systems used to administer elections in the United States.
- Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC): The TGDC was chartered by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to provide recommendations on voluntary standards and guidelines related to voting equipment and technologies. It is composed of 14 members selected from various standards boards and for their technical and scientific expertise related to voting systems and equipment. The

National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED) selected Elections Supervisor Ross Hein as its nominee on the TGDC and he served in that capacity throughout 2016.

- TGDC Interoperability Working Group: The TGDC instituted an interoperability working group to work on common data formats that allow the varied technical components used for administering elections to be able to exchange data and interoperate more effectively. The interoperability group has picked up much of the work that was being done by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Voting Systems Standards Committee (VSSC). WisVote Functional Lead Sarah Whitt sits on the interoperability working group and is involved with several sub-groups including Election Process Modeling and Online Voter Registration. She remains head of the Election Results Reporting group, which published its standard in 2016.
 - U.S. EAC Standards Board: Interim Administrator Michael Haas serves on the EAC's Standards Board, composed of state and local election official representatives from each State and Territory. The Standards Board is charged with reviewing and providing input to the EAC related to the guidelines under which the EAC certifies voting systems as well as its guidance and best practices recommendations to local election officials. At the end of 2015, in accordance with procedures adopted by the G.A.B., staff facilitated a process by which Wisconsin's local election official representative to the Standards Board would be appointed for a four-year term. The appointment process was completed in early 2016.
16. Voting Equipment Audit: After each General Election, the WEC is statutorily required to audit the performance of each type of electronic voting equipment used in Wisconsin and determine the equipment's error rate in counting valid ballots. On November 11, 2016 a random draw of reporting units to be audited was conducted by staff and all municipalities selected to participate in the audit were notified on November 14, 2016. As part of the recount planning special teleconference meeting of the WEC, Commission members voted unanimously to postpone the audit until the completion of the statewide recount. At its December 14, 2016 meeting, the Commission approved a motion to exempt municipalities which conducted the Presidential recount by hand from having to complete the 2016 voting equipment audit and a motion to change the audit deadline to January 31, 2017.
17. Polling Place Accessibility Compliance:
- Polling Place Audits: Over the course of four statewide elections in 2016, accessibility auditors completed audits of 386 polling places in approximately 340 municipalities in 39 counties. Agency staff hired and trained temporary workers to conduct onsite accessibility compliance audits, a program that is unique in the nation.

Following each audit, staff reviewed the responses submitted by municipal clerks and helped to ensure that accessibility problems identified by the audits are resolved as quickly and cost-effectively as possible. In support of clerks' efforts to make

polling places more accessible to voters with disabilities, agency staff distributed signs, page magnifiers, and other grant-funded accessibility supplies to municipalities.

Commission staff partnered with a member organization of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW), to staff the project for the Presidential Election. Seventeen teams, representing the three DRW field offices and consisting of 22 volunteers, participated in the project. In total, the teams from DRW completed 80 audits in 55 municipalities.

- Accessibility Advisory Committee: Agency staff organized and facilitated two meetings of the Accessibility Advisor Committee. The meetings were held in advance of the Spring Election and the General Election in order to provide updates regarding preparations for those elections, solicit input from representatives of disability advocacy organizations, and discuss how the agency can partner with those organizations to communicate with the public. Committee members heard presentations and discussed topics such as the polling place audit program, voting equipment testing, the Photo ID Law, accessibility components of the MyVote Wisconsin website and public outreach and education efforts.
 - Recognition from the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired: The Government Accountability Board was presented with the 2016 “Outstanding Public Service” award by the Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired in June 2016 in recognition of its efforts to ensure accessible voting for all Wisconsin citizens.
18. Voter Felon Audit: Wis. Stat. §6.56(3m) requires the Commission to compare the list of voters in an election with the list transmitted to the Commission by the DOC containing the names of individuals disqualified from voting due to felony convictions. The Commission continued to use an updated automatic tracking process first implemented in 2014 to improve communications with DOC and to obtain information more quickly and accurately. The system allowed DOC and agency staff to review potential voter felon matches and refer appropriate matters to the District Attorney if it appears individuals who were still “on paper” cast ballots when they were in fact ineligible. The referral allowed the District Attorney to then conduct any additional investigation and make a decision as to whether sufficient evidence exists to file criminal charges. Commission staff will continue to provide the Commission with updates on the voter felon audit process and results twice per year.
19. Voter Registrations and Cancellations: The G.A.B. and WEC continued to receive a significant number of misdirected voter registration applications in 2016. The EL-131 Voter Registration form is processed at the local level by municipal clerks. However, some sources, including some national voter registration drives, list the WEC as the recipient. Individuals also find the WEC office address online or at the bottom of the form and sometimes send their registration applications into the agency. Processing these forms involves determining what municipality the voter resides in and forwarding the form to that clerk for processing. Agency

staff received and processed approximately 6,235 of these forms in 2016, requiring a significant investment of staff time.

Staff also received notices from election officials in other states of voters who have moved from Wisconsin into their state and who have registered to vote there. These voter registrations are then cancelled in WisVote and their municipal clerks are notified. In 2016, staff received 6,847 cancellation notices.

20. BADGER Voters: Agency staff continued to process requests for WisVote data throughout 2016. The BADGER Voters website processed 789 initial data request quotes, of which 435 were purchased, generating \$235,820 in revenues. IT staff also implemented several improvements to the data request system to improve security and enhance the user experience. 2015 Wisconsin Act 261 required the WEC to implement a subscription service to provide electronic access to absentee ballot data entered in WisVote. Specifically, Wis. Stat. § 5.05(14)(b) mandates the subscription service to include updated absentee ballot data that must include the date on which an elector applied to vote by in-person absentee ballot, the date on which the clerk mailed an absentee ballot to the elector, and the date on which the elector returned the absentee ballot to the municipal clerk.

In July 2016, WEC staff developed and launched an automated process in BADGER Voters to fulfill the subscription service requirement. Users have the option to register for an annual subscription to obtain absentee ballot data information through BADGER Voters. The service allows the user to receive and download updates of their absentee ballot data request for the calendar year. Users have an option to receive absentee ballot data updates semi-weekly, weekly, bi-weekly and/or monthly. The cost to subscribe and receive frequent absentee ballot data on a rolling basis is consistent with existing data pricing rates which includes a standard \$25 to subscribe and \$5 per every 1,000 new records generated. Since the launch of the absentee subscription service in July of 2016, there have been a total of 10 subscribers. The system completed 119 absentee ballot data files under the subscription service, generating total revenue of \$27,230.00.

21. Wisconsin Elections Data Collection System (WEDCS): In 2016, municipal clerks completed EL-190 statistics reports for the Partisan Primary and General Election and the Spring Primary and Spring Election. Municipal and county clerks submitted the EL-191 election-specific cost report for those elections as well as the Annual Election Costs Report for 2016.

All of the data reports are conveyed electronically through WEDCS. Agency staff invested considerable time and effort in educating local election officials regarding the reporting requirements, obtaining and monitoring compliance with the reporting requirements and reconciling discrepancies in the data. Staff reconciled WEDCS data internally, as well as with voter participation and election data from WisVote and the Canvass Reporting System.

After all data was reconciled, it was used to complete several major federal reporting requirements: The U.S. Election Assistance Commission's Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) covering the 2016 General Election, and the Federal Voting Assistance Program's grant reporting requirements related to the development and use of MyVote Wisconsin. Cumulatively, staff completed reporting on more than 600 data points for each

municipality on behalf of all of Wisconsin's municipal and county clerks. This equates to more than 1 million total data points.

22. Canvass Reporting System: Counties use the Canvass Reporting System (CRS) to transmit official results for federal and state offices to the Commission. Many counties also use CRS for reporting unofficial election night results. Agency staff provided support and assistance to county and municipal clerks using CRS to report unofficial Election Night results for the four statewide elections and three recounts in 2016. Voting equipment must be capable of exporting results on election night to CRS. Commission IT staff worked with voting equipment vendors to develop new export reports for counties that purchased new voting equipment in 2016.
23. Promulgation of Administrative Rules: Legal Counsel continued with the promulgation of administrative rules related to election administration in 2016. Permanent rules codifying technical college ID cards as valid forms of photo ID for purposes of voting were effective February 1, 2016. Legal Counsel worked with the Legislative Reference Bureau to properly convert Chapter GAB rules to Chapter EL rules with an effective date of June 30, 2016. Legal Counsel continued to work on proposed administrative rules at various stages in the promulgation process. Significant progress on the promulgation of administrative rules, or proposed legislation in lieu of promulgation of administrative rules in certain topic areas is anticipated in 2017.
24. 2015 Wisconsin Act 261: The revision of election-related statutes continued with the enactment of 2015 Wisconsin Act 261 on March 16, 2016, which was promptly addressed by staff and incorporated into the agency's ongoing Election Official training program as well as procedures. The election-related changes in the new law included:
 - Electronic Voter Registration
 - Elimination of Special Registration Deputies/Appointment of Election Registration Officials
 - Counting of Absentee Ballots
 - New Proof of Residence Document
 - New Voter ID Document
 - Additional Categories of Information in the Official Registration List
 - Subscription Service for Absentee Voting Information
 - Posting Election Night Returns
 - Election Official Evaluations
 - Electronic Poll Books

- Joining the Election Registration Information Center (ERIC)
 - Approval of Electronic Voting Equipment
 - Treatment of Overvoted Ballots
 - Elimination of Voter Registration Transfers
 - WEC Authority to Perform Certain Registration Activities
25. Other Legislation: The Legislature passed five additional revisions of election-related statutes in 2016 which required staff to change procedures, publications and training programs:
- 2015 Wisconsin Act 154: prohibiting a legislator from concurrently holding office as a county executive.
 - 2015 Wisconsin Act 229: training period for election officials and terms for members of a board of canvassers.
 - 2015 Wisconsin Act 209: responding to a request for an absentee ballot.
 - 2015 Wisconsin Act 229: training period for election officials and terms for members of a board of canvassers.
 - 2015 Wisconsin Act 356: creating a program to protect the confidentiality of addresses for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking; providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures; and requiring the exercise of rule-making authority.
26. Assistance to Legislature: Agency staff provided information and answered questions from legislators and legislative staff regarding legislative proposals as well as specific inquiries from legislators and constituents regarding application of election laws. Staff assisted in preparing testimony for legislative hearings, and submitted fiscal estimates at the request of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.
27. Litigation: The WEC was involved in three major cases which originated with the Government Accountability Board:
- *Frank v. Walker*: Ongoing challenges to Wisconsin's Voter Photo ID Law.
 - *One Wisconsin Institute v. Thomsen*: This case challenges almost all election law legislation passed in the State of Wisconsin since 2005. The case touches on many aspects of election administration such as absentee voting, in-person absentee voting, election observers, voter registration requirements and voter photo ID.
 - *Whitford v. Nichol*: This case challenges the district maps put into place by the Wisconsin Legislature in 2012, and alleges that they constitute an unconstitutional gerrymander, based

in part on a theory of a disparate impact on voters in certain demographic and racial categories.

Litigation filings, discovery requests and hearings required significant effort and attention from Legal Counsel and agency staff, as well as consultations with the Department of Justice.

28. Biennial Budget Preparation: Staff prepared the 2017-2019 Biennial Budget Request based on instructions to assume there will be zero growth in overall General Purpose Revenue appropriations in each fiscal year of the biennium. However, the agency also faces the end of its federal HAVA funding during the next biennium which supports 22 full time employees, four IT contractors and other program initiatives. At its August meeting, the Commission directed staff to submit a budget request which sustains current agency operations and services to local election officials, voters, candidates and the public. The Commission Chair, Administrator and Chief Administrative Officer held numerous meetings with key legislators, state budget officials and the Governor's office regarding the budget in late 2016 to explain the agency's budget request.
29. STAR Project: Agency financial staff spent countless hours in 2016 creating new accounting structures in preparation for the State Transforming Agency Resources (STAR) Project which consolidated multiple outdated human resource, procurement and financial business IT systems into one efficient, transparent and modern enterprise-wide system. As with all new computer systems, there have been some significant challenges that the financial staff continues to work through with the State Controller's Office, the State Budget Office and the STAR experts.