



NEWS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

The Election Law Enforcement Commission today released Technology in the Future: Strengthening Disclosure, a white paper that discusses how technology can enhance the Commission's disclosure efforts as well as its operational efficiency.

Frederick M. Herrmann, Executive Director of the Commission, said that ELEC is "dedicated to providing the public with meaningful campaign financial and lobbying information and that it views the utilization of up-to-date technological equipment as an integral part of that process."

"The white paper written by Deputy Director Jeffrey M. Brindle represents the Commission's long-range plan for utilizing high technology in a way that advances public disclosure and improves the management efficiency of ELEC's internal operations," stated Herrmann.

According to Herrmann, the paper indicates that the Commission would like to provide the public with more direct access to its data base, both at the Commission's offices and at remote locations.

"The Commission is envisioning a future computer network that includes hook-ups to counties, municipalities, public and private libraries, media, and individual users," said Herrmann. "This project would permit users to access the Commission's data base for campaign financing and lobbying information and to file reports electronically."

The paper also suggests that a Document Scanner Disc storage and Image Retrieval System could become an integral part of the Commission's operations.

Herrmann said "such a graphic system would enhance the disclosure of campaign financial and lobbying information and ease the workload of an overextended staff."

The technology scans and photographs documents, retains the image, and has the ability to display the image on a screen or reproduce it via a photocopy. It also can produce computer discs.

Herrmann said that "the system would streamline data entry operations, save valuable time in the Compliance Section, and ultimately result in more information being provided to the public more quickly."

Among the other ideas for technological change offered by the Commission are: an automated mail processing system, a modern telephone system, electronic mail, and desk-top publishing.

In its report the Commission acknowledges that "these technological improvements are out-of-reach financially at this particular time" but states

that the "blueprint will be useful in that when additional funding becomes available, the Commission will be poised to enter a high-tech future."

The white paper estimates that the implementation of all the components of the blue print would cost an estimated \$890,000.

Herrmann noted: "when the economy improves it will be important for the Commission to invest in high technology. The suggestions for technological change contained in the white paper will be an important part of agency planning for the future."

He said that the implementation of new technology will "improve disclosure, operational efficiency, and in the long run save taxpayers dollars because it would reduce the number of additional staff needed to be hired in the future to keep pace with an increasing Commission workload.

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