



**CITY OF EAU CLAIRE -**

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To Nick Zaves		From Katie Munde	
Co./Dept.		Co. Sen. Brown	
Phone #		Phone # 6-8546	
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December 15, 2004

The Honorable Ron Brown  
 Wisconsin State Senator  
 State of Wisconsin  
 PO Box 7882  
 Madison WI 53707-7882

Subject: Legislation to update voter verification

Dear Senator Brown,

You have often asked if we were aware of potential legislative changes that would benefit the tax payers. A simple change in Wisconsin Statutes 6.56(3) could save several hundred thousand dollars throughout the state.

Section 6.56(3) requires an audit of all electors registering to vote at the polls by requiring that address verification postcards be sent to them. This procedure is designed to discover anyone who may have falsified his address. Undeliverable postcards are returned to City and are given to the district attorney.

Section 6.56(3) specifically requires that a first class post card be mailed so that the U.S. Post Office's address verification database will identify the faulty addresses.

What is not generally known is that mailing services have access to the same database and can process an electronic file against the database for thousands of dollars less than the cost of postage. The same audit is performed, the same information obtained, but in a more efficient manner and at a significant cost savings.

Under the present statute, Eau Claire must mail out approximately 10,000 postcards costing the taxpayers approximately \$3,000. We have the ability to provide an electronic file to a mail processor who will verify the addresses using the U.S. Post Office's National Change of Address (NCOA) system at a cost of under \$300.

We have asked the State Election Board if we may substitute the electronic file for the postcards. The Election Board denied the City's request, citing the statutory requirement.

The following change to 6.56(3) would permit the substitution of the electronic file for the postcards.

(3) Upon receipt of the list under sub. (1) the municipal clerk or board of election commissioners shall make an audit of all electors registering to vote at the polling place or other registration location under s. 6.55(2) and all electors registering by agent on election day under s. 6.86(3)(a)2. The audit shall be made by 1<sup>st</sup> class postcard *or by electronic verification using databases generated by the United States Post Office*. Postcards shall be labeled "ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED" or "DO NOT FORWARD - RETURN POSAGE GUARANTEED". If any postcard is returned undelivered, or if the clerk or board of election commissioners is informed *by the electronic verification or other means* of a different address than the one specified by the elector which was apparently improper on the day of the election, the clerk or board shall remove the elector's name from the registration list, mail the elector a notice of the removal and provide the name to the district attorney for the county where the polling place is located.

If the proposed legislative change to allow electronic verification will save the City of Eau Claire about \$3,000 just in postage alone, you can project that the statewide taxpayer savings could be several hundred thousand dollars.

Thank you for your consideration of changes to the verification process. There are other similar legislative changes to the election statutes that could generate more cost savings. We would be happy to work with you and the State Elections Board to draft the enabling legislation. We appreciate your assistance with our efforts to use new technologies to find efficiencies and cost savings for our citizens.

Sincerely,



Don T. Norrell  
City Manager