



# County of Santa Cruz

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## ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

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RICHARD W. BEDAL, COUNTY CLERK  
GAIL L. PELLERIN, ELECTIONS MANAGER

February 4, 2002

AGENDA: February 12, 2002

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### Individual Precinct Reports on the Internet

Dear Members of the Board:

The Elections Department has conducted an initial study of placing individual precinct results on the Internet, as those results become available on election night, in addition to the summary vote results that are now provided. After discussing this issue with our vendor, DFM Associates, it has been determined that while the new Windows NT client server system could technically accommodate this new reporting, various issues may make it undesirable to do so.

As you are aware, on Election Night, results are released as they become available in the Elections department where election officials are available to explain any discrepancies or incomplete information. For example, a precinct could be reported in, but not counted because there was no header card. We correct that information by pulling the precinct results, inserting the proper header card, and rerunning the ballots so that results are tabulated correctly. We are able to correct our reporting to members of the public who are in the office on Election Night. Using this particular example, if the individual precinct results had been published online as soon as they were available, it would appear incorrectly that the precinct had not come in.

We believe that providing election results in such a raw format directly online, without the ability to provide caveats and disclaimers about preliminary results could create confusion and misinformation, resulting in additional calls to staff regarding our reporting system that staff would not be prepared to handle, given that our primary goal on Election Night is counting ballots and releasing semi-official results as quickly as possible.

Elections staff is prepared to post online a precinct-by-precinct semi-official statement of the votes cast in the election at the conclusion of the vote counting. As you know, the semi-official statement may not be available until the early a.m. hours after Election Night.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that Elections staff not post directly to the Internet individual precinct-by-precinct ballot results as they become available, but rather post on the Internet the semi-official precinct-by-precinct statement of votes that is available at the conclusion of the ballot counting procedure.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Bedal  
County Clerk

Recommended:

SUSAN A. MAURIELLO  
County Administrative Officer