

ELECTIONS BC

News Release

For Immediate Release

Date: April 5, 2005

B.C. First with Internet Voter Registration

Victoria - Provincial voters can now register, update or confirm their voter registration online 24 hours a day at www.elections.bc.ca. British Columbia is the first jurisdiction in North America to offer fully automated Internet voter registration. The online system was introduced last September and was used successfully to register voters in the October 28 by-election in Surrey-Panorama Ridge.

Its use has spread across the province during the current Elections BC registration drive for the May 17 general election and referendum on electoral reform. Since the voter registration drive began on February 17, more than 101,000 British Columbians have registered, updated or confirmed their registration by using the "Register Now" button at the Elections BC website.

Voters are encouraged to use the system if they are unsure whether they are registered at their current address. The deadline for pre-election registration is April 26. At that point the voters list is 'closed' to allow production, printing and distribution.

The Internet voter registration system was initiated by Chief Electoral Officer Harry Neufeld as part of an extensive effort to encourage British Columbians to register to vote, and to keep their registration current. "We wanted to create an online system that was easy and convenient, but also offered a high measure of security so voters could use it with confidence," Neufeld said.

To achieve these goals, the registration data in the Elections BC website is protected by a series of firewalls and other security measures.

To prevent fraud or duplication, all on-line registrants are asked to provide their name and address, date of birth and either their B.C. Driver's Licence Number or the last six digits of their Social Insurance Number.

The online registration system was developed by Elections BC and EDS Canada at a cost of \$300,000. By reducing the expense of paper transactions, the system will pay for itself during this election alone.

Elections BC is a non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for the impartial administration of provincial elections and referendums, voter registration and voter education.

Background

A person is eligible to vote if they are 18 years or older on election day (May 17), a Canadian citizen and a resident of B.C. for the past six months. All voters must be registered in order to cast a ballot.

Those who are eligible to vote have a variety of registration choices until pre-election registration closes on April 26:

- **ONLINE** — register, update or confirm your registration online at www.elections.bc.ca.
- **PHONE** — call Elections BC toll-free at 1-800-661-8683 to confirm or update your registration information.
- **PAPER FORM** — use the voter registration form that was included in the ‘This Election, Vote Twice’ flyer mailed to every home across the province, or download and print an application form from the Elections BC website.
- **FAX/MAIL** — the completed paper form can be faxed to Elections BC toll-free at 1-866-466-0665, or mailed to the address shown on the form.
- **COMMUNITY OFFICES** — on-line registration through public access computer terminals and in-person voter registration is available at every Service BC - Government Agent office across the province.
- **IN-PERSON** — as of April 6, in-person registration will be available at any one of the 85 district electoral offices being established around the province. (Locations will be listed on Elections BC website April 6.)

Voters who are registered, but who have moved since the last time they voted (either federally or provincially), are encouraged to contact Elections BC to make sure their address information is up-to-date. Voters must be registered at their current residential address in order to vote for a candidate to represent the district in which they currently reside.

For more information:

Elections BC

Phone: (250) 387-5305 or toll-free 1-800-661-8683 / Hearing Impaired (TTY) 1-888-456-5448

Location: 333 Quebec Street, Victoria

Email: electionsbc@elections.bc.ca

Website: www.elections.bc.ca/

