



AMO Background Report on Alternative Voting Methods

May 13, 2005

**Association of
Municipalities
of Ontario**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tasked to investigate how to improve the municipal election process, AMO has been asked by the Province's Democratic Renewal Secretariat (DRS) to offer suggestions on how to make voting easier and to improve voter turnout.

The DRS is reaching out to engage Ontarians in what it terms "the most ambitious democratic renewal process in Ontario's history." One aspect of this renewal is an attempt to make elections work better and encourage more people to exercise their right to vote. Currently in an informal information gathering stage, DRS staff have asked AMO for input on ways to make voting easier and to improve access.

The Advisory Committee on Municipal Council Term and Related Matters was asked by the AMO Board to send an Alert to our members requesting their input on alternative voting methods such as phone ballots, mail ballots, computer terminals, and e-voting. The Board also enabled the Advisory Committee to forward this information to the DRS as is and without formal endorsement or prejudice.

As a result, AMO sent an Alert to its members on April 1, 2005 asking them to respond to the following questions:

- Which type of non-traditional way(s) of voting (i.e. mail-in ballots, telephone voting, computer terminal, e-voting) has your municipality implemented? When?
- Has your experience been positive or negative? Why?
- Have you or do you plan to repeat the use of this method? Why?
- What affect did this have on your municipality's voter turnout rate?
- What were the cost implications?

Staff were also requested to provide any additional information, including reports to Council.

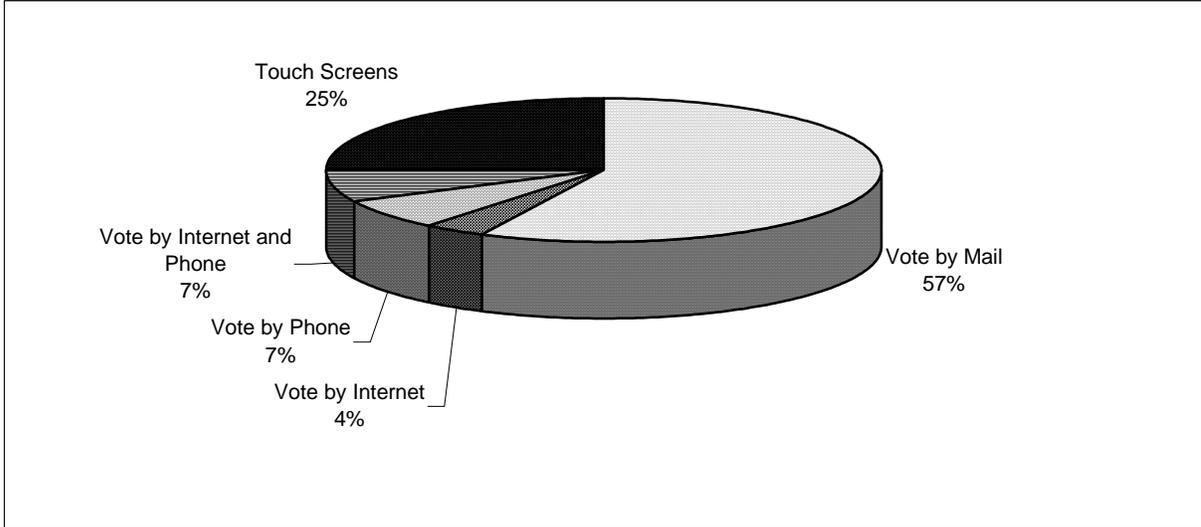
2.0 RESULTS

Fifty-four officials responsible for elections in their municipality responded to AMO's Alert. Those submissions that included a written description or analysis of voting methods are listed as is in Section 2.1 Vote By Mail, Section 2.2 Vote By Phone and Internet, and Section 2.3 Touch Screens and other Technological Tools. Information on voter turnout is not detailed in Section 2.3 as touch screens do not fundamentally alter the voting process (i.e. allowing the voter to vote by

remote location) but instead use machines that track and tally the results much more quickly than a hand-count.

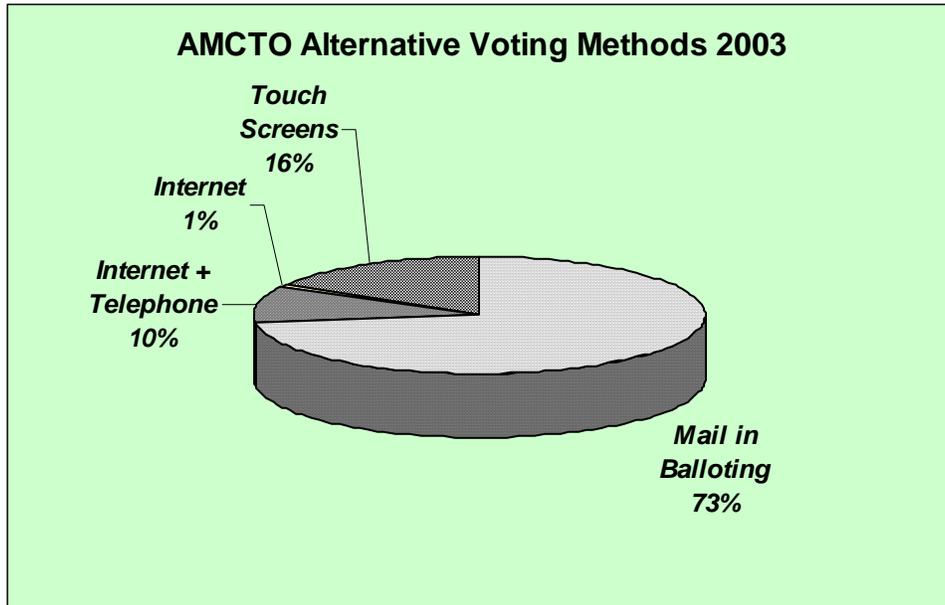
Figure 1 details which methods were utilized by those municipalities that responded to our survey:

Figure 1: Response According to Voting Method



This result differs somewhat from the City of Burlington’s Municipal Election technology Survey of May 2004 which had a larger share of touch screens/optical scans 57.2% than vote by mail 12.5% but which also found the vast majority (90+%) were happy with the methods employed and planned to use them again. However, AMO’s results are remarkably similar to those produced by the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) in their survey conducted following the 2003 Municipal Elections as shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: AMCTO Municipal Elections 2003 Report



Not surprisingly, there was a very strong correlation between responses to our questions about whether or not the municipality was pleased with the method it had used and whether it planned to use that method again. As Table 1 shows, the vast majority of respondents were pleased with voting by mail, internet, and touch screens but less were enamoured with voting by telephone mostly because Bell Canada cancelled a related program.

Table #1: Evaluation of Experience with Specific Voting Method

Method	Happy	Unhappy	Will Use Again
Vote by Mail	100%	0%	100%
Vote by Internet	100%	0%	83%
Vote by Phone	62.50%	37.50%	50%
Touch Screens	93%	7%	93%

Finally, while aggregate data about costs is impossible to calculate due to the variety of methods of calculating costs as well as the lack of accurate historical data, costs rose for almost all municipalities regardless of method employed except for three small municipalities (two utilized mail while the other, touch screens) that enjoyed savings due to reduced labour costs.

Data relating to voter turnout was available for some responses. Table #2 summarizes these results:

Table #2: Estimate of Voter Turnout by Specific Voting Method

Method	Increased	Decreased	No Effect
Vote by Mail	32/32 (100%)	0/32 (0%)	0/32 (0%)
Vote by Internet	6/6 (100%)	0/6 (0%)	0/6 (0%)
Vote by Phone	7/8 (88%)	1/8 (12%)	0/8 (0%)
Touch Screens	1/14 (7%)	0/14	13/14 (93%)

While there was an inadequate number of responses to produce average voter turnout increases for voting by internet, phone, or touch screens, the mean of the 18 respondents who used vote by mail and provided voter turnout numbers was 23.2%.

The following sections detail individual municipalities' experiences with the various voting methods, but by no means is an exhaustive list. In addition, municipalities such as Burlington, Fort Erie, Leamington, Markham, and Sudbury have provided excellent staff reports that are too lengthy to be included herein.

2.1 VOTE BY MAIL

The following is an alphabetical list of unedited responses from AMO Members who utilized Vote By Mail sometime in the past.

Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Implemented Vote By Mail in the year 2000. The experience has been positive because it allowed a greater number of eligible voters to access the voting process. The Township will continue to use this process in the future. The costs were also substantially higher, however the cost per vote has been well worth every penny with the overwhelming positive response in voter turnout.

Bluewater

Used Vote-By-Mail for the last 2 elections. The experience has been positive and the number of voters has increased. Voter turnout went from 36% to 58%. It is much easier to administer than having to arrange walk-in polls. Large seasonal population was much happier not having to come to the municipality to vote and

some actually voted for the first time. The Vote-By-Mail is costlier than the walk-in polls, but this is the method preferred by the voters.

Carling

Carling Township has used mail in ballot for the last three elections. Our experience has been very positive. Canada Post provided excellent support, and seasonal property owners appreciate that it is much easier for them to cast a ballot. Voter turnout increased from 26.5% in 1994 to 58.7% in 1997, the first year vote by mail was used. It subsequently declined to 46.7% in 2000 and 43.4 % in 2003. We will repeat the use of vote by mail only because of improved voter turnout and ease of voting for seasonal residents. Vote by mail is more time consuming, more expensive, and requires much more organization than the traditional vote.

Centre Hastings

The Municipality of Centre Hastings has used the Canada Post Vote By Mail system since the 1997 election. The experience has been positive, and we will continue to use this system in the future. Voter turnout increased from a general 30% to 60+%. Costs are extremely high compared to the tradition system; however, the pros outweigh the cons.

Elizabethtown-Kitley

The Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley has used mail-in ballots for the past two elections (2000 and 2003). Our experience with mail-in-ballots has been positive for the most part. The elderly and absentee property owners really enjoy this type of ballot as it ensures that their ballot is cast no matter where they are or what the weather is like.

The affect on voter turnout is difficult to determine, as this is a newly amalgamated municipality (2000). The first election turnout was quite high, I believe due to the amalgamation. The second election the voter turnout was lower but still higher than what the two municipalities had before. This could still be as a result of amalgamation.

The cost of mail-in-ballots was in keeping with the traditional method. Where we saved in not hiring people as returning officers and assistants for advanced polls and regular voting day, we spent on the new process. As well, staff that were much more involved in the old process are now freed up to complete other work, thereby saving the municipality money as well.

Faraday

Used mail-in ballots for last two elections, which helped increase voter turnout from 17% to 35%. The costs were roughly three times higher.

Howick

Howick Township used the mail-in ballot method for the last municipal election. The experience was positive overall for staff and voters as voter turnout improved by 13% and our costs were lower.

Huron-Kinloss

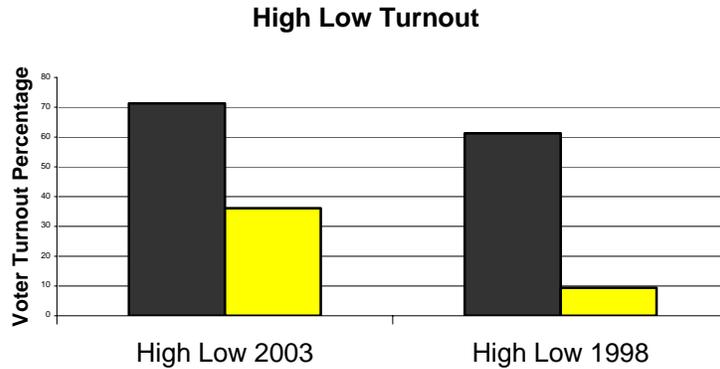
In 1996, the *Municipal Elections Act* was amended to allow for alternative voting procedures. A few municipalities took advantage of this option during the regular municipal election held in 1997. Locally the then Amabel Township took the plunge and went with Vote By Mail. Amabel's decision to utilize this method was based on the significant numbers of seasonal residents that owned property in the Sauble Beach area. In 1998 the amalgamation election was conducted by the Clerk of the former Township of Kinloss using a regular polling station method. In 2000, the Council of the Township of Huron-Kinloss were acclaimed to their positions and although arrangements had been made for using Vote By Mail, it was only required for the contested Separate School Trustee position.

There are several items that will affect voter turnout but the two most significant are a) whether or not there is a major issue that has forced public debate and b) the number of contested positions. For example, if only the Councillor positions are being contested, and not Mayor and Deputy Mayor, turnout will be significantly lower. For comparison purposes, the 1998 amalgamation election satisfied both of these criteria and therefore is a viable benchmark for comparing the success of Vote By Mail.

In 1998 Voter Turnout was 34.54%. In 2003 we saw an overall turnout of 52.98%.

Seasonal Vs Permanent

It is apparent that our seasonal residents have taken advantage of the VBM Method, as the increase in percentages in Polls 7&11 (Lurgan) and Poll 8 (Bruce Beach) are indicative of the participation of these electors.



Rural Area

In 1998 the Voter Turnout in Polls 1,2 & 3 averaged 43.18%. A twenty percent increase occurred in 2003 with those three polls achieving an average of 66.72%. Unfortunately the same percentage was not seen in Kinloss. However, this was not unexpected as in that area of the Township we have experienced significant increase in the number of electors in those polls who choose not to vote in Municipal Elections. Regardless of voting method chosen, that same situation would reoccur.

Kenora

Kenora has implemented Vote by Mail for the last two regular elections. Yes, the experience has been positive. It has been very well received by the Electorate, and in particular, from the non-resident community as we have a very large seasonal population. This method has increased voter turnout and has definitely made it more convenient for the voter and the Clerk's Office. Yes, the City will use Vote by Mail in 2006, complimented by voting tabulators. The voter turnout increased from approx. 32% to 68%. While the costs are slightly higher because of the contracting with Canada Post, we believe it is money well spent. Our costs will be slightly higher again next year with the purchase of two tabulators, however this will be a one-time fee that will pay for itself over the course of the next two elections as we will require very few election staff for counting purposes.

Kingsville

The Town of Kingsville implemented the Vote-by-Mail method of election in the 2003 municipal election for the first time. The experience was positive with less time spent on certain traditional voting methods (i.e. Advance polls and polling station administration), more streamlined approach to voting, coordinated election reporting through an electronic software database and reduced number of participants involved in carrying out the election effectively. We anticipate

conducting the 2006 municipal election in the same Vote-by-Mail method because it was tried and found to be more effective and less costly than the traditional voting method. The Town of Kingsville had an increased voter turnout than previous elections because of the convenience of vote-by-mail to the electors. The cost implications involved Canada Post vote-by-mail service agreement, Data-Fix software election database management for the list of electors (including additions, deletions and changes to the electors list) and staffing costs on the day of the election for returning officers.

Lanark Highlands

Lanark Highlands has utilized Vote-by-Mail for the last two terms. Election staff thought it was great – less pressure on election day – quicker results. Voter turnout increased from 22% to 57%. The costs were slightly less than the traditional method.

Leamington

Our municipality used mail-in voting in both the 2000 municipal election and the 2003 municipal election. There are many advantages to mail-in voting. The major advantage is customer satisfaction. I have never had such an overwhelming positive response from the public to any project I have undertaken. The public like it because it is so convenient to vote. Positive response came from all ages. Most of the candidates liked it and election officials like it because mail-in voting lets you better control the safety and security of the ballots and the voting process. It is also a much better system for voters with disabilities.

Traditionally, prior to amalgamation, Leamington and Mersea both experienced voter turnout in the range of 30% – 33% for municipal elections. That is typical for most municipalities across the Province. In the 2000 Municipal Election, 53% of the electors voted. Canada Post reported that voter turnout increased by approximately 20 percentage points for most municipalities that used Vote By Mail. In addition to the increase in voter turnout, Election Officials also received overwhelmingly positive feedback from members of the public. The most common comment was that it was so convenient.

Security & Secrecy of Ballots

Those residents who did express concern most often raised issues of secrecy and security. Some were concerned that when Election Officials opened their return envelopes that the Election Officials would be able to see how each resident voted. Others were concerned about how the ballots were being stored until election night and who had access to the ballots. Usually these concerns were satisfied when Election Officials explained the process to the residents and it was demonstrated how both secrecy and security were a high priority of the system.

Conduct of Election

It is also suggested that the Vote By Mail voting system is an easier process to manage than the traditional polling station method. In the traditional method, handicapped accessible polling stations must be established throughout the Municipality, people hired and trained for Election Day. Election Officials have to ensure that all these voting stations are properly set up, appropriate signs are erected and deal with problems that arise throughout Election Day at these various polls. In the Vote By Mail system, the ballots arrive over a 3 week period and are handled by permanent full-time employees who are well trained in election procedures.

Cost

The Vote By Mail system is slightly more expensive than the traditional voting system primarily because of the cost of postage.

Campaigning

Candidates must ensure that they start to campaign sooner than in a traditional election. Approximately 50% of the votes that were cast were received two weeks before election day. One week before election day, 85% of the votes that were cast were received.

Vote Tabulating Machines

In the previous two elections, vote tabulating machines were not available for those municipalities using Vote By Mail. Canada Post has been trying to design Vote By Mail ballots that could be counted by a tabulating machine and is expected to announce in the near future if such ballots will be available. For the province to implement such a system, it will greatly affect the campaign period. In Municipal elections the campaign period is over 10 months long. In Provincial elections it is about 4 weeks. It would be necessary for the province to extend its campaign period by at least 3 weeks if it wanted to use mail-in balloting. However, now that the Province is implementing specific election dates, like in Municipal elections, that should not be a major problem.

We are presently working with a company to develop mail-in ballots that can be counted by using our existing municipal scanners that we use in our daily operations. Leamington went from a traditional voting turnout from around 30% to over 50% in both of the mail-in elections.

London

The City of London implemented Mail Voting for the 2003 General Election. Our experience was a positive one. We received positive feedback from the

public and it was not a very complex set up. The only real down side was getting adequate space in a mall that allowed enough room for our staff and proper privacy when marking the ballot. The City of London will be using the Mall Voting system in 2006. Cost implications were minimal.

Mulmur

Utilized vote by mail in 2003. The voter turnout was 47.5%. In our previous normal elections the turnout would be no higher than 30%. There is more time involved with our staff, but still less than running a normal election. The vote by mail worked out to about \$5.00/voter whereas a normal election would be about \$1.50/voter.

North Kawartha

Implemented Vote by Mail in the 2000 Election. We do plan to utilize Vote by Mail in the upcoming election since it was a more efficient and convenient method of voting for our citizens and increased voter turnout. Costs increased for the 2000 Election over the combined costs of the previous elections for the former Townships in 1997. Costs increased for the 2003 Election over the 2000 Election.

Vote By Mail - Pros:

Voter Turnout Improved: The Township of North Kawartha utilized the Vote By Mail method to conduct our Municipal Election. This method enabled voters to cast their ballots in the comfort of their own home and made voting as easy as mailing a letter. This provided a more convenient way for non-residents, seniors and those with disabilities to cast their vote. Vote By Mail was successful in increasing our voter turnout by 70%.

Eliminated Proxy Voting: Vote By Mail eliminated the need for proxy voting. In previous elections, particularly in the former Chandos Township, proxy voting involved a large time commitment on the part of municipal staff in explaining the proxy process, resolving complaints and receiving and verifying large numbers of forms. Proxy voting also involved additional time and complication at the polls.

Eliminated Need for Advance Polls: Vote By Mail eliminated the need for advance polls as well as the need to have several polling stations spread throughout the municipality. This reduced the number of election staff required to operate the polls and the amount of election supplies needed at each of the polls.

There was one poll on Voting Day at the Apsley Community Centre operated by an Election Assistant, Deputy Returning Officer and Poll Clerk. Voting Clerks were utilized to count the ballots.

Staff Requirements: Election Staff included four municipal staff members utilized for the positions of Returning Officer (1), Deputy Returning Officer (1), and Election Assistants (2) and 21 individuals hired to fill positions consisting of Election Assistant (1), Poll Clerk (1) and Vote Counters (19). Training requirements were also reduced. Training required for vote counters was minimal (approximately 1 hour). The knowledge and experience of municipal staff was utilized for the positions requiring greater expertise.

Canada Post: The staff at Canada Post worked very closely with our municipality and were very prompt, knowledgeable and efficient in answering questions and addressing concerns of election staff.

Vote By Mail - Cons:

Costs: The costs were more using the Vote By Mail method as a result of costs for voter kits.

Labour Intensive: Opening the voter kits was very time consuming. It was also difficult to judge how many people would be needed and how much time to allow since the total number of kits to be received was unknown.

Canada Post: The staff at our local post office did not receive information concerning vote by mail until late in the process which caused some confusion. Post Office staff also experienced some difficulty distributing voter kits since some addresses were outdated.

Proxies: The elimination of proxy voting caused some concern. Individuals who were out of the country at election time felt that without proxies, it would be difficult for them to cast their vote. One voter kit was sent by courier. The voter kits moved through the mail system very efficiently, for example: an individual in California received their voter kit within 5 days permitting sufficient time for the kit to be mailed back.

Summary/Recommendations: The election in general and vote by mail was a successful and positive experience. The opening of voter kits and counting was completed on schedule. The majority of comments received from our voters were positive. Those electors who had concerns with secrecy still had the option of voting at the poll and those who had concern with obtaining kits were accommodated. The question most often asked of our election staff was why the ballot did not include the office for Reeve and Ward Councillors. Additional advertising may have been helpful in this regard. Election staff were efficient, knowledgeable, maintained the secrecy of the election and performed all their duties in a responsible manner. They are to be commended for their efforts. A meeting of staff was held after the election to review the election. This resulted in several recommendations made to Canada Post for improvements/changes in the voter kits (see attached). Information is being compiled by staff to assist us

with the next election and to update our voter list. Lessons learned will serve to improve the vote by mail process.

Ramara

In 1997, 2000 and 2003 Ramara Township utilized the vote by mail method. We have found the vote by mail method to be very easy to use and the residents have become accustomed to the process. The voter turnout for 2003 was 42.20%. The costs for the traditional (attend at the polling place) vs. the vote by mail method are slightly higher for the vote by mail.

Sioux Lookout

For the 2003 election, we used mail-in ballots (through Diebold Election Systems, not Canada Post). At the outset, the experience was very negative but the Elections Coordinator for Kawartha Lakes overcame initial obstacles and, once the glitches were worked out, things went relatively smoothly. Overall, it worked very well; most of the bugs have been worked out of the system; it required fewer Poll Personnel; and increased our voter turnout. Our voter turnout is usually in the low 30% area, i.e. 32% in 2000. Our voter turnout in 2003 was 61% – double what it has been. I believe that's because of the ease of using mail-in ballots. The cost per voter was reduced significantly because of the high voter turnout.

Sioux Narrows - Nestor Falls

We have used Canada Post's Vote-by-Mail system for our last two consecutive elections. We were extremely pleased with the service provided by Canada Post. We have 2 wards with two school boards in each and a hospital board position in one. The system makes our election very easy to manage and extremely convenient for municipal staff (we normally produced our own ballots and would require at least two polling stations, with multiple staff at each). Last but not least, it is also convenient for our electorate. Our municipality is recreational based, 156,000 Ha in size, contains two small communities and several additional built-up cottage communities. Not to mention that the majority of our eligible voters reside well outside of our municipality for the better part of the year (across Canada, into the U.S. and abroad). In fact, a great number of our residents requested mail-in balloting, despite any cost discrepancy compared to traditional polling. Our voter turnout increased exponentially when we instituted the mail in ballot system. We now have an average turnout over 50%, whereas with the traditional polling station system we were lucky to get 18-20%. The cost implications are significantly higher than our traditional system, however, we feel that it is worth it in order to provide a more convenient and efficient system for our electorate and encourage greater participation among the electorate in municipal elections.

Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield

We have used Vote-By-Mail for the past two elections. The experience has been for the most part positive. Eliminates proxy voting and advance polls and gives everyone the chance to vote. Most electors do seem to appreciate the convenience of voting by mail. It still takes a relatively long time to get results and is labour intensive, as the ballot envelopes all have to be opened for counting. It also takes significant staff time to open all of the return mail prior to Election Day. The cost is probably 10% to 20% higher than a traditional election.

South Bruce Peninsula

Uses a mail-in ballot for municipal elections. Prior to the amalgamation of the Town of Wiarton, Townships of Albemarle and Amabel and the Village of Hepworth in 1999 voter turnout was quite low, as little as 16%. The Township of Amabel implemented the mail-in ballot for two elections prior to amalgamation and experienced a greater voter turnout.

The overall experience has been positive. The workload before voting day is heavy and more help is hired to process the ballots received daily. The mail-in ballot allows our seasonal electors (approx. 50%) the opportunity of voting without proxies, which have problems of their own. The cost is more expensive, but when you equate to the higher voter turn out it probably would be similar.

South Huron

For the 2003 election the Municipality of South Huron implemented Vote-by-Mail. We found this to be very effective and more convenient for the voter. Very positive. We had over a 50% response using this method. Normally our voter participation count is in the 30% range, so we felt the change from a traditional election to vote by mail had been very successful. From a personal perspective, and as the person responsible for elections, I am certainly planning to recommend to council that we use vote by mail for the 2006 election. Although it was a lot of work for election staff during the 'return' period, we were able to accommodate personnel, doing the final count on election night, at our main office which reduced the workload considerably and provided regular updates for the candidates. Vote by mail costs more than a regular election. We used Canada Post for the 2003 election, however, we are looking into using an alternative service provider and it appears the costs will come down. We should also be able to manage our voter list more effectively.

Tecumseh

Implemented Vote by Mail in 2003. The positive Aspects included: more control of the election process, no need to train workers for Election Day, polling stations not required, Canada Post provided excellent co-operation and service in

delivery Voting Kits and returning Ballot kits, convenience for electors; time spent by staff on Vote by Mail system is comparable to the time spent in preparing, counting, allocating ballots, securing voting stations required in the traditional voting method; voting turnout higher. The negative aspects included: candidates complained that ballots were distributed too early, resulting in voters casting their ballots prior to candidates being able to campaign; candidates' names need to be printed larger on the ballots and the fold of the ballots should not be along candidate's name; secrecy envelopes need to be larger to accommodate the pre-folded ballot (experienced problems with opening the envelope, ballots being ripped along candidates' names and more time consumed in opening the envelopes with extra care); 321 kits were provided on Election Day alone to electors (many of these electors believed that they could vote the traditional way and as a result either threw out their kits or left them at home). Voter turnout rate went from 45.26% in 2000 to 54.50% in 2003.

Tweed

The Municipality of Tweed used Vote by Mail for the 2000 and 2003 municipal elections. For the 2000 election the process was very time consuming and involved a lot of work for set up, etc. Once we had the process in place, the 2003 election ran smoother. It was mainly the newness of the vote by mail process, mainly the internal controls, etc. which were a challenge. We will continue to use the Vote by Mail method for our elections. We have a large rural area in our municipality; the use of vote by mail relieved us from having to set up several advance poll stations and voting stations throughout the rural parts of the municipality in an effort to reach all voters. Although I don't have the exact %, voter turnout did increase, particularly for the rural areas. The cost of each election was somewhat higher than the combined costs of the elections for the three municipalities which ran separate elections prior to the 1998 amalgamation.

2.2 VOTE BY PHONE AND INTERNET

The following is an alphabetical list of unedited responses from AMO Members who utilized Vote By Phone and/or Internet sometime in the past.

East Garafraxa Township

We used TeleVote for the 2000 Municipal Election, but traditional ballots in 2003. The positive was the increased voter participation but the drawback was last day call volume resulted in some residents not being able to vote as they couldn't get through. Bell did not offer this method again. Significant increased voter turnout rate in 2000 as opposed to 2003. Cost differential was roughly 40% higher for Televote as compared to a regular ballot.

Markham

In 2003, the Town of Markham used internet voting during the advance polling period. It was a very positive experience and there was a significant survey undertaken that proved almost 100 per cent satisfaction with the product. I am currently in the planning stage for the 2006 stage and internet is one of the options being investigated. The 2003 Municipal Election Staff in Markham took the Town of Markham from a manual count system of ballot processing to a three-way integrated electronic process that included internet voting, touch screen, and poll counting equipment. 17% of the more than 42,000 votes cast were cast over the internet. There were no requests for recounts or applications to the court for controverted elections. The timely presentation of the results was well received by the public. Internet voting increased the previous election advance poll numbers by 300%. It allowed Markham residents to vote from their homes, their offices and while on vacation. It was a wonderful tool. The pilot project was quite inexpensive due to partnering with ES&S.

The ES&S Internet voting system is a turn key solution that is fully integrated with their Unity vote compiling system and their vote tabulating and touch screen systems. The Town of Markham was responsible for the Internet connection and supporting the vote tabulating machines. The security and integrity of the vote has been one of the principle areas of investigation and was identified as one of the guiding principles. ES&S provided ITS with detailed documentation on the security of their system as well as their data centre. Over a period of two months, the Technology team reviewed the documents and compared the information with industry standards. The team found that the security protocols documented by ES&S for their system were in fact similar to secure online transaction systems used by banks and other organizations with similar concerns.

That cost if we use ES&S will increase for the 2006 election. We have discovered in our current research there are other companies who are willing to provide this service, even at a loss, just to get into the market. The Town also partnered with Delvinia Inc and the Canargie Foundation to prove that the use of broadband could enhance communications in the government sector and through that

partnering we received communications services, as well as extensive surveying at the conclusion of the project.

Grey Highlands

The Vote by Telephone seemed to work amazingly well, however, there was a problem with the availability of telephone lines at the end of the voting period and therefore a number of voters did not cast their votes. It was not offered the next year so we tried the Vote by Mail. This appears to work well, however we would ensure we have enough staff for counting the ballots on election night.

Mulmur Township

The voter turnout by phone was about 46.5%. In our previous normal elections the turnout would be no higher than 30%. With the vote by phone method it ran quite well until the last 3 - 4 hours when the phone lines became tied up and people had a hard time getting thru. As well, there was a delay in getting the tallies from Bell Canada when it was done. But, as far as our staff time, this system is by far the easiest. The votes are tallied by computer so there is no recount to go thru. Since Bell Canada did not offer vote by phone at the last election, I went to the vote by mail in order to get voter turnout. Both the vote by phone and mail worked out to about \$5.00/voter whereas a normal election would be about \$1.50/voter (not allowing for extra municipal staff).

North Dundas Township

Utilized telephone and internet voting in 2003. It was a positive experience because of the quick turnaround and increase in voter turnout (up to 49%).

North Stormont

The Township of North Stormont, along with the other 5 lower tier municipalities in Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry and municipalities in Prescott & Russell, implemented voting by Telephone and Internet during the last municipal election in 2003. The overall experience was positive. Voter turnout increased minimally; however, as that was the first time the alternative method was used, we would expect a greater increase next time. We are a very small municipality (population 6,500), and the cost for us was greater than traditional polls. However, all of our neighbouring municipalities who are slightly bigger than us, found the cost comparable if not cheaper than traditional methods. Council has not yet decided what method will be used in 2006.

South Dundas

Our municipality used telephone/internet voting in the 2003 election. It was a positive experience, everyone could vote from the comfort of their home and accessibility was not an issue. We hope to use this method in 2006. Our voter

turnout increased. Our cost was almost one third more than the vote by mail used in 2000.

South Glengarry

Conducted telephone and internet voting over six days in the 2003 election. Enjoyed a very quick response rate as well as high customer satisfaction. CanVote tracked demographics of voters who selected to vote by phone and internet and produced a report to Council detailing those results: 36% used the internet while 64% used the telephone.

2.3 TOUCH SCREENS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

The following is an alphabetical list of unedited responses from AMO Members who utilized Vote By Touch Screen and/or employed vote tabulators sometime in the past.

Aurora

Aurora introduced vote tabulators in the election of 2003 including touch screen tabulators for the advance voting days. The new system was generally well accepted by the public and elected officials for its speed and accuracy. The technology did not have any impact on voter turnout. I think this is predicated on the candidate races. Since we purchased the tabulation units we plan to use them again for many more future elections. The initial cost of the units should be recovered by the 2009 election due to the reduction in the number of election staff that will be needed.

Barrie

The City of Barrie has utilized electronic touch screen voting equipment and an electronic voters' list for all Municipal Elections held since 1997. The use of the electronic touch screen voting system has provided a cost effective solution to the rising cost of a paper ballot system and the logistic problems of ballot management. The City of Barrie's current electronic voting system offers a number of benefits that are not available through the use of manual style balloting systems. Electronic voting allows electors to vote anywhere, on any day and at any time. In addition, the use of electronic voting equipment reduces the requirement for the number of voting locations and as a result, reduces the requirement for staffing and associated costs.

The electronic voting system utilized in November of 2003, provided an option for the visually impaired to vote unassisted. Visually impaired voters had access to a voice guidance system that reads the ballot out loud. This system guides the voter

in making ballot selections by listening to spoken prompts utilizing a headset and keypad. This equipment was located at City Hall, the Allandale Recreation Centre, Parkview Centre for Seniors and at the East Bayfield Community Centre. Additionally, since the entire ballot is produced in a much larger font than a traditional ballot, it is much easier for individuals with visual impairments to use the City's system. The ballot stations also offer a "magnify" option which allows for the ballot to be magnified to provide for an even larger font size.

Electronic voting provides for quick and accurate results. Recounts can be conducted in an equally efficient manner. Individual ballots are available on each ballot station for viewing by an election supervisor. As with a paper ballot, the ballots cannot be traced to an individual voter. If necessary, it is possible to print each individual ballot result.

The City of Barrie completes a very thorough testing process of each piece of equipment prior to its use and staff have full confidence in the reliability and accuracy of the equipment utilized. The City of Barrie staff will be monitoring system upgrades that may be available for the electronic voting equipment. The City of Barrie intends to utilize the same equipment in 2006 (with any additional upgrades) for the reasons cited above.

Voter Turnout:

Voter turnout was enhanced in the 2003 Municipal Election by the strong Mayoral race and media coverage of the Mayoral candidates. The number of days of voting and equipment utilized also offered greater accessibility for voters. Although the weather was wet, it was generally favourable for electors. All 21 voting locations were accessible by Barrie Transit. The City of Barrie also offered free transit passes (including BACTS passes) to transport electors to the voting locations.

<p><i>NOTE:</i> Councillor Patrick Brown's office forwarded a separate submission that was quite critical of the use of touch screens in municipal elections.</p>

Bradford West Gwillimbury

Bradford West Gwillimbury implemented Automated Vote Count Tabulators in our 2003 elections. This was our first deployment of this equipment. Our experience with Vote Count Tabulation equipment was extremely positive and well received by the public, candidates and election staff. Our reporting of unofficial results were completed and posted to our website within 1/2 hour of the close of the vote. (8:30 p.m.). The delay was that one of our voting locations had a line up at 8:00 p.m. to cast their votes.

It is my intension to implement the vote count tabulator again in the 2006 election. The tabulation equipment worked very well. Overall the cost for

implementation of the vote count tabulation equipment was pretty reasonable. Staff time during the counting was drastically reduced.

Brantford

Utilized iVotronics touch screens for visually impaired only (2 units were utilized). More negative than positive due to cost versus voter use. There were only approximately 15 voters who used the units in the 2003 election. The continued use of these units is under review. Alternative methods of voting will be explored to meet the needs of the visually impaired.

Cobourg

Utilized vote tabulating machines in 2003. Very positive experience in terms of the process, time savings and labour savings. The tabulators were \$45,000.00 to purchase but resulted in cost savings in terms of labour and time.

Hamilton

The City of Hamilton owns 160 AccuVote scanner/tabulators. Our experience to date has been positive and we plan to continue to use the voting machines for the next few elections, although we may look at alternate methods as a complement to and not instead of (i.e. : e-voting). We continue to experience the standard 30% to 40% turnout rate. The original cost of the units is offset by ongoing savings in the cost of running future elections.

Mississauga

Optical Scan - 2000 Election. Very positive, the public liked the fact that their vote was being tallied in their presence. Yes, the system works well. The public and the politicians have taken to it. Not much effect on voter turnout.

Newmarket

The Town of Newmarket used computer terminals (Global) in 1997, 2000, 2003, and will do so for 2006. Positive for staff and workers at the Polls as the results are very quick. But some electors not comfortable with the process, mostly the marking of the ballots – filling in the oval rather than marking with an X.

Niagara Falls

The City of Niagara Falls used Global Elections System Accu-Vote Tabulators equipment and software in the 1997 Municipal Election, for the first time. We initially purchased 15 Accu-Vote Tabulators and loaned 15 additional tabulators from a U. S. Municipality, allowing us to have 30 machines available on the Election Day. The machines in the field, performed without mechanical error for

the entire day, and the results were transmitted via modem from the Polling Stations at close of the Polls, allowing for a complete wrap-up of the Election by 9:15 p.m. on Election night. The complete wrap-up included all Final Reports and Statements of Votes Cast.

We were extremely pleased with the performance of both the equipment and the software, and I have obtained the permission of my Council to purchase an additional 15 Accu-Vote tabulators, as well as one (1) Accu-Feed ballot processor, which I believe demonstrates our confidence and commitment to the Global Election System.

Pelham

The Town of Pelham uses the AccuVote Optical Scan Tabulators for all of our municipal election ballots, including advance polls and each polling station on election day. This system was established in the 2000 Municipal Election and has resulted in a positive experience as the election results are available within a very short time following the close of polls.

Russell Township

Has used vote tabulators since 2000. Our experience has been positive in the sense that we provide results on election night within 30 minutes after the close of the polls as compared to four and even five hours later in the manual count method. In both elections voters had positive comments. We have two vote tabulators which are set up in two polls on election day. We have reduced the number of polls from 28 to 2. We plan on repeating it for a third time in 2006. Our total election expenses represented a cost of \$2.22 per eligible voter.

Springwater

In 2000, the Township of Springwater implemented voting tabulators at central polling locations. These tabulators were used at the 2000 and 2003 elections.

Sudbury

Utilized optical scan vote tabulators and a "marksense" ballot. Survey of voters revealed the vast majority were pleased with these devices. Sudbury staff made an excellent staff report available to council detailing this survey and many other details about the vote including the use of free transit passes.

Thorold

Implemented automated vote tabulating using AccuVote optical scanning equipment in the 1997 municipal elections along with the majority of other municipalities in the Niagara Region. This equipment has now been used successfully in two subsequent municipal elections (2000 and 2003) and our

experience has been extremely positive for several reasons: produced a reduction in costs, reduction in manpower required, accuracy of vote counting, speed of reporting poll results. We intend to continue using this equipment in the upcoming 2006 municipal elections for the reasons already noted. Based upon the experience of other municipalities our turnout has been relatively good regardless of whether a manual or electronic system was used.

Timmins

We have used the global AccuVote system since 1997. Our experience has been very positive, results in 23 minutes from close of polls in 2003. Yes, very quick results, easy to use by operator and voter, accurate, simple set-up. No impact on our turnout except we were able to deal with line-ups much quicker; Our voter turn-out has traditionally been between 52 to 62% The initial costs were the purchase of the machines although you can rent. The net benefit to cost of elections has been approx \$30-\$40,000 in savings since using Accuvote.

Windsor

The City of Windsor used (rented) both vote tabulator machines and touch screen units at the Advance Vote locations and vote tabulator machines only on regular voting day. We had a positive experience. We conducted a survey to determine the electorate's viewpoint and overwhelming number of voters said they liked the electronic voting machines. Yes, we plan on using the same for the 2006 Municipal Election. Voter turnout is usually quite high in the City of Windsor. This past municipal election was 46 percent. Several factors played a role in making the turnout high: strong mayoral race, number of advance polls, aggressive advertising on buses, media, pamphlets, etc. Cost associated with the electronic voting methods was higher than the central count method used in the 2000 election. Costs associated with creation of new manuals, procedures, etc.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Several respondents suggested that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and/or Democratic Renewal Secretariat may want to convene a meeting and invite a number of clerks to get together to discuss all the variations, successes, pit-falls and adventures that accompany alternative elections.

The biggest complaint that Municipal Election Officials across the Province have after every election is about the quality of the voters' lists. MPAC Officials have advised that they have implemented procedures and more financial resources toward producing better preliminary lists of electors for municipalities. AMO intends to work with the AMCTO and MPAC to ensure a better list by gaining access to those individuals that have transferred property, deceased, as well as to data relating to new births.

4.0 USEFUL LINKS FOR ALTERNATIVE VOTING METHODS

Advanced Voting Solutions

<http://clients.enfocom.com/avs/home.html>

CanVote

<http://www.canvote.ca/Services.htm>

Canada Post Vote By Mail

http://www.canadapost.ca/business/offerings/vote_by_mail/can/about_faqs-e.asp

Diebold Election Systems

(formerly known as Global Election Systems)

<http://www6.diebold.com/dieboldes/default.htm>

Election Systems & Software

<http://www.essvote.com/HTML/home.html>

Microvote

<http://www.microvote.com/>

Sequoia Voting Systems

<http://www.sequoiavote.com/>

Unilect Corporation

<http://www.unilect.com/>