

PLACING THE ELECTOR AT THE CENTRE OF THE PROCESS:

ELECTIONS ONTARIO'S
REPORT ON THE 39TH
GENERAL ELECTION IN THE
PROVINCE OF ONTARIO



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The Honourable Steve Peters
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is with great pleasure that I submit my Report on the preparation and delivery of the 39th Provincial General Election, ***Placing the Elector at the Centre of the Process.***

The successful administration of the 2007 election and referendum could not have been achieved without the dedication and commitment of the 107 returning officers, 7,910 returning office personnel and 73,775 Election Day workers. In addition, the twelve registered political parties and the 599 Ontario citizens who offered themselves as candidates for election ensured the continuing vitality of our electoral processes. I extend my thanks and appreciation to all of these people for their participation.

Special thanks are extended to staff at Elections Ontario for completing this report four months early to coincide with my retirement.

This Report presents an overview of activities conducted by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer over the past four years, and addresses critical topics relating to electoral administration and legislation for consideration by the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Hollins".

John L. Hollins
Chief Electoral Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Serving the elector is the reason that Elections Ontario exists.

Protecting the elector's constitutional right to vote, preserving the integrity of the process and ensuring that the elector's access to the process is guaranteed, can be considered the hallmarks of an effective electoral administration.

In the days following October 10, 2007, electors across the province answered a range of questions posed by Ipsos Reid's interviewers working on behalf of Elections Ontario. Electors told the interviewers that they were very satisfied, on the whole, with their experiences in the 39th Provincial General Election and Referendum on electoral system reform. They also told them that they were convinced of the importance of elections and that they felt that each vote counts.

When they visited their polling places, 92% of voters told us that they had no problems. This level of satisfaction is up from 85% at the last general election in 2003. As well, 93% of voters (up from 83% in 2003) said that they did not have problems with the Voters List and 87% of them reported that they had received their Notice of Registration card with the correct information. This is an improvement of 9% over 2003.

The newly introduced identification requirement at the polls was also well received and 98% of voters had no problems providing their identification documents.

Perhaps the most telling statistic is the 99% of voters who told Ipsos Reid that they did not experience any problems when casting their ballots.

The satisfaction expressed by voters with the procedures used in the first fixed-date election and the first provincial referendum since 1924, speaks to the effectiveness of a range of activities undertaken by Elections Ontario in preparation for the event.

A significant challenge in the preparatory stages of the election was the redistribution of electoral districts. Legislative changes in 2005 required Elections Ontario to put in place new boundaries and support structures for the 107 districts that came into effect for the 2007 general election.

In late August and early September, revising agents throughout the province knocked on over one million doors to locate electors and update the Voters List. Over the course of the event, electors experienced a range of activities and initiatives aimed at increasing their awareness and meeting their needs for information about the referendum and election. Traditional communications were enhanced by outreach activities at the local level and extensive multilingual communications. Printed materials were provided in 33 languages, radio advertising was presented in 48 languages and callers had access to over 100 languages through the Elections Ontario contact centre.

Employing innovative methods to reach electors, Elections Ontario had a much greater presence on the Internet. In addition to web-based advertising, social media sites were deployed to reach electors in the younger demographics. Elections Ontario also launched a greatly improved and redesigned website to serve the segment of the population that increasingly relies on the Internet to acquire information. The new site is compliant with the requirements of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA).

The introduction of the newly legislated "E-Confirmation" offered electors a different channel to use to verify their inclusion in the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario (PREO) through the Internet. This initiative, in conjunction with a new technology environment at Elections Ontario, sets the stage for further elector-focused technology enhancements, such as E-Registration.

Since the last general election, Elections Ontario has undertaken a range of pilot initiatives aimed at improving its internal processes and procedures. The success of these initiatives has resulted in enhanced levels of service and support being provided to electors, both centrally and through local returning offices.

More importantly, electors were served by greatly expanded opportunities to participate in the general election and referendum. To make voting more convenient and accessible, significant changes were made in the location and distribution of voting locations. For the first time, community centres were specifically targeted as locations for polling places, and dedicated voting locations were established in condominiums and apartments with over 100 units. In total, there were 9,090 voting locations used in 2007, an increase of 30% over 2003.

Considering how electors might be affected by the inclusion of a referendum with the general election required a complete review of polling division boundaries. There were concerns that the additional time to administer an election and a referendum ballot at the same time might cause a bottleneck and delay for electors. To prevent this from happening, existing plans to improve service to electors by increasing the number of polling divisions were further expanded to reduce the average number of electors per poll to 350. As a result, on Election Day, Ontario's 107 electoral districts were divided into 27,596 Election Day polling places.

The total cost for the 39th Provincial General Election, the Referendum and the Referendum Education Program was \$94,503,000.

Just as electors are not a static group, Elections Ontario must keep moving forward and adapting to change. Analyses and reviews following the election have supported the development of strategic and operational plans that will give focus to activities and guarantee the success and effectiveness of

Ontario's next general election, expected in October of 2011.

The full implementation of new technology-enabled processes will bring to completion those systems used in managing and improving the Permanent Register of Electors and will streamline the applications deployed to support the preparations for and delivery of the next election. However, the technical environment is only a tool to help make working with electors and other clients more effective.

We have learned much from the 2003 general election, the array of legislative change over the past four years, and the experiences of October 10, 2007, but we still find ourselves unable to place the elector firmly at the centre of the process.

Amendments to the *Election Act* have improved aspects of the electoral process in many ways but have also created discrepancies and an overall lack of consistency in the legislative framework. True value for Ontario electors will come only if energy can be dedicated to a wide-ranging review of the election process in the province.

In the conclusion of this report, we highlight some of the continuing areas of inconsistency and concern. For example, as long as returning officers are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, in some cases only a few weeks before an election, there is a direct impact on the effective management and delivery of the election; staff cannot be selected and trained, and the required preparations cannot be put in place in those districts. Local service provided to local electors is critical to a successful process. There is a significantly greater probability of this happening if Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer were to have the authority to appoint returning officers, as do a majority of his Canadian counterparts.

Over 73,000 people work on Election Day in Ontario and it is no longer possible to staff each poll with deputy returning officers and poll clerks nominated by local candidates for political parties, particularly when the legislation allows candidates to wait until ten days before the election to provide their lists. The recent amendment to the Act that expanded the number of advance Polling Days has made this even more problematic, since the list deadline now falls in the middle of the advance poll period.

We have opportunities to enhance the management of the data that makes up the Register, and much of the work of the past three years is close to completion. A definitive address is at the very root of an effective Register, but while we can come close for most electors, they cannot be assured of consistent placement in the correct poll. Without a provincial authority responsible for setting the rules for addressing, we can never complete the job.

Elections Ontario cannot complete its tasks without making the electors the focus of the electoral process. New outreach mandates will help electors to stay in contact and to keep their register information up to date and accurate. New technical systems will offer more channels to provide information, but without authorized security systems, using what is known as a “shared secret,” the circuits will be incomplete. Legislation needs to be expanded to permit Elections Ontario to share parts of common identifiers, such as driver’s licence and health card numbers with electors to create the required security that will add integrity to the elector register.

Our future is in our youth, yet we do little to smooth their entry into the electoral process and provide them with registration support as they come close to the age of qualification. There is a new mandate placed on Elections Ontario to educate “soon-to-be” electors - meeting this mandate and developing a sense of electoral commitment or habit in the minds of these young citizens would be simpler if we could identify who these “soon-to-be” electors are and where they can be reached.

Electors usually vote on Thursdays. In 2007, they voted on a Wednesday. Why should they not vote on a Saturday or a Sunday? Why shouldn’t schools be available for elections on a province-wide Professional Development day? Security and disruption to the teaching environment are very real concerns when the community uses a school site for an event such as an election, but these issues are not without solutions.

Why are there three different jurisdictions in Ontario preparing three different lists of electors and managing elections with three different sets of staff using many different procedures and processes? It is time to take a fresh look at these issues. Not since the late 1960s has there been a thorough review of the structure of electoral legislation in Ontario.

Now is the time.

INTRODUCTION

The 39th Provincial General Election was an historic event in the province of Ontario. On October 10, 2007, electors went to the polls to exercise their democratic right to vote in the first general election in the province held on a fixed-date and, at the same time, to vote in the first provincial referendum held since 1924.

Innovation and change also characterized this election. New electoral boundaries were in place, resulting in 107 electoral districts and, for the first time, electors were required to provide identification to receive a ballot. Using a newly developed online tool provided on a redesigned website, electors could confirm that they were registered to vote. As well, the electoral process was made more accessible to electors through increased voting hours on Election Day and an extended 13-day advance poll voting period.

Administering a referendum in parallel with the general election proved to be a positive experience, particularly from an event management viewpoint. Modifications to poll procedure and training, additional ballot production, and adjustments to staffing and support were readily accommodated during preparatory activities and during the event. As a result, when electors went to the polls, they were greeted with an effective and efficient process. Voters received two ballots – one to elect a member of the Legislative Assembly and one to determine the results of a referendum on electoral reform – and they were able to cast both ballots in a supportive environment.

Since differences between election and referendum calendars and poll administration procedures were not significant, shared initiatives and budgetary efficiencies were achieved that would not have been possible in a separate referendum event. For example, by pairing voter information mailings and Notice of Registration cards with referendum education materials, Elections Ontario was able to inform voters about both events at a significantly lower cost than would have been required if they had been separate activities.¹

The successful delivery of the event on October 10, 2007 depended on integrated planning and delivery of many separate but related activities including staffing, training, communications, procurement, technology, supplies production and logistical support. In the following pages, we describe how these activities came together and resulted in increased elector satisfaction in most areas when compared with the general election of 2003.

¹ For more information on the referendum education campaign, please refer to the Chief Electoral Officer's report entitled "Provincial Referendum on Electoral System Reform, October 10, 2007, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer".

EVENT READINESS AND DEPLOYMENT

It takes a mere moment to cast a ballot but the preparations that enable that moment are years in the making. In the four years between general elections, Elections Ontario engages in a complex cycle of development and testing, strengthening and refining its existing processes and adding innovations and new systems. Event readiness preparations ensure that Elections Ontario is primed and equipped, well in advance of the issue of the writs, to administer all stages of the electoral event. The introduction of a fixed-date, four year electoral cycle has added certainty to these preparatory activities.

The Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario

Continued development of the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario, has become one of the cornerstones of event readiness preparation in advance of an election. PREO is a database comprised of the names, addresses, birthdates and genders of more than 8.5 million electors residing in the province of Ontario. With approximately 20% of elector information changing each year as Ontarians move, die, become citizens and reach their eighteenth birthday, it is essential not only to draw upon the data-sharing partnerships with federal, provincial and municipal information sources, but also to continue to reinforce the importance of registration with all electors and stakeholders.

Once the writ is issued for an election, the Register is used to produce a preliminary List of Electors. Every elector on the preliminary List – that is, every elector who is on the Register and who is at least 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen and a resident of the Province of Ontario on Election Day – is sent a Notice of Registration card which provides valuable information on when and where to vote. This preliminary List also serves as the foundation for the List of Electors used on Election Day which includes all of the additions, deletions and changes recorded during the targeted registration and target revision activities undertaken prior to and during the event period.

All of the map products, lists and database files provided to returning officers, municipal clerks,

registered political parties and candidates are derived from the Permanent Register of Electors. The Register is also the basis for many of the databases used during an event to provide information to the public and to support the Elections Ontario website and field information technology systems. Consequently, ensuring the Register is current and reflective of the electorate is a major focus of Elections Ontario.

Electoral Boundaries – 107 Redistribution

The passage of the *Representation Act, 2005* on December 13, 2005, resulted in the replacement of the previous 103 electoral districts with 107 new districts upon dissolution of the Legislature for the next general election. The creation of the new electoral districts means that Ontario's electoral boundaries are no longer identical to federal electoral district boundaries. The 107 districts will remain in place until new redistribution legislation is passed.

The 107 electoral districts consist of 11 northern electoral districts that are identical (except for a minor boundary adjustment) to those in existence during the provincial general election in 2003, and 96 southern electoral districts that match the federal electoral district boundaries in place on September 1, 2004. Changes to the names of southern electoral districts, made at the federal level after September 1, 2004, were adopted at the provincial level.

Once the new electoral district boundaries were in place, Elections Ontario created a new set of electoral district overview maps that illustrated major geographical features and reflected the relationship between the new boundaries and the geography of the province of Ontario. An atlas of the new electoral districts was also produced.

Election Management System

In the period following the 2003 general election, Elections Ontario began developing a new and innovative technology strategy, recognizing that, as the needs and expectations of electors evolve, so too must the technology utilized in advance of and during events. This technology strategy formed the basis for a larger system-development tactical plan that ultimately resulted in the development of the Election Management System (EMS).

EMS was designed to provide a full event management solution, combining a scope of functionality previously accessed in 16 separate applications in one centralized platform. Intended to evolve and adapt through multiple electoral cycles and any future electoral reforms, EMS integrates all aspects of election administration in one service-oriented architecture, providing:

- Election information and geographic products and services to electors;
- Election management software tools and processes specifically for returning office teams and poll officials, supported by integrated and effective training;
- A newly redesigned website;
- PREO products and services specifically for candidates, municipal clerks and political parties;
- Election Finances' products and services exclusive to the parties, candidates and constituency associations;
- A gateway for sharing information with data and strategic partners;
- Reliable and secure web-based access to all of the above.

The drive to design and build EMS spanned the entire four year period between general events. Beginning in 2003, planning and analysis continued through to procurement and the award of a contract in the spring of 2005. The active development of the system commenced in July of 2005 with extensive systems testing and simulated elections occurring in the spring and summer of 2007.

By the spring of 2007, development of EMS was 95% complete. The final development and testing phases, however, coincided with the addition of a referendum and substantial legislative change in advance of the provincial election. Thus, Elections Ontario chose only to utilize select components of EMS during the election. The preliminary List of Electors and all geography products were generated by EMS. Additional components, namely the public website, the "Am I Registered/on the List?" applications, elector and field communication management tools were also used. All performed very well during the event and generated much excitement and anticipation for the full system to come.

The progress of EMS continues to be of interest to electoral agencies in jurisdictions across Canada, promising significant new insights and partnering opportunities. Built to adapt to change and with the potential to integrate new developments in technology and digital security, EMS is clearly only at the beginning of its life cycle.

CEO Liaison Officers and Assistant Liaison Officers

Building on the successful initiative introduced during the general election in 2003, 11 CEO liaison officers were hired one year in advance of the event.

Each CEO liaison officer was assigned responsibility for a geographic region made up of 6 to 12 electoral districts, and worked closely with the returning officers in that region.

Acting as a communication bridge between the returning officers and Elections Ontario, the CEO liaison officers are the Chief Electoral Officer's representatives in the field and provide training, advice, issues management assistance and technical support to returning officers and their staff. CEO liaison officers also facilitated specific operational and technical training for returning officer teams during the spring and summer of 2007 which further strengthened the networks that could be drawn upon for support during the event.

In 2003, Elections Ontario had initiated a remote telephone-based technical support program. While successful, feedback following the event indicated that a more personalized grade of technical assistance would have been beneficial. Consequently, Elections Ontario chose to increase

the technical support options offered to returning office staff.

In July, 2007, 11 assistant liaison officers were hired to provide additional assistance to the technical support officer in the returning offices. Throughout the event period, assistant liaison officers made regular visits to returning offices and provided site-specific technical assistance as necessary.

Returning Officers

Responsible for all activities pertaining to the general election in their electoral district, returning officers play a critical role in ensuring that the registration and voting process is fair and accessible for all electors and that candidates have the necessary products and information throughout the event.

Returning officers are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and are then trained, provisioned and supported by Elections Ontario. These key team members are responsible, under the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the organization and conduct of the election in each of the 107 electoral districts and, as such, are required to quickly and energetically adapt to new processes and tasks in a demanding environment within a very limited period of time.

In 2003, the majority of returning officers remained in the positions that they had held in the previous general election and were, therefore, familiar with the scope and responsibilities of the role.

In 2007, however, due to redistribution, 80% of returning officers were new to the position. This, understandably, required a close, supportive working relationship with CEO liaison officers, and also provided Elections Ontario with a valuable opportunity to test and hone the strength of its training programs.

The influx of new returning officers also brought fresh perspectives and unique solutions to common event hurdles, such as last minute recruiting of poll officials. These new practices are being reviewed for possible inclusion in our training materials.

Returning Officer Assessment Process

As the technology and systems employed in the field become even more comprehensive, it is important to ensure that the returning officers and their staff not only have a thorough understanding of all their duties as set out in the *Election Act*, but also possess the skills to effectively utilize all of their technical tools. It is for this reason that Elections Ontario developed and launched a returning officer assessment process.

Designed to both encourage legislative compliance by returning officers and to assess the operational, financial, technical and event management skill sets of each potential returning officer, the online assessment replaces the formal introductory interview process of the past.

The returning officer assessment process proved to be a success with 127 assessments completed and more than 96% of all returning officer candidates reaching the required threshold. Feedback from returning officers, the majority of whom were new to the role, indicates that they found the assessment to be a good introduction to what would be expected of them as a returning officer.

Polling Divisions and Voting Locations

In advance of an election, the polling divisions within each electoral district must be carefully reviewed and adjusted, as necessary, to account for any variations in population size. Furthermore, planning for the redistribution of electoral districts required that the polling divisions in place for the 2003 election be reviewed and adjusted where necessary, to fit into the new electoral districts.

Elections Ontario developed transposition tables of votes and elector counts that mapped the results from 2003 against the electoral district boundaries of 2007. About 135 polling divisions established for the 2003 election were split by the new electoral district boundaries.

A review of the size of polling divisions then commenced, with the goal of ascertaining the optimum number of electors per polling division in order to create an efficient and expedient voting experience for the elector. The possibility of a referendum, as yet unconfirmed in the spring of 2006, also influenced the size of each polling division – the requirement to mark two ballots

would increase an elector's time in the voting location, and poll officials would also have to count double the number of ballots at the end of Election Day, thus increasing the length of an already considerable workday. Taking both factors into account, Elections Ontario determined that the optimum number of electors per polling division would be approximately 350 and set about creating new polling divisions.

In order to make voting as accessible as possible for electors, apartment and condominium buildings with 100 units or more were designated as separate polling divisions. In accordance with section 14 of the *Election Act*, nursing homes, long-term care facilities with 20 beds or more and retirement facilities with 50 beds or more were designated as polling divisions. On Election Day, where possible, each of these polling divisions was secured as a voting location for its residents.

Elections Ontario completed the polling division exercise in March of 2007, creating 25,327 polling divisions.

In conjunction with the polling division exercise, Elections Ontario also compiled a corresponding inventory of potential voting locations. Whenever possible, accessible sites, easily recognized by the public, such as schools and community centres, were selected. Locations used in the 2003 general election and in federal and municipal elections were utilized in order to reinforce the consistency of voting locations between electoral events. All applicable nursing homes, retirement homes, long-term care facilities and apartment and condominium buildings with more than 100 units, designated as separate polling divisions were identified, as well.

Upon completion, the voting location inventory was distributed to the returning officers for evaluation as part of their pre-writ preparatory activities.

Orientation Training and Spring Work Exercise

Between April 10 and April 16, 2007, returning officers and election clerks gathered for orientation training on the fundamentals of administering a general election in their electoral districts. Orientation training included *Election Act* workshops and seminars introducing all planned electoral

administration processes and programs. The orientation was structured to foster team-building based on geographically similar needs. To achieve this, returning officers and election clerks were grouped together with counterparts from their respective regions. A combined total of 204 returning officers and election clerks participated in the week-long exercise.

During this time, the returning officers and election clerks were also introduced to the tools to be used in the spring work exercise. Elections Ontario, with the assistance of returning office teams, periodically undertakes focused field exercises to improve the quality of PREO data by reviewing and updating information contained in the Register. These exercises are also used to familiarize returning officers with the electoral geography tools and products that will be used in the general election.

Using the newly designed EMS mapping tools, the returning officers were asked to confirm polling division information, primarily to designate long-term care facilities, as well as to confirm street names, civic addresses and voting locations.

In less than three weeks – from April 16, 2007 until the completion of the spring work exercise on May 1, 2007, returning officers across the province confirmed 25,327 polling divisions, added an additional 342 and identified 1,490 special polling divisions for a total of 27,159.

Pre-Writ Assignments and Activities

Following the spring work exercise, returning officers were asked to undertake a number of pre-writ confirmation and planning exercises. Returning officers were first asked to evaluate the inventory of potential voting locations to ensure that the most appropriate locations were selected for use. With the advantage of a fixed-date election, returning officers could secure voting locations in advance as well as document all relevant contact information which considerably reduced the number of last-minute voting location changes during the election period.

During this time, returning officers were also required to begin building their core returning office team for the upcoming election. Securing individuals to staff the positions essential to the proper administration of the event – namely the human resources officer, the revision supervisor,

technical support officer and training officer – well in advance of the election period not only resulted in stronger returning office teams but also allowed each returning office core team to attend the pre-writ regional training exercise. Both of these activities were completed by May 18, 2007.

The next pre-writ assignment required returning officers to identify and inspect possible sites for returning office and satellite office locations. Being able to secure a returning office location well in advance of the event period was an obvious advantage in a fixed-date election and, as such, Elections Ontario was able to employ a different office selection strategy than had been used in the past.

The objective of this strategy was to lease 107 offices across the province with an additional 800 square feet to accommodate the increase in field staff training, while keeping the average square footage cost stable relative to 2003. Elections Ontario worked with centralized real estate professionals to secure a list of potential sites and then asked the returning officers to inspect possible office sites and to report upon their preferences. The bulk of these inspections occurred in June and July of 2007.

The final pre-writ assignment required returning officers to identify area advance poll voting locations. An amendment to the *Election Act*, passed on June 4, 2007, modified the criteria that governed the selection of voting locations, in particular emphasizing that consideration be given to locations that were both convenient and familiar to electors. Consequently, Elections Ontario determined that area advance poll voting locations should be strategically situated in areas of the community thought to have high volumes of pedestrian traffic flow. As a result, 'area' advance polls were placed in lobbies of community centres, libraries, malls, plazas and even grocery stores.

Returning officers were asked to complete the identification of area advance poll voting locations by August 25, 2007. With the period for advance polls having increased from 6 to 13 days, and ten of those days requiring area advance polls in locations outside of the returning office, returning officers encountered a number of challenges in trying to secure lease sites for the length of time required.

Typical obstacles included sites that were not available for the full ten day period or their own hours of operation, particularly on Sunday, conflicted with the legislated advance polling hours. Elections Ontario worked with returning officers to provide solutions to these and other challenges in establishing locations for advance polls.

Regional Training

Regional training of returning office business processes took place during a three week period in the summer preceding the election. Returning office teams, arranged into three regional groups, each received a week of intense and comprehensive training on all of the responsibilities of the returning office during an electoral event.

In 2007, the regional training included revision supervisors and technical support officers in addition to the returning officers and election clerks. Because the majority of returning officers were new to the role in 2007, it was particularly necessary that the supporting office teams be strong. In attending training concurrently, the four-person team from each returning office learned how to use shared knowledge collectively to plan and execute efficient operations in the returning office and at voting locations on Polling Day.

In total, 457 returning officers, election clerks, revision supervisors and technical support officers attended regional training.

PREO: Innovation, Evolution and Updates

Following the 2003 event, Elections Ontario embarked upon a new vision for the Register to be comprised of integrated databases containing elector, address and geographic information. These would function as "living" databases, integrating and managing multiple data sources rather than simply adding new extracts from Elections Canada's National Register of Electors. A key component of this vision was the creation of the Ontario Address Register (OAR), the first to be loaded into the integrated databases.

The decision to build the OAR reflected a paradigm shift from the traditional thinking governing register maintenance. Designed to identify each fixed physical location where electors could be found, the OAR was built upon the fundamental premise that while electors move from one address to another,

addresses themselves are generally stationary. Serving as a fixed point, an address provides a demonstrable link between the elector and their electoral district and polling division; essentially providing a stable foundation for the Register.

Elections Ontario commenced building the OAR in October of 2004, drawing and matching assessment parcel data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and ownership parcel data and addresses from the Ontario Parcel Alliance (OPA) over an 18-month period. MPAC is responsible for assembling the property assessment roll for every municipality in the province. The OPA, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Natural Resources, MPAC and Teranet Enterprises Inc., is responsible for a shared, standardized digital database comprised of information on Ontario's land parcels. Once the design and structure of the OAR was complete, Elections Ontario then engaged in data quality improvement exercises to refine the address data in advance of integrating the OAR database into EMS and linking it with the elector data. By the end of 2006, this work was completed and the new PREO database was launched.

During this period, Elections Ontario also refined its map products, ensuring that the products not only reflected the electoral boundary redistribution but also incorporated many of the changes suggested by the public, returning officers, political parties and candidates.

In the months leading up to the event, Elections Ontario integrated a number of data updates from the National Register of Electors. The first extract, incorporating updates from the Canada Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Vital Statistics and Ontario Registrar of Motor Vehicles was received in April 2007, and included 8,609,574 active elector records and 5,712,717 addresses.

Two more updates from the National Register of Electors were integrated, in July and August respectively, resulting in the addition of 534,514 updated records. During the final weeks before the returning offices opened, Elections Ontario continued to verify and update data, removing duplicate records and deceased electors while incorporating extracts from MPAC and the National Change of Address Database maintained by Canada

Post. The last updates to the Register were complete on August 15, 2007.

Focus on PREO was still intense as Elections Ontario began flagging the 1,588,528 addresses to be visited during the targeted registration and revision exercises. More than 29,000 polling division maps were created in a three day period for immediate distribution to returning officers, political parties and candidates. On August 23, 2007, the preliminary List of Electors extract was created and delivered to returning officers for use in the pre-writ targeted registration program.

Tripartite Organization

The efforts to maintain and improve a constantly evolving "living list" would not be possible without the data-sharing agreements in place with federal and municipal counterparts. The Tripartite Organization, a cooperative partnership between Elections Ontario, Elections Canada and MPAC in place since 2002, was formed to advance the shared pursuit of register accuracy and efficient elector identification for all three levels of government.

In December 2004, the Tripartite Organization agreed to participate in a joint data sharing and matching project focusing on the identification and registration of electors with the aim of creating a virtual single list of Ontario electors. The goal of this single list, to be built on the data held in the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario, the National Register of Electors and the MPAC database of municipal electors, was pursued via a phased process.

Building on earlier success with matching Elections Canada and MPAC data in advance of the 2000 and 2003 municipal elections, in early 2005, the Tripartite Organization developed a set of business rules matching protocols and common data standards on which future data matches would be based. This phase concluded in the spring of 2006 upon the completion of an MPAC enumeration form mail-out which achieved a higher than anticipated match rate with the National Register of Electors, resulting in reduced enumeration costs for MPAC.

The next phase of Tripartite activity commenced in the summer of 2006. As the drive towards a functional Ontario Address Register was well underway at Elections Ontario at this point, efforts focused upon developing and implementing an OAR

data-sharing relationship between Elections Ontario and Elections Canada. A number of key data quality and sharing activities were undertaken during this phase.

With new initiatives contemplated in the short-term future, the Tripartite partnership has already done much to advance the move towards a single list of Ontario electors. Elections Ontario is committed to continued cooperation with the Tripartite partners in the months and years to come.

E-Confirmation

Included in the 2007 amendments to the *Election Act* was a requirement for the Chief Electoral Officer to establish “an electronic system to allow electors to verify and confirm information about themselves in the Permanent Register of Electors”. Activated on August 1, 2007, as required by legislation, the “Am I Registered?” tool was available through the Elections Ontario website.

With this online application, electors were able to enter their first name, last name, date of birth and residential address and submit it in order to confirm that they were registered to vote. Due to the need to protect the private and personal information of electors, the electronic search required an exact match of details entered.

Electors who were unable to confirm their registration were given the option to either contact Elections Ontario for more information or to complete an Application for Addition to the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario form and submit it with appropriate identification by September 9, 2007. Electors were also given information on how to add themselves to the Voters List at local returning offices or at advance poll and Election Day voting locations.

A total of 85,255 electors visited the “Am I Registered?” application between August 1 and September 9, 2007. Following the election call on September 10, 2007 and the issuance of the preliminary List of Electors, the tool was relaunched as an “Am I on the List?” application and was visited by 44,876 electors.

Targeted Registration

In late August, immediately in advance of the issue of the writs of election, Elections Ontario undertook an extensive, province-wide targeted registration initiative. Differing from the traditional door-to-door enumeration programs of the past, targeted registration programs focus on well-defined targets, such as specific addresses and buildings, to improve elector registration and the currency of existing elector records.

Section 17.14 of the *Election Act*, requires that the Chief Electoral Officer conduct a targeted registration program for the purpose of improving the accuracy of the Register. Elections Ontario commenced the targeted registration program on August 23, 2007, when 7,977 revising agents began visiting specifically selected addresses across the province.

The goal of the targeted registration program was to improve elector and address information in the following three key areas:

- High-Density Addresses – visiting buildings with seven or more units in order to capture the highest percentage of high-density addresses;
- New Development Areas – as identified through the OAR and returning officer local knowledge; and
- Quality Control Polls – a new initiative in 2007 to collect information on the quality of the Register, focusing on rural areas where address data could be improved.

Revising agent teams were instructed to visit each address listed on the targeted registration “walk sheets” and to leave notification on how to contact Elections Ontario if the resident electors were not available. All additions, deletions, moves and confirmations to the Register were tracked and then entered by returning office teams to improve the accuracy and currency of PREO in advance of the event.

During this period, all electors were able to confirm that they were on the Register by visiting the “Am I Registered?” application on the Elections Ontario website. They were, as well, able to obtain information on how to add themselves to the Register by telephoning the Elections Ontario contact centre.

The targeted registration program was completed on September 9, 2007, in advance of the issue of the writs of election, as stipulated by the *Election Act*.

The preliminary List of Electors was produced on September 10, 2007, immediately following the election call, establishing a starting point for the Voters Lists that were used by over 28,000 deputy returning officers in the 39th Provincial General Election.

FROM WRITS TO THE POLLS

Traditionally, the issue of the writs signifies the beginning of a highly intense period of activity. Knowing the date of the election in advance, however, provided some flexibility and allowed for the commencement of those tasks not governed by precise timelines set in the *Election Act*. Thus, Elections Ontario, the returning officers and the field staff were able to undertake some duties at a more measured pace.

A Fixed-Date Election

The 2003 general election was called in September of that year. While the election was called in the last year of the government's mandate, the precise timing was not certain until the Premier had asked the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature.

In contrast, the "first Thursday in October" date for the 2007 general election was decided in December 2005 with the enactment of changes to the *Election Act*. As permitted by the legislation, the Lieutenant Governor in Council ordered in February 2007 that Election Day be moved from Thursday, October 4, 2007, to the following Wednesday (October 10). This change was made on the recommendation of the Chief Electoral Officer that October 4 fell on a day of cultural or religious significance that was unsuitable for polling.

Before recommending this change, the Chief Electoral Officer sent surveys to 278 organizations (representing 56 cultural communities in the ten major religious communities) and posted the survey on the Elections Ontario website to invite responses from the general public. Respondents were asked to identify two things: (1) if they observed any days of cultural or religious significance between October 4 and 11; and, (2) if on those days they would not be able to visit their poll between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. There was a good response rate to the survey. Members of the public participated, as did 89 organizations representing 21 different communities. Based on the information received, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended October 10, 2007, as a more suitable day for polling.

The *Election Act* was further amended in March 2007² to provide that the writs for the October 2007 general election would be issued on

Monday, September 10, 2007, allowing for 29 clear days for campaigning before Election Day on October 10, 2007.

Issue of the Writs

Unlike events in the past where Elections Ontario had to wait for the issue of the writs to fully secure voting locations and returning office rental space, some advance preparation was possible in 2007. Stronger, united teams and more comprehensive training were in place in all electoral districts. Elections Ontario was also able to capitalize upon the fixed-date by securing prime advertising space well in advance of the event and fully developing outreach activities and products.

When the official election period began on September 10, 2007, the following personnel, systems and processes were operational:

- 107 returning offices and 29 satellite offices were fully stocked, furnished and had been open for three weeks;
- 7,977 revising agents had been hired and trained and had already completed the pre-writ targeted registration exercise;
- 824 tonnes of election supplies had been shipped from Elections Ontario's central warehouse to all 107 returning offices and 29 satellite offices;
- 107 wireless, configured Local Area Networks comprised of over 1,800 components were in use;
- 1,862 telecom components, including Centrex and analog voice lines, high speed Internet lines and 1-800 numbers were installed and fully functional;
- Geography products, including wall maps, new polling division lists, poll keys and map books had been made available to returning officers,

² Bill 187, *Budget Measures and Interim Appropriation Act, 2007*, Schedule 10, section 1 (enacted March 22, 2007).

candidates, clerks and political parties in hard and soft copy formats;

- One centralized and fully-staffed contact centre had been providing service to electors for more than three weeks;
- Four different advertisements for each of the 107 electoral districts, coinciding with the event calendar and customized with local times and locations were ready for printing in 78 daily or weekly publications.

Technology Deployment & Installation

While select components of EMS were utilized in 2007 for the general election, Elections Ontario deployed an updated version of the 2003 suite of field management applications for use during the event.

Elections Ontario built in system modifications to address electoral district boundary and legislative changes in the months preceding the event and then imaged, tested, packaged, shipped and installed 107 Local Area Network systems throughout the entire province. Key features of the 2007 returning office set-up included the enhanced flexibility of laptop workstations and the transition to secure wireless Local Area Networks in each office.

Installation support and any other needed assistance were provided through a dedicated help desk comprised of 25 technical support experts. Telecom services were installed and supported by external suppliers.

Identification Requirements

It is the mission of Elections Ontario to protect the integrity of the electoral process. The legislation requiring proof of the identity and place of residence of each elector is one tool that helps us to meet that goal.

To vote in the 2007 general election and referendum, new measures were introduced in the *Election Act* requiring each elector to show proof of identity to obtain a ballot. Electors who were unable to show this documentary proof were instead permitted by the statute to make a statutory declaration to obtain their ballots, if they were on the List of Electors.

The *Election Act* now also requires the Chief Electoral Officer to determine what specific documents, or class of documents, may serve as acceptable proof of identity and place of residence. When this change was enacted, Elections Ontario immediately set about creating a comprehensive identification (ID) policy.

A survey, sent to approximately 400 community organizations and groups representing a wide range of interests, asked respondents to determine what identification members of their community were likely to possess and the challenges members of their communities faced in producing those documents. The survey had an unexpectedly high response rate for a mail-out survey (20%) and provided constructive feedback.

In advance of developing the identification policy, Elections Ontario reviewed ID requirements used

SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	VOLUME
Telecom	Centrex Voice Lines & Sets	1,344
	High Speed Data/Internet Lines	244
	Analog Voice Lines	137
	1-800 Services	137
Computer	Servers	107
	Work Stations (Laptop)	1,070
	Routers	107
	Local Area Networks	107
	Printers	258
Back Up	Back Up Equipment (equipment for six full office replacements configured and packaged)	220
Total		3,731

in the application processes to access provincial government programs and benefits as well as identification requirements put in place by other levels of government.

In general, the Chief Electoral Officer determined that:

- Where proof of identity and proof of residence are required, one piece of ID showing an elector's **name, address, and signature** is acceptable (e.g. a driver's licence); or, two pieces of ID, one showing **name and signature**, the second document showing **name and address** is likewise acceptable;
- Where proof of identity is required, one piece of ID showing an elector's **name and signature** is acceptable;
- Where proof of residence is required, one piece of ID showing an elector's **name and address** is acceptable.

A comprehensive list of the documents that would be accepted as proof was developed, posted on the website, made available at polling places in 33 languages, including English and French, and referenced on the Notice of Registration cards and householder mailings.

Provisions were also made for hospitals and other such institutions populated by electors who would need to vote at their bedsides. It was sufficient proof of identity for these electors to display their hospital identification bracelets.

Elections Ontario accepted letters from university residence administrators as proof of residence, as well, and made allowance for voters with change of name certificates and marriage certificates in the documentary requirements.

Past experience, reinforced in public consultation, has shown that there are some communities where requiring electors to present ID poses specific challenges. In particular, homeless persons, residents in women's shelters and members of Aboriginal reserve communities may not have the specified ID. For these reasons, the Chief Electoral Officer developed a special "Certification of Identity and Residence" form to serve as documentary proof. This form had to be signed by the elector and by the administrator of a shelter, drop-in centre, or by a representative of a Band Council.

Elections Ontario added an ID requirements component to poll official training in order to ensure that all officials working in advance polls and on Election Day were advised of this change in voting procedure. As well, all voting locations were supplied with reference materials that clearly explained and illustrated the new ID requirements.

Municipal Partnership Opportunity

A pilot project with the municipal election authorities presented itself in late 2006 through discussions with the City of Toronto. Elections Ontario subsequently brought this opportunity forward to the government during the returning officer appointment phase in the spring of 2007. Having secured the approval of government, a member of the City of Toronto staff was appointed as a returning officer and the partnership with the City of Toronto was forged.

The City of Toronto agreed to manage and operate one of the 107 provincial returning offices from their municipal elections office located in the Beaches-East York electoral district. In addition to providing a building and an office infrastructure, the partnership provided an opportunity to assess the efficiencies of employing municipal election staff with local knowledge and expertise in all aspects of operating a returning office.

Target Revision Program

Once an electoral event is underway, the first critical undertaking is the target revision program. This initiative serves the immediate purpose of increasing the accuracy of the List of Electors. Revising agents are no longer updating the Register but are instead revising the preliminary List of Electors. As with the targeted registration program, the additions, deletions and confirmations gathered during this time serve to strengthen the Register as a whole, a benefit which persists well beyond Election Day.

Following the completion of the targeted registration program on September 9, returning officers once again dispatched revising agents and commenced the nine day target revision program on September 10, 2007.

Having visited high-density polls, areas of new development and quality control polls during the targeted registration period, the target revision program focused specifically on five key areas in order to maximize the number of eligible electors on the List of Electors:

- Special Polls – polls placed in “an institution for the reception, treatment or vocational training of persons who have served or are serving in the Canadian Forces or who are disabled, a hospital, a psychiatric facility, a home for the aged, a nursing home or other institution of twenty beds or more, in which chronically ill or infirm persons reside or where a retirement home of fifty beds or more is situate in an electoral district”³. Confirmation of resident electors is often accomplished by working with the staff of the facility;
- Universities and colleges;
- Homeless electors;
- Aboriginal electors;
- Discretionary areas as identified by the returning officer – added for any reason that, in the estimation of the returning officer, would improve the List of Electors.

Overall, Elections Ontario selected 1,581,839 addresses, in total, for both the targeted registration and target revision programs. Revising agents left notices with Elections Ontario contact information at 529,852 residences. In a new feature of this activity for 2007, Elections Ontario confirmed 1,152,237 addresses and identified a further 12,454 new addresses across the province.

The following chart details the more than 1.09 million transactions generated by the Targeted Registration and Target Revision Programs.

TARGETED REGISTRATION AND TARGET REVISION PROGRAMS	
Confirmations*	668,979
Additions	222,419
Deletions	141,996**
Changes	61,992
Transactions	1,095,386

* New 2007 initiative
 ** Includes moved and deceased electors.

Field Audit Program

Elections Ontario spends considerable time developing and testing the tools and processes that will be used by returning officers during the election. Once the event is underway, however, the magnitude of tasks to complete and the sheer size of the province make it difficult for Elections Ontario to capture the valuable day-to-day suggestions and responses of the returning office teams.

Recognizing that, Elections Ontario invited four experienced election officials – two from Canada, one from the United States and one from Scotland – to conduct a thorough, independent and impartial audit through a series of visits to all 107 returning offices across Ontario during a five week period.

The field audit program provided an opportunity to capture the recommendations and comments of the returning office teams as they were actively living the event. At various points throughout the event period, field auditors visited each of the 107 returning offices and interviewed the key staff. The auditors also engaged in poll-to-poll visits on Election Day.

The findings of the program, the results of more than 200 completed questionnaires and the key recommendations of the field audit team, provide valuable insight into the realities of administering an event throughout the province. The Returning Officer Advisory Committee, one of the key suggestions stemming from the field audit exercise, was implemented immediately following the election.

3 Subsection 14 (1), *Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.6.*

Recruiting

One of the greatest challenges in administering an electoral event lies in the need to hire a massive temporary workforce, the bulk of which only work on Election Day. On average, returning officers hire 700-800 people per electoral district in order to conduct an election. Hiring and training such a substantial group of employees within a 28-day timeframe presents significant challenges. While the *Election Act* prescribes specific rules for the appointment of poll officials, including instruction to draw from lists provided by candidates, it is often difficult to fill all of the required poll official positions by drawing on the sources as stipulated in the Act.

Moreover, the increased length of the advance poll period and Election Day, as well as the double ballot counting as a result of the referendum, amplified the recruiting challenges in the 2007 event. Returning officers worked diligently, drawing on a number of sources including political party referrals, on-line job applications and lists of previous federal, municipal and provincial election poll officials to meet their staffing targets and training deadlines.

The recruiting efforts, however, did not end when all polls had been staffed. Historically, approximately 15% of all recruited poll officials who have completed training quit on or before Election Day. In order to guarantee a trained team of officials at each poll, Elections Ontario instituted a 30% over-hiring and training strategy. Post-event research indicates that the stand-by resource pool provided the returning office teams with an appropriate number of replacement poll officials.

POSITIONS FILLED*	2003	2007
Revising Agents	4,130	7,977
Returning Office	3,193	7,910
Election Day	59,625	73,775
Total	66,948	89,662

* The number of positions for 2007 reflects an increased number of electoral districts, more voting locations and polling places, new positions to provide enhanced customer service and data entry in the returning office and staffing efficiencies resulting from the assignment of individual employees to different responsibilities at various stages of the election.

Poll Official Training

Once the poll officials have been recruited, they must be trained. Instruction in proper procedure and practice is a task of the utmost importance in a well-administered election. However, this necessity must be balanced with the realities of the event; namely that poll officials come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience and there is limited time available for training. As a result, the poll official training program must be accessible and easily consumed by the trainees while still uniformly conveying the important specifications and obligations of administering an election.

Research undertaken following the 2003 general election indicated that a video-based and facilitator-led interactive training program of roughly one hour in length would provide the optimum method for delivering poll official training. Elections Ontario developed the video and training materials in accordance with that model and supplemented the poll official training with an on-line e-learning reinforcement program. Particular emphasis was placed on identification requirements and referendum instruction as these items were new to the poll official training program in 2007.

The poll official training program and video were very well received with 95% of post-event poll official survey respondents stating that the video helped them to understand most or all of the situations that they faced on Election Day.

Each returning office facilitated between 190 and 230 hours of training, conducting three classes per day within a 14-day period that ran from September 25 to October 9, 2007.

E-learning Reinforcement Training Program

While poll officials may feel confident and prepared for polling day duties upon leaving a training session, it is understandable that they may develop questions or concerns as Election Day approaches.

As a result, Elections Ontario developed a web-based reinforcement training program for poll officials intended to supplement the training received in the returning office prior to Election Day. It also provided an opportunity to test e-learning as a vehicle for administering poll official training in future events.

Instructions on how to access and use the voluntary e-learning reinforcement training program were distributed to poll officials by trainers during the classroom sessions. The daily rate of access increased slowly leading up to Election Day, with the greatest spike of activity appearing on October 9, 2007, indicating that the system was, in fact, used for reinforcement training immediately prior to the event.

Results from those poll officials who responded to the post-event online survey indicated that 76% of them would encourage others to use the e-learning program. Furthermore, the majority of respondents were appreciative of the speed of the functionality and the user-centred navigation.

A contact centre was set up to support the users of the program during the event. The low volume of calls received suggests that poll officials who accessed the e-learning site were able to navigate their way through the system easily.

Fly-in Community Training

Administering an election in an isolated northern community presents certain challenges; nowhere is that more evident than in the 21 fly-in communities located in the Electoral District of Kenora-Rainy River. While poll officials can be recruited from the local population and election supplies can be flown in to communities, there still remains the issue of how to train poll officials.

Elections Ontario capitalized on advances in technology in the isolated communities and launched an on-line real-time training program whereby the training officer located in the returning office was able to digitally administer an interactive training program while communicating via the Internet with the poll officials in the remote communities. This new initiative proved to be both well-received and cost effective. Elections Ontario is currently exploring the possibility of administering training to larger audiences via this method.

Notice of Registration Cards

The receipt of a Notice of Registration card (NRC) has become the unofficial starting point for electoral events for a large portion of the electorate. Information received from focus groups indicates that this piece of mail is one of the most

recognizable items received during an electoral event and that electors rely upon it not just to advise them of registration but also for information on when and where to vote and who to contact for answers to their questions.

Recognizing the importance of the NRC as a communication tool, Elections Ontario redesigned it for the 2007 event with the goal of making it easier to read. The NRC clearly listed the voting location, voting location hours and poll number and, as well, reinforced the new ID requirements by instructing electors to bring both the card and identification to the polling place when voting. The 2007 NRC was 33.6% larger than the card used in the previous event and, accompanied by a separate referendum education information brochure, was distributed in an envelope. Feedback from electors indicates that the new NRC was well received.

Apart from redesigning the card, Elections Ontario also implemented a single-supplier printing strategy. Unlike the past event where the NRCs had been printed by two suppliers, the cards were generated centrally by one contracted printer. This new initiative proved to be successful as it alleviated a number of the logistical challenges faced in past events and allowed for a uniform distribution of cards across the province.

Between September 18 and September 21, 2007, 8,206,005 NRCs were mailed to electors in the province. An additional 940,533 cards were generated to reflect updates collected through targeted registration and target revision and transactions at the returning office for new additions and changes. These cards were mailed to electors between September 24 and September 26, 2007. Where necessary, those cards were clearly marked as “REVISED” in order to lessen any potential elector confusion.



Data for the Notice of Registration cards is derived from the elector and mailing address information contained in the preliminary List of Electors extract from the Register. In most cases, an elector's mailing address is the same as his or her residential address. However, in rural regions, this is often not the case as a result of electors having Rural Route, post office box and general delivery mailing addresses.

In order to increase the likelihood that each NRC gets to the intended destination, the NRC data file is processed through Canada Post approved standardization software which validates each mailing address against current Canada Post mailing address data. If the resultant accuracy rate exceeds 95%, incentive reduced mailing rates are available.

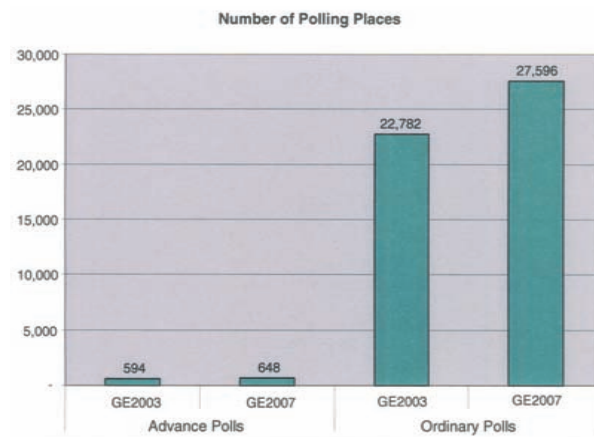
The 2007 NRC data file exceeded this requirement, which provided a definite measure of certainty that each card would reach its intended destination. Achieving this accuracy rate also allowed Elections Ontario to take advantage of a reduced mailing rate, accordingly reducing the costs associated with NRC distribution.

Voting Locations

Voting locations must be confirmed early in the election period for inclusion on the Notice of Registration cards for electors.

Following the pre-writ evaluation of potential voting locations by returning officers, Elections Ontario incorporated the recommendations into a record of potential locations. In the weeks before the issue of the writs, returning officers worked quickly to visit and confirm locations and to ensure accessibility and availability of each site in advance of that deadline.

Roughly 30% of the voting locations used during the 2007 electoral event were situated within schools. Centrally located and traditionally used in electoral events, schools are often the only suitable public locations available for use. In recent years, however, school administrators have been increasingly hesitant to grant access to their buildings, primarily citing security concerns. Elections Ontario worked with administrators to alleviate these concerns, reinforcing the importance of security during training, increasing the number of



poll officials in voting locations within schools and, in some cases, providing professional security guards on Election Day.

In total, returning officers set up 648 advance polls and 27,596 Election Day polling places, totaling 28,244, in 9,090 voting locations throughout the province. This represents an increase of 4,868 polling places and 2,073 voting locations over the previous election – in effect, a 20% increase in the overall number of polling places and a 30% increase in the number of voting locations in comparison with the 2003 election.

Voting locations were closer to the elector, located in familiar sites within their communities. With the goal of creating a more convenient and efficient voting experience for the elector, Elections Ontario increased voting locations in apartment and condominium buildings with more than 100 units, by 261% over the 2003 election. Similarly, the use of community centres as voting locations increased by 159% over the previous event.

Advertising Campaign

Building on the successes of the award-winning advertising campaign of 2003, Elections Ontario ran a multi-staged and highly visual campaign which sought to meet two distinct objectives: to “inform” and to “engage” electors.

The engage component was designed to encourage eligible electors to exercise their right to vote whereas the inform element was designed to provide details about the electoral process and ensure that voting was as accessible as possible. The 2007 advertising campaign was comprised



of 828 individual items produced for distribution during the event.

Both the “inform” and “engage” objectives were united under the shared event theme of “Don’t let others speak for you. Vote.”

Elections Ontario conducted focus groups across the province and across multiple socio-economic groups to test the 2007 theme and concepts. The evaluation showed that the campaign concepts and creative samples were received positively by respondents across all markets and segments of the polled population. The message was deemed to be clear, relevant and motivating.

Working with a media buy plan developed to achieve a 99% reach – meaning 99% of the Ontario electors would see or hear an Elections Ontario



advertisement at least once – Elections Ontario placed a variety of print, radio and television ads as well as transit shelter and resto-bar pieces and banner ads on high traffic websites.

In addition to print, radio, television and online materials, Elections Ontario also produced two “householder” brochures, each distributed to 4.8 million households. Delivered during the week of August 14 – 17, the first householder was designed to inform electors of all that was new for the 2007 election. It included information regarding the new identification requirements, the referendum, services for electors with special needs and general advice on

DIRECT MAIL

Householders (x2)	4,797,000
Number of NRC centrally mailed (including revised cards)	9,146,538

ADVERTISING

Daily Newspapers (4 stages)	45
Weekly Community Newspapers	11
French-Language Newspapers	20
Ethnic and Aboriginal Daily/Weekly Newspapers	31 print and corresponding on-line publications
Television Stations - English and French	16 major television markets (800 Gross Rating Points for 3 flights*)
Radio Stations - English and French	All available Ontario radio stations (300+)
Radio Ethnic	4 inform scripts produced and delivered in 46 languages
Transit Shelters	80 locations
Resto-Bar	1,525 locations
On-line	4,000,000 impressions on 9 sites

LANGUAGES

Print	33
Television	2
Radio	48

* Gross Rating Points – an advertising industry measure of the intensity and estimated audience for a campaign

voting procedures and how to confirm registration or work in the election. It also advised electors that revising agents were to be expected to visit in the coming weeks.

The second householder, delivered during the week of September 10 – 14, again emphasized the referendum, new identification requirements and included information on advance poll voting locations, NRCs and voter eligibility.

Response from electors following the electoral event indicates that more than 96% of electors specifically recalled seeing, reading or hearing a component of the Elections Ontario advertising campaign. Eight out of ten Ontarians gave positive ratings to the information that was available to them prior to and on Election Day regarding the voting process and where to vote.

Outreach

Elections Ontario is committed to protecting the accessibility of the electoral process. Implicit in this pledge is the understanding that Ontario has a very diverse population of electors who may require specialized assistance in order to exercise their right to vote. It is through the outreach program that we provide the necessary tools and materials to support that accessibility.

Through its outreach activities, Elections Ontario not only sought to convey electoral process information to the diverse communities making up the province but also to effectively promote the products, services and partnerships available to electors who may face barriers to the electoral process.

The 2007 outreach program built upon relationships with more than 500 stakeholder organizations and, by extension, the electors that those organizations represent. The following are some of the key enhancements to products and services available for the 2007 electoral event:

- New Braille ballot template, developed in consultation with the CNIB;
- Larger font on ballots for electors who are visually impaired;
- Increased TTY services for hearing impaired electors;
- Downloadable large print and Braille householder on the website;

- Pictograph poster to aid electors with low literacy skills in understanding voting procedures;
- An expanded web presence providing information in 35 languages;
- A third party translation service to assist callers in over 100 languages;
- Language guides for use in polling places, provided in 35 languages.

Apart from the multi-language print and radio advertising campaign, Elections Ontario encouraged involvement in the electoral process and addressed the new identification requirements by providing the following resources throughout the province:

- 23 Aboriginal liaison officers to work with Chiefs and key Aboriginal leaders and to distribute information kits to over 200 communities throughout the province;
- 61 community liaison officers to work with various ethno-cultural organizations and communities;
- Eight liaison officers for the homeless to provide voting information to shelters and to distribute election information kits to homeless electors;
- 60 student liaison officers to facilitate partnerships with student organizations and to participate in campus registration initiatives.

In order to drive awareness of the general election and referendum on university and college campuses across the province, Elections Ontario formed strategic alliances with the Canadian Federation of Students and the College Student Alliance. With the assistance of more than 200 representatives on 50 campuses, Elections Ontario launched an extensive media campaign aimed at promoting the advertising campaign messaging and information in 29 campus publications, on campus radio and on popular online platforms such as Facebook and Campus Life. As well, on September 17 and 18, 2007, Elections Ontario hosted on-campus registration days.

In addition, Elections Ontario distributed information kits to more than 1,000 women living in temporary shelters. We also retained the services of a literacy consultant to create materials for electors with low literacy levels.

Post-election surveys conducted by Ipsos Reid show that the experience of electors with special needs generally mirrors that of other electors



when it comes to electoral event awareness and obtaining information at different stages in the election calendar. Overall, the vast majority reported having no problems casting their ballots and, while some respondents reported a lower level of awareness regarding the new identification requirements, they indicated that they had no difficulty producing acceptable identification when required to do so.

The majority of electors with disabilities surveyed also stated that they experienced no problems when casting their ballots. However, a key finding of the survey is that, when compared to other electors, voters with disabilities report a higher level of problems or barriers at voting locations. Elections Ontario is committed to removing such barriers and will continue to improve products, services and support for these electors.

The fact that Ontarians with disabilities are among the electors more likely to rely directly upon Elections Ontario for voting and accessibility information, using either our website or our toll-free numbers, again confirms the importance of Elections Ontario's commitment to effective communications materials, accessible information and responsiveness to electors.

Student Vote

As in 2003, Elections Ontario again partnered with Student Vote to encourage active and educated citizenship in students under the voting age with the goal of establishing and reinforcing the habit of electoral participation in young Ontarians. First launched during the 2003 Provincial General Election, Student Vote provides students with the opportunity to take part in a parallel election experience, during an official event period. In total, 2,177 schools, located in every electoral district in the province, registered to participate.

Student Vote distributed suggested action plans and actual event advertising, information materials and sample poll kits, as supplied by Elections Ontario, in order to represent the voting experience as accurately as possible at all involved schools. Students studied the electoral process, learned of the referendum on electoral reform and interacted, in some cases, with local candidates. The process culminated in the participation of 1,704 schools and 269,311 votes cast by elementary and secondary school students on October 10, 2007 in the parallel Student Vote election. The parallel referendum consisted of 188,656 valid votes submitted by 1,238 schools.

Contact Centre

Expanding upon the centralized framework that was piloted in the 2003 electoral event, Elections Ontario activated its 125-seat capacity contact centre at the beginning of the writ period. In total, 239 agents were trained to provide services in English and French with contact centre agents available to callers in shifts, for a total of 78-hours each week.

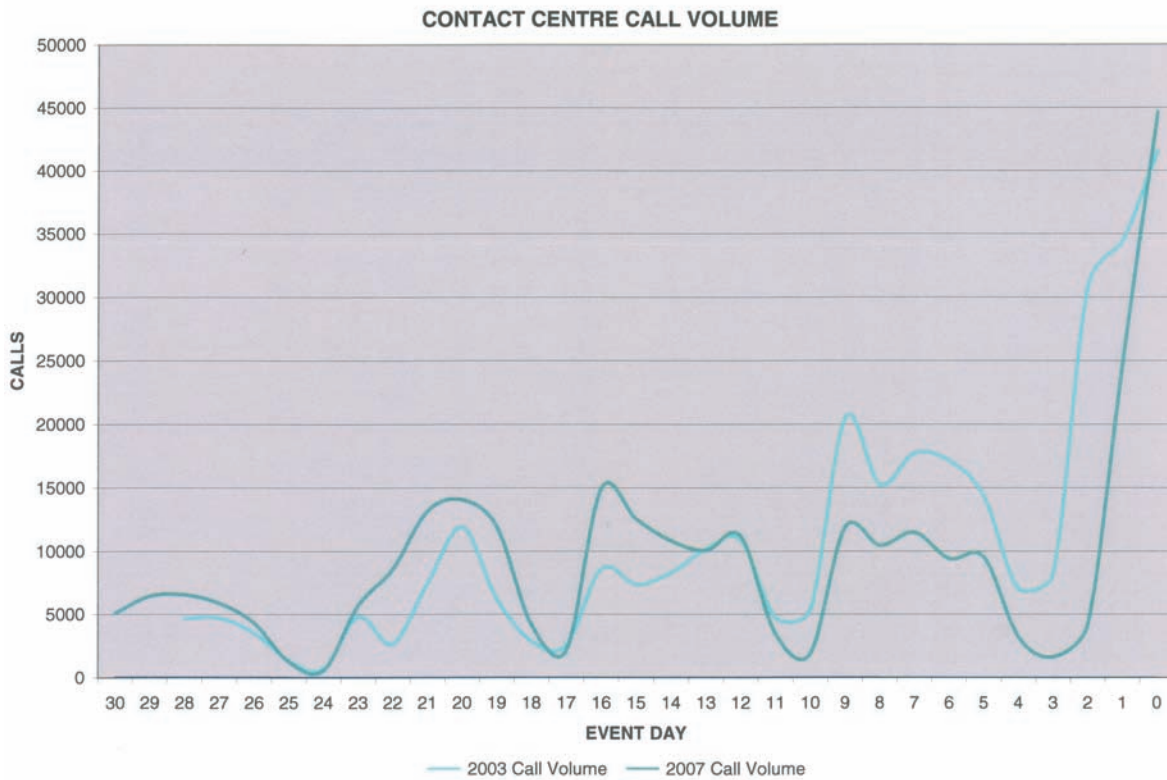
The contact centre provided a single point of contact for all elector inquiries, a fact that was reinforced in all communications and advertising materials. In addition to the 239 agents staffing the contact centre, more than 300 agents located in the returning offices received calls pertaining to local election issues throughout the writ period, such as hiring, target revision and voting location confirmation.

In order to ensure that electors contacting Elections Ontario received professional and efficient responses to their queries, Elections Ontario set performance targets using industry standard or better Key Performance Indicator measures, committing to answer 85% of all calls within 15 seconds and to resolve an elector's query on the initial call 90% of the time.

During the event, Elections Ontario's agents responded to a total of 286,610 telephone calls, receiving 177,266 at the centralized contact centre

and an additional 109,344 in the returning offices themselves. The contact centre exceeded its Key Performance Indicator standards, achieving over 94% for both English and French-language services.

As with the election in 2003, separate toll-free support lines were provided specifically for use by returning office staff, electors with special needs, candidates and the media.



Website

The Elections Ontario website provided electors with another link to information, support and assistance during the event.

In 2003, the website had been a well-accessed point of contact, with more than 200,000 unique visitors accessing the site during the 28-day writ period. In the four years since the last event, however, Ontarians have become more reliant upon the Internet as a means of gathering information and technology has, understandably, evolved. Consequently, Elections Ontario launched a redesigned website for the 2007 general election expanding on the functionality of the previous website and offering new, innovative tools as well as enhanced user-centered navigation.

In an effort to increase the ease of navigation a header and footer were added to the website making key links accessible from anywhere on the website. These links allowed users to quickly view the most commonly accessed content and applications on the Elections Ontario website, to search for key words on the site or to toggle page content between English and French.

One of the key drivers while designing the site was to ensure accessibility for all users of the website. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, an office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, endorses the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative Guidelines for website developers to follow to ensure that persons with disabilities receive the same user experience as other users. The Elections Ontario website was compared against the W3C Web Content Accessibilities guidelines to ensure compliance with Priority 1 checkpoints. Using an on-line accessibility review tool, Elections Ontario confirmed that all Priority 1 checkpoints were met. Elections Ontario continues to monitor the accessibility of the site by using on-line accessibility review tools on a periodic basis to ensure that all new content conforms to Priority 1 checkpoints.

The website also proved to be a useful recruiting tool. In total, 13,846 individuals visited the online job application page between September 10 and October 10, 2007 and submitted an application to work in an electoral district on Election Day.

During the election, over 434,000 “Where Do I Vote” FAQ inquiries were responded to on the website. Most of this activity occurred during the last week of the event and focused on the following queries:

- Where do I vote?
- Who are the candidates in my electoral district and how can I get in contact with them?
- Where are my Advance Poll Voting Locations?
- When are they open?
- Who are the candidates in Ontario?
- Who is my returning officer and how can I contact him/her?

In accordance with the new legislative requirements, the “Am I Registered?” elector registration confirmation was transitioned to the “Am I on the List?” application on September 10, 2007. Accessed by 44,876 electors, the application was offered until early October when its value became diminished as a result of the number of updates to the list being generated in 107 electoral districts.

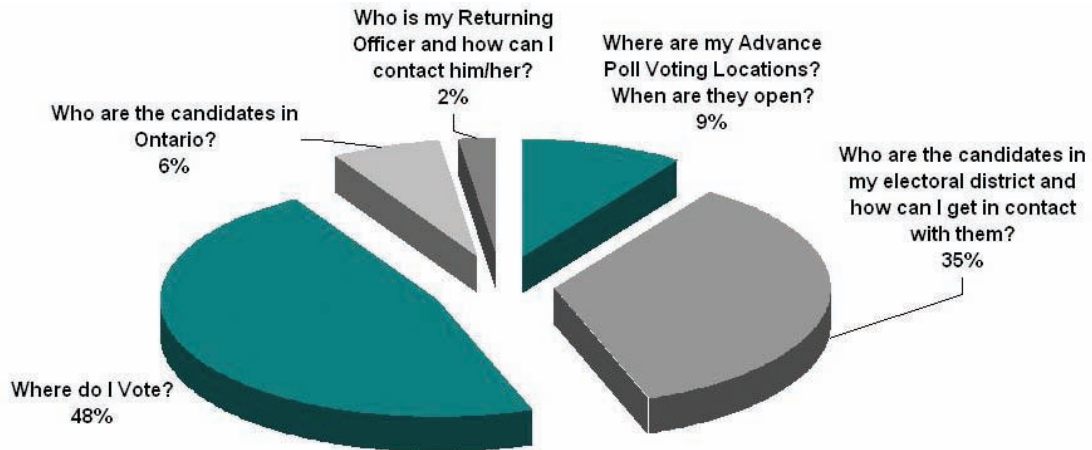
The website was accessed by 401,147 unique visitors during the election period, with 105,455 of those visiting the site on Election Day for last minute voting information or election and referendum results. Roughly double the number of unique visitors accessed the Elections Ontario website in comparison with the previous provincial electoral event.

Post-event research conducted by Ipsos Reid indicates an unexpected three-fold increase in the number of electors making use of our web services over the 2003 event. With usage growing at such a significant rate, it is clear that the continued advancement of our web services is a key and necessary deliverable. Elections Ontario is committed to exploring online innovations and opportunities in order to provide the best possible support to electors via web services.

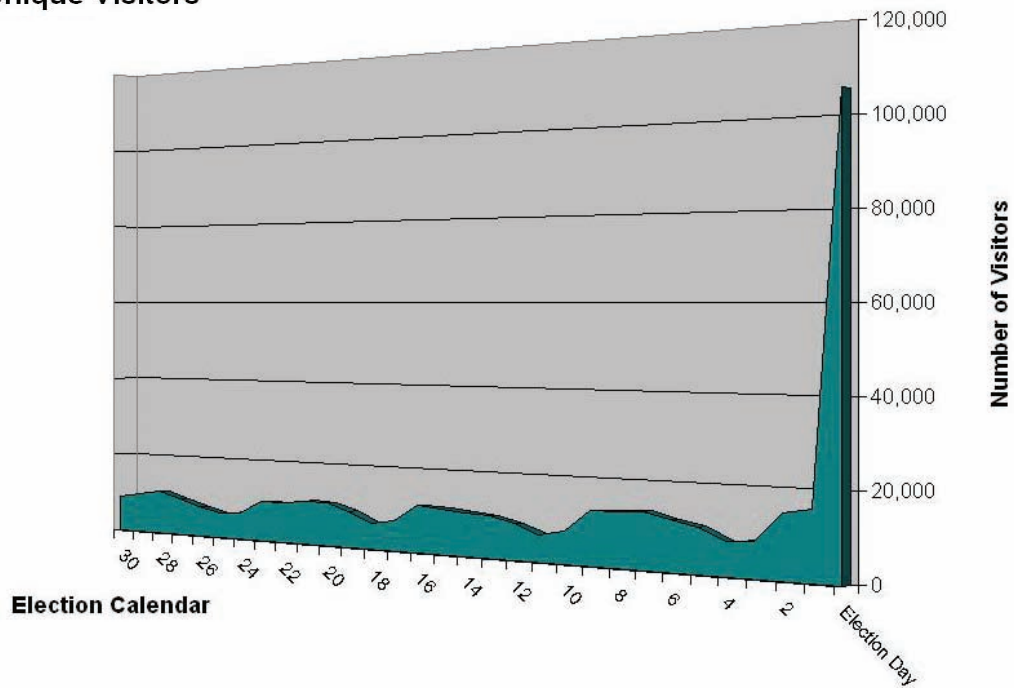
Web Activity

	TOTAL HITS	UNIQUE VISITORS
Election Day	7,155,263	105,455
Event Total	26,914,866	401,147
Daily Avg.	868,221	12,940

FAQ Applications



Unique Visitors



Nominations and Ballot Printing

Nomination Day signals the commencement of a period of great activity during an event. With less than four full days separating the end of the nomination period and the first day of advance polls, there is much to be done in order to ensure the efficient printing and shipping of more than 10.5 million election ballots.

Nominations closed at 2 p.m. on September 18, 2007. One of the recent amendments to the *Election Act* allowed for the inclusion of political party affiliation on the ballot with the name of the candidate, if a statement of endorsement had been signed by the leader of that political party and then submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer on or before the close of nominations.

Of the 599 candidates nominated in the 39th Provincial General Election, 565 candidates were endorsed by 12 registered political parties, thereby allowing for the name of the political party to appear below the candidate name on the ballot. The majority of those candidates who were not endorsed by a party chose to be identified as “independent” and were listed as such on the ballot. The three new political parties were able to obtain their registration by meeting the threshold of

nominating two candidates for election as permitted by an amendment to the *Election Finances Act* made in March, 2007.

While two types of ballots were produced for use in the 2007 electoral event – election ballots and referendum ballots – they were generated using vastly different methods.

The election ballots, newly designed and featuring the political party name, a voting circle double the size of that appearing on the ballot used in 2003, and a 33% increase in ballot width to permit a larger font size and improve legibility for visually impaired voters, were produced for each of the electoral districts as they had been in past electoral events. Returning officers were required to identify a local ballot printing supplier in advance of the writ period so that the ballot specifications and security-encoded paper used in election ballot printing could be shipped in advance. Following the close of nominations, approximately 70 local printing houses across the province worked with returning officers and Elections Ontario to produce and ship 10,529,950 election ballots for use in advance polls and on Election Day.

CANDIDATES	2003	2007
Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)	6	8
Family Coalition Party of Ontario	51	83
Freedom Party of Ontario	24	15
New Democratic Party of Ontario	103	107
Ontario Liberal Party	103	107
Ontario Libertarian Party	5	25
Ontario Provincial Confederation of Regions	1	2
Party for People with Special Needs *	n/a	2
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario	103	107
Reform Party of Ontario *	n/a	2
Republican Party of Ontario *	n/a	2
The Green Party of Ontario	102	107
Independent Candidates	24	32
Total Number of Candidates	522	599
Total Number of Parties	9	12

* Registered in 2007

Sample Election Ballot: Ottawa-Orléans 2007



Unlike the election ballot, the referendum ballot was not dependant upon an electoral district specific candidate list and thus could be produced centrally by a single printer in advance of Nomination Day. In total, 9,020,000 referendum ballots were produced and shipped for use in advance polls and on Election Day.

Sample Referendum Ballot

Advance Polls

In 2003, advance polls in returning offices were open for six days and “area advance polls” throughout each electoral district were open for three of those days. Following an amendment to the *Election Act*, passed on June 4, 2007, the advance poll period was extended to 13-days in returning offices and ten days for “area advance polls”.

Preparing for and administering the extended advance poll period presented some logistical and

recruiting challenges. Returning officers noted that it was difficult to recruit and retain poll officials for the entire 13-day period. This proved to be particularly true in rural electoral districts.

Keeping the advance polls secure and separate from politically affiliated advertising and other events booked into the same facilities was also a concern. The increased duration of the area advance poll period in turn increased the likelihood that other events, politically affiliated or otherwise, were booked in the same community centres, shopping plazas or churches. Elections Ontario took care to ensure that all area advance polls were kept separate and, in some cases, provided security to enforce the separation.

The advance poll period commenced in returning offices on Saturday, September 22. Additional “area advance polls”, located in communities throughout the province, opened three days later on Tuesday, September 25. All advance polls concluded on October 4, six days prior to Election Day.

Overall, the 13-day advance poll period progressed smoothly and the few incidents that occurred, such as power outages in the Electoral Districts of Algoma-Manitoulin and Thunder Bay-Atikokan, were addressed appropriately by returning officers and advance poll officials. In one case, advance poll officials were unable to enter the arranged voting location in order to open their poll. Recognizing their responsibility to accommodate electors, the poll officials simply set up the poll in the parking lot and processed voters until the landlord was contacted and the location was unlocked.

During the 13-days that advance polls were open, 452,919 electors chose to cast a ballot, representing an increase of 27.4% over advance poll turnout in 2003 and comprising roughly 10.1% of the overall 2007 election turnout. Ballots were held securely and not counted until the close of polls on Election Night.

	2003		2007	
Number of Advance Poll Days	Area Advance	3	Area Advance	10
	Returning Office Advance	6	Returning Office Advance	13
Number of Locations	594		648	
Turnout	355,396		452,919	
% Changed	—		+27.4	
% of Overall Turnout	7.8		10.1	

Polls Open – October 10, 2007

All event efforts and preparations culminated on October 10, 2007 with a successful Election and Referendum Day that took place almost without incident. With extended voting hours (9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Central time zone) electors had even more time to exercise their right to vote.

Few disruptions occurred and those that did, such as a fire at a school in the Electoral District of Dufferin-Caledon, were handled admirably by poll officials and resulted in no interruption to voting. Throughout the day, Elections Ontario maintained contact with the public, political parties and media through the website, contact centre and through dedicated telephone lines.

Of the 27,596 polls operating on Election Day, Elections Ontario was informed that 19 did not open at 9 a.m. as prescribed by the *Election Act*. The majority of these polls were open and serving electors within one hour of the appointed time. The Chief Electoral Officer directed three of these polls, located in the Electoral Districts of Etobicoke North and Ottawa West-Nepean, to extend voting hours until 10 p.m. No results from any of the other polls in those two electoral districts were released until after 10 p.m., when all polls had closed.

A total of 204,081 electors registered at the polls to be added to the List of Electors on Election Day and 78,006 electors had changes made to their entry on the List. The following chart details the additions, deletions and changes to elector records that took

place throughout the event. Results from the 2003 general event are provided for comparison. Over all, Election Day transactions decreased from 2003 to 2007 as a result of the high number of confirmations and additions from the targeted registration and target revision programs completed before Election Day and a continuous maintenance program for the Register.

Results Reporting

At 9 p.m. (8 p.m. Central time zone) the polls closed, with the exception of the three polls remaining open until 10 p.m. on the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer, and Elections Ontario poll officials began the ballot count process for election and referendum ballots. In accordance with legislation, election results were tabulated in advance of referendum results.

Elections Ontario launched its redesigned live election and referendum results web pages shortly after 9 p.m. Interest in election and referendum results proved to be substantial, greatly exceeding that seen in 2003, and by 9:30 p.m. the high volume of traffic on the website slowed the system.

Ipsos Reid research confirmed that Internet access for the general public had increased from 80% to 85% over the previous four years; a 5% increase in usage which was factored into Elections Ontario's pre-event planning. In anticipation of the election, Elections Ontario prepared for double the web traffic experienced when reporting results in the previous general event. Web usage throughout Election Day

Total List Activity Throughout Event Period

	2003	2007
Register Extract	n/a	8,384,958
Targeted Registration and Revision Additions	265,659	222,419
Preliminary List of Electors	7,331,161	8,377,734
Elections Canada Update	388,045	n/a
Polling Day Additions	324,031	204,081
Total Deletes*	175,364	180,539
Other Transactions	65,805	n/a
Duplicates Removed Post-Event	236,730	73,266
Final Elector Count	7,962,607	8,557,653
Polling Day Changes	185,651	78,006
Total Certificates	175,702	56,947
* Includes moved and deceased electors.		

up until the time that polls closed was consistent with this hypothesis.

The close of polls, however, brought an increase of eight times more website traffic than experienced in 2003 which, in turn, overloaded the security infrastructure and caused slowdowns to the website, returning offices and results feeds to the media. Elections Ontario immediately posted a “busy site” notification barring any new users, continued updating results for those already accessing the site and established an alternate means for reporting to the media, which performed well. Around midnight, normal service was resumed.

The significant use of our web-enabled results reporting system has clearly demonstrated that Ontario electors are now much more comfortable using the Internet to obtain information during an event. The expansion of the Elections Ontario web environment is a key part of the strategic direction of the next four years; the election night experience has reinforced the importance of pursuing this crucial objective.

Voter Turnout

Elections Ontario establishes voter turnout by calculating the ratio between the number of ballots and the final number of electors on the List of Electors.

In 2007, the number of people who voted during the 13-day advance poll period as well as on Election Day was 4,457,829. The final elector count, totaling 8,557,653, increased between 2003 and 2007 by 595,046 electors, resulting in a general election voter turnout rate of 52.1%.

The first provincial referendum since 1924 resulted in 63% of participating electors selecting First-Past-The-Post and 37% of participating electors selecting Mixed Member Proportional. A total of 2,714,020 ballots were cast in favour of First-Past-The-Post while 1,581,741 ballots were cast in favour of Mixed Member Proportional.

To help understand the changing future, we have presented a chart in Appendix B that shows preliminary numbers for voter turnout by age in the 2003 and 2007 elections.

PROVINCIAL GENERAL ELECTIONS		2003	2007
Polls	Advance Polls	594	648
	Election Day Polls	22,782	27,596
	Polling Locations	7,017	9,090
Ballots	Total Ballots	4,528,167	4,457,829
	Valid Ballots	4,497,244	4,423,898
	Rejected Ballots	20,679	19,654
	Unmarked Ballots	7,613	10,865
	Declined Ballots	2,631	3,412
Electors who voted at Advance Polls	355,396	452,919	
Turnout	Percentage of names on the Voters List	56.8%	52.1%

THE REFERENDUM IN BRIEF

Ballots	Total Ballots	4,457,829
	Valid Ballots for First-Past-The-Post	2,714,020
	Percentage of Valid Votes	63%
	Valid Ballots for Mixed Member Proportional	1,581,741
	Percentage of Valid Votes	37%
	Rejected Ballots	28,512
	Unmarked Ballots	111,766
	Declined Ballots	21,790

POST-EVENT

Recount in Thunder Bay-Atikokan

There was one judicial recount following the 2007 general election. A recount for the Electoral District of Thunder Bay-Atikokan was requested under Section 71 of the *Election Act* by the NDP candidate, John Rafferty, who received the second-highest number of votes. After the official tabulation on October 12, 2007, the margin between Mr. Rafferty and the Liberal candidate, Bill Mauro, who received the most votes, was 41 votes.

The judicial recount took place on October 26, 2007 under the supervision of Mr. Justice DiGiuseppe of the Ontario Court of Justice. Following the recount, the difference between the two candidates was adjusted to 50 votes.

Comprehensive Contingency and Disaster Recovery Planning

The successful delivery of an electoral event is as dependant upon supplies, technology and utilities as it is upon each returning officer and poll official. Consequently, Elections Ontario developed strategies to address unexpected events or disruptions that could threaten the ability to administer an election.

Building on the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans in place in 2003, Elections Ontario developed critical event resumption plans for head office and all 107 returning offices. Arrangements were made for a short-term emergency business resumption facility, an IT recovery centre, an alternate contact centre site, back-up skids of supplies and emergency generators. Elections Ontario also requested credible evidence of contingency preparations from all major suppliers and strategic partners. None of the plans or preparations had to be put into action during the event.

Closing Down The Event

Long after voting has concluded and the results have been tabulated, the general election remains a focal point at Elections Ontario.

In advance of closing down 107 returning offices and 29 satellite offices, returning officers and their staff must reconcile the election and referendum

results, take part in any required judicial recounts, arrange for all telephony services and utilities to be disconnected and return furniture to suppliers. They must capture the payment information for more than 70,000 poll officials and record the Polling Day voter registration data for incorporation into the Register. Finally, returning officers must repack all of the materials and equipment originally shipped from Elections Ontario. All 136 returning and satellite offices completed these tasks and closed on or before October 20, 2007.

Immediately following the election, Elections Ontario commenced issuing payments to poll officials; a significant undertaking considering that more than 80,000 people, most of whom only work on Election Day, are hired during an event. Those poll officials with questions were directed to contact a payment inquiry telephone and e-mail assistance service, staffed by more than 25 agents.

In the weeks following the event, Elections Ontario hosted returning officer and CEO liaison officer debrief sessions, collected online surveys completed by poll officials and met with outreach stakeholder organizations and representatives from political parties to gather their reflections of the event. The comments and suggestions amassed during these post-event sessions will be analyzed in the months to come and used to strengthen the processes and training employed in future elections.

Ipsos Reid Post-Event Survey

In accordance with section 67.1 of the *Election Act* which requires the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct a survey of electors, Elections Ontario commissioned Ipsos Reid Public Affairs to conduct stakeholder and public opinion and behaviour research following the October 10, 2007, provincial election and referendum.

The primary objective of the research project was to measure general elector (voter/non-voter) and stakeholder opinions on and experiences with the procedures, processes and related communications associated with the general election. In particular, the survey was commissioned to determine whether electors experienced any barriers in adding their names to the Register or Voters List, in attending polling places or in casting their votes.

While the findings of the post-event survey are noted throughout this report, a comprehensive summary of the Ipsos Reid survey results can be found in Appendix A of this report. Results pertaining to the referendum are presented in a separate report entitled “Provincial Referendum on Electoral System Reform, October 10, 2007, Report of the Chief Electoral Officer.”

Election Costs

On July 10, 2007, for the first time, Elections Ontario published a set of projected cost estimates for a general election. In order to establish a consistent basis of comparison, the publication restated 2003 event expenditures and presented the anticipated costs for the October 2007 election and referendum using the same groups and categories.

Some of the cost estimates reflected the preliminary plans for the Referendum Education Program that was being developed at that time. In the final

analysis, expenditures in some areas vary from the initial estimates because of altered products and processes and delivery systems for the referendum.

In a similar context, the wide range of integration of operational delivery activities for the election and the referendum means that it is not possible to separate referendum costs from election costs in electoral districts. Expenditures specifically associated with the design and delivery of the referendum education program, included under the heading Headquarters Expenditures below, are discussed in detail in the separate referendum project report.

The following table sets out the 2003 expenditures, the July 10, 2007 cost estimates and the total cost for all aspects of the 39th Provincial General Election and the October 2007 Referendum on electoral system reform.

	2003 ACTUAL (ELECTION ONLY)	2007 COST ESTIMATES JULY 10, 2007 (ELECTION AND REFERENDUM)	2007 PROJECTED FINAL COSTS (ELECTION AND REFERENDUM)
Headquarters Expenditures			
Communications	8,023,000	13,829,000	13,675,000
Human Resources	2,226,000	3,677,000	5,336,000
Hardware and Equipment	412,000	603,000	191,000
Services	2,378,000	4,167,000	2,745,000
Supplies	1,951,000	2,251,000	4,986,000
Distribution, Transportation & Postage	1,458,000	1,074,000	2,840,000
	\$16,448,000	\$25,601,000	\$29,773,000
Election Finances	\$4,394,000	\$6,169,000	\$5,103,000
Electoral District Expenditures			
Administration of Returning Office	15,633,000	14,645,000	16,536,000
Advance Polls	911,000	3,371,000	4,361,000
Hardware and Equipment	6,558,000	1,748,000	2,196,000
Notice Of Registration Cards	3,956,000	5,225,000	7,614,000
Polling Day	11,559,000	18,064,000	17,064,000
Printing	1,170,000	1,414,000	1,131,000
Revision Personnel	9,515,000	11,891,000	7,914,000
Supplies, Distribution & Services	420,000	359,000	350,000
Training	975,000	2,068,000	1,656,000
Preliminary Duties	2,898,000	2,389,000	805,000
	\$53,595,000	\$61,174,000	\$59,627,000
TOTAL	\$74,437,000	\$92,944,000	\$94,503,000

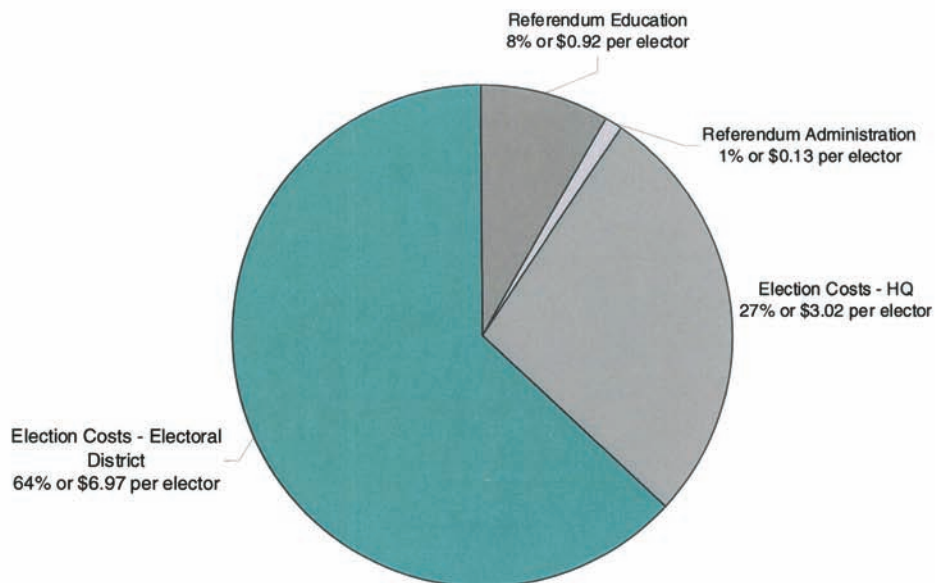
The 2007 Projected Final Costs reflect information available as of April 30, 2008, together with estimates for all other outstanding costs. The Actual Final costs will be confirmed in the 2007 Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to be tabled later in 2008.

From Election to Reflection

The focal point of all of the preparations and processes undertaken during the pre-writ and writ period, leading to Election Day, provides Elections Ontario with the opportunity to fulfill its mandate and to connect with and support electors across the province. But efforts relating to the election do not end there. Following the event, Elections Ontario is heavily involved in processing all payments to poll officials, collecting all supplies and capturing all elector data and reflections of the event. Then, with the successes and lessons of the recent event in mind, focus shifts to preparation for the next general election.

The following chart demonstrates the impact of these costs for an eligible elector.

Total Cost of 39th Provincial General Election, Referendum and Referendum Education Program By Eligible Elector



OBSERVATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Looking at the experience of the 2007 general election, it is clear that the opportunities identified in 2003 have provided increased integrity and greater access for electors. According to the measures of success and satisfaction surveyed by Ipsos Reid immediately after the election, Ontario's electors rated their experiences very positively. In fact, satisfaction levels in all major areas improved over 2003. It is also clear, however, that there is still room for improvement.

There is a need to revisit the legislative framework for elections in Ontario in the very near future. It is also clear that the principles of access, integrity and modern electoral management that were identified in 2003 are equally valid in 2008, and provide fundamental guidelines for the process of change.

The following observations describe a number of initiatives currently planned or underway at Elections Ontario. These observations also serve to illustrate the challenges to the electoral process created by the current legislation.

Immediately after the election, Elections Ontario invested in the completion of a strategic plan and organizational review for 2008 and forward. This process not only built on the previous strategic plan and recent changes in the legislative framework, but also allowed staff to consider in some depth, the lessons learned leading up to and following October 10, 2007.

Over the coming four years, Elections Ontario will pursue a range of activities that will help meet strategic challenges such as geographic diversity, the changing demographic characteristics of electors, the management of technology, the technology demands of electors and the infrastructure of election delivery. Specifically, the 2008 Strategic Plan identifies priorities for maintaining and developing the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario (PREO), expanding public education and outreach activities, managing the business of Elections Ontario and protecting the integrity of the electoral process.

Effective election processes demand a solid operational environment at the local level. Achieving

this will become easier as a direct result of the creation of a new regionally focused advisory committee of returning officers. Local intelligence leads to better service to electors and the other essential participants in the electoral process, including candidates and political parties, and this new advisory committee will identify opportunities for a continuing electoral presence in communities throughout the province.

If the Chief Electoral Officer is able to ensure a continuing relationship with returning officers over the 18-months preceding an election, there will be enough time to build the community outreach initiatives, find facilities and staff, and conduct the training activities that will ensure well-managed elections.

There is a continuing challenge to ensuring effective electoral administration and public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process when returning officers are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under the current provisions of the *Election Act*. Unlike other public offices, the legislation governing these appointments does not require the use of open competitions and a merit-based selection process. Federally, and in a majority of Canada's provinces and territories, including British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec and Saskatchewan, the law entrusts the Chief Electoral Officer with the ability to hire returning officers using open competitions and a merit-based selection process so the public has confidence that selection is independent of partisan considerations. Electoral delivery in Ontario, and public faith in the electoral process, would benefit from legislative changes that

would give the Chief Electoral Officer responsibility for selecting and appointing returning officers.

The integrity issues that underlie this suggestion are equally applicable to staffing of the polls. The legislation currently requires the deputy returning officer and the poll clerk to be “*appointed so as to represent two different political interests*” and, “*if possible,*” for the appointment to be made from lists provided by candidates representing political parties. The hands of the returning officer are effectively tied by another provision of the Act that allows the candidates to wait until ten days before Election Day (midway through the extended advance poll period) to provide their list, and does not allow the returning officer to appoint anybody before that point, unless the candidate advises them that they will not be providing a list. This rarely happens.

Consequently, the lists provided by candidates arrive too late in the process, if at all. There is not sufficient time to permit adequate training of the thousands of people needed to do the job. The associated uncertainty about the number of capable people who will be identified on the candidates’ lists leaves little room to find enough alternative workers. Freeing the appointment of poll workers from political constraints will allow returning officers to recruit more effectively which will result in better-trained workers. Legislation is needed to make this happen.

In a related matter, electors sometimes look, with a great sense of frustration, at the long line-up in front of them at their ballot box while another ballot box near them in the same school cafeteria, has only a few people waiting. This frustration is shared equally by poll officials. However, the public needs to understand that it is outdated and overly prescriptive legislative requirements, which poll officials are required to follow, that often prevents smooth passage through the voting process. In many instances, the voting process could be improved if there was greater flexibility to assign and divide tasks among various poll officials rather than being bound by an unnecessarily restrictive staffing model and work flow that is defined by statute. The Chief Electoral Officer has no authority to override these impediments and implement basic process and staffing improvements in general elections. In contrast, the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* affords municipal election officials greater

discretion and flexibility to design and implement improvements in the voting process.

To allow modern electoral management processes and staffing models that better serve electors to be adopted, a review and overhaul of the *Election Act* is required.

Within the coming months, Elections Ontario will be bringing the full Election Management System (EMS) on line. This suite of technologically enabled applications will position the organization to continue to deliver increasingly automated processes to electors and to increase the quality of service to all clients.

One critical component of effective electoral delivery is reflected in the information that goes to make up the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario. Increasingly electoral agencies across Canada are appreciating the value that ‘good’ addresses add to the process. PREO is updated from a wide range of sources, facilitated to a considerable extent by the close working relationship with MPAC, Elections Canada and their data feeds.

However, electors may, unwittingly, contribute to inconsistencies in the Register and lists. If, for example, members of a household describe their address differently from each other by using ‘9-1-1’ addresses in one case and Lot and Concession in another, they may not be assigned to the same polling place. Similarly, if a person describes their residence with a Rural Route number in a particular community when they file their Income Tax return, but their partner, living in the same house, uses “Old Highway 8” on their driver’s licence, they may not appear on the same List of Electors.

Through the course of the 2007 general election the impact of this problem became clear as some electors were not assigned to the correct polling place or did not receive their Notice of Registration card in the mail because their “address” within the Register was not adequate or precise enough.

Recent changes in the legislative framework for the Register have provided the Chief Electoral Officer with an expanded tool-kit to reach electors and enlist their help in improving register quality and avoiding these problems in future. Registration

agents appointed under the Act can now assist with mailings, telephone calls, e-mails and personal visits to the homes of persons who may be electors. These new authorities will be used to operate an out-bound call centre that is currently being developed to contact electors; targeted mail-outs are also being planned, and initiatives are being developed to engage returning officers in local register improvement activities.

Beyond these process activities, there is a long-term solution to the basic issue. Elections Ontario has dedicated significant effort to building a solid base of addresses within PREO so that, no matter how electors describe their residence, we are able to identify it as, or link it to a specific place on the face of the earth – the single physical address.

The technical capacity however, is only one aspect of this critical endeavour. There is currently no authoritative source of addresses in Ontario. Municipalities carry the responsibility for addresses within their own boundaries, and, while ‘best practices’ exist, there are no standards to ensure compatibility between jurisdictions. Canada Post has an interest in delivering mail, but has a lesser interest in the physical location of addresses with the expansion of ‘super mail boxes’ and other consolidated delivery points. While mailing addresses are critical to ensure communications with electors, they are of no use in setting polling division boundaries.

Ontario needs an address authority, and not just for electoral efficiency. In Quebec, a single entity, the Chief Electoral Officer, manages addresses throughout the province. A similar authority in Ontario would not only reduce PREO addressing issues, but would provide significant value to all other agencies in the province that use physical addresses as a part of their business. Elections Ontario is positioned to fulfill this role if the appropriate legislative authority is developed.

The link from an address to a polling division to voting location is clear and precise: without a good address, the elector may not be allocated to the correct polling place. On Polling Day, the elector is tied to one specific voting location. Placing the elector at the centre of this situation and looking elsewhere in the *Election Act* discloses an obvious

disconnect. Electors at advance polls can vote anywhere in their electoral district.

Many jurisdictions provide returning officers with the authority to establish mobile polls that could significantly improve access to the election for people who, for medical reasons or as a result of physical challenges, live in smaller long-term care facilities. Mobile polls also offer a solution to the very real problem of disruption to the routine and the residents of the larger care facilities caused by the requirement to host a polling place for a prolonged number of hours on Election Day. If electors are to be placed at the centre of these processes, legislative reform is required.

Current legislation permits a process of “vouching” for electors who are not on the list in “rural” polls. In today’s world, it is much less likely to find poll workers who are so firmly rooted in the community that they know all of the electors in their polling division. In addition, this provision of the *Election Act* predates the changes that opened up the voting process so that any elector could be added to the List of Electors at the polling place.

From an elector perspective, since anybody can apply to be added to the Voters List with appropriate identification, why is there a need to preserve the anachronism of a vouching process in the legislation? Retaining this process compromises the integrity of the voting and does not treat all electors equally. This situation merits legislative change.

Improving data and list quality can only go so far toward making elections problem-free. Recent legislative changes have provided Elections Ontario with the responsibility to increase outreach and elector education and this offers many opportunities to engage electors in processes that will encourage their participation, not only in the voting process, but also in the management of accurate information about them in the Register. Shared responsibilities with electors should be a part of the future in Ontario, but only if they can anticipate predictable results from support systems such as an authoritative address register and friction-free access channels.

Work is currently underway at Elections Ontario to enhance the on-line opportunities for electors. A significant provision of the June 4, 2007, package of legislative changes resulted in the on-line register

verification initiative. Elections Ontario's technical staff has been investigating the security aspects of this service that will carry this forward to a wide-ranging on-line registration opportunity.

While examples of similar functionality can be found in Alberta and British Columbia, Ontario has not yet adopted appropriate "shared secrets" that could guard elector privacy and register security. Access to driver's licence records is one avenue currently being pursued, but other identification numbers exist within the control of the Ontario Government that could be used in whole or in part as "shared secrets." The Health Card number is one example of a piece of information, some part of which could be shared between the card-holder and Elections Ontario as a form of secure identity confirmation or "shared secret." Legislative changes are needed to permit such a use.

In a related environment, the new identification requirements of the legislation were met by electors with forms of identification that they traditionally carry and use – their driver's licence and their health card. While poll officials could ask for the driver's licence, they could not ask for the health card. A legislative change would allow this to be requested as a form of acceptable identification and would thereby provide a higher level of service to electors, placing them at the centre of the process.

When electors arrived at their voting locations in October of 2007, approximately 30% of them found themselves in school gymnasiums and cafeterias. Schools have been a feature of the traditional election landscape for many years, but increasing concerns about disruptions to school activities and increasing concerns about physical security are making schools less attractive as voting locations under current conditions. Also, the timing of the expanded advance polls sometimes made it difficult to find facilities that could be guaranteed to be available for a ten day period. Again, there are solutions available.

As we recommended in 2003, moving elections to Saturdays or Sundays could still permit use of school premises, but without any disruption to the academic environment. In the alternative, weekday elections could use school premises if Election Day were to be designated as a Professional Development day for all school boards. This might also present further opportunities to integrate electoral issues with

school curriculum. Again, this will require specific legislative change.

Some electors in 2007 voted without going to a voting location; they made use of the proxy system. Each of these electors had the privacy of his or her vote violated as a result of using this statutory process. Changes made in the 2007 package of legislation improved access for 'traditional' electors but did nothing to improve the situation for those whose access to the poll was constrained in some way. This includes members of the Armed Forces on active duty, foreign-service workers, 'shut-ins', incarcerated electors, some students, electors abroad, and other electors who cannot attend the regular or advance polls. Ontario should consider changing its legislation to adopt a different model including special ballots used in other jurisdictions and the mobile polls discussed previously.

Ontario places its post-secondary students at a disadvantage in comparison with other electoral jurisdictions. By presuming that students retain a close connection with their previous place of residence, usually the family home, when they go away to school, we are ignoring the reality that many students forge strong links with their university or college locations. Current legislation presents this as a challenge for this key group of electors.

High school students who are not yet electors, are usually ignored in traditional electoral processes. These citizens are our future but not very much is done to engage them. Elections Ontario has a new mandate to educate youth. Specifically, the Chief Electoral Officer is charged with the responsibility to *"prepare information packages for new electors and ... make them available, annually, to school boards for distribution to students who have reached voting age or will soon do so."* Being an Ontario elector in the future should become a habit, and habits are often formed in the years of youth.

We know now that citizens born before October 1993 will reach voting age in time to participate in Ontario's next general election in 2011. Elections Ontario cannot reach these soon-to-be electors directly without access to their names and addresses. At present, this information rests with school boards and their administrations, and is not available to the Chief Electoral Officer. By allowing Ontario school boards to provide this information, these new

electors could not only be informed and aware of electoral processes and their places in them, but their entry into the system will be all the more smooth and effortless if they are registered for participation in their first election.

Throughout the preceding paragraphs, we have identified proposals for legislative change. In the recent past, most statutory amendments have been piecemeal, with the inevitable result that the legislative fabric contains inconsistencies. The code that governs provincial elections in Ontario was born from the deliberations of a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly in the late 1960s. Now is the time to consider a complete review of our electoral framework and the drafting of a new *Election Act*.

There is now a fixed-date anticipated for the 40th Provincial General Election in October 2011. If the recommendation to re-write the *Election Act* is accepted, it is critical to recognize that there is a significant risk of adverse impacts on electors if the changes in procedures, forms, staffing, or any other fundamentals of the electoral process contained in the legislation are not passed before June of 2010.

Elections Ontario and all other electoral agencies exist for the sole purpose of serving the elector. Elections are the process through which citizens exercise their constitutional right “...to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.” During and after the 2007 election, many electors shared their concerns with Elections Ontario. The following is a selection of these questions and concerns:

- Why must I stand at the end of a line-up of 20 people waiting to vote when there are only two people waiting in line at the next desk?
- Why can I vote by mail in a municipal election, but I have to show up at a polling place to vote provincially?
- Why do I have to vote by proxy and share my choices with someone for Ontario elections when I can vote by mail in a federal election?
- Why can I vote by mail when I am out of the country during a federal election but not for a provincial one?
- Why are there three agencies (federal, provincial and municipal) registering voters in Ontario?

- As an elector with a disability, why must I put up with having my privacy violated by having someone mark my provincial ballot for me? In my municipality, I can vote by using a headset and speaking my choice.
- Why do I have to go to three different places to vote federally, provincially or municipally?
- Why can I vote on the Internet for the mayor and councillors but I have to go to a polling place to vote for my MPP?
- Why are there three different sets of officials administering elections in the province?

As we noted at the outset of this report, the hallmarks of effective electoral administration include preserving the integrity of the electoral process and ensuring that electors’ access to that process is guaranteed. At the beginning of this section we identified three principles that must be respected in the process of change:

- *Access to the Electoral Process* means that the administration of elections must be accessible, open, and impartial. Barriers must be removed and the process must be made more accessible to electors.
- *Integrity of the Electoral Process* means that the electorate needs to be confident that the electoral process is managed and operates in a transparent and impartial manner.
- *Modern Electoral Management* means that the *Election Act* needs to be updated to ensure that electors are served, and that polling locations are staffed and operated, in an efficient and effective manner.

The *Election Act* is the primary piece of legislation which defines how voting is administered in provincial elections and by-elections. The existing statutory framework, which has been amended in an incremental manner over the last 30 years, challenges the principles of electoral integrity, impedes access to electors and poses challenges for the management of future elections.

For the better administration of the electoral process in the future, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends that the entire statute be reviewed and amended to ensure that it best upholds the principles of access, integrity, and modern electoral management.

APPENDIX A

Elections Ontario's 2007 Post-Event Research Project

The general survey of eligible electors was conducted between October 12 and November 29, 2007. A total of 1,500 electors were interviewed by telephone and the results are considered accurate within +/- 2.5%, 95 times out of 100. The sample was stratified by voters and non-voters (1,000 and 500 respectively) and weighted by sex, age and geography. The statistical reliability of the voter sample is +/- 3.1 and the non-voter sample is +/- 4.5%.

In addition to the general elector survey, surveys were completed with candidates (+/- 10%) and chief financial officers of registered constituency associations (CFOs) (+/- 10%). In addition, party officials and special elector groups were included in the research program, but the responses were not sufficient to generate statistically reliable results and are directional only.

A similar survey was undertaken following the 2003 Provincial General Election which provides a point of reference for comparative purposes.

General Electors

The following is a summary of the survey results for the general elector population:

- The vast majority of Ontarians who voted reported problem-free experiences:
 - 92% reported having no problems at their polling place (85% in 2003)
 - 93% had no problem with the Voters List (83% in 2003)
 - 98% had no problem producing identification when asked (new in 2007)
 - 87% reported receiving their Notice of Registration card (NRC) with the proper information (78% in 2003).
- Even among non-voters, their contact with the election process was generally positive:
 - 91% had no problems with the Voters List, and
 - 70% reported they received their NRC with the proper information (56% in 2003).

- Just under one-in-ten voters said they experienced problems at the poll. 99% said they experienced no problems casting their ballots.
- Ratings for being put on the Voters List remain generally positive. Only about one-in-twenty eligible electors reported any problems with the list.
- Three-quarters of voters said poll officials were clear in explaining the new identification requirements. Leaving just one-quarter who said poll officials were unclear, mainly because they did not receive an explanation as to why the new requirements were in place. Very few voters reported having problems producing identification when asked.
- When electors attended at a polling place their experiences were decidedly positive with excellent or good ratings of:
 - 92% for accessibility
 - 92% for casting the ballot
 - 89% competence of workers, and
 - 89% for the set up of the polling placeThese ratings are consistent with 2003 levels. The lowest level of satisfaction was with signage outside the polls (78%).
- The vast majority of eligible electors, both voters and non-voters alike, were exposed to at least one of the six main components of Elections Ontario's advertising/communications campaign:
 - 97% of voters and 90% of non-voters said they specifically recalled seeing, reading or hearing non-political election advertising/information through at least one of the six main vehicles used by Elections

Ontario (TV, radio, Internet, print, AdMail, NRC)

- 75% of voters recalled at least three of the six sources versus 58% of non-voters
- Consequently, a full 85% of voters and 72% of non-voters gave positive ratings (good or excellent) to the information that was available prior to Election Day about things like reminding people that there was an election and where/how to vote.
- While Elections Ontario was successful in “pushing” its advertising/communications out to eligible electors, it was less successful in “pulling” eligible electors toward it as a contact source for information (assuming of course that eligible electors were in fact seeking information):
 - Only 6% of eligible electors (10% of voters, 3% of non-voters) reported they contacted Elections Ontario for information or about a problem during the course of the campaign, and
 - Only 4% of eligible electors (no difference between voters and non-voters) said they called Elections Ontario’s toll-free number during the course of the campaign; over twice as many (10% overall, comprised of 12% voters, 6% non-voters) said they visited Elections Ontario’s website.
- The vast majority of voters (99%) and non-voters (91%) alike continue to share a fundamental belief that it is important that people vote (although the “intensity” of this belief among non-voters is down 5% since 2003).
 - Furthermore, almost nine-in-ten voters and seven-in-ten non-voters think that their vote matters. This has, however, declined by 5% among voters and 8% among non-voters since 2003
 - There remains a more diverse list of reasons that drove the lack of participation among non-voters:
 - A perceived lack of time,
 - Followed by several different “reasons” including:
 - Lack of availability (out of town, sick, injured),
 - Did not like the choices (candidates/parties)

- A sense of disaffection (election does not matter, not make a difference), and
- Lack of knowledge, information.

Electors with Special Needs

Highlights from surveys of electors with special needs revealed the following:

- *Overall Sentiment*
 - Electors with special needs tended to be less “decidedly” positive (“excellent”) in their assessments of the process of voting and pre-election information available. Nevertheless, none of the special elector groups were particularly critical of these areas.
 - With the exception of shelters/homeless, electors with special needs were generally similar to general electors in saying that poll officials were clear in explaining the new identification requirements. Few electors with special needs reported having problems producing identification when asked.
- *Electors with Physical Disabilities*
 - Electors with physical disabilities reported a higher level of problems at voting locations than the general elector population. 82% reported no problems with casting their ballot.
- *Voter Turnout*
 - Electors with special needs overwhelmingly believe that it is important that people vote. Aboriginal electors and electors in shelters/homeless are a bit more skeptical than others that their vote actually matters. While not that much different overall, students are less convinced (“strongly disagree”) than others that their vote matters.

Candidates & CFOs

The fact that fewer candidates and CFOs reported problems in 2007 than 2003 suggests that Elections Ontario made progress in improving on delivery of specific procedure/process and service/product areas in the recent election.

For **candidates**, the survey showed the following:

- The general opinion of those surveyed in assessing how the recent election was run was generally favourable.
 - 75% of surveyed party officials and 54% of candidates had a favourable impression of how the election was run

- For candidates who said they had a problem, their three main problem areas were associated with the returning officer (lack of knowledge), lack of information generally, and Voters List.

Strengths/Areas for Improvement

- Candidates gave a positive rating to the support and information provided by Elections Ontario on and before Election Day; however party officials were again split 50-50.
 - The overall rating of support and information provided after Election Day was fair to poor.
 - Candidates' highest ratings were on items associated with forms and rules.
- Candidates and CFOs alike gave Elections Ontario positive ratings with respect to the following products and services:
 - The speed with which Elections Ontario responded to their inquiries
 - The accuracy of Elections Ontario's responses to questions
 - Elections Ontario anticipating needs and giving relevant information in advance
 - The toll free line provided by Elections Ontario.
- Candidates' rating of voting issues was high. They were most positive of:
 - Interaction with returning officers
 - Candidate meetings
 - Voting at advance polls.

For **CFOs** the following were the key findings:

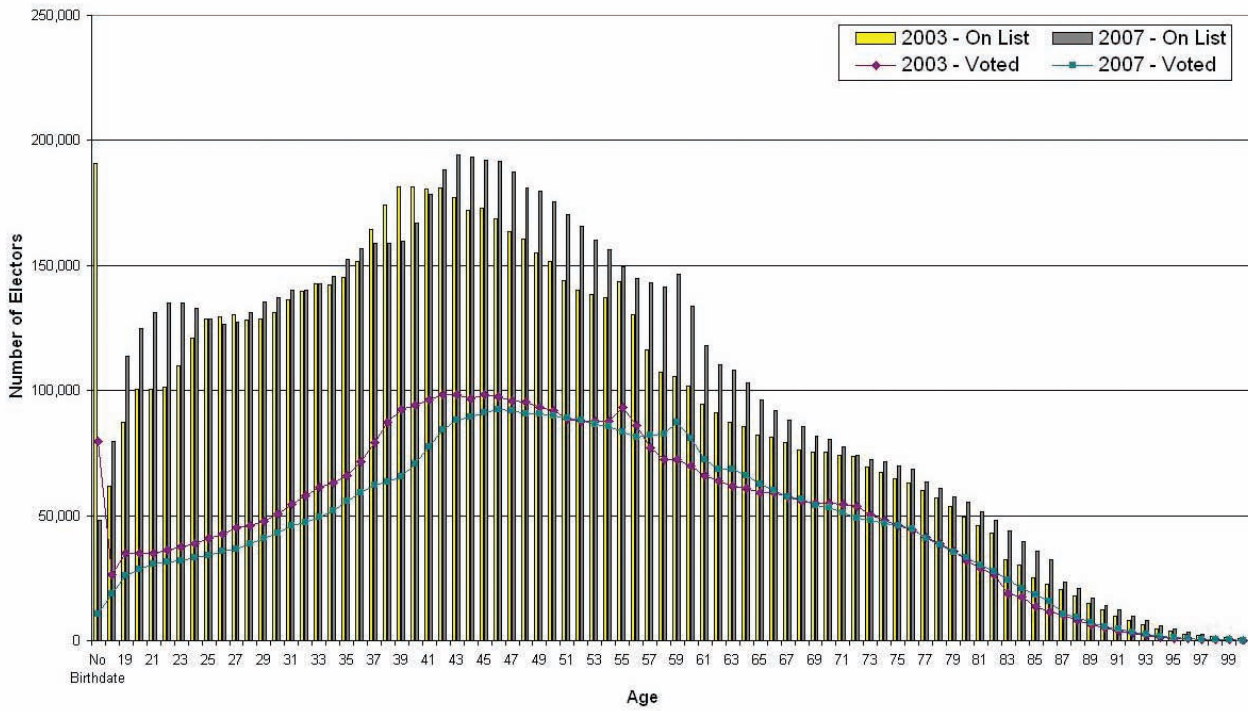
- The general opinion of those surveyed in assessing how the recent election was run was moderately favourable overall.
 - 67% of CFOs had a good to excellent impression of how the election was run.
 - CFOs cited similar problems as candidates, but also confusing/contradictory information and accounting issues.
 - CFOs surveyed cited most of their contact was with Election Finances (EF) and ratings of EF were generally positive (82% good to excellent).

Strengths/Areas for Improvement

- CFOs also gave a positive rating to the support and information provided by Elections Ontario on and before Election Day.
 - The overall rating of support and information provided after Election Day was fair to poor.
- A large majority of CFOs (79%) stated they would prefer more communications with Elections Ontario via electronic means in the future; and would use a web-enabled electronic system for filing financial returns (83%).
- CFOs highest rating with respect to Elections Ontario products and services was for items associated with timelines/accuracy of Elections Ontario's support/info and finance.

APPENDIX B

Voter Turnout by Age



Notes

Notes