



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

October 3, 2007

Motion 12586

Proposed No. 2007-0456.2

Sponsors Patterson

1 A MOTION adopting the King County Elections Office
2 Final Assessment Report and Organizational Effectiveness
3 Plan, which is the complete detailed report regarding the
4 elections section staff cultural change, organizational
5 effectiveness and training recommended by the citizens'
6 elections oversight committee and independent task force
7 on elections.

8
9 WHEREAS, in 2005 the Washington state Legislature enacted a law allowing
10 counties the option of conducting all elections by mail, under RCW 29A.48.010, and

11 WHEREAS, in authorizing the option to conduct all elections by mail in King
12 County, the King County council adopted Ordinance 15524 on June 19, 2006, indicating
13 several criteria that must be met, including one that culture change must occur within
14 elections section staff, and

15 WHEREAS, for the director of the records, elections and licensing services
16 division to be ready to conduct all King County elections entirely by mail ballot

17 beginning in April 2008 the council directed the elections section director to work with a
18 consultant to begin a process of culture change within the section, and

19 WHEREAS, with the consulting services of Waldron & Company, this work has
20 been undertaken and has been in progress for nearly one year.

21 WHEREAS, the results of these activities have resulted in a cultural
22 transformation and a higher level of organizational effectiveness, and

23 WHEREAS, the activities and outcomes of this effort are detailed in the final
24 assessment report and organizational effectiveness plan, and

25 WHEREAS, since January 2007, the council has received two progress reports
26 from Waldron & Company as well as three quarterly reports from the elections section
27 detailing the strides made within the organization, and

28 WHEREAS, this exit report assessment developed by Waldron & Company
29 provides both short-term and long-range recommendations for continuing to optimize the
30 elections culture and organizational effectiveness for a high performing team, and

31 WHEREAS, the elections team has completed its work, according to our
32 consultant, and has the tools and long-term plans to guide the organization for a
33 successful transition to all-mail voting in 2008 and thereafter;

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

35 The King County Elections Office Final Assessment Report and Organizational
36 Effectiveness Plan, Attachment A to this motion, is hereby approved and adopted.

37

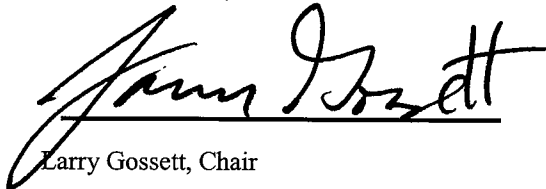
Motion 12586 was introduced on 9/17/2007 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 10/1/2007, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Mr. Gossett, Ms. Patterson, Ms. Lambert, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Phillips, Ms. Hague and Mr. Constantine

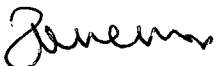
No: 0

Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Larry Gossett, Chair

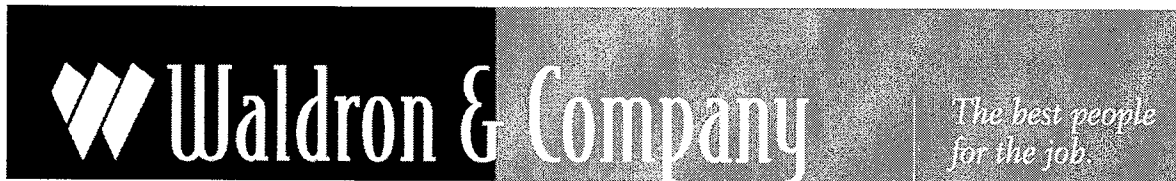
ATTEST:



Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments A. King County Elections Office Final Assessment Report and Organizational Effectiveness Plan

12586



King County Elections

Final Assessment Report Organizational Effectiveness Plan

August 15, 2007





*The best people
for the job.*

August 15, 2007

The Honorable Ron Sims, Executive
King County Executive Office
701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3210
Seattle, WA 98104

The Honorable Larry Gossett, Chair
Metropolitan King County Council
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104-3272

Dear Executive Sims and Council Chair Gossett,

The purpose of this document is to submit a Final Assessment Report and Organizational Effectiveness Plan to complete the work by Waldron & Company under Contract #T02425T with King County Elections (KCE).

In June 2006, the King County Council approved funding for KCE to initiate the transition to Vote-by-Mail, supported by consulting services (Ordinance 15524). The Ordinance requires that the King County Executive submit to the Council for approval the consultant's exit report assessment and recommendations for continuing to optimize KCE's culture and organizational effectiveness. The enclosed Final Assessment Report and Organizational Effectiveness Plan constitute that assessment and contain recommendations for the future.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to support KCE staff in their successes, which you have strongly supported and they have earned. We are looking forward to your review and approval of our Final Assessment Report and Organizational Effectiveness Plan. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Harold Robertson, Sr. Consultant, with any questions you may have at 206 441-4144.

Sincerely,

Deborah L. Bevier
Sr. Consultant

Final Assessment Report

Introduction

Waldron Consultants began organizational effectiveness work with King County Elections (KCE) leadership and staff in 2006. This Final Assessment Report to the King County Executive and King County Council includes:

- Waldron Consultants' assessment of the current state of the KCE organization.
- A final progress update on activities related to the transition to Vote-by-Mail and management/leadership development.
- The KCE Organizational Effectiveness Plan (OE Plan).

The centerpiece of this report is the OE Plan. The OE Plan draws together all of KCE's work on building and sustaining a high performing organization, and includes benchmarks for excellence. The OE Plan is the road map to continuous improvement and will evolve as KCE implements and executes the Plan.

The King County Elections Organization – Today and Tomorrow

Based on our experience and observations in working with KCE, it is the overall opinion of Waldron Consultants that **KCE leadership and staff have achieved a cultural transformation**. Compared to one year ago, we observe that people in the organization are:

- More confident, open, and energetic.
- More systematic in problem-solving.
- More proactive in planning and communication.
- More resilient in addressing issues and change.

Waldron's major consulting activities supported the KCE organization with facilitation, advice, and training as leadership and staff accomplished the following:

- Conducted the work of the Vote-by-Mail Transition Leadership Team with emphasis on coordinated project management, shared understanding of project priorities, coordinated messaging, and effective use of time.
- Systematically debriefed elections in order to build on what went well, identify needed improvements, develop action plans, and assign responsibilities going forward.



- Supported seventeen managers, supervisors, and lead staff by providing individual coaching on leadership, management practices, skill development, and preparation of individual development plans by the seventeen staff and their supervisors.
- Enabled and encouraged 25 to 30 managers, supervisors, leads, and other staff to participate interactively in *Leadership University Training Sessions* on organization structure, conducting effective meetings, change management and resiliency, and media relations.
- Assessed the organization's goals, roles, decision-making, team dynamics, communication, and benchmarks for measuring results.
- Analyzed the flow of elections work between individual work groups in order to improve key hand-offs and emphasize an organization-wide view.
- Refreshed the organization's *Mission & Guiding Principles* to reflect progress and new leadership, and to invigorate KCE beliefs and practices going forward.
- Became more proactive in engaging stakeholders in the transition to Vote-by-Mail, and in outreach overall.
- Stressed integrated management, role clarity, proactive problem-solving, accountability, and on-time delivery.

From our experience in supporting and participating in the above activities, it is the opinion of Waldron Consultants that KCE has established a strong foundation on which to further build high performance:

- **Trust is high**

Staff at all levels are now open in raising issues, concerns, and ideas, apparently without fear of being shut down or viewed negatively by others. An exploratory, problem-solving atmosphere prevails.

- **Conflict is dealt with constructively**

Discussion of differences now largely focuses on issues and interests, and does not become emotional and personal. Also, staff better understand the stages of group development and are more skilled at working within groups to achieve results.

- **Commitment is strong**

Staff work long, hard days conducting elections, but also have energetically worked to improve the organization and the quality of results.



- **Accountability is clear**

Clarifying roles and responsibilities has become routine in matters such as Vote-by-Mail transition planning, election debriefs, process hand-off analysis, and change management. Individuals take ownership and hold each other accountable.

- **Attention to results is constant**

Leaders and staff are strongly oriented to achieving the desired results. All recent elections have been 100% reconciled.

KCE has established six new, key systems that will greatly help the organization continue to push its performance to higher levels:

- A refined process for debriefing elections enables staff to systematically build on what went well, identify needed improvements, develop action plans, assign responsibilities, and track progress.
- A new approach for analyzing the impacts of change helps staff mitigate risks and remove barriers to implementation, and helps maintain positive morale and build resiliency. The approach encompasses:
 - Gathering data.
 - Assessing risks.
 - Identifying and evaluating mitigation options.
 - Developing action plans.
 - Assigning responsibilities.
- A comprehensive communications approach consists of three communication plans:
 - An updated media plan is being carried out to convey pertinent information to voters – remain open, transparent, and accountable and communicate in a crisis.
 - A new *Outreach Accountability Plan* further organizes the approach to identifying stakeholders and interests, selecting applicable outreach tools and activities, tracking information shared, and monitoring messages conveyed.
 - An internal communication plan for the transition to Vote-by-Mail is in place to disseminate information and broad organization messages to all staff effectively, considering their focused attention on election schedule deadlines.
- A new *KCE Passport Program* will be structured to enhance on-boarding for timely and consistent assimilation of new employees.
- A *Question & Issues Tracking System* will improve consistency and timeliness of responses, and provide a database for input to various agency performance benchmarks.



- The OE Plan itself is the centerpiece, drawing together all elements of KCE's work and establishing goals, benchmarks for measuring progress, and accountability for results.

Issues and Risks Going Forward

In the opinion of Waldron Consultants, there are several major issues and risks as we look to the future:

- It has been publicly acknowledged that there is a lot on KCE's plate between now and December 2008. Even though the move to Renton and the transition to Vote-by-Mail are positive, the work load is heavy. Limited reserve capacity is available for distractions, either internal or external, particularly those that result in a shift in focus from the transition to Vote-by-Mail. Loss of focus will jeopardize the transition to Vote-by-Mail and the successful results KCE has achieved so far.
- Resources for KCE must be sufficient. Past reviewers have called for sufficient resources to improve KCE, and subsequent strong commitment has delivered strong results to date. This support must not lessen if positive results are to continue. Now is the time for KCE to take stock and reassess the resources needed for the transition to Vote-by-Mail – staffing, possible consulting support for immediate help needed to maintain the Vote-by-Mail schedule, equipment, and financial resources necessary to pay for the foregoing.
- KCE communication with the King County Executive, King County Council, Citizen Elections Oversight Committee (CEOC), and public must be effective to maintain confidence and momentum, and to continue building the idea of shared responsibility for success articulated by the CEOC in 2006.
- KCE leadership must continue to work hard at focusing on an integrated view of the organization. It is natural for people to gravitate toward working in silos; however, KCE's work on process mapping and communication has highlighted the importance of attention to the whole. This approach has resulted in the development of more comprehensive policies and procedures to mitigate the risk of error. The 100% reconciliation of recent elections is a good indicator of their level of performance.
- In order to have the capacity and expertise to successfully implement Vote-by-Mail, become increasingly effective, and sustain good performance, it is essential that KCE maintain a sufficient level of staffing and knowledge capital. This is especially important between now and the November 2008 general election. As stressed by the CEOC, a full leadership team is critical. In addition to the REALS Director and Superintendent of Elections, the Program Managers and supervisors are responsible for:
 - The transition to Vote-by-Mail.
 - The ongoing core election processes.



- The security, communication, information technology, and quality assurance components required to support the core elections processes.

Proactive steps are important to staff retention, especially in light of the move to Renton. Transportation options, work schedule options, training, individual development planning, and recognition programs are examples of such steps.

- The Citizen Election Oversight Committee recommended that KCE become its own Division within King County government. We agree that this change should be considered. In the current environment, elections work requires the full attention of top management and KCE's support services, and competing issues are especially problematic during critical election periods.
- Finally, King County voters may soon be deciding whether the leader of KCE should be an elected official (the current director is appointed). If the result is a new leader for the organization, we would urge that person to become fully informed about recent organizational effectiveness efforts. Further, we would urge that a transition plan be developed to address the time, resources, and full staff engagement necessary for minimizing any loss of productivity and continuing to build on recent improvements.

Final Progress Report

This Final Assessment Report constitutes Waldron & Company's final progress report on Phase II Organizational Effectiveness consulting for King County Elections. All three services within the Waldron scope of work under Contract #T02425T are complete:

- Transition Planning for Vote-by-Mail.
- Management / Leadership Development.
- Organizational Effectiveness Plan.

Below are highlights of each completed service.

Transition Planning For Vote-by-Mail

Waldron Consultants facilitated work of the Transition Leadership Team (TLT) and Transition Manager in a coordinated approach to transition planning. In meeting major milestones, KCE has delivered its required reports on-time:

- Vote-by-Mail Transition Report – February 15, 2007.
- Business case recommendation for upgrading the ballot tabulation system – March 30, 2007.



- Business case recommendation for a ballot tracking and accountability solution – May 15, 2007.
- Regional Voting Center Consulting Group (chaired by the REALS Director) recommendations on regional voting center and ballot drop box locations – July 27, 2007.
- Regular, quarterly reports to the King County Council.

This recent track record has helped establish a new ethic within KCE of on-time delivery.

Over the past two years, a great deal of assessment work was completed by KCE and outside organizations such as the Citizens Elections Oversight Committee, Elections Center, Office of the Secretary of State, and the Independent Task Force on Elections. Waldron Consultants worked with KCE as they addressed all the recommendations. Any resultant activities that are ongoing, along with more recent priorities, are now included within detailed work plans for KCE work units and the OE Plan.

Management / Leadership Development

KCE Coaching Program

Seventeen KCE managers and supervisors participated in the KCE Management/Leadership Coaching Program and KCE Leadership University.

Coaching participants completed an assessment tool called Profiles XT, which enhanced the level of individual self-awareness and team-awareness. Incorporating the assessment information, Waldron Consultants worked with coaching participants as they created individual development plans. The development plans address the following:

- Team building within work units and with peers.
- Supervising and developing staff.
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Improving technical and management skills.
- Communicating effectively.
- Taking initiative.

These plans were discussed with supervisors for feedback and support for proceeding. Ongoing coaching to review progress on development plans continues through August 30, 2007. In addition, the OE Plan outlines ongoing coaching to continue during the transition to Vote-by-Mail through 2008.



KCE Leadership University

The opportunity for managers and supervisors in KCE to learn together as a group is an important component of management and leadership development highlighted in the OE Plan. A total of 25 to 30 managers, supervisors, lead staff, and others participated in the Leadership University training sessions.

The REALS Director worked with Waldron Consultants over the past year to create a timely and targeted curriculum for KCE utilizing the Leadership University model. The curriculum is designed to support KCE organizational effectiveness work and supplements the training currently offered within King County.

The KCE Leadership University is a forum for the leadership team to learn together, take time to reflect, discuss real-world issues, and problem-solve together. It also provides a significant opportunity to focus on team building within work units and with peers. Five Leadership University sessions were conducted covering the following topics:

1. KCE Coaching Program and Team Profile (October 17, 2006).
2. Organization Structure and Effective Meetings (January 29, 2007).
3. Media Training (February 26, 2007).
4. Leadership Agility – Understanding, Managing, and Initiating Change (March 26, 2007).
5. Revising the *Mission & Guiding Principles* and review the *Elections Process Hand-off Map* (June 18, 2007).

The OE Plan outlines a schedule for ongoing sessions of KCE Leadership University to continue during the transition to Vote-by-Mail and through 2008.

Organizational Effectiveness Plan

The OE Plan is designed to accomplish the strategy of transitioning to Vote-by-Mail, with proactive and committed leadership driving integrated work plans with measurable results. While the OE Plan establishes ownership at the highest levels of KCE, it intends to have the whole organization own the elections process.

The OE Plan begins with a refreshed statement of KCE's *Mission & Guiding Principles*. It goes on to include key accomplishments, goals for the future, benchmarks for achieving excellence, lead and shared responsibilities, and action steps. The Plan elements are as follows:

- **Strategy**
Transition to Vote-by-Mail and pro-active leadership.
- **Culture**
Philosophy, attitudes, and behavior.



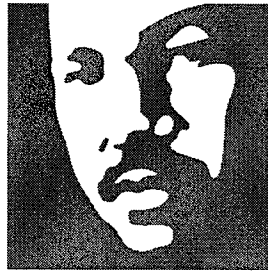
- **Core Processes**
The defining work of KCE in conducting elections.
- **Systems**
Communication, staff development, and budget.
- **Structure**
How people and facilities are organized.
- **Environment**
Public expectations, legislative requirements, new technologies, and financial resources.

It is important to note that the OE Plan focuses on an integrated approach across KCE work units. At the request of the REALS Director, significant work was completed to identify key hand-offs within the overall election process. The result is an *Elections Process Hand-off Map* which will be used by KCE as a tool for depicting progress and reflecting any new hand-off issues that may arise.

Conclusion

KCE leadership and staff have achieved a cultural transformation and established new systems for continuous improvement. Management and leadership development has strengthened collaboration, responsiveness, ownership, and results. The transition to Vote-by-Mail is proceeding in a coordinated, integrated manner. Drawing all that work together, the KCE Organizational Effectiveness Plan provides the foundation for further building and sustaining high performance over the long term.





King County Elections

Organizational Effectiveness Plan

August 15, 2007

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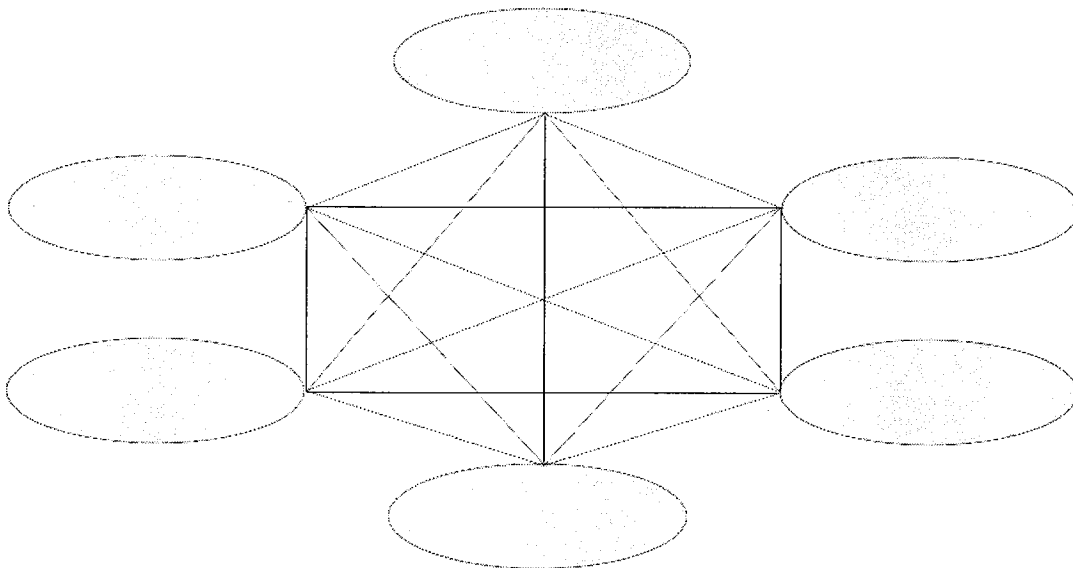
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Overview

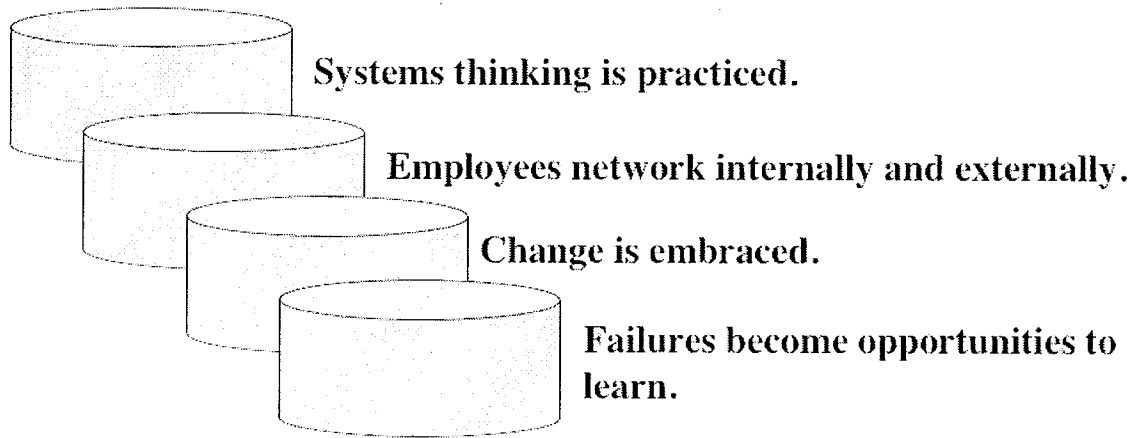
Organizational Effectiveness is driven by:

- A mission that motivates people.
- Clear strategies to achieve that mission.
- Organizational processes and structure aligned with the strategies.
- A culture that supports high performance by individuals and teams.
- The capacity to embrace change.

The Organizational Effectiveness Plan (OE Plan) developed by King County Elections (KCE) and Waldron & Company is prefaced by a refreshed statement of KCE's *Mission & Guiding Principles* to reflect recent improvements and new leadership. The OE Plan itself stresses the integration of its elements as depicted below:



The OE Plan also stresses continuous improvement as a learning organization:



The OE Plan draws together all of KCE's work on building and sustaining a high performing organization, and includes benchmarks for excellence. The OE Plan is the "road map" to continuous improvement and will evolve as KCE implements and executes the plan.

Mission & Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

By conducting accurate, secure, and accessible elections, we provide an opportunity for the people of King County to participate in their government.

Guiding Principles

At King County Elections we PLEDGE that we will:

Plan ahead and continuously improve our efficiency and our effectiveness.

Listen and learn from the public and each other to facilitate open and timely communication.

Educate the public and each other about election processes.

Dedicate ourselves to democracy by conducting fair and impartial elections.

Guide each other to fulfill our mission with excellence.

Encourage everyone's contribution for the success of our team.



STRATEGY

Overview

A well-developed strategy guides an organization like a ship's rudder in a stormy sea. Strategy is defined as the being or character of an organization, describing who we are and how we want to operate. It includes the organization's mission and guiding principles. A clear strategy helps to transform a typical workplace into one that inspires and commits people to do their best to become a high-performing organization.

There are three parts to KCE strategy: 1) Transition to Vote-by-Mail elections, 2) Operating plans that define staff roles and responsibilities in support of the transition to Vote-by-Mail, and 3) Proactive leadership committed to developing and maintaining a high performance team.

Goals

1.1 Transition to Vote-by-Mail:

Complete the transition to Vote-by-Mail in King County with the special election scheduled for April 2008.

1.2 Planning:

Ensure the successful transition to Vote-by-Mail through integration of work unit plans and strategic accountability reviews.

1.3 Leadership:

Demonstrate the proactive and committed leadership needed to support a sustained effort in continuously improving the system by which elections are conducted.



Key Accomplishments: Strategy

KCE's Key Strategic accomplishments for the first and second quarters of 2007 are listed below. This format was designed to be updated quarterly.

First Quarter / Second Quarter 2007	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refined the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Plan and benchmarks as key decisions were made regarding the transition to Vote-by-Mail. Developed an 18-month schedule for implementing key initiatives in the OE Plan, to begin in September 2007. Developed and updated comprehensive work plans for each work unit with specific performance measures identified as appropriate to support the OE Plan and benchmarks. Reviewed and integrated the remaining recommendations from the <i>Updated Elections Recommendation Matrix</i> into work unit plans. Conducted the work of the Vote-by-Mail Transition Leadership Team with emphasis on coordinated project management, shared understanding of project priorities, coordinated messaging, and effective use of time. Many staff participated in KCE Leadership University training sessions and seventeen managers, supervisors, and leads were supported with individual coaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Vote-by-Mail Transition Report</i> was submitted to King County Council on February 15, 2007. A <i>Business Case</i> for ballot tabulation solutions was submitted to King County Council on March 30, 2007. A <i>Business Case</i> for ballot tracking and accountability was submitted to King County Council on May 15, 2007. Recommendations for Regional Voting Center (RVC) and Ballot Drop Box locations were submitted to the King County Council by the RVC Consulting Group on July 27, 2007.
Third Quarter 2007	
Fourth Quarter 2007	



