**Help American Vote Act State Planning Committee Meeting
February 9, 2007**

The meeting was called to order by Jim Mairs. Those in attendance were Tim Hurst, Jim Mairs and Lisa Powers from the Secretary of State Office; Ken Roberts, Majority Caucus Chairman; Elinor Chehey from the League of Women Voters; Sharon Widner from Washington County; Dan English from Kootenai County; Dave Gibson with Caxton Printers; Emil Drazayich with Computer Arts; Jim Hansen with United Vision of Idaho; Kelly Buckland with Idaho State Independent Living Council; Barbara Roberts with the Democratic Party; Dave Navarro, Jo Spencer and Phil McGrain from Ada County; Brian Kane with the Attorney General's Office; and Rose Gehring from Idaho County.

Minutes from the July 27, 2006 meeting were approved.

Review of the General Election November 2006

Idaho met the federal requirement of having accessible voting devices in every polling place in the state before the Primary Election and used the devices again for the General Election. Now the task is to improve the process. It was a difficult and time consuming job and the counties deserve the credit for a successful implementation.

Statewide Voter Registration System

Tim Hurst reported on the statewide voter registration system was used during all elections this year. All the payments have been made and a number of upgrades and changes that the counties requested have been implemented. The cost of maintenance is $10,000 a month.

Counties have until March 7 to purge all voters who have not voted in the last 4 years. Some counties have already started the process and some are still entering registration cards from Election Day registration. There was discussion on mail being returned for voters who were on the voter registration list. This is more likely a problem with the Postal Service and not the voter registration system. Duplicate entries are being cleaned up and procedures are in place to avoid duplicate entries.

A users group was formed to look at suggested changes and the cost of making those changes. When changes are made to the voter registration system, what may be good for one county may have a negative impact on others. There is no funding available at this time for the administration changes that have been requested.

Some counties have experienced problems with the time it takes to upload the scanned voter registration cards. Betsie Kimbrough is doing testing and the vendor, Saber, will be coming to Boise to work on the problem.

In the future we are hoping to be able to share information with other states in the Northwest, so that when people move across the border, we will be able to share the data. We need to make sure our data is correct before we start sharing it.

Accessible Voting Device

Statewide 1,644 ballots were cast on the AutoMark. Some counties had no votes cast on the AutoMark and others had up to 380 (Bingham). Some machines failed at the polls. The vendor supplied a check list to set up the machines. One step was left off the checklist. This caused the machine not to be calibrated properly.

The machine can be sensitive to transport. When the machine prompted an error message some election workers assumed the machine was not working properly. Instead of trying again, some poll workers turned the machine off.

Steps are being taken to correct these problems in the future.

Poll workers will be trained on how to solve problems instead of just saying "It doesn't work". The clerks and poll workers will be trained with accurate procedures from the vendor to insure the machines operate properly. Additional procedures will be developed for poll workers to follow if a machine does not work that insure voters have the opportunity to vote even if a machine fails at the polls.

Kelly Buckland made the comment that some people had told him when they went to the polls and wanted to vote on the AutoMark, they were told by a poll worker that they didn't know where the machine was. Brian Kane commented that no matter what the problem was, it was unacceptable. Additional training will be provided to counties and poll workers on compliance with HAVA.

There was discussion about the vendor contract and changes that could be made to hold the vendor responsible.

Brian Kane is concerned about the challenge of getting poll workers. He would like to create incentives for people to work at the polls. Barbara Roberts suggested paying the workers more and running more advertisements. Jim Mairs asked the committee to email him with any and all suggestions to stimulate interest in working in the polls. Suggestions will be compiled and distributed to the counties.

There was discussion about absentee voting percentages and the possibility of "vote by mail" in the future.

M650 Tabulation

Jim Mairs reported that there are 2 counties utilizing M650 optical scan counters. There is one machine in Payette County and two in Bannock County that were used in the General Election. There were problems in both counties with the tabulator and

procedures. This made the processing of the ballots slow, but did not impair the accuracy of the count.

In Payette County the machines stopped repeatedly and the vendor (ES&S) did not give sufficient support on election night according to the county. ES&S is going back to Payette to retrain county staff, evaluate procedures and the tabulator.

In Bannock County the machines also stopped repeatedly. County staff did not fully understand how the tabulator worked and did not have procedures in place to manage the inspection of ballots that required review. Follow up evaluation meetings are also scheduled.

In the future, the vendor will certify during training that the county understands the inspection processes as well as equipment operation.

Vendor Performance Evaluation

Jim Mairs reported that the staff has met with vendor twice since November to evaluate the vendor's performance during the General Election and discuss and review tabulation and training issues, AutoMark issues, ballot preparation and design issues, and future certification of upgraded equipment.

The proposed upgrade to the AutoMARK will loosen the tolerance on the scanner and reduce "print on one side errors". The certification hearing will be held in the spring.

There was discussion of "open source" coding of voting system software.

HHS Grants-Project Vote

This past year $10,295 was awarded to 4 counties to improve access to the polls. The funds were used for signage, parking cones, wider parking spaces and ramps. Jim had pictures of one community center that upgraded their back entrance to make it an accessible polling place.

The Project Vote initial grant request was for $42,000 but the project was finished for less than half that amount. Project Vote put together a training network of 661 people statewide. The network will be useful in coming elections. Kelly Buckland suggested it could be a great tool for getting people with disabilities to help with voter education and work at the polls. All involved deserve credit for this innovative and effective project.

The Democracy Fund

Rose Gehring asked if counties that hadn't previously paid into the fund could still get involved. Tim Hurst answered that they could contribute to at any time.

Meeting was adjourned.