2004 PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTION

Overview

The election was conducted on the boundaries described in the *Electoral Divisions Act,* which was proclaimed into effect along with the issuance of the writs for the Provincial General Election. Electoral division boundaries had been adjusted following the independent review of the 2002/2003 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission and the May 2003 acceptance of the revised electoral division boundaries by the Legislative Assembly. Order in Council 545/2004 proclaimed the new electoral division boundaries in force on October 25, 2004.

Order in Council 544/2004 dissolved the Twenty-fifth Legislative Assembly on October 25, 2004, and Order 546/2004 signalled the commencement of the Provincial General Election by ordering the Chief Electoral Officer to issue Writs of Election to each of the 83 Returning Officers listed on page 69 of this report, pursuant to Section 40 of the *Election Act*.

Challenges

Albertans went to the polls on November 22, 2004 for the third time in six months; our event was preceded by the federal election on June 28, 2004 and the municipal elections on October 18, 2004. Election process varies between events due to the differences in legislation governing each event and this can be confusing to the electorate. It was a particular challenge to effectively communicate to electors that elector eligibility criteria, polling places, voting hours, and voting options varied from the two electoral events preceding the Provincial General Election.

This challenge was compounded by the fact that electors went to the polls on new electoral division boundaries. Electors had become accustomed to the names of provincial electoral divisions that were in place since 1997, or electoral boundary names used during the municipal or federal elections.

Elections Alberta enhanced advertising, Internet presence and expanded the hours of operation for the phone-in Voter Information Centre to address these challenges. The website provided information such as polling place location, electoral division maps, hours of voting at the advance polls and on Polling Day, candidate listings and linkages (where available), and various voting options during over 470,000 site visits. The Voter Information Centre responded to over 16,000 phone-in queries, mainly regarding polling place location and the election process.

Other challenges arose from the administration of the Senate Nominee Election. It was important to notify electors of the event and to provide clear instruction for marking ballots. Unlike the Provincial General Election, electors were able to mark their ballots for up to four candidates.

This challenge extended to the training of election officers who were called upon to answer questions related to the historic event and, later, to count the ballots. Directions were provided verbally by election officers, in written form via the posters in each polling place, and in a multilingual written translation for electors who required that service.

Administering the two parallel events, and particularly tabulating the unofficial results, was a time-consuming process. Unofficial results were not available as quickly as in the past. Although notification of the expected delay was provided by Elections Alberta in advance, the delay in viewing unofficial results frustrated some stakeholders.

Election Training

Returning Officers had selected individuals to assist them with the conduct of the election in advance of the event. Staff appointments were made upon receipt of the Writ of Election.

Each Returning Officer had an election clerk to assist them and to replace them in the event that the Returning Officer was unable to fulfil their duties. A legislative change allowed the recruitment of an additional staff person for the first time: an administrative assistant, whose responsibilities included data entry and Special Ballot poll management. Sixty-four Returning Officers hired an administrative assistant on a full-time basis, while 14 hired an individual part-time and 5 did not hire an administrative assistant.

Elections Alberta provided training to Returning Officers, election clerks and administrative assistants to prepare them to fulfil their duties. They received appropriate resources to provide standardized training to supervisory deputy returning officers, registration officers and deputy returning officers. As in past elections, poll clerks were briefed on their responsibilities by the deputy returning officers and followed the directions provided in the updated "Guide for Polling Place Officials".

Returning Officers used those resources to train 7,270 electors to staff the polls on Polling Day. This demanding task is accomplished by Returning Officers in the latter part of the twenty-eight day election period. As with the enumeration, the election is a very labour-intensive process: 72% of the election budget is allocated to election officers' fees.

Advertising

The maps completed by Returning Officers in March 2004 were used in advertisements and posted at the polling places. Maps had been updated with new civic address data, where available, to ensure currency and accuracy.

In accordance with legislation, maps of each electoral division were advertised in newspapers of general circulation on two occasions during the election period. The first advertisement appeared in the first week of November, and included Election Proclamation information, Returning Officers' office hours and contact information, qualifications for Special Ballot voters, and information regarding the availability of level access in the Returning Officers' offices and advance polling places.

The second advertisement appeared in mid November, and included information on regular, advance and Special Ballot polls, along with the polling place maps.

Both advertisements appeared as inserts in the Edmonton and Calgary daily newspapers. Inserts included information for electoral divisions that shared a boundary with the cities, along with the electoral divisions within the two cities. As an added service, both inserts were hand-delivered to all residences of non-subscribers in Edmonton, Calgary and most urban centres in adjacent electoral divisions to best disseminate information to all electors.

Additional generic advertisements were published throughout the election period to encourage electors to obtain necessary polling day information from the Voter Information Centre or the Elections Alberta website. The advertisements appeared in 9 daily newspapers and 103 weekly newspapers.

Monday, November 22 is Election Day

ALBERTA

Polls for the Provincial General Election and Senate Nominee Election are open from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm

Are you ready to vote?

You will need to know:

- If you are qualified to vote
- How to vote if you plan to be away on Polling Day
- What identification you must have if you need to be added to the List of Electors on Polling Day

If you need information, the **Elections Alberta Voter Information Centre** is available to help you.

In Edmonton:
Call Elections Alberta
at 422-VOTE (422-8683)

Outside Edmonton:
Call toll-free 1-877-422-VOTE (8683) or
310-0000 and 422-VOTE

Hours of Operation:
Monday to Friday   8:00 am to 9:00 pm
Saturdays and Sundays   9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Election Day   8:00 am to 8:00 pm

Electors with TTY Units call 427-9999 in Edmonton.
Other locations dial 1-800-232-7215.

Additional election information is available at www.electionsalberta.ab.ca

Watch your local newspaper for additional information about polling places, advance polls and more!

Elector Information

Electors had access to information throughout the election period from a number of sources. Information was compiled and made available on a timely basis, given that all activities in the electoral cycle occur following the issuance of the Writs of Election.

Returning Officers secured office space as soon as the Writs were issued, and contact information for them was available early in the election period. Offices were open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays and from noon to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Extended hours were offered on key dates of the election period.

All Returning Officers had received furniture and election supplies by day three of the election period; in the interim, they were able to provide prospective candidates with necessary documentation and electors with Special Ballot packages. Returning Officers were able to respond to stakeholders' immediate concerns even though the 80 tonnes of election supplies took three days to deliver across the province.

Locations of polling places were selected after the issuance of the Writs and made available to callers by day five of the election period, both on the website and through telephone contact.

Candidates' nominations closed at 2:00 p.m. on the fourteenth day following the issuance of the Writs, and a listing of candidates for 82 electoral divisions was available on the website later that day. A complete listing of candidates for the electoral division of Bonnyville-Cold Lake was added the following day, following repair of the telecommunications cables which had been severed, cutting off telephone and Internet service to that region.

Elections Alberta's website provided answers to commonly asked questions regarding polling place locations, eligibility criteria and availability of voter assistance. For the first time, electors were able to determine their polling place location following data entry of their civic address or rural legal land description. Electors were also able to confirm their inclusion on the List of Electors after entering the personal information necessary to confirm their identity and prohibit information gathering by unauthorized sources.

The website also included statistical information from previous events, an election calendar highlighting the key dates in the election period, contact information for Returning Officers across the province, and a listing of candidates for each electoral division (with website links, where available).

At the close of polls on Polling Day, electors were able to obtain unofficial results, as that information was entered by Returning Officers. The portion of the website containing poll by poll results, and aggregate results by party, was visited over 112,000 times on Polling Day.

The Voter Information Centre handled over 16,000 calls throughout the election period, including 6,327 on Polling Day. Operators were available 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekends. Operators answered general inquiries and directed electors to their polling places.

Electors who were unable to obtain the information they required from the Returning Officer, Voter Information Centre or website were able to contact Elections Alberta by email. Email queries were answered on a timely basis, particularly the 447 where-to-vote queries received on Polling Day.

This combination of resources was designed to accommodate electors round-the-clock. Electors have, in past, expressed their concern that providing information during regular business hours does not always accommodate their schedules. The increased hours of operation and means for providing information have been adopted to address that concern.

Election Calendar

The election calendar posted on the website highlighted the following key dates:

Monday, October 25	Issuance of the Writs of Election to Returning Officers in the 83 electoral divisions
Saturday, October 30	First day for electors to be added to the List of Electors in the Returning Officers' offices
Monday, November 8 at 2:00 PM	Last opportunity for Candidates to file Nomination Papers in the Returning Officers' offices
Saturday, November 13 at 4:00 PM	Last opportunity for electors to be added to the List of Electors in the Returning Officers' offices
Thursday, November 18	First day to vote in the Advance Polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)
Friday, November 19	Second day to vote in the Advance Polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)
Saturday, November 20	Final day to vote in the Advance Polls (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM)
Monday, November 22 POLLING DAY	**Polls open from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM; unofficial results web-posted**
Thursday, December 2	Official results announced by the Returning Officers in the 83 electoral divisions

Legislative and Procedural Changes

A comprehensive review of the *Election Act* resulted in almost 200 changes that were in effect for the 2004 electoral events. Many revisions were made to clarify or update the legislation, or to allow for increased administrative efficiencies. Others were to enhance the front-line service provided to electors.

The following are highlights of some of the changes to the *Election Act*:

Access to publicly held elector information, on a cost recovery basis, was expanded to allow Elections Alberta to economically update the Register of Electors using data held by public agencies.

Enumerators were able to contact electors by telephone, where distances were a consideration, and to accept elector information provided by telephone.

Access to multiple dwelling sites (including apartments and condominiums) was clarified to facilitate entry by enumerators and campaign workers. Returning Officers provided identification to enumerators and campaign workers to assist in this regard.

Advance poll eligibility has been expanded to accommodate electors who believe they will be unable to vote on Polling Day.

Two new election officer positions were available: administrative assistants, within the offices of the Returning Officers; and registration officers, within polling places holding multiple polling stations. Both positions were instituted to improve service to electors, the latter by streamlining the process of adding electors to the Lists of Electors on Polling Day.

Poll Books were revised to include the List of Electors. This streamlined the voting process for electors whose names were included in the Register of Electors.

Election officers were able to provide cover-off of any position within a polling place to avoid disruptions in service due to sudden absence or illness. Polling stations could be opened with only one election officer in attendance, if necessary, to avoid possible delays.

Electors who are unable to vote in the usual manner due to a physical incapacity or inability to read the ballot have expanded options available to them. In addition to receiving assistance from election officers, they may be assisted by a friend who has accompanied them. An elector may also enlist a friend to provide translation services.

Nominated Candidates

Nomination day was Monday, November 8, 2004. That was the last day on which prospective candidates were able to file nomination papers with the Returning Officer in the electoral division in which they wished to contest the election.

By 2:00 p.m., when nominations closed, 450 candidates had filed nomination papers. This represented the greatest number of candidates to contest a provincial election in Alberta's history. The distribution of candidates by political party affiliation follows:

Alberta Alliance	83
Alberta Greens	49
Alberta Liberal Party	82
Alberta New Democratic Party	83
Alberta Party	4
Communist Party – Alberta	2
Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta	83
Separation Party of Alberta	12
Social Credit	42
Independent	10

No candidate withdrew following the close of nominations and no candidate was elected by acclamation.

Special Ballot Polls

By legislation, a Special Ballot poll was established in each of the 83 electoral divisions. The poll is established to facilitate voting for electors who are not able to vote at the advance polls, or on Polling Day. It is often used by electors who are physically incapacitated or who travel, work or attend an educational institution outside of their own electoral divisions for extended periods. Availability of the Special Ballot was advertised in newspapers and on the website.

Special Ballot brochures were distributed to stakeholder groups whose members tend to use this voting option. Brochures were distributed on a proactive basis to trade unions, travel clubs, post-secondary educational institutions and the Canadian Armed Forces to allow them time to share information with their membership. This increased awareness directed electors' early attention to this voting option.

The Special Ballot is often viewed as a mail-in ballot, but ballots may also be completed in the Returning Officer's office or hand-delivered by an individual at the elector's request. While every effort is made to provide a Special Ballot to an elector, it is a legislative requirement that an elector must request his or her own Special Ballot: it cannot be requested on his or her behalf by another person. This is to ensure that the Special Ballot is issued to, and completed by, the appropriate elector.

Electors may request a Special Ballot in person, by telephone, by facsimile, by electronic mail or in writing. The Special Ballot package uses a series of envelopes to protect the confidentiality of the ballot, and contains an elector's declaration identifying the reason for use, along with an undertaking confirming that the elector has not yet voted and will not vote a second time.

In the same way that each elector must vote within their own electoral division, each elector must request a Special Ballot from the Returning Officer in his or her own electoral division and return it to the office from which it was issued. Although Special Ballot requests may be made electronically, original Special Ballots must be submitted to ensure authenticity and confidentiality.

Returning Officers sent Special Ballots throughout the province and even out of the country. Completed Special Ballot envelopes returned from Europe and Asia were commonplace. Electors were able to request a Special Ballot at the beginning of the election period and were able to vote for the candidate or political party of their choice. This helped to ensure that electors had adequate time to complete and return the Special Ballot by the close of polls on Polling Day.

A total of 7,358 valid Special Ballots were received by the close of polls on Polling Day, providing a valuable option to electors who otherwise may have been unable to exercise their franchise.

Advance Polls

By legislation, advance polls were established in at least one location in each electoral division on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to Polling Day. Up to four advance poll locations may be established to ensure elector convenience in electoral divisions that cover a large geographic area; additional locations may be established, if deemed necessary by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Advance polls were open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on November 18, 19 and 20, 2004, at sites that offered level access. Returning Officers' offices were used, where appropriate.

These polls were established to accommodate electors who were unable to vote on Polling Day due to:

- physical incapacity,
- absence,
- acting as an election officer, candidate, official agent or scrutineer whose official duties precluded their attendance at the polling place established for their own polling subdivision, or
- an inability to vote on Polling Day.

A total of 44,807 valid ballots were cast at 165 advance polls.

Mobile Polls

By legislation, mobile polls were established on Polling Day in treatment centres and in supportive living facilities with ten or more resident inpatients or electors, where consultation with facility staff found the service to be appropriate.

Mobile poll brochures were distributed to facility administrators early in the election period to inform them of the mobile poll process. Posters were provided to inform residents of the time and location for mobile polling within their facility to allow electors to plan appropriately for Polling Day.

Mobile polls accommodated electors within the facilities during hours agreed upon by facility staff, and were conducted in a fixed location, or by going bed-to-bed, or by using both methods, to best meet electors' needs.

All electors identified by the facility staff as being well enough to vote are eligible to vote in the electoral division in which the facility is located. In accordance with

legislation, facility staff can restrict participation to the deputy returning officer, poll clerk, interpreter, and facility representative, if appropriate for the well-being of the residents or inpatients.

A total of 17,639 valid ballots were cast at 477 mobile poll locations.

Polling Day

By legislation, polls were open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Monday, November 22, 2004. There were 5,357 polling stations established across the province, each staffed by a deputy returning officer and poll clerk. Supervisory deputy returning officers were hired in polling places with multiple stations to assist in directing electors to the correct polling station. Registration officers were hired to assist electors whose names were not on the Lists of Electors, which expedited the process for all electors.

Election officers were responsible for setting up the polling places, taking the vote, swearing-in electors, conducting the unofficial count and returning all election material to the Returning Officers in a secure manner.

Election officers were also responsible for answering electors' inquiries and for working with the scrutineers appointed by candidates to observe Polling Day proceedings. Both election officers and scrutineers are to be commended for their cooperative efforts in ensuring fairness and transparency in the process.

The role of election officers also includes the collection of information that will be used in updating the Register of Electors. Polling Day is an excellent opportunity to collect new and updated information from electors for use in refreshing the Register and subsequent Lists of Electors.

At the close of polls, election officers conducted the unofficial count for the Provincial General Election and the Senate Nominee Election, and telephoned results to the appropriate Returning Officer. All results were communicated in a timely manner and were made available in Returning Officers' offices. For the first time, staff in Returning Officers' offices data entered the unofficial results as they arrived and posted that information to the website. Interested parties were able to view poll-by-poll results, as well as results aggregated for the entire province, as they were posted. The information systems capability will be enhanced prior to the next electoral event in order to expedite the web-posting of unofficial results.

Additions to the List of Electors

A total of 70,037 electors were added to the Lists of Electors during the Revisions Period and on Polling Day. This figure includes electors who did not provide information during the enumeration, those who moved, and those who attained the age, residency or citizenship requirements following the enumeration.

On average, 13 electors were sworn in at each regular polling station. Areas of high mobility or significant recent growth experienced the highest number of additions.

The Register of Electors contained 1,931,250 names following the Provincial General Enumeration. Names in the Register were used to create the Lists of Electors provided to registered political parties in October 2004 to meet the legislated requirement for providing a List of Electors in the fourth year following an election.

The number of names in the Register of Electors increased to 2,001,287 by the close of polls on Polling Day for the November 22, 2004 Provincial General Election. Names added during the Revisions Period and on Polling Day were included at that point.

By March 2005, the Register of Electors contained 1,982,843 names. Electors' names had been removed from previous addresses and at electors' requests following out-of-province moves. This final tally is also partially attributable to the number of electors who withheld consent for participation in the Register of Electors.

In order to receive a ballot, an elector's name must appear on the List of Electors. It is not mandatory, however, to participate in the Register of Electors. Electors were encouraged to participate to increase the accuracy of future Lists and to reduce the number of electors having to swear-in to vote at the next electoral event. Still, some electors prefer not to have their names included in the Register on an ongoing basis, in spite of the fact that their information is used for electoral purposes only.

Opting out of the Register is one of the reasons that a certain number of Polling Day swear-ins must be anticipated at all electoral events. The addition of the registration officer on Polling Day helps to ensure that these electors are added to the List of Electors without delaying those electors who expect a streamlined voting process subsequent to their provision of Register information prior to Polling Day.

Accuracy of the Lists of Electors

Accurate, current Lists of Electors are essential both for campaigning and effective Polling Day administration. The Lists of Electors distributed to registered political parties in October 2004, and subsequently used at the polls, were compared to the post-election Lists produced in March 2005 to gauge accuracy.

It is recognized that an indeterminate number of eligible electors actively choose not to participate in the electoral process, so it is acknowledged that the List of Electors does not contain every eligible elector. At the same time, a benchmark must be established to gauge accuracy. For that reason, the assumption is made that the post-election Lists of Electors are one hundred per cent accurate, since they include all electors who choose to provide information during the enumeration, the Revisions Period or on Polling Day.

Table 3 on page 15 illustrates the accuracy of the Lists of Electors prepared following the enumeration in comparison to the post-election Lists. Overall, the Lists were found to be 97.4% accurate. Only 2.6% of electors that appeared on the March 2005 Lists of Electors were added during the Revisions Period and on Polling Day.

Official Results

The official results were announced by each of the 83 Returning Officers on Thursday, December 2, 2004.

No controverted election petition was filed for the election.

Judicial Recount

One judicial recount was requested, pursuant to Section 144 of the *Election Act*. The unofficial count conducted on Polling Day in the electoral division of Edmonton-Castle Downs showed a five vote margin of victory for the Alberta Liberal Party candidate over the second place candidate, representing the Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta.

Returning Officers in all electoral divisions are required to perform an official count of ballots. This began on Tuesday, November 23 in Edmonton-Castle Downs. The two leading candidates were present, or had representatives present, throughout the official count. The official results announced by the Returning Officer on December 2 reduced the margin of victory for the Alberta Liberal Candidate to three votes.

The Returning Officer's decision was appealed by the Progressive Conservative candidate, and a judicial recount of certain disputed ballots was conducted. The Order filed in the Court of Queen's Bench on December 9 confirmed a three vote margin of victory for the Liberal candidate, although the assessment of certain ballots varied from that of the Returning Officer.

The Progressive Conservative candidate appealed the decision of the judicial recount to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal deemed ten ballots as valid which had been disallowed previously: eight for the Progressive Conservative candidate, and two for the Liberal candidate. *Lukaszuk v. Kibermanis, 2005 ABCA 26* cites, in part:

> *Voting is the lifeblood of democracy and courts should be very slow to disenfranchise voters on the basis of a technical non-compliance with voting instructions. Restrictions on this right should be narrowly interpreted and strictly limited. This is particularly true in our pluralistic and multi-cultural society where citizens enjoy differing levels of education, language comprehension and physical dexterity. Therefore, in a conflict between principle and technicality, principle must govern.*

> The judgment is available at www.albertacourts.ab.ca

As a result of the decision, the Progressive Conservative candidate was declared elected by three votes.

Custody and Inspection of Election Documents

Polling Day documentation for 82 electoral divisions was returned to Elections Alberta following the announcement of the Official Results, in accordance with Section 142 of the *Election Act*. In accordance with that Section, Polling Day documentation for Edmonton-Castle Downs was retained by the Returning Officer until the conclusion of the judicial recount.

Section 152 authorizes candidates and their official agents to review all Polling Day documentation for their electoral division, with the exception of the ballots, in the thirty-day period following the publication of the names of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Alberta Gazette. Seven candidates and official agents availed themselves of this opportunity.

During this same time period, candidates and their official agents are entitled to obtain copies of the Poll Books used at the election. Thirty-eight candidates and official agents requested copies on a cost-recovery basis.

Continuous Register of Electors Management

Elector information collected throughout the election period and on Polling Day was incorporated into the Register of Electors, where permission was granted by the elector, for preparation of future Lists of Electors.

Lists were updated following the election and distributed to registered political parties and Members of the Legislative Assembly under Section 19(2) of the *Election Act*. Restrictions for use are contained at Section 20, to ensure elector information is used appropriately. Penalties for misuse include fines up to $100,000, or a term of imprisonment up to one year, or both. Lists were provided in an electronic format to facilitate use by recipients and to promote security through the use of passwords.

Section 18 directs that both registered political parties and Independent Members of the Legislative Assembly receive updated Lists on a regular basis. Updated Lists must be provided immediately after the election, two years after the election, during the fourth and fifth years following the election, and following any updates made to the Register subsequent to electoral division boundary revisions.

With any large database, it is a major challenge to compare and correct entries against other data sets. It is particularly challenging when some entries cannot be matched conclusively because of incomplete information. This is particularly difficult in the case of common names where birth date and previous address information is unavailable.

Maintaining the accuracy and currency of Lists of Electors will become an increasing priority at Elections Alberta. Possible data sources are being reviewed for use in updating Register information on an ongoing basis. Recent legislative amendments will support the economical acquisition of accurate, timely data held by public agencies. Data collection will continue to reconcile the need for updated information with the electors' rights to privacy.

Candidates' Deposits

The candidate's nomination deposit prescribed by legislation increased from $200 for the 2001 Provincial General Election to $500 for this event. The increase is not as substantial as it appears due to the refund policy. All candidates who win or who receive half the votes of the winning candidate receive half of the deposit back. In addition, those who file candidate campaign financial statements within the prescribed period receive half of the deposit back.

In accordance with Section 62 of the *Election Act*, 130 candidates received a refund of half the amount of their candidate nomination deposits for receiving the most votes, or at least fifty per cent of the votes received by the winning candidate.

In addition, 435 candidates received a refund of half the amount of their candidate nomination deposits by filing a financial statement within the legislated timeline.

A breakdown follows:

	Number nominated	Number received refund based on votes received	Number received refund for timely filing
Alberta Alliance	83	2	74
Alberta Greens	49	0	47
Alberta Liberal Party	82	43	82
Alberta New Democratic Party	83	7	82
Alberta Party	4	0	4
Communist Party – Alberta	2	0	2
Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta	83	78	83
Separation Party of Alberta	12	0	11
Social Credit	42	0	41
Independent	10	0	9

In total, $83,750 was forfeited and was paid through Elections Alberta to the Minister of Finance for deposit to the General Revenue Fund.

Cost Summary Overview

2004 General Election

Election Officials' Fees and Associated Costs

Total reported by all Electoral Divisions		$ 5,969,844

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Materials and Supplies	$ 53,874	
Contract Services	563,171	
Advertising	33,381	
Temporary Staff—wages and benefits	103,037	
Freight and Postage	27,240	
Rentals	24,349	
Travel	36,165	
Telephone and Communications	33,625	874,842
Total Expenses:		$ 6,844,686
Number of Names on the November 2004 List of Electors		2,001,287
Average cost per name on List of Electors		$ 3.42

Table 5: 2004 General Election Cost Summary By Electoral Division (Rounded To The Nearest Dollar)

Electoral Division	Returning Officers				Election Clerks	Admin. Assistants	Election Staff					Other		Total Cost
	1 Fees	2 Rental	3 Advertising	4 Printing	5 Fees	6 Fees	7 SDRO	8 RGO	9 DRO	10 Poll Clerk	11 Support Staff	12 Travel	13 Poll Rental	
1 Dunvegan-Central Peace	8,583	3,965	2,604	898	5,877	0	550	510	14,355	9,450	115	3,300	6,975	57,181
2 Calgary-Bow	9,929	7,121	3,898	2,594	7,507	3,212	3,025	3,060	17,575	11,250	872	141	5,625	75,808
3 Calgary-Buffalo	10,092	8,583	3,898	1,620	6,783	3,093	3,025	3,570	16,254	10,581	11,232	715	5,715	85,161
4 Calgary-Cross	9,733	7,522	3,898	1,425	6,759	2,726	2,475	2,805	14,235	9,150	529	186	4,875	66,318
5 Calgary-Currie	9,870	8,207	3,898	1,628	6,754	2,877	4,350	3,060	17,525	10,950	2,040	304	6,000	77,462
6 Calgary-East	9,774	2,896	3,898	1,540	6,868	2,877	3,025	2,805	15,645	9,900	966	0	5,450	65,643
7 Calgary-Egmont	9,998	8,436	3,898	1,258	7,511	3,534	2,475	1,785	17,055	10,950	351	147	5,850	73,248
8 Calgary-Elbow	10,175	5,598	3,898	2,575	7,356	3,242	3,850	2,040	17,290	11,100	173	143	5,925	73,365
9 Calgary-Fish Creek	10,231	3,089	3,898	1,036	7,369	2,733	2,200	510	14,940	9,600	245	102	5,175	61,127
10 Calgary-Foothills	10,658	7,374	3,898	2,240	6,951	3,541	3,300	2,805	16,215	10,350	1,170	231	5,850	74,583
11 Calgary-Fort	9,347	5,786	3,898	1,499	6,560	1,961	3,025	2,805	14,655	9,450	253	7	5,250	64,496
12 Calgary-Glenmore	9,554	4,102	3,898	1,110	6,898	3,432	3,025	2,805	15,645	10,050	686	30	5,625	66,859
13 Calgary-Hays	10,132	7,857	3,898	1,073	7,178	2,877	1,650	2,295	15,930	10,200	124	0	4,138	67,352
14 Calgary-Lougheed	9,619	3,220	3,898	1,110	7,374	3,322	2,750	3,000	15,980	10,050	115	46	4,950	65,435
15 Calgary-Mackay	10,506	9,377	3,898	1,832	7,612	3,088	3,575	4,080	18,750	12,000	1,472	238	6,225	82,653
16 Calgary-McCall	9,115	8,973	3,898	1,430	6,736	3,651	2,475	3,880	14,285	9,150	1,054	29	5,025	69,700
17 Calgary-Montrose	9,762	11,111	3,898	1,425	6,760	3,096	2,750	0	13,765	9,000	2,686	295	4,800	69,347
18 Calgary-Mountain View	10,731	9,618	3,898	1,730	6,890	3,502	4,125	4,080	18,800	11,800	3,762	275	5,955	85,166
19 Calgary-North Hill	9,935	10,139	3,898	1,425	6,522	2,650	3,025	2,040	17,240	10,500	643	728	5,500	74,245
20 Calgary-North West	10,777	6,426	3,898	2,635	7,799	2,877	3,575	5,100	21,570	14,100	1,602	0	7,500	87,857
21 Calgary-Nose Hill	9,378	4,718	3,898	1,526	6,600	3,242	2,750	2,550	16,165	10,400	288	286	5,625	67,426
22 Calgary-Shaw	10,375	6,388	3,898	1,073	7,388	2,883	2,475	2,805	17,005	10,950	933	0	5,625	71,799
23 Calgary-Varsity	9,810	10,067	3,898	1,654	7,392	2,093	5,500	5,155	19,740	12,300	2,530	179	6,675	86,992
24 Calgary-West	10,509	7,153	3,898	1,933	8,148	3,212	3,850	3,060	19,035	12,300	759	164	6,375	80,397
25 Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview	9,407	5,295	4,441	1,523	6,615	2,932	3,850	3,570	15,425	9,450	184	95	5,550	68,337
26 Edmonton-Calder	9,439	5,575	4,441	1,650	6,401	3,139	3,850	3,568	17,105	10,950	1,116	317	5,850	73,401
27 Edmonton-Castle Downs	11,662	4,538	4,441	1,620	7,790	2,880	3,575	3,825	19,035	12,150	2,334	209	5,995	80,053
28 Edmonton-Centre	9,197	5,960	4,441	1,300	6,816	3,132	4,400	4,590	19,270	12,300	711	313	6,600	79,031
29 Edmonton-Decore	9,587	5,068	4,441	1,894	6,756	3,345	2,750	2,550	15,930	9,900	0	125	5,475	67,821
30 Edmonton-Ellerslie	9,514	7,852	4,441	1,080	6,999	2,862	2,750	3,010	15,225	9,750	56	308	5,475	69,322
31 Edmonton-Glenora	9,967	5,025	4,441	1,960	6,566	743	3,575	1,020	15,695	10,200	552	18	5,175	64,939
32 Edmonton-Gold Bar	10,197	4,785	4,441	1,152	7,234	2,883	3,575	2,805	18,415	11,850	190	82	6,675	74,285
SUBTOTAL	317,564	211,823	127,786	50,447	224,768	91,638	101,150	91,543	535,754	342,081	39,740	9,014	183,503	2,326,810

Table 5: 2004 General Election Cost Summary By Electoral Division
(Rounded To The Nearest Dollar)

Electoral Division	Returning Officers				Election Clerks	Admin. Assistants	Election Staff					Other		Total Cost
	1 Fees	2 Rental	3 Advertising	4 Printing	5 Fees	6 Fees	7 SDRO	8 RGO	9 DRO	10 Poll Clerk	11 Support Staff	12 Travel	13 Poll Rental	
33 Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood	9,786	4,693	4,441	1,400	6,894	2,877	4,125	3,825	17,540	10,850	0	52	5,775	72,258
34 Edmonton-Manning	10,195	3,764	4,441	1,700	6,814	2,775	3,850	3,570	17,995	11,400	0	48	6,375	72,927
35 Edmonton-McClung	9,677	8,265	4,441	2,054	7,258	3,315	3,575	3,570	16,820	10,650	601	186	6,075	76,487
36 Edmonton-Meadowlark	9,518	6,797	4,441	1,624	7,046	3,096	2,750	2,805	16,635	10,650	105	174	5,475	71,116
37 Edmonton-Mill Creek	10,133	4,134	4,441	1,152	7,119	2,883	3,300	3,060	16,735	10,800	725	258	5,250	69,991
38 Edmonton-Mill Woods	9,866	5,816	4,441	1,320	6,566	2,877	3,575	3,315	16,165	10,200	0	61	5,700	69,903
39 Edmonton-Riverview	10,174	8,436	4,441	1,470	7,228	2,541	3,850	3,825	18,565	11,700	0	129	6,450	78,810
40 Edmonton-Rutherford	9,536	5,522	4,441	1,080	7,073	0	3,025	2,027	15,880	10,425	682	76	5,550	65,317
41 Edmonton-Strathcona	10,077	4,176	4,441	1,224	7,179	3,177	4,125	2,805	16,350	10,500	620	169	5,850	70,692
42 Edmonton-Whitemud	10,529	8,775	4,441	2,852	7,661	3,418	3,575	4,645	20,160	12,900	1,967	226	7,125	88,274
43 Airdrie-Chestermere	10,499	5,937	6,527	1,933	7,476	1,452	3,300	3,315	19,020	12,300	1,742	2,439	7,043	82,983
44 Athabasca-Redwater	10,179	4,661	9,188	1,017	7,144	2,212	2,200	2,295	20,145	13,050	257	3,938	9,330	85,617
45 Banff-Cochrane	9,437	5,035	2,756	2,399	6,330	3,315	1,375	2,550	15,830	10,050	278	2,424	5,570	67,348
46 Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock	9,714	4,944	3,049	1,190	6,945	2,877	1,650	1,020	18,635	12,150	64	3,747	7,385	73,370
47 Battle River-Wainwright	8,948	2,928	4,867	1,664	6,618	0	550	255	17,460	11,250	829	3,151	3,990	62,511
48 Bonnyville-Cold Lake	9,258	5,597	2,508	1,680	5,813	3,096	825	765	15,495	10,050	16	4,297	6,225	65,625
49 Cardston-Taber-Warner	9,263	2,461	1,627	970	6,560	3,139	1,375	765	15,815	10,350	334	4,284	4,205	61,148
50 Cypress-Medicine Hat	9,529	3,924	2,069	1,713	6,979	2,877	2,200	1,275	17,325	11,250	807	3,132	7,475	70,555
51 Drayton Valley-Calmar	9,234	5,786	4,067	1,933	6,411	3,205	825	765	16,015	10,350	197	2,310	7,500	68,597
52 Drumheller-Stettler	9,097	3,099	6,642	1,777	6,568	3,552	1,100	1,275	17,460	11,370	359	4,422	4,140	70,859
53 Foothills-Rocky View	9,788	7,619	8,313	1,036	7,178	2,950	2,200	1,530	14,640	9,600	294	3,449	6,095	74,691
54 Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo	10,609	8,689	2,830	2,350	6,790	3,827	2,750	2,295	15,965	10,350	1,242	1,843	6,300	75,840
55 Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville	9,891	8,136	7,369	1,632	6,783	2,744	3,800	6,690	18,910	12,550	248	2,333	7,806	88,891
56 Grande Prairie-Smoky	9,913	4,188	3,398	1,085	6,916	2,877	2,200	2,040	19,340	12,600	103	3,558	8,025	76,242
57 Grande Prairie-Wapiti	9,634	6,323	2,091	1,085	6,747	2,733	2,475	2,295	16,250	10,500	552	2,738	6,900	70,322
58 Highwood	9,978	5,287	7,232	1,851	7,055	3,757	1,650	3,265	15,595	10,050	610	2,092	3,091	71,513
59 Innisfail-Sylvan Lake	9,643	3,659	2,898	1,375	7,090	2,986	1,650	1,275	17,325	11,250	0	2,248	5,748	67,146
60 Lac La Biche-St. Paul	7,686	3,556	2,777	1,376	6,318	3,205	1,100	1,020	14,875	9,750	0	3,766	6,600	62,030
61 Lacombe-Ponoka	10,914	8,539	3,637	1,396	7,393	2,883	2,200	1,835	17,880	11,550	499	4,490	3,935	77,150
62 Leduc-Beaumont-Devon	10,568	1,558	7,516	1,390	7,476	1,452	2,750	1,275	19,290	12,150	817	1,285	6,506	74,031
63 Lesser Slave Lake	9,890	5,637	1,547	2,303	6,625	2,883	550	510	14,855	9,450	236	5,844	5,250	65,581
64 Lethbridge-East	9,964	5,975	2,391	1,284	7,391	3,096	3,300	2,805	17,760	11,400	835	1,384	6,000	73,587
SUBTOTAL	313,125	173,916	139,710	50,315	221,444	88,076	77,775	74,562	548,730	353,445	15,014	70,553	194,743	2,321,409

Table 5: 2004 General Election Cost Summary By Electoral Division
(Rounded To The Nearest Dollar)

Electoral Division	Returning Officers				Election Clerks	Admin. Assistants	Election Staff					Other		Total Cost
	1 Fees	2 Rental	3 Advertising	4 Printing	5 Fees	6 Fees	7 SDRO	8 RGO	9 DRO	10 Poll Clerk	11 Support Staff	12 Travel	13 Poll Rental	
65 Lethbridge-West	9,986	3,962	2,391	1,088	7,112	3,281	3,850	4,235	15,510	10,050	679	1,232	3,620	66,996
66 Little Bow	8,896	5,306	2,623	1,323	6,314	1,726	1,650	0	16,050	10,500	150	1,627	3,130	59,294
67 Livingstone-Macleod	9,300	2,276	3,383	2,099	6,745	3,270	1,650	1,530	16,185	10,650	380	2,040	4,040	63,548
68 Medicine Hat	10,392	4,390	1,754	1,920	7,373	0	2,475	1,530	17,635	11,250	516	1,561	6,825	67,619
69 Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills	9,448	4,554	4,784	1,839	6,719	2,883	1,650	1,275	16,100	10,500	0	3,039	2,670	65,462
70 Peace River	9,034	5,460	3,782	2,084	6,067	2,877	1,100	510	14,790	9,600	64	4,921	6,750	67,038
71 Red Deer-North	9,825	7,989	1,644	1,198	6,819	3,764	3,025	2,550	16,870	10,625	160	1,229	5,850	71,548
72 Red Deer-South	10,443	6,296	2,613	1,524	7,542	2,198	3,800	2,805	15,980	10,200	0	1,028	5,700	70,129
73 Rocky Mountain House	9,405	3,651	2,997	998	6,349	2,726	2,475	1,785	16,385	10,500	184	2,739	3,547	63,742
74 Sherwood Park	10,459	5,669	6,178	1,530	7,402	2,883	4,675	4,335	17,290	10,950	613	149	6,375	78,507
75 Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert	11,127	4,483	7,691	1,129	7,622	2,069	3,025	3,010	20,195	13,050	0	1,104	6,371	80,875
76 St. Albert	10,672	5,511	6,397	1,620	7,740	2,877	3,300	4,080	19,170	12,300	1,921	190	1,400	77,177
77 Stony Plain	10,510	3,814	6,415	1,087	7,358	1,452	1,800	1,785	17,055	10,800	58	1,677	6,185	69,996
78 Strathcona	10,955	6,093	8,092	2,210	7,223	0	3,300	3,060	16,485	10,650	1,613	514	6,675	76,871
79 Strathmore-Brooks	10,387	4,275	1,713	960	7,350	3,205	1,375	1,275	17,425	11,400	245	3,063	5,090	67,762
80 Vermilion-Lloydminster	9,934	8,190	6,237	1,298	6,763	3,432	1,100	765	15,715	10,350	0	4,342	7,050	75,176
81 West Yellowhead	8,935	4,147	7,357	1,320	6,147	3,425	1,285	1,275	15,630	10,350	632	2,519	3,405	66,428
82 Wetaskiwin-Camrose	10,009	2,451	4,090	1,470	6,746	2,267	2,750	0	15,715	10,350	583	2,637	4,973	64,040
83 Whitecourt-Ste. Anne	9,503	5,296	4,284	1,309	6,636	3,103	1,100	1,175	16,050	10,350	623	2,485	7,500	69,414
TOTAL	819,910	479,553	351,921	128,768	578,239	227,151	224,310	203,085	1,400,719	899,951	63,174	117,664	475,401	5,969,844

Election Expenses – Fees and Associated Costs

The following information directly relates to the numbered columns presented on pages 37 to 39 in the table entitled 2004 General Election Cost Summary by Electoral Division:

Returning Officers

1. Honorarium, basic fee, fee payment for names recorded on the List of Electors, attendance at the Chief Electoral Officer's training sessions, and employer contributions.

2. Office and equipment rental, training space rental, telephone expenses, freight, postage and miscellaneous costs.

3. Advertising (newspapers of general circulation within each electoral division).

4. Ballot printing and photocopying.

Election Clerks

5. Basic fee, fee per name on the Lists of Electors, attendance at the Chief Electoral Officer's training sessions and employer contributions.

Administrative Assistants

6. Basic Fee, attendance at the Chief Electoral Officer's training session and employer contributions.

Supervisory Deputy Returning Officers

7. Basic fee and training session.

Registration Officers

8. Basic fee and training session.

Deputy Returning Officers

9. Basic fee and training session.

Poll Clerks

10. Basic fee.

Support Staff

11. Support staff wages.

Other

12. Travel for election officers includes reimbursement for kilometres traveled (based on the rate of 38 cents per kilometre). In addition, it includes meals and accommodation expenses for Returning Officers, Election Clerks and Administrative Assistants.

13. Rental of polling places.

Election Fees and Expenses Regulation, August 2004 (Extract)

A **Returning Officer** may be paid the following:

a) a monthly honorarium of $115;
b) a fee of $170 per day for each day of attendance at training sessions called by the Chief Electoral Officer;
c) a fee of $1,525 if a writ of election is issued but no poll is held;
d) a fee of $4,515 if a poll is held, including training of election staff and the conduct of the official count;
e) a fee of 15¢ per name included on the list of electors on polling day;
f) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation* made under the *Public Service Act;*
g) a supplemental fee of $20 for every 100 kilometres, or portion thereof, traveled in excess of the first 100 kilometres of travel during an enumeration or an election; and
h) if a Returning Officer
    i. elects to use the Returning Officer's personal residence as an office, a maximum rental of $450 per month with a rental period not exceeding 2 months, unless otherwise approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, or
    ii. elects to use commercial space as an office, the most economical rate available with a rental period not exceeding 2 months, unless otherwise approved by the Chief Electoral Officer.

An **Election Clerk** may be paid the following:

a) a fee of $1,130, where a writ of election is issued and no poll is held;
b) a fee of $2,990 if a writ of election is issued and a poll is held, including training of election staff and the conduct of the official count;
c) a fee of 13¢ per name included on the list of electors on polling day;
d) a fee of $170 for attending a class of instruction;
e) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation*; and
f) a supplemental fee of $15 for every 100 kilometres, or portion thereof, traveled in excess of the first 100 kilometres of travel during an election.

An **Administrative Assistant** may be paid the following:

a) a fee of $2,500 for duties performed on a full-time basis in the returning officer's office where a writ of election is issued and a poll is held, including the post-election update of the register of electors;
b) a fee to be prorated at a daily rate, as approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, for duties performed on a part-time basis in the returning officer's office;
c) a fee to be prorated at a daily rate, as approved by the Chief Electoral Officer, if a writ of election is issued but no poll is held;
d) a fee of $140 for attending a class of instruction; and
e) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation*.

A **Supervisory Deputy Returning Officer** may be paid the following:

a) a basic fee of $225 for duties performed on polling day or on each advance polling day;
b) a fee of $50 for attending a class of instruction; and
c) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation.*

A **Registration Officer** may be paid the following:

a) a basic fee of $205 for duties performed on polling day or on each advance polling day;
b) a fee of $50 for attending a class of instruction; and
c) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation.*

A **Deputy Returning Officer** may be paid the following:

a) a basic fee of $185 for duties performed on polling day;
b) a fee of $555 to conduct an advance poll;
c) a fee of $50 for attending a class of instruction; and
d) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation.*

A **Poll Clerk** may be paid the following:

a) a fee of $150 for duties performed on polling day;
b) a fee of $450 for advance poll duties; and
c) when required to travel on official business, the rates prescribed in the *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation.*

The following additional fees and expenses may be paid:

a) a maximum of $150 per day for the rental of a building where one poll is held and $75 per day for each additional poll held in the same building or part of the building to a maximum polling place rental of $750 per day, including utilities, janitorial services and the supply of all necessary furniture;
b) telephone installation, service and toll charges at prevailing rates, on submission of the invoices or receipts for the installation, service and toll charges;
c) support staff, including but not limited to messengers, special constables and interpreters, at a rate approved by the Chief Electoral Officer;
d) printing costs for lists of electors, proclamations, ballots, forms and any other printing or photocopying required by a returning officer, at the most economical commercial rate available;
e) publication costs for:
   i. proclamations,
   ii. maps of electoral divisions showing boundaries of polling subdivisions,
   iii. list of names and addresses of candidates' agents, and
   iv. any other matter required to be published under the *Act*, at the rate identified in the current rate card of the respective newspaper in which publication actually occurs; and
f) costs for the collection and the data entry of address based information at a rate approved by the Chief Electoral Officer.

The maximum polling place rental referred to in subsection 10(1)(a) may be adjusted only in extraordinary circumstances with written approval of the Chief Electoral Officer.

If, in the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer, an emergency exists, or circumstances for which no adequate provision of fees exists, the Chief Electoral Officer may fix the appropriate fee for the situation.

Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act

The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* requires all political parties, constituency associations and candidates to be registered with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The *Act* provides for the public disclosure of contributions and expenses.

Candidate Registration

Until a candidate has been registered with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, the candidate may not raise or spend money to help get elected.

Any person, corporation, trade union or employee organization may contribute up to a maximum of $2,000 to each candidate during the campaign period. The campaign period commences on the date the candidate is registered with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, following the issue of the Writ of Election, and continues for a period not exceeding two months after polling day.

The *Alberta Income Tax Act* provides a system of tax credits for contributions to registered political parties, registered constituency associations and registered candidates.

Example of Income Tax Credits

Amount Contributed	Calculation	Income Tax Credit
$ 200.00	75% of $200.00	$ 150.00
1,100.00	$150.00 + 50% of $900.00	600.00
2,300.00	$600.00 + 33 1/3% of $1,200.00	1,000.00

Candidate's Campaign Period Financial Statements

These statements were required to be filed by all candidates by March 22, 2005. Details of expenses incurred by each candidate will be published on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer. Political parties filed Political Party Campaign Period Financial Statements on or before May 24, 2005. Copies of all financial statements are placed on the Public Files maintained by this Office and are available for examination during normal office hours. The Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer will provide details on all campaign period financial statements filed in 2005.

Senate Nominee Election Highlights

On November 22, 2004, an election under the *Senatorial Selection Act* was conducted in conjunction with a Provincial General Election for the first time. Names of ten candidates appeared on the ballot, from which Albertans were asked to elect four Senate Nominees. A summary of the provincial tabulation of official results appears below. Additional details will be made available in "The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 2004 Senate Nominee Election".

Cliff Breitkreuz, Progressive Conservative Party	241,306
Bert Brown, Progressive Conservative Party	312,041
Link Byfield, Independent	238,751
Vance Gough, Alberta Alliance	167,770
Gary Horan, Alberta Alliance	156,175
Michael Roth, Alberta Alliance	176,339
Jim Silye, Progressive Conservative Party	217,857
Tom Sindlinger, Independent	161,082
Betty Unger, Progressive Conservative Party	311,964
David Usherwood, Progressive Conservative Party	193,056

Names of the four Senate Nominees elected appear in bold type.

Remarks of the Chief Electoral Officer

The period covered by this Report has been a challenging and exciting time. Elections Alberta provided administrative support to the 2002/2003 Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission and saw the new boundaries accepted by the Legislative Assembly in May 2003. This Office administered the recent enumeration and election on new electoral division boundaries in accordance with new legislation following the review and revision of the *Election Act*.

Once again, our success was achieved with the cooperation of electors across the province. Enumerators visited approximately one million homes to collect information for updating the Lists of Electors, and Polling Day staff used those Lists to serve electors on Polling Day. Behind the scenes, Returning Officers capably managed activities in their electoral divisions, including a map review and revision, enumeration supervision and conduct of the election. Those tasks are easily itemized but extremely challenging to accomplish: Returning Officers work many hours, in an increasingly complex environment, to provide this service to electors.

Albertans were able to choose from a record number of 450 candidates who contested the past election. Many other individuals worked behind the scenes to support those candidates. Members of constituency associations and political parties are active on an ongoing basis. Official agents, chief financial officers, scrutineers and many other campaign staff work diligently to support the candidates, engage the electorate and promote the democratic process in the province.

While most electors view the voting process as a simple one that involves visiting a polling place and marking the ballot, there are literally thousands of unsung heroes who make that activity possible and meaningful. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The past electoral cycle allowed us the opportunity to expand our outreach to stakeholders by offering new informational brochures, enhancing our customer service provided by telephone and electronic mail, and increasing interactive information provision via the website. These activities support our commitment to meeting electors' demands for information provision over extended hours and through various means.

While information provision continues to be enhanced and voting options are numerous, the voter turnout has declined for the past three general elections, since 1993 when the turn-out was 60.2%. Interested parties have expressed concern over the voter turnout and Elections Alberta is working hard to ensure that declining voter turnout is not attributable to administrative barriers.

Elections Alberta also works diligently to disseminate accurate information as broadly as possible to allay concerns of possible irregularities on a proactive

basis. During each event, Elections Alberta receives concerns about the voting process: in a number of cases, stakeholders assume that activities which concern them must contravene electoral law. In the vast majority of these situations, it is immediately evident that the activities do not constitute an offence under the *Election Act*.

These concerns included a limited number of allegations that, if proven, could potentially have constituted a breach of electoral law. It is always greatly appreciated that these concerns are brought to the attention of this Office so they can be reviewed in a timely fashion and investigated, if appropriate. Allegations are taken very seriously and are investigated in those circumstances where a possible breach of legislation exists and a sufficient level of detail permits.

The electoral process itself is conducive to fairness and transparency. Electors are greeted at their local polling station by Polling Day staff from the same area. Similarly, scrutineers are appointed from within the electoral division. These individuals bring a wealth of community knowledge to their responsibilities and are uniquely positioned to identify possible instances of elector fraud. Both Polling Day staff and scrutineers may request an elector to complete an Oath of Elector, and produce identification, if they believe in good faith that the elector should not be voting at the polling place. This provides a valuable safeguard to verifying elector eligibility for all electors, not just the three per cent who are added to the List on Polling Day.

Having said that, it would be possible to make the rules surrounding voting far more stringent. Each elector could be asked to provide picture identification along with proof of Canadian citizenship, six month residency, age and current address; whether on the List of Electors or not. Electors could be required to produce a voter card or be excluded from casting a ballot. This approach could serve to disenfranchise electors who are not typically prepared for this level of scrutiny and who may not be prepared even with a massive public education campaign. The current honour-based system has served us well; incorporating, as it does, the means for verifying elector eligibility. Facilitating a fair and transparent system, without onerous administrative regulations, is essential.

I have been involved with this Office for the past three decades and take great pride in Alberta's electoral system. There are always areas for improvement, whether in service delivery, application of new technologies or distribution of information. Still, the basic principles of trust, integrity and fairness are core values within our system, which warrant our respect and protection.

O. Brian Fjeldheim
Chief Electoral Officer