VOTE CENTERS AND ELECTION COSTS:

A Study of the Fiscal Impact of Vote Centers in Indiana

The Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute
in collaboration with
GrowthEconomics Inc.

January 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than 150 years most Hoosiers have cast their ballots on Election Day the same way. Those registered to vote travel to their precincts, which vary in number of voters assigned from a handful to several hundred people, sign in and cast their ballot. The technology utilized for marking the ballot and counting it has changed over the years, but the fundamental process for organizing where Hoosiers must cast them has not.

The Indiana General Assembly in 2006 enacted legislation that may change that. Public Law 164-2006, Sec. 119 permitted the establishment of pilot vote centers. The Secretary of State designated three counties, Tippecanoe, Cass and Wayne, that established centers that allowed voters from any precinct to vote at common locations in the county.

First, an important distinction: Vote centers operate only on Election Day and should not be confused with satellite absentee voting offices. Satellite absentee voting offices allow voters to cast absentee ballots at central locations established by the county election board before Election Day, whether at the county courthouse or elsewhere. Often the vote center location *is* utilized for absentee voting prior to Election Day, but on these days it functions as a satellite absentee voting office. This study analyzes the value of vote centers on Election Day.

This study, sponsored by the Indiana Secretary of State, seeks to understand the fiscal impact of vote centers in their pilot counties. A fiscal model was developed to identify possible cost savings associated with vote centers and to estimate the fiscal impact of those centers in each county. A previous study, "Assessing and Evaluating Indiana Vote Centers: the Development of a National Model," published by the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, March 2009, studied the implementation and administration of the pilot vote centers in Indiana.

The model in the IFPI study was developed from data provided by the Indiana Secretary of State's office. Several other information sources affected development of the model. These include the Bowen Center study, interviews with several county clerks and their staff directly involved in election administration, and vendors of election equipment such as voting machines.

This model estimates the Election Day costs in five critical categories: poll workers' pay, poll workers' meals, poll workers' training, equipment transportation and poll-book printing. These categories represent the typical and significant costs of elections in each county as currently conducted.

The model then brackets the low- and high-range of costs and savings based on turnout for each county. Two elections, the relatively low-turnout primary of 2006 and the high-turnout general election of 2008, provided the basis for this model.

Tables at the conclusion of this report use the model to compare the cost of conducting an election with vote centers in each county to the cost of using the current precinct-based process. These tables compare the costs overall and on a per-vote basis. The findings show savings in every county.

The data used in the study did not apportion the costs associated with voting machines consistently across counties over time, so the models developed for this study only include the annual costs in the four scenarios. The study does, however, discuss the potential long-term effect, including potential cost savings, associated with voting machines and their use in vote centers.

The major finding of this study is that vote centers would produce significant savings for all counties that implemented them and give local election officials more flexibility to anticipate voter turnout and deploy staff more effectively. These savings are particularly noticeable in counties with a low number of registered voters per precinct. Counties that already co-locate precincts at the same polling site also would experience significant cost savings. It also finds that implementation of vote centers could significantly reduce the number of voting machines necessary to conduct an efficient election, thus further reducing the election costs to counties. This study finds that counties that choose to establish vote centers could realize significant cost savings both immediately and long-term.

Key Findings

As the General Assembly and county officials consider the pros and cons of expanded local options for vote centers, this report provides estimates of potential cost savings under four scenarios. Key findings are:

■ <u>Most Indiana counties already use a single location to serve as the polling place for more than one precinct:</u> Smoother operations and voter convenience result. Cost savings, however, are minimal because staffing requirements are inflexible.

■ <u>Some Indiana counties have very high numbers of registered voters per precinct:</u> Cost savings from optimal location and size of vote centers/precincts are best achieved by providing local officials with maximum flexibility. Counties with few registered voters per precinct stand to gain the most by reforming their election process with vote centers. On the other hand, vote centers could help counties with high numbers of registered voters per precinct to ease crowding and long waits in line at polling places.

■ <u>All counties would save on Election Day variable costs by using vote centers:</u> This report shows that all Indiana counties would save money by implementing vote centers. This is true even when vote centers are assumed to be staffed by up to 12 workers per location and the same number of machines as the precincts they replace.

■ <u>Voting machines are a large expense and are often underutilized:</u> Voting machines cost about $4,000 each and are replaced after about 10 years of use. When counties experience low voter turnout the voting machines are underused. This is an area of potential for future study to ascertain the per-county implications of vote centers as a way to save costs related to voting machines. Evidence suggests this could be an area where counties could realize significant savings.

■ <u>Electronic poll books can provide counties substantial pre- and post-election savings:</u> Electronic poll books, required for vote centers, replace traditional paper precinct voter lists. An electronic poll book requires a large initial expense, but enables the county to plan elections better, reduce the cost of Election Day operations and greatly reduce post-election administration.

■ <u>Poll workers represent the largest variable cost of election administration:</u> The cost of poll workers' pay accounts for roughly half of the costs considered in this report.

■ <u>The combination of vote centers and satellite voting offers further potential savings:</u> Election practices in Indiana are evolving. As voting absentee before Election Day gains in popularity, election resources can be used on several days rather than one.

■ <u>The best candidates for vote centers:</u> The counties most likely to adopt and benefit from vote centers are counties of moderate size, growing populations and high numbers of registered voters per precinct.

The counties of moderate size and/or with growing populations that would benefit most: Bartholomew, Boone, Cass, Delaware, Grant, Hendricks, Henry, Johnson, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Madison, Monroe, Morgan, Shelby, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Wayne.

The counties with a high number of registered voters per precinct that would benefit most: Brown, Clark, Delaware, Elkhart, Floyd, Hancock, Hendricks, Lagrange, LaPorte, Marion, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Porter, Scott, Steuben, Vanderburgh and Wabash.

1. Introduction

Vote centers have been tried on a pilot basis in three Indiana counties. The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University has already documented how vote centers were implemented and administered in Cass, Tippecanoe and Wayne counties during the elections of 2007 and 2008. That report documents high voter approval and substantial savings in all three counties.

This report examines the fiscal considerations associated with vote centers on an expanded scale. It provides estimates of the potential savings that other Indiana counties might obtain by using vote centers in place of traditional precincts. Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita sponsored this study conducted by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute and GrowthEconomics, Inc., nonpartisan organizations committed to serving Indiana with objective analysis.

2. Background

Vote centers were first used in Larimer County, Colorado in 2003. Since then, vote centers have been employed in Indiana, North Carolina, Texas and Washington, and considered in other states. Only once has the process yielded unsatisfactory results. The 2006 primary election in Denver, Colorado was not well received by participants and not considered a success. Post-election reviews showed that the number of machines was not adequate considering the high turnout and a long ballot. Other evaluations of the Denver primary say the problem was due also to a flawed system for tracking eligible voters, not enough technical support and too little effort beforehand to inform voters of the change.

Indiana has employed vote centers in three counties for two election cycles. Those counties are:

Tippecanoe County

Tippecanoe County has employed vote centers in three elections – the municipal fall election of 2007 and the primary and general elections of 2008. Tippecanoe County realized total savings of more than $40,000 in November 2008 by consolidating 92 precincts into 20 vote centers. Prior to Election Day, Tippecanoe County created voting opportunities through absentee voting and 53 percent of votes were cast early. Public input during and after Election Day showed a strong favorable response to vote centers.

Cass County

Cass County employed vote centers in both the primary and general election of 2008. Like elsewhere, voters strongly approved vote centers. Cass was one of four Indiana counties that lost support for their vote machines prior to the 2008 elections when the vendor went out of business. Cass County faced the prospect of purchasing 80 new machines to equip its precincts in a presidential election year. Instead, Cass consolidated 40 precincts into seven vote centers and saved more than 50 percent on the 2008 election.

Wayne County

Wayne County used vote centers in 2007 and 2008. Wayne County combined 31 precincts into four vote centers for the 2007 election and 63 precincts into eight for the high turnout 2008 general election. County Clerk Jo Ann Stewart reports that first-year savings came from employing fewer poll workers but greater savings in subsequent years are expected as the purchase of new voting machines is deferred. Wayne County voters encountered long waits at one vote center due to the temporary failure of vote center equipment and to an insufficient number of voting machines for the high turnout.

Counties face financial stress

This consideration of vote centers occurs in the context of severe fiscal stress for most counties in Indiana. The Indiana revenue forecast issued Dec. 15, 2009 reduced revenue expectations for the current biennium by $1.8 billion, prompting the governor to order cuts to keep the budget balanced. On-going recession and joblessness mean several years of constraint and Purdue University's Office of Agriculture Economics has suggested that government appropriations may not regain 2009 levels until 2015: "Perhaps this will lead to greater efficiency in the provision of state services. Perhaps it will lead to cuts in the services that the state provides. Or, perhaps it will lead Indiana lawmakers and residents to consider tax increases." (Larry DeBoer, Indiana Local Government Information Website, Purdue University Department of Agricultural Economics, http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/crd/localgov/Topics/Hot_Topics/HotTopic_State_Budget.htm).

Vote centers represent an opportunity for the first of these options: greater efficiency. As this report shows, inefficiency is built into the current election system. The cost of operating more than 5,000 precincts across the state, each staffed by a minimum of five poll workers and equipped with costly voting machines, is onerous for many counties. The list of cost crunches associated with the voting process in Indiana is growing.

Boone, Cass, Parke and Randolph counties were stressed financially in 2007 when their voting equipment became obsolete with the bankruptcy of the company that sold and supported it. Randolph County had used the machines in only three elections but was compelled to spend nearly $200,000 for new equipment. Cass County, however, reduced its unbudgeted emergency purchase by 50 percent when it received permission to be a vote center pilot county.

Also two counties in Northwest Indiana ignored a legislative mandate to conduct special elections for a referendum in November 2009, citing financial stress as the reason. The Lake County Commissioners voted down a request for more than $400,000 to conduct the election, according to the Post-Tribune newspaper. The money was not budgeted by the County Council because no election had been scheduled for 2009 until the General Assembly included a provision in the special session's budget bill that required the referendum. LaPorte County also failed to hold a special election on the November 2009 referendum.

These examples show how some Indiana counties have already encountered difficulty in election administration. As all counties face fiscal constraint in the years to come, vote centers offer greater efficiency and public savings.

3. Election Issues

Variation in turnout

Local election turnout varies from year to year. Factors such as the number of contested races, the headline race, perceived closeness of races, and voter interest in the issues and candidates can alter voter turnout by a factor of three or four. This is demonstrated by comparing the 2006 primary with the much more heavily voted 2008 general election.

Seventy-nine Indiana counties experienced an increase in votes cast of 200 percent or more between the two elections. Votes cast in Gibson County increased by 526 percent and in St. Joseph County by 515 percent. In Marion County, votes cast increased by 297,708. In three other counties, Allen, Hamilton and Lake, vote totals increased by 100,000 votes or more. The smallest increase, in percentage terms, was 143 percent in Benton County.

Under the precinct system, each county employs the same number of poll workers in low- and high-turnout elections. Each precinct must have at least five poll workers (except following bi-partisan agreement by the county election board to eliminate some poll-worker positions) and at least two machines, unless the same machine also is accessible to disabled voters. This rigidity can cause overstaffing in low-turnout years. The 2006 primary election in Gibson County had only 2,952 votes cast, fewer than 2,600 on Election Day. Distributed across 38 precincts and 12 hours of open polls, Gibson County had about five votes per hour per precinct, yet it bore the full cost of an election because no cost-saving recourse was available to the county.

Optimal use of voting machines

The greatest fixed cost of local elections is the purchase and maintenance of voting machines. Machines cost up to $5,000 each and are replaced about every 10 years. Counties are required under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to have at least two machines – including one that is accessible for disabled voters – at every polling place.

Allocating machines among voting locations is one of the critical tasks of election management. Election officials attempt to estimate turnout and to deploy machines where it will be heaviest. But their prognostications are never precise. One precinct may have machines that are idle while voters at another precinct wait in long lines for access to a machine. Further, deployment of machines is inefficient because clerks and election boards cannot use a fraction of a machine. If five machines are available for two precincts, the precinct with two machines may have wait lines while the one with three machines has idle capacity.

Vote centers solve this problem. Fewer locations mean less division of resources. When voters from any precinct can cast a ballot at any vote center, there are no inefficiencies because all machines are located at the same place.

Voter Satisfaction

Survey research by the Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University has determined four key criteria for successful vote centers. These are, incidentally, important for precinct-based voting as well:

- Convenient locations
- Well-trained workers
- Efficient procedures
- Ample capacity and provisions

Vote centers provide fewer overall locations than precinct-based voting, yet they can be well-planned using GIS or traffic pattern information. The three Indiana pilot counties sought the following five characteristics in choosing vote center sites:

- Large parking lot
- On bus route or major thoroughfare
- Wired for internet
- Floor plan conducive to flow of foot traffic
- Handicapped accessible

It is beyond the scope of this report to assess which of Indiana's 5,000+ precincts are suitable for vote centers. Not all precincts would be, since the requirements are different. Many fire stations lack adequate parking. Urban schools also may lack parking. Rural churches, on the other hand, may have plenty of parking but lack internet connections.

Poor location choices can lead to unsatisfactory results. A journalist in Collin County, Texas, wrote the following regarding that county's choices for vote centers: "It appeared that the county never really 'got' the sense of what a vote center was. Instead they opted for what they knew, neighborhood polling places, but without the precinct residency restriction. The members of the committee were concerned that the goal would be to simply reduce the number of polling places and therefore costs, without taking the steps needed to accommodate the larger turnout at these fewer locations."

Not all current polling sites will be suitable as vote centers, but not all need to be. Many Indiana counties have already located the polling place for multiple precincts at the same location and use places that can handle heavy automotive and foot traffic (see Section 5: Findings). These changes have, in many cases, been necessary to comply with the accessibility requirements of the Help America Vote Act.

Election watchers nationwide believe that poll workers' training is often neglected. According to Project Vote, "Poorly trained poll workers . . . are not well acquainted with their state's laws and procedures for voting, exercise discretion arbitrarily and treat some voters with considerably more deference than other voters. The differences can lead to illegally disenfranchised voters, unwanted media attention and legal challenges." The journal *Campaigns and Elections* contends that more than one million votes were lost nationwide in the 2000 presidential election through errors made by inept poll workers.

Indiana counties have sometimes been challenged to find a sufficient number of trained and capable poll workers. During Marion County's 2007 municipal primary, five precincts could not open on Election Day during the entire 12 hours of voting because polls were not staffed. This kind of total failure is rare. But many counties have encountered problems because of poll workers who were unfamiliar with computers, voting laws or other considerations.

Vote centers require fewer poll workers. This, in turn, allows both parties to send their best people and for the election board to provide better training. As noted in the report of the Bowen Center on Public Affairs, "Recruiting, tracking, training, deploying, supporting and compensating 70 percent fewer people significantly eases the preparation required for a successful election. It also permits election officials to maintain a higher-quality pool of poll worker candidates across successive elections."

Cass County's experience confirms this, as noted in the report following the 2008 primary, stating: "We feel that we have fewer problems because we have to work with fewer poll workers. By not needing so many, we were able to almost hand pick the best."

The Help America Vote Act

Federal legislation passed in 2002 has influenced voting in Indiana and other states. These changes have both encouraged and compelled counties to conduct elections differently. Under HAVA, every polling place must be handicap accessible. Previously, disabled voters were expected to vote absentee or with the aid of a traveling absentee board. New laws have compelled counties to move polling places away from buildings that require the use of stairs to enter the polls. In recent years, counties have shifted many polling sites to more suitable locations.

HAVA also requires that every polling place provide at least one voting machine suitable for hearing-impaired, blind or otherwise disabled voters. This requirement has lead to an increase in the cost of voting machines required in each county. Counties have already purchased the equipment required, but they face future costs of replacing it.

HAVA has also resulted in every county voter registration office being linked to Indiana's Statewide Voter Registration System. As described by Ball State's Bowen Center for Public Affairs, "[T]he main purpose of statewide voter registration systems was to implement a single, uniform, official, centralized interactive computerized statewide voter registration list defined, maintained and administered at the State level." The Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) improves the way voters are tracked when they move. Every county in Indiana shares voter registration information with other Indiana counties through the SVRS, which permits more accuracy in voter registration lists.

A county's own paper voter registration records are no longer the final authority on voter eligibility. Instead, under federal law, the official list of voters is the list included in the SVRS. Since the official list of voters resides in computerized form in the SVRS, use of electronic poll books make that feature of vote centers possible.

In-person absentee voting and vote centers

There is an important distinction between in-person absentee voting and vote centers. Absentee voting satellite locations are sometimes incorrectly called vote centers. The two are not the same, but they complement each other.

Absentee voting prior to Election Day is allowed in all Indiana counties. Any eligible voter may vote at any satellite location that is provided by the county election board. Many voters now take advantage of the chance to vote before Election Day by casting an absentee ballot. Sixty Indiana counties had absentee voting before Election Day equal to 20 percent or more of their total number of votes cast in the 2008 general election; in two counties the number of these votes exceeded those cast on Election Day.

Vote centers, by contrast, have been permitted only as a pilot program in three counties. Vote centers are open only on Election Day. They allow any registered voter in the county to vote at any location. Vote centers typically rely on a computer system to speed the check-in process and to maintain records during and after Election Day.

Voting absentee before Election Day at satellite sites is popular with voters. Higher rates of overall voter turnout have occurred when more absentee voting opportunities were provided, but research indicates the high turnout is caused more by interest in the races than the convenience of the process.

Absentee voting programs impose additional costs to the county. Vote centers, on the other hand, cost less than precinct-based procedures. Thus, the two can go hand in hand. Money saved by

implementing vote centers makes it possible for a county to provide voters with extensive absentee voting opportunity. Alternatively, the money saved can remain in the county budget.

Electronic poll book

The electronic poll book serves in place of the printed paper voter lists in traditional precincts. An electronic poll book serves the same purpose as the paper list, but provides additional value. The electronic record stored on the electronic poll book provides immediate real-time records of voter activity. This is useful for identifying peak activity at particular locations in order to plan staffing levels in future elections. Also, the electronic poll book instantly updates voter registration records – a task that requires many hours of staff time when performed by entering information from paper voter lists to the SVRS.

Voter sign-in before casting a ballot can be accelerated and simplified if a county sends voter ID postcards before the election. On arrival at the polls, a voter's bar-coded card is scanned to identify him or her and identify the appropriate ballot, the voter's photo ID is checked and the voter's signature is obtained.

Indiana's three pilot counties have used electronic poll books from two sources. Tippecanoe and Cass counties obtained their poll book from Lafayette-based Del-Mar Information Technologies. Del-Mar spokesman Kyle Lutes says the product is available for a one-time license fee with set-up, training and other services at additional cost. Wayne County used an electronic poll book designed by Quest Information Systems and provided to it gratis in the first year of its trial. Quest is the firm that supports the Indiana Statewide Voter Registration System.

The electronic poll book is an equipment purchase with multi-year value. It is not included in the single-year estimates, but is discussed separately.

4. Methodology

We have not attempted in this report to compile exact total cost for elections for each county. Many costs (e.g., county election board administration, legal advertisements) are fixed and constant for both precincts and vote centers. Other costs (e.g., purchase of equipment including new voting machines or electronic poll books) are variable, but should be apportioned to the several years the equipment will be in use. For the sake of brevity our cost model focuses on election-day variables costs only. Equipment costs are discussed separately.

The cost estimates assume certain staffing levels and voter turnout. The results are based on a linear model. They do not attempt to optimize each county's staffing level, or to take into account any special practices, conditions or circumstances in particular counties.

Most data and information for this report has been provided by the Indiana Secretary of State's Office. Additional data and information has been obtained from the Bowen Center for Public Affairs, Ball State University, conversations with several county clerks and county election board staff, and on-line sources of information from other states, product vendors and other sources.

Indiana counties regularly report details of election activities to the Indiana Election Division, but there are no standard formats, definitions or procedures for all of these reports. The report of one county is not necessarily comparable with those of others. Counties divide election spending into lesser and greater numbers of categories, lump new machinery and other capital costs into a single election cycle, and employ diverse definitions.

Because the actual data provided by counties are not always comparable and are not provided by all counties, we turn to the alternative of estimating costs and savings for counties. These estimates aim to bracket the low and high range of costs and savings for typical counties. These low and high ranges will not capture extremes, such as counties that pay high per diems to poll workers or spend unusual amounts for training. They will encompass the 10th to 90th percentiles among Indiana counties. Factors that will be the same for either vote-center or precinct-based elections may be ignored. Only the following need be calculated as the principle categories of Election Day costs:

Poll workers' pay: All counties pay poll workers a daily rate. Inspectors receive a higher rate in most counties while judges and clerks receive a lesser amount. A few counties still employ election sheriffs, but the typical staffing of election precincts is one inspector, two judges and two clerks. Our estimate calculates five poll workers per precinct at rates of $90 to $125 for inspectors and $60 to $80 for judges and clerks. For vote centers, various scenarios envision from four to 12 poll workers at each vote center.

Poll workers' meals: Most counties provide two meals to poll workers who staff the voting sites. The cost of meals is sometimes added to the per diem. In other places, meals are catered. These are estimated in our cost model as from $5 to $10 per poll worker.

Poll workers' training: Training varies a great deal from county to county. Although the Help America Vote Act provides resources for better training of poll workers, there is no standard set forth in HAVA. Indiana law does establish minimum content for such training. Our model includes various levels of training. In the model, the cost of training one poll worker is presumed to be equal in a precinct or a vote center. Total training cost varies according to the number of poll workers required.

Transportation of equipment: Delivering voting machines to polling places and setting them up for operation can be a major task involving drivers, laborers and technicians who are qualified to prepare the voting equipment. However, in small precincts using light-weight equipment the same task can be performed by a well-trained inspector at no additional cost to the county. Transportation costs in the cost model are posited at levels from zero to $50 per polling place. This cost varies by the number of different addresses to which the machines must be delivered.

Poll book printing: Printing the paper lists of eligible voters per precinct can be a simple task for counties with small populations and few precincts. For larger ones, the cost can be substantial. Some counties can print the lists with clerk's office resources while others must contract the printing. Poll book printing applies only to the traditional precinct method and is replaced by the electronic poll book in vote centers.

Offsetting cost of vote centers

Printing and mailing of postcards: This factor applies only to vote centers, and can represent half or more of the total cost. All three Indiana vote center pilot counties have mailed every eligible voter a postcard prior to elections. The card, in combination with the voter's photo ID and signature, proves eligibility and speeds the process of screening and tracking votes. The lists are generated from the Statewide Voter Registration System. The cost model assumes a cost of 28 cents per registered voter for vote center counties.

Scenario 1: Consolidation of co-located precinct polling places

Most Indiana counties co-locate at least some of the polling places for their precincts at one location. (Precinct lists were unavailable for Jennings, Sullivan, Washington and Wayne counties.) Under current practice, voters from different precincts enter the polling place and then are separated inside the building by cordons and signs toward the appropriate set of poll workers and voting machines used to vote in their specific precinct. In rural counties, these co-located sites may include voters from more than one township. In Wells County, for example, voters from the Jackson Township precinct must travel to Southern Wells High School in adjoining Chester Township. Expenses are high in such elections because each precinct must be fully staffed even for low-turnout elections.

Inspectors' pay	$100
Judges' pay	$80
Meals	$10
Training	$20
Transportation	$50
Poll book printing	$30
Postage	$.00

The scenario envisions all voters continuing to vote where they voted in 2008, but allowing all co-located polling locations for precincts to operate as vote centers with a single entry line and all machines programmed for all co-located precinct polling locations. In Dubois County, for instance, the six precincts of Patoka Township, which already vote at the Huntingburg Event Center polling location, would combine their six voter lines into one.

For this scenario, no pre-election postcards would be mailed as in the other vote center scenarios.

Scenario 2: Low Turnout

Indiana's election laws require a fixed level of staffing and a fixed number of voting locations in most situations. Because these factors are fixed by law, electoral costs are very high on a cost-per-vote basis when turnout is low. The Low-Turnout Scenario shows what counties might save by staffing vote centers at a moderate level. The scenario assumes 7,000 registered voters per vote center and eight poll workers. In low turnout elections only 12 percent to 30 percent of voters will vote, leading to about 1,500 actual votes – identical to the number at a vote center apportioned for 2,500 voters when turnout is 60 percent.

Inspectors' pay	$100
Judges' pay	$80
Meals	$10
Training	$20
Transportation	$50
Poll book printing	$30
Postage	$.28

The low turnout scenario is perhaps the most probable of the four scenarios and yields strong savings to all counties. The staff reduction envisioned in these estimates does not exceed what has been shown to work in the pilot counties.

Scenario 3: High Turnout

Vote centers promise the greatest savings when turnout is low. However, it is important to note that even when vote centers are staffed for high turnout counties will save money compared to precinct-based elections. Even when 12 poll workers are placed at a vote center, the total number of workers required is less than the number required at several individual precincts. And experience at Indiana's pilot counties shows that 12 poll workers can handle even heavy voter traffic.

Inspectors' pay	$100
Judges' pay	$80
Meals	$10
Training	$20
Transportation	$50
Poll book printing	$30
Postage	$.28

The high turnout scenario assumes a vote center for every 3,000 voters, and 12 poll workers at each vote center. Other assumptions are displayed in the box.

Scenario 4: Maximum Savings

Indiana law authorizing pilot-phase testing of vote centers stipulated that counties must have at least one vote center for every 10,000 registered voters. In practice, the pilot counties chose to provide more voting locations than required. In Tippecanoe and Cass Counties, the ratio has been near 3,000 registered voters per vote center. Wayne County provided fewer locations but still operated well below the limit at about 7,000 registered voters per vote center.

Inspectors' pay	$125
Judges' pay	$90
Meals	$10
Training	$20
Transportation	$50
Poll book printing	$30

This scenario aims to show the maximum savings that could occur in other counties at the 10,000 voter threshold. The scenario also assumes the poll worker cost shown in the table.

5. Findings

Most Indiana counties already consolidate precinct polling-place locations

Analysis of Indiana voting sites shows that many precinct polling-place locations are already at the same polling site used by at least one other precinct.[1] Of 5,086 precincts in 88 counties, 2,789 (55 percent) polling sites are co-located with that of at least one other precinct. All precinct polling locations in the vote center pilot counties of Tippecanoe and Cass are located at the vote center sites. But 45 counties co-locate the polling-place locations of at least half of their precincts and 64 counties co-locate the polling-place locations of at least one-third. Only five counties do not co-locate any polling-place locations. This polling-place co-location occurs in both Indiana's largest and smallest counties. Complete tallies of co-located and unique precinct polling-place locations by county are found in Section 8.

Counties w/ Population > 250,000	
County	Precincts Co-located
Allen	81%
Hamilton	65%
Lake	52%
Marion	71%
St. Joseph	47%

Counties w/ Population <10,000	
County	Precincts Co-located
Benton	100%
Martin	33%
Ohio	73%
Switzerland	75%
Union	50%
Warren	0%

Existing polling-place co-location shows that most Indiana county election boards have already achieved one of the key steps toward implementing vote centers. Counties find it both convenient and expedient to locate two or more (eight precincts at one location in Adams Township, Allen County; six at single locations in both Dubois and Ohio counties) polling places for precincts in one location.

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[1] Includes 5,086 precincts located in 88 counties. Data for Jennings, Sullivan, Washington and Wayne counties were not available.

Registered Voters per Precincts Varies Among Indiana Counties

There is a disparity among Indiana counties in terms of the average number of registered voters per precinct. In every county some precincts will have more voters than others but the disparity is also great for entire counties. According to 2008 voter registration figures, the range was from 409 to 1,321 per precinct.

The counties with fewer voters per precinct tend to be rural counties with small populations and a single precinct in each township. Sixteen counties have fewer than 600 registered voters per precinct, while 11 others have 1,000 or more. The median number of registered voters per precinct is 783.

The ratio of registered voters per precinct is significant to election management. A high number signals that extra machines may be needed and that the basic crew of five poll workers assigned in most precincts may be inadequate. Where the number of voters per precinct is low, equipment and staff may be underutilized during voting hours. Altering the number of polling places, as can be done with vote centers, is a powerful tool for election management. This report finds that counties with few registered voters per precinct usually stand to gain the most by reforming their election process with vote centers.

Direct Savings from Variable Election Day Costs

Scenario 1: Consolidation of co-located precinct polling sites

Precinct polling-place consolidation would allow some Indiana counties to save considerable Election Day expenses. For other counties, the savings would be small or nonexistent. Carroll, Clay, Knox, Newton, Owen, Starke and Warren counties would reduce their Election Day costs by less than 10 percent. These counties have little or no co-location of polling-place sites.

Allen County, on the other hand, already co-locates the polling places for its 301 precincts in 147 locations. Allen County could cut Election Day expenses by 53 percent, or $104,510. Floyd County's 60 precinct polling sites are also extensively co-located – with only 15 precincts in locations where no other precinct's polling site is located. The cost model suggests Floyd County could reduce expenses by 49 percent, or $19,160. Other counties estimated to benefit from vote centers at co-located precinct polling sites include Benton, Blackford, Boone, Clinton, Dearborn, Floyd, Fountain, Grant, Monroe, Ohio, Orange, Scott, Switzerland and Union.

Scenario 2: Low Turnout

In this scenario, Indiana counties' Election Day costs would be reduced by a median of 50 percent. Reductions of 30 percent or more could occur in 84 counties. Only one county – Hancock – would see a cost reduction less than 20 percent. Hancock is exceptional because its level of voters per precinct (more than 1,300) makes the precinct system seem efficient.

Counties that would benefit most in the low turnout scenario are those that have more precincts than necessary for handling light voter traffic – especially those in compact geographic areas.

Scenario 3: High Turnout

Election Day expense reductions of 50 percent or more would be experienced by 22 counties in this scenario. More moderate 20 percent cost reductions would occur in 83 counties. The fiscal impact of vote centers would be less than it is for low turnout elections because voter centers would add workers to assist the greater flow of voter traffic. The median cost reduction would be 41 percent.

The number of voting locations would be reduced 25 percent to 33 percent of the number of precincts in most counties with a similar reduction in poll worker staff. Very small counties with fewer than 15 precincts and low registered-voters-per-precinct levels would combine to two or three vote centers under this scenario and their savings would be greatest in proportion.

Porter County, for example, has estimated that vote centers could enable it to reduce its Election Day poll worker staff from 620 people to 200. This would be accomplished by reducing 124 precincts to 17 vote centers. The county's savings would vary from $50,000 to $100,000 depending on the level of staffing.

Scenario 4: Maximum Savings

Under this scenario, all counties' Election Day expenses would be reduced by at least 30 percent. In 74 counties, those expenses would be reduced by more than 50 percent. The median reduction of expenses would be 55 percent.

The maximum savings scenario is included in this report to illustrate the full potential effect of vote centers. It is not a course that counties should put into practice. If counties were to consolidate to this extreme, they could fail to provide good service to voters.

Other Considerations

In addition to the direct Election Day savings described in each of the scenarios, counties that adopt vote centers may realize other long-term savings. These additional benefits are discussed here. They are not quantified and included in the model because they are multi-year factors, because they are contingent on other factors than the use of vote centers and because Indiana's brief experience with vote centers has not shown a track record for these factors.

Replacement of Vote Machines

Voting machines cost between $3,000 and $5,000 each. In most counties, machines are replaced after about 10 years. These machines are idle most days of the year but must be warehoused and maintained at substantial cost. On election days, one machine can accommodate more than 200 voters in a 12 hour day. Actual turnout is often far lower. As noted elsewhere, one Indiana county experienced just 78 votes *per precinct* in the 2006 primary.

The challenge for election administrators is to accommodate voters at the least expense, and with respect to voting machines that means avoiding underutilized machines at precincts where turnout is low.

Estimated Annual Cost of Voting Machine Replacement
Precincts v. Voter Center, by County Size
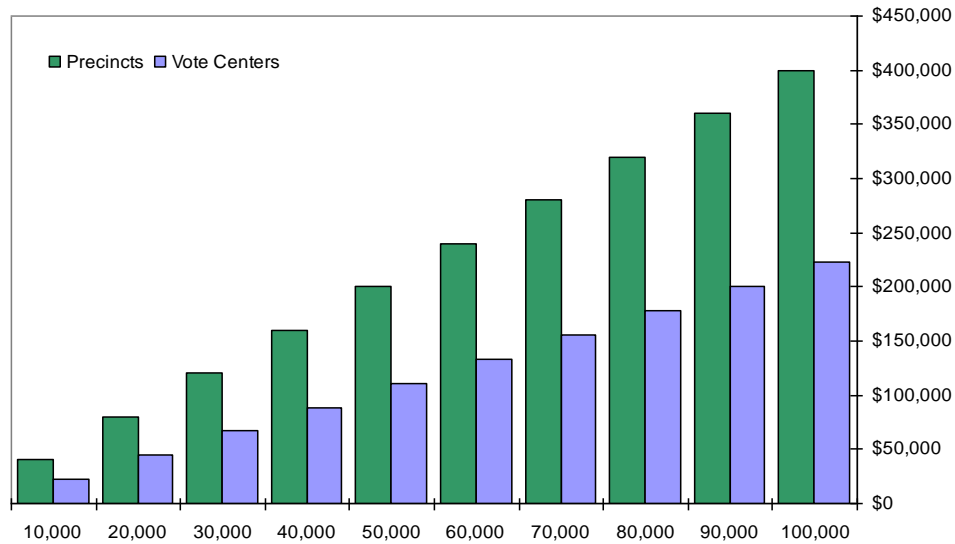
Source: Data from Indiana Secretary of State; calculations by IFPI and Growth Economics, Inc.

Because of the efficiencies of vote centers, the same number of voters can be served equally well with fewer machines. Tippecanoe County Clerk Linda Phillips estimates that an efficient vote center operation could function with only one-third the machines of a traditional polling place. The calculation here assumes a 44 percent reduction in the number of machines with vote centers.

The chart illustrates a simple model of possible savings for counties of varying size according to the two styles of voting. Precinct voting is assumed to average 100 voters per machine, while vote center machines are assumed to serve 180 voters. Replacement cost and schedule is assumed the same for both. But because the vote centers require fewer machines, the replacement cost is commensurate. For a county of 10,000 votes cast, the savings would be more than $17,000. For a county of 50,000 votes, savings of nearly $89,000 would accrue.

Pre- and Post-election Cost Savings

Following each election, the voter registration office in each Indiana county is required to catalog voter activity and update the voter registration record. The task often requires additional temporary staff and hundreds of hours of staff time when performed from traditional paper poll books.

Counties that purchase electronic poll-book technology as part of their implementation of vote centers can automate the process. When the bar-coded postcard is scanned at the polling place, it confirms the voter's eligibility and indicates his or her correct ballot. The same scanning process records the voter's activity and captures address and/or name changes from the poll lists. The SVRS-generated paper precinct poll lists also contain bar codes to permit expedited processing by counties.

Tippecanoe County Clerk Linda Phillips has estimated the savings to be more than $10,000 each year. The electronic poll book software cost approximately that amount. Thus, the electronic poll book pays for itself in the first year or two (depending on the size of a county) and provides savings in subsequent years equal to the cost of updating the voter rolls.

Costs by Category

The cost of conducting an election depends on many factors, including several that are not expended on Election Day. But the differences between precinct-based and vote-center elections can be described simply. The chart depicts the example of Kosciusko County.

Major Cost Categories
Precincts v. Vote Centers, Estimated for Kosciusko County
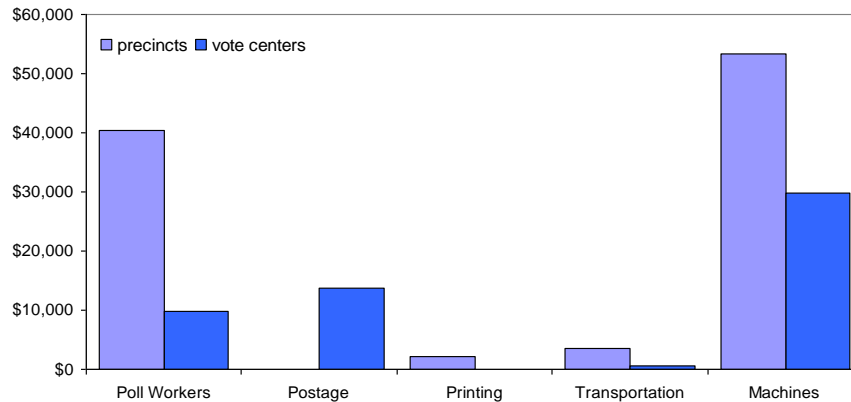
Source: Data from Indiana Secretary of State; calculations by IFPI and Growth Economics, Inc.

The main costs of local elections are poll workers and voting machines. Precinct elections require more poll workers. They also use machines less efficiently. Hence, precinct-based elections cost more than vote centers in both of the key categories. Vote centers, however, entail on additional expenditure for postage.

The shape of the chart shown here is the same for all counties. Poll workers and machines are the greatest costs; precincts require more of both than vote centers in similar proportions. Variations from county to county are minor.

Vote centers would enable counties to reduce their cost per vote

Cost per vote is a key measure of election administration. The objective for each county is to provide efficient, convenient and fair polling at the least possible cost. With precincts, the number of locations and the level of staffing are fixed unless county official take specific actions described earlier in the report. With vote centers, election administrators can anticipate turnout and modify the number of locations and the level of staffing to suit the need with greater flexibility.

Several factors affect a county's ability to optimize cost per vote. Very rural counties must not reduce the number of locations to such an extent that voters are forced to drive inordinate distances. Urban counties must accommodate voters who will arrive by bus. If a county provides too few locations, too few machines or too few trained poll workers, it will achieve a favorable cost per vote level at the expense of voter convenience or electoral fairness.

The map on the following page depicts the estimated cost per vote for each Indiana county. The values assume a high turnout, which is based on the 2008 general election.

Cost per Vote Using Vote Centers in High Turnout Election

Cost per Vote

	<$1.42
	$1.42...$1.51
	$1.51...$1.63
	$1.63...$1.73
	$1.73...$1.91
	>$1.91

INDIANA
FISCAL
POLICY
INSTITUTE
IFPI
Since 1987
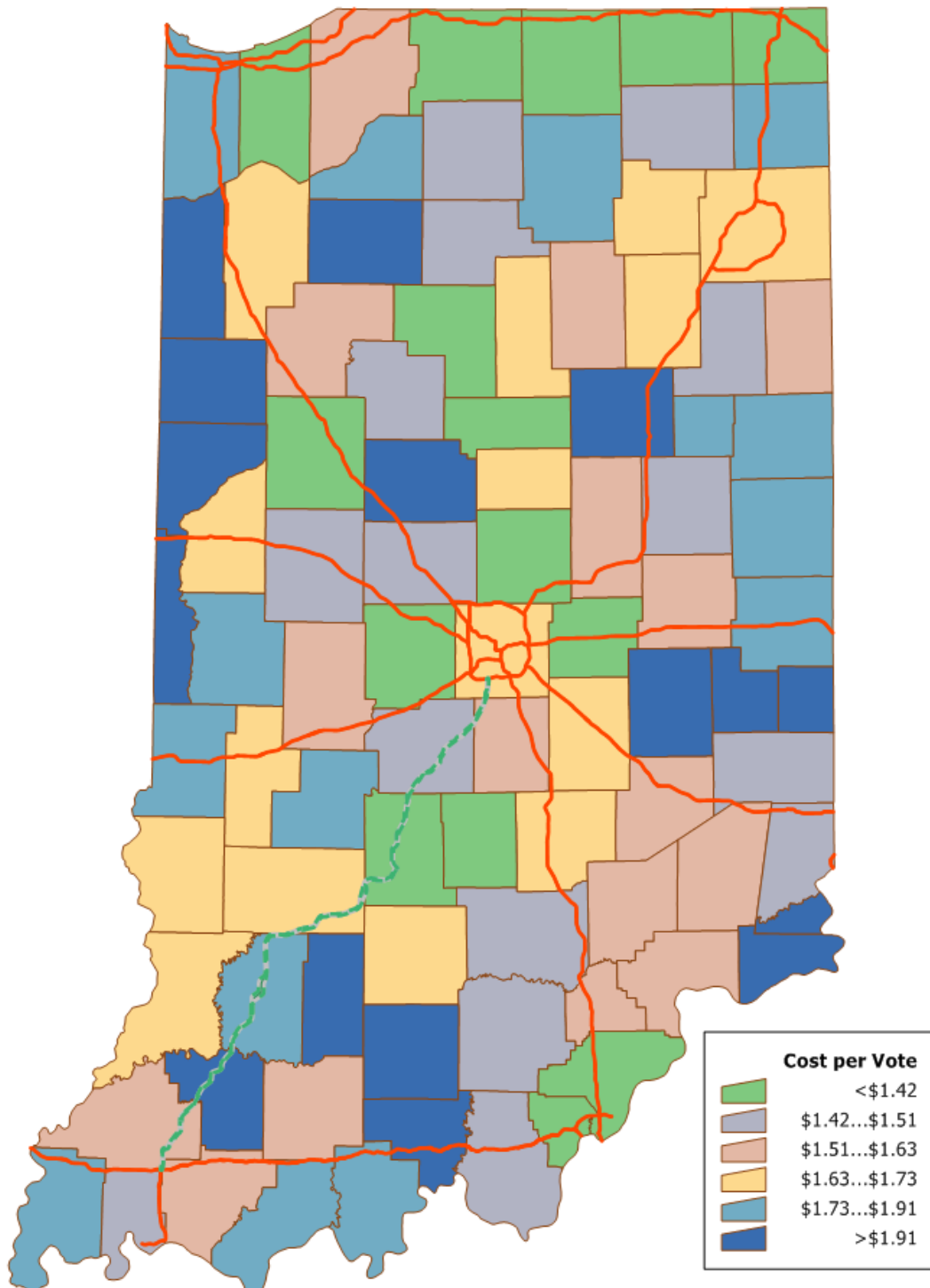
Future efficiencies

In current practice, each county purchases a number of voting machines adequate to process all votes in a single day. When that day arrives, the county also recruits a small army of poll workers to staff its precincts for the 12 hours the polls are open. The rest of the year, the machines are of no value and must be warehoused and maintained at considerable expense.

Historically, absentee voting in Indiana was permitted only for people with a specific need – plans to leave the state for personal or business reasons, ill health, etc. But Indiana has joined 31 other states to allow any registered voter to cast their absentee ballot before Election Day.

Indiana's brief experience with absentee voting before Election Day at satellite sites suggests that voters across the state welcome the chance to vote on weekends or evenings prior to Election Day. In Cass and Tippecanoe counties, more than half of the votes in the November 2008 General Election were absentee ballots cast before Election Day.

The scenarios in this report address current levels of Election Day voter activity. The model approximated the cost in each county of handling the traditional level of Election Day activity and, consequently, the necessity to have a traditional large number of machines. As more counties expand their early voting stations and as more voters grow accustomed to voting a few days or weeks before Election Day, the burden of Election Day itself will diminish. Counties will expect fewer votes on Election Day. Underutilized precincts will become more common – in some counties they will become the rule rather than the exception.

Best next candidates for vote centers

If the general assembly wishes to open the door to vote centers only a little wider than at present, two factors should be considered in selecting the next vote center counties.

Moderate-sized counties are best able to bear the administrative burden of converting to vote centers, including redesign of the process, finding appropriate locations and purchasing the electronic poll book. Further, counties using direct record electronic machines will avoid possible complications caused by the need to store multiple ballots on each machine. The following counties best meet these criteria:

Bartholomew, Boone, Cass, Delaware, Grant, Hendricks, Henry, Johnson, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Madison, Monroe, Morgan, Shelby, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh, Warrick and Wayne.

The following counties also merit consideration. These counties have a high rate of registered voters per precinct. During high-turnout elections these counties' polling places may be strained to accommodate the flow of voters. Several of these counties are growing in population and face the prospect of overloading their precincts in the near future. Vote centers would provide these counties with an alternative to the expense of reorganizing and adding precincts, and of adding new voting machines to them. These counties are:

Brown, Clark, Delaware, Elkhart, Floyd, Hancock, Hendricks, Lagrange, LaPorte, Marion, Marshall, Montgomery, Morgan, Noble, Porter, Scott, Steuben, Vanderburgh and Wabash.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes:

- Vote centers have significant savings potential for counties that choose to implement them;
- That the savings will vary in each county depending upon local conditions and the circumstances under which the vote centers are established; and
- The savings potential merits strong consideration for extending enabling legislation for vote centers as a "may" provision to all counties.

Appendix of Tables

Table 1 Electoral Precincts and Voting Locations

County	Total Precincts	Co-located Precincts	Unique Precincts	Number of locations	Percent Co-located	Percent Unique
Adams	25	11	14	19	44%	56%
Allen	301	245	56	147	81%	19%
Bartholomew	67	39	28	43	58%	42%
Benton	15	15	0	6	100%	0%
Blackford	11	9	2	5	82%	18%
Boone	49	39	10	23	80%	20%
Brown	12	2	10	11	17%	83%
Carroll	19	2	17	18	11%	89%
Cass	39	39	0	**	100%	0%
Clark	73	43	30	49	59%	41%
Clay	23	0	23	23	0%	100%
Clinton	39	33	6	20	85%	15%
Crawford	17	14	3	9	82%	18%
Daviess	28	13	15	21	46%	54%
Dearborn	45	19	26	35	42%	58%
Decatur	20	4	16	19	20%	80%
Dekalb	39	21	18	24	54%	46%
Delaware	75	18	57	66	24%	76%
Dubois	38	22	16	24	58%	42%
Elkhart	110	62	48	77	56%	44%
Fayette	28	14	14	21	50%	50%
Floyd	60	45	15	32	75%	25%
Fountain	22	19	3	8	86%	14%
Franklin	24	10	14	19	42%	58%
Fulton	17	11	6	10	65%	35%
Gibson	38	19	19	27	50%	50%
Grant	68	60	8	36	88%	12%
Greene	32	12	20	26	38%	63%
Hamilton	196	127	69	118	65%	35%
Hancock	38	19	19	28	50%	50%
Harrison	36	16	20	28	44%	56%
Hendricks	99	14	85	92	14%	86%
Henry	42	8	34	37	19%	81%
Howard	71	55	16	38	77%	23%
Huntington	33	24	9	20	73%	27%
Jackson	33	12	21	27	36%	64%
Jasper	29	4	25	27	14%	86%
Jay	21	11	10	13	52%	48%
Jefferson	28	13	15	21	46%	54%
Johnson	107	64	43	70	60%	40%
Knox	36	0	36	36	0%	100%
Kosciusco	65	42	23	38	65%	35%
LaPorte	78	18	60	68	23%	77%
Lagrange	16	8	8	11	50%	50%
Lake	563	290	273	396	52%	48%

County	Total Precincts	Co-located Precincts	Unique Precincts	Number of locations	Percent Co-located	Percent Unique
Lawrence	39	10	29	34	26%	74%
Madison	111	42	69	89	38%	62%
Marion	590	417	173	344	71%	29%
Marshall	28	10	18	23	36%	64%
Martin	18	6	12	12	33%	67%
Miami	31	18	13	22	58%	42%
Monroe	67	18	49	58	27%	73%
Montgomery	27	15	12	19	56%	44%
Morgan	48	37	11	26	77%	23%
Newton	18	18	0	18	100%	0%
Noble	29	6	23	26	21%	79%
Ohio	11	8	3	4	73%	27%
Orange	7	0	7	7	0%	100%
Owen	19	2	17	18	11%	89%
Parke	17	8	9	12	47%	53%
Perry	21	10	11	15	48%	52%
Pike	13	2	11	12	15%	85%
Porter	127	85	42	82	67%	33%
Posey	33	8	25	29	24%	76%
Pulaski	15	2	13	14	13%	87%
Putnam	29	8	21	25	28%	72%
Randolph	18	0	18	18	0%	100%
Ripley	27	20	7	15	74%	26%
Rush	20	9	11	15	45%	55%
Scott	16	13	3	8	81%	19%
Shelby	40	20	20	29	50%	50%
Spencer	25	16	9	16	64%	36%
St. Joseph	229	108	121	172	47%	53%
Starke	21	2	19	20	10%	90%
Steuben	19	4	15	16	21%	79%
Switzerland	12	9	3	6	75%	25%
Tippecanoe	94	94	0	**	100%	0%
Tipton	19	12	7	13	63%	37%
Union	8	4	4	5	50%	50%
Vanderburgh	131	52	79	104	40%	60%
Vermillion	17	6	11	14	35%	65%
Vigo	87	52	35	58	60%	40%
Wabash	25	10	15	19	40%	60%
Warren	13	0	13	13	0%	100%
Warrick	63	14	49	55	22%	78%
Wells	22	16	6	14	73%	27%
White	23	8	15	18	35%	65%
Whitley	34	25	9	21	74%	26%

Table 2 Electoral Turnout and Voters per Precinct

County	Precincts	Registered Voters	2006 Primary Votes	2008 General Votes	Registered Voters per Precinct	Votes per Precinct Low Turnout	Votes per Precinct High Turnout
Adams	25	17,379	3,380	13,795	695	135	552
Allen	301	253,320	37,833	152,403	842	126	506
Bartholomew	69	53,658	12,683	31,588	778	184	458
Benton	15	6,351	2,762	3,943	423	184	263
Blackford	12	9,763	2,249	5,564	814	187	464
Boone	49	38,528	8,603	26,966	786	176	550
Brown	12	13,108	3,619	8,239	1,092	302	687
Carroll	19	14,136	4,186	8,928	744	220	470
Cass	40	22,331	5,592	16,017	558	140	400
Clark	73	80,521	18,311	55,958	1,103	251	767
Clay	24	19,641	4,992	11,663	818	208	486
Clinton	39	22,171	5,269	12,648	568	135	324
Crawford	17	8,947	3,078	4,924	526	181	290
Daviess	28	18,350	3,999	10,827	655	143	387
De Kalb	39	29,833	6,009	17,460	765	154	448
Dearborn	48	37,504	5,521	22,712	781	115	473
Decatur	20	15,462	4,061	10,677	773	203	534
Delaware	75	89,945	18,833	50,964	1,199	251	680
Dubois	38	30,068	6,700	19,048	791	176	501
Elkhart	113	115,496	18,056	71,937	1,022	160	637
Fayette	28	18,260	4,417	9,668	652	158	345
Floyd	60	57,614	9,267	37,254	960	154	621
Fountain	22	12,108	3,994	7,710	550	182	350
Franklin	24	18,443	4,889	12,264	768	204	511
Fulton	17	14,330	2,049	9,148	843	121	538
Gibson	38	21,491	2,952	15,528	566	78	409
Grant	73	53,950	11,279	26,912	739	155	369
Greene	32	19,619	6,938	14,010	613	217	438
Hamilton	201	175,538	26,350	130,829	873	131	651
Hancock	38	50,196	11,168	34,488	1,321	294	908
Harrison	36	28,898	7,659	18,581	803	213	516
Hendricks	99	93,886	16,861	65,930	948	170	666
Henry	42	31,357	10,614	21,795	747	253	519
Howard	72	64,235	10,823	39,308	892	150	546
Huntington	35	25,257	5,333	16,561	722	152	473
Jackson	34	30,208	9,478	17,742	888	279	522
Jasper	29	20,571	4,158	13,157	709	143	454
Jay	21	12,092	4,482	8,542	576	213	407
Jefferson	26	20,942	5,275	13,768	805	203	530
Jennings	25	22,243	5,908	12,294	890	236	492
Johnson	108	92,666	13,702	59,437	858	127	550
Knox	37	27,321	6,316	16,829	738	171	455
Kosciusco	71	48,976	10,226	30,864	690	144	435
La Porte	81	80,276	16,133	48,121	991	199	594
Lagrange	16	15,869	4,272	9,596	992	267	600
Lake	565	304,512	71,433	215,062	539	126	381

County	Precincts	Registered Voters	2006 Primary Votes	2008 General Votes	Registered Voters per Precinct	Votes per Precinct Low Turnout	Votes per Precinct High Turnout
Lawrence	39	34,419	8,766	19,011	883	225	487
Madison	111	92,598	22,123	58,187	834	199	524
Marion	590	697,559	84,051	381,759	1,182	142	647
Marshall	28	29,964	4,926	18,872	1,070	176	674
Martin	18	7,366	2,977	5,095	409	165	283
Miami	31	24,682	4,626	14,333	796	149	462
Monroe	137	91,532	13,986	63,774	668	102	466
Montgomery	27	26,559	7,263	15,588	984	269	577
Morgan	49	44,071	8,145	29,263	899	166	597
Newton	18	10,708	2,810	6,153	595	156	342
Noble	29	27,597	4,973	17,447	952	171	602
Ohio	11	4,511	1,703	3,035	410	155	276
Orange	22	16,013	4,141	8,316	728	188	378
Owen	19	14,925	3,339	8,377	786	176	441
Parke	17	12,282	3,625	7,083	722	213	417
Perry	21	14,763	5,121	8,681	703	244	413
Pike	18	10,054	3,074	6,225	559	171	346
Porter	124	112,811	17,721	74,793	910	143	603
Posey	33	17,793	4,896	13,019	539	148	395
Pulaski	15	9,791	3,381	6,053	653	225	404
Putnam	29	24,275	3,792	14,900	837	131	514
Randolph	29	17,312	5,058	11,046	597	174	381
Ripley	27	21,234	3,880	12,415	786	144	460
Rush	21	12,609	3,596	7,805	600	171	372
Scott	16	18,481	4,380	9,078	1,155	274	567
Shelby	40	26,799	6,941	17,965	670	174	449
Spencer	25	15,382	2,259	10,428	615	90	417
St. Joseph	230	198,291	23,219	119,525	862	101	520
Starke	21	18,037	3,966	9,670	859	189	460
Steuben	19	23,770	4,303	14,241	1,251	226	750
Sullivan	20	15,483	4,349	8,998	774	217	450
Switzerland	12	6,931	1,747	3,747	578	146	312
Tippecanoe	96	104,279	15,267	69,574	1,086	159	725
Tipton	18	13,228	3,985	8,053	735	221	447
Union	10	6,249	2,019	3,393	625	202	339
Vanderburgh	134	135,992	16,133	79,072	1,015	120	590
Vermillion	17	11,403	4,434	7,294	671	261	429
Vigo	89	79,436	20,266	44,294	893	228	498
Wabash	25	23,903	6,070	14,145	956	243	566
Warren	13	6,583	1,980	4,134	506	152	318
Warrick	59	46,718	8,084	29,195	792	137	495
Washington	22	19,170	5,720	11,619	871	260	528
Wayne	63	51,800	9,754	29,085	822	155	462
Wells	22	21,001	4,364	13,286	955	198	604
White	24	17,852	5,816	10,927	744	242	455
Whitley	34	21,373	5,203	15,402	629	153	453

Note: The following tables include estimates that comprise the major costs of an election in each county, including poll worker pay and training, transportation and set-up of equipment, printing of poll books (precincts only), postage (vote centers only) and replacement of voting machines.

Voting machine replacement is not included in the scenarios presented in the text because they are not a regular annual cost. They are included in Tables 3 and 4 as a more complete but less representative measure of costs.

Tables 3 and 4 assume the number of registered voters for each county in 2008. The estimates in Tables 3 and 4 further assume a vote center for each 3,000 registered voters and eight poll workers per vote center. This is a moderate combination of scenarios 2 and 3 discussed above.

TABLE 3 ESTIMATED COST PER VOTE

| County | Vote Centers | | Precincts | | Percent Change |
	Cost / Vote High Turnout	Cost / Vote Low Turnout	Cost / Vote High Turnout	Cost / Vote Low Turnout	
Adams	$1.61	$6.57	$2.81	$11.46	43%
Allen	$1.63	$6.56	$2.79	$11.26	42%
Bartholomew	$1.72	$4.29	$3.06	$7.62	44%
Benton	$2.21	$3.16	$4.76	$6.79	54%
Blackford	$1.81	$4.49	$3.15	$7.80	42%
Boone	$1.46	$4.59	$2.52	$7.89	42%
Brown	$1.28	$2.92	$1.82	$4.14	30%
Carroll	$1.48	$3.15	$2.66	$5.67	44%
Cass	$0.96	$2.74	$2.00	$5.72	52%
Clark	$1.18	$3.59	$1.65	$5.05	29%
Clay	$1.66	$3.88	$2.88	$6.73	42%
Clinton	$2.16	$5.19	$4.32	$10.36	50%
Crawford	$2.05	$3.29	$4.32	$6.90	52%
Daviess	$1.91	$5.18	$3.62	$9.80	47%
Dekalb	$1.74	$5.06	$3.13	$9.09	44%
Dearborn	$1.51	$6.20	$2.64	$10.87	43%
Decatur	$1.55	$4.07	$2.62	$6.89	41%
Delaware	$1.44	$3.89	$2.07	$5.62	31%
Dubois	$1.63	$4.63	$2.79	$7.94	42%
Elkhart	$1.27	$5.06	$1.92	$7.66	34%
Fayette	$2.14	$4.68	$4.05	$8.87	47%
Floyd	$1.31	$5.25	$2.01	$8.09	35%
Fountain	$1.68	$3.24	$3.41	$6.58	51%
Franklin	$1.47	$3.68	$2.45	$6.14	40%
Fulton	$1.48	$6.60	$2.32	$10.37	36%
Gibson	$1.58	$8.29	$3.06	$16.09	48%
Grant	$2.02	$4.82	$3.80	$9.06	47%
Greene	$1.69	$3.41	$3.20	$6.46	47%
Hamilton	$1.29	$6.38	$2.05	$10.20	37%
Hancock	$1.11	$3.42	$1.38	$4.25	20%
Harrison	$1.43	$3.46	$2.39	$5.80	40%
Hendricks	$1.34	$5.24	$2.09	$8.18	36%
Henry	$1.56	$3.21	$2.70	$5.54	42%
Howard	$1.42	$5.16	$2.30	$8.37	38%
Huntington	$1.66	$5.15	$2.96	$9.19	44%
Jackson	$1.44	$2.70	$2.40	$4.48	40%
Jasper	$1.72	$5.46	$3.09	$9.76	44%
Jay	$1.76	$3.36	$3.44	$6.56	49%
Jefferson	$1.56	$4.08	$2.64	$6.90	41%
Jennings	$1.58	$3.28	$2.54	$5.29	38%
Johnson	$1.53	$6.62	$2.56	$11.09	40%
Knox	$1.72	$4.57	$3.08	$8.20	44%
Kosciusco	$1.75	$5.28	$3.22	$9.72	46%
LaPorte	$1.51	$4.50	$2.36	$7.03	36%
Lagrange	$1.42	$3.19	$2.08	$4.68	32%
Lake	$1.80	$5.43	$3.65	$10.99	51%

County	Vote Centers		Precincts		Percent Change
	Cost / Vote High Turnout	Cost / Vote Low Turnout	Cost / Vote High Turnout	Cost / Vote Low Turnout	
Lawrence	$1.72	$3.73	$2.87	$6.23	40%
Madison	$1.59	$4.18	$2.70	$7.09	41%
Marion	$1.64	$7.44	$2.45	$11.11	33%
Marshall	$1.42	$5.44	$2.08	$7.96	32%
Martin	$1.96	$3.36	$4.42	$7.56	56%
Miami	$1.72	$5.34	$3.03	$9.38	43%
Monroe	$1.36	$6.21	$2.53	$11.52	46%
Montgomery	$1.42	$3.06	$2.17	$4.65	34%
Morgan	$1.45	$5.21	$2.34	$8.42	38%
Newton	$1.93	$4.23	$3.66	$8.01	47%
Noble	$1.47	$5.15	$2.33	$8.16	37%
Ohio	$2.26	$4.03	$4.53	$8.07	50%
Orange	$1.99	$4.00	$3.70	$7.44	46%
Owen	$1.79	$4.50	$3.18	$7.97	44%
Parke	$1.90	$3.70	$3.36	$6.57	44%
Perry	$1.82	$3.09	$3.39	$5.74	46%
Pike	$2.12	$4.30	$4.05	$8.20	48%
Porter	$1.33	$5.61	$2.13	$8.98	38%
Posey	$1.81	$4.82	$3.55	$9.44	49%
Pulaski	$1.96	$3.52	$3.47	$6.21	43%
Putnam	$1.59	$6.26	$2.72	$10.71	42%
Randolph	$1.73	$3.79	$3.40	$7.43	49%
Ripley	$1.59	$5.09	$2.72	$8.70	41%
Rush	$1.95	$4.23	$3.77	$8.18	48%
Scott	$1.58	$3.28	$2.20	$4.57	28%
Shelby	$1.67	$4.32	$3.12	$8.07	46%
Spencer	$1.78	$8.24	$3.36	$15.49	47%
St. Joseph	$1.42	$7.30	$2.39	$12.28	41%
Starke	$1.83	$4.46	$3.04	$7.41	40%
Steuben	$1.25	$4.13	$1.67	$5.52	25%
Sullivan	$1.73	$3.58	$3.11	$6.44	44%
Switzerland	$2.10	$4.51	$4.00	$8.59	48%
Tippecanoe	$1.25	$5.69	$1.79	$8.16	30%
Tipton	$1.65	$3.33	$2.94	$5.95	44%
Union	$2.07	$3.47	$3.68	$6.19	44%
Vanderburgh	$1.51	$7.39	$2.35	$11.54	36%
Vermillion	$2.00	$3.30	$3.61	$5.94	45%
Vigo	$1.83	$3.99	$3.09	$6.76	41%
Wabash	$1.55	$3.61	$2.47	$5.77	37%
Warren	$2.23	$4.65	$4.40	$9.19	49%
Warrick	$1.62	$5.86	$2.83	$10.22	43%
Washington	$1.43	$2.90	$2.37	$4.81	40%
Wayne	$1.74	$5.17	$3.03	$9.04	43%
Wells	$1.50	$4.55	$2.32	$7.06	35%
White	$1.51	$2.84	$2.69	$5.06	44%
Whitley	$1.69	$4.99	$3.09	$9.15	45%

Table 4 Estimated Election Costs by Category for Precinct-based and Vote Center Elections

County	Precinct-Based Elections					
	Total	Personnel	Transport	Printing	Postage	Machines
Adams	$38,750	$14,250	$1,250	$750	$0	$22,500
Allen	$425,900	$171,570	$15,050	$9,030	$0	$230,250
Bartholomew	$96,600	$39,330	$3,450	$2,070	$0	$51,750
Benton	$18,750	$8,550	$750	$450	$0	$9,000
Blackford	$17,550	$6,840	$600	$360	$0	$9,750
Boone	$67,850	$27,930	$2,450	$1,470	$0	$36,000
Brown	$15,000	$6,840	$600	$360	$0	$7,200
Carroll	$23,750	$10,830	$950	$570	$0	$11,400
Cass	$32,000	$22,800	$2,000	$1,200	$0	$6,000
Clark	$92,450	$41,610	$3,650	$2,190	$0	$45,000
Clay	$33,600	$13,680	$1,200	$720	$0	$18,000
Clinton	$54,600	$22,230	$1,950	$1,170	$0	$29,250
Crawford	$21,250	$9,690	$850	$510	$0	$10,200
Daviess	$39,200	$15,960	$1,400	$840	$0	$21,000
Dekalb	$54,600	$22,230	$1,950	$1,170	$0	$29,250
Dearborn	$60,000	$27,360	$2,400	$1,440	$0	$28,800
Decatur	$28,000	$11,400	$1,000	$600	$0	$15,000
Delaware	$105,750	$42,750	$3,750	$2,250	$0	$57,000
Dubois	$53,200	$21,660	$1,900	$1,140	$0	$28,500
Elkhart	$138,250	$64,410	$5,650	$3,390	$0	$64,800
Fayette	$39,200	$15,960	$1,400	$840	$0	$21,000
Floyd	$75,000	$34,200	$3,000	$1,800	$0	$36,000
Fountain	$26,300	$12,540	$1,100	$660	$0	$12,000
Franklin	$30,000	$13,680	$1,200	$720	$0	$14,400
Fulton	$21,250	$9,690	$850	$510	$0	$10,200
Gibson	$47,500	$21,660	$1,900	$1,140	$0	$22,800
Grant	$102,200	$41,610	$3,650	$2,190	$0	$54,750
Greene	$44,800	$18,240	$1,600	$960	$0	$24,000
Hamilton	$268,650	$114,570	$10,050	$6,030	$0	$138,000
Hancock	$47,500	$21,660	$1,900	$1,140	$0	$22,800
Harrison	$44,400	$20,520	$1,800	$1,080	$0	$21,000
Hendricks	$137,850	$56,430	$4,950	$2,970	$0	$73,500
Henry	$58,800	$23,940	$2,100	$1,260	$0	$31,500
Howard	$90,600	$41,040	$3,600	$2,160	$0	$43,800
Huntington	$49,000	$19,950	$1,750	$1,050	$0	$26,250
Jackson	$42,500	$19,380	$1,700	$1,020	$0	$20,400
Jasper	$40,600	$16,530	$1,450	$870	$0	$21,750
Jay	$29,400	$11,970	$1,050	$630	$0	$15,750
Jefferson	$36,400	$14,820	$1,300	$780	$0	$19,500
Jennings	$31,250	$14,250	$1,250	$750	$0	$15,000
Johnson	$151,950	$61,560	$5,400	$3,240	$0	$81,750
Knox	$51,800	$21,090	$1,850	$1,110	$0	$27,750
Kosciusco	$99,400	$40,470	$3,550	$2,130	$0	$53,250
LaPorte	$113,400	$46,170	$4,050	$2,430	$0	$60,750
Lagrange	$20,000	$9,120	$800	$480	$0	$9,600
Lake	$785,000	$322,050	$28,250	$16,950	$0	$417,750

	Precinct-Based Elections					
County	Total	Personnel	Transport	Printing	Postage	Machines
Lawrence	$54,600	$22,230	$1,950	$1,170	$0	$29,250
Madison	$156,900	$63,270	$5,550	$3,330	$0	$84,750
Marion	$933,700	$336,300	$29,500	$17,700	$0	$550,200
Marshall	$39,200	$15,960	$1,400	$840	$0	$21,000
Martin	$22,500	$10,260	$900	$540	$0	$10,800
Miami	$43,400	$17,670	$1,550	$930	$0	$23,250
Monroe	$161,050	$78,090	$6,850	$4,110	$0	$72,000
Montgomery	$33,750	$15,390	$1,350	$810	$0	$16,200
Morgan	$68,600	$27,930	$2,450	$1,470	$0	$36,750
Newton	$22,500	$10,260	$900	$540	$0	$10,800
Noble	$40,600	$16,530	$1,450	$870	$0	$21,750
Ohio	$13,750	$6,270	$550	$330	$0	$6,600
Orange	$30,800	$12,540	$1,100	$660	$0	$16,500
Owen	$26,600	$10,830	$950	$570	$0	$14,250
Parke	$23,800	$9,690	$850	$510	$0	$12,750
Perry	$29,400	$11,970	$1,050	$630	$0	$15,750
Pike	$25,200	$10,260	$900	$540	$0	$13,500
Porter	$159,200	$70,680	$6,200	$3,720	$0	$78,600
Posey	$46,200	$18,810	$1,650	$990	$0	$24,750
Pulaski	$21,000	$8,550	$750	$450	$0	$11,250
Putnam	$40,600	$16,530	$1,450	$870	$0	$21,750
Randolph	$37,600	$16,530	$1,450	$870	$0	$18,750
Ripley	$33,750	$15,390	$1,350	$810	$0	$16,200
Rush	$29,400	$11,970	$1,050	$630	$0	$15,750
Scott	$20,000	$9,120	$800	$480	$0	$9,600
Shelby	$56,000	$22,800	$2,000	$1,200	$0	$30,000
Spencer	$35,000	$14,250	$1,250	$750	$0	$18,750
St. Joseph	$285,100	$131,100	$11,500	$6,900	$0	$135,600
Starke	$29,400	$11,970	$1,050	$630	$0	$15,750
Steuben	$23,750	$10,830	$950	$570	$0	$11,400
Sullivan	$28,000	$11,400	$1,000	$600	$0	$15,000
Switzerland	$15,000	$6,840	$600	$360	$0	$7,200
Tippecanoe	$124,650	$54,720	$4,800	$2,880	$0	$62,250
Tipton	$23,700	$10,260	$900	$540	$0	$12,000
Union	$12,500	$5,700	$500	$300	$0	$6,000
Vanderburgh	$186,100	$76,380	$6,700	$4,020	$0	$99,000
Vermillion	$26,350	$9,690	$850	$510	$0	$15,300
Vigo	$137,050	$50,730	$4,450	$2,670	$0	$79,200
Wabash	$35,000	$14,250	$1,250	$750	$0	$18,750
Warren	$18,200	$7,410	$650	$390	$0	$9,750
Warrick	$82,600	$33,630	$2,950	$1,770	$0	$44,250
Washington	$27,500	$12,540	$1,100	$660	$0	$13,200
Wayne	$88,200	$35,910	$3,150	$1,890	$0	$47,250
Wells	$30,800	$12,540	$1,100	$660	$0	$16,500
White	$29,400	$13,680	$1,200	$720	$0	$13,800
Whitley	$47,600	$19,380	$1,700	$1,020	$0	$25,500

County	Vote Center Elections					
	Total	Personnel	Transport	Printing	Postage	Machines
Adams	$22,216	$4,500	$250	$0	$4,866	$12,600
Allen	$248,320	$45,900	$2,550	$0	$70,930	$128,940
Bartholomew	$54,454	$9,900	$550	$0	$15,024	$28,980
Benton	$8,718	$1,800	$100	$0	$1,778	$5,040
Blackford	$10,094	$1,800	$100	$0	$2,734	$5,460
Boone	$39,498	$8,100	$450	$0	$10,788	$20,160
Brown	$10,552	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,670	$4,032
Carroll	$13,192	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,958	$6,384
Cass	$15,313	$5,400	$300	$0	$6,253	$3,360
Clark	$65,796	$17,100	$950	$0	$22,546	$25,200
Clay	$19,379	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,499	$10,080
Clinton	$27,338	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,208	$16,380
Crawford	$10,117	$1,800	$100	$0	$2,505	$5,712
Daviess	$20,698	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,138	$11,760
Dekalb	$30,433	$5,400	$300	$0	$8,353	$16,380
Dearborn	$34,229	$7,200	$400	$0	$10,501	$16,128
Decatur	$16,529	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,329	$8,400
Delaware	$73,255	$15,300	$850	$0	$25,185	$31,920
Dubois	$31,029	$6,300	$350	$0	$8,419	$15,960
Elkhart	$91,427	$21,600	$1,200	$0	$32,339	$36,288
Fayette	$20,673	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,113	$11,760
Floyd	$48,642	$11,700	$650	$0	$16,132	$20,160
Fountain	$12,960	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,390	$6,720
Franklin	$17,978	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,164	$8,064
Fulton	$13,524	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,012	$5,712
Gibson	$24,485	$5,400	$300	$0	$6,017	$12,768
Grant	$54,316	$8,100	$450	$0	$15,106	$30,660
Greene	$23,683	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,493	$13,440
Hamilton	$168,231	$39,600	$2,200	$0	$49,151	$77,280
Hancock	$38,223	$10,800	$600	$0	$14,055	$12,768
Harrison	$26,501	$6,300	$350	$0	$8,091	$11,760
Hendricks	$88,348	$19,800	$1,100	$0	$26,288	$41,160
Henry	$34,020	$7,200	$400	$0	$8,780	$17,640
Howard	$55,814	$12,600	$700	$0	$17,986	$24,528
Huntington	$27,472	$5,400	$300	$0	$7,072	$14,700
Jackson	$25,582	$5,400	$300	$0	$8,458	$11,424
Jasper	$22,690	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,760	$12,180
Jay	$15,056	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,386	$8,820
Jefferson	$21,534	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,864	$10,920
Jennings	$19,378	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,228	$8,400
Johnson	$90,726	$18,000	$1,000	$0	$25,946	$45,780
Knox	$28,890	$5,400	$300	$0	$7,650	$15,540
Kosciusco	$53,983	$9,900	$550	$0	$13,713	$29,820
LaPorte	$72,647	$15,300	$850	$0	$22,477	$34,020
Lagrange	$13,619	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,443	$5,376
Lake	$387,603	$64,800	$3,600	$0	$85,263	$233,940

| County | Vote Center Elections | | | | | |
	Total	Personnel	Transport	Printing	Postage	Machines
Lawrence	$32,667	$6,300	$350	$0	$9,637	$16,380
Madison	$92,387	$18,000	$1,000	$0	$25,927	$47,460
Marion	$625,029	$115,200	$6,400	$0	$195,317	$308,112
Marshall	$26,800	$6,300	$350	$0	$8,390	$11,760
Martin	$10,010	$1,800	$100	$0	$2,062	$6,048
Miami	$24,681	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,911	$13,020
Monroe	$86,849	$19,800	$1,100	$0	$25,629	$40,320
Montgomery	$22,209	$5,400	$300	$0	$7,437	$9,072
Morgan	$42,420	$9,000	$500	$0	$12,340	$20,580
Newton	$11,896	$2,700	$150	$0	$2,998	$6,048
Noble	$25,607	$5,400	$300	$0	$7,727	$12,180
Ohio	$6,859	$1,800	$100	$0	$1,263	$3,696
Orange	$16,574	$2,700	$150	$0	$4,484	$9,240
Owen	$15,009	$2,700	$150	$0	$4,179	$7,980
Parke	$13,429	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,439	$7,140
Perry	$15,804	$2,700	$150	$0	$4,134	$8,820
Pike	$13,225	$2,700	$150	$0	$2,815	$7,560
Porter	$99,353	$22,500	$1,250	$0	$31,587	$44,016
Posey	$23,592	$4,500	$250	$0	$4,982	$13,860
Pulaski	$11,891	$2,700	$150	$0	$2,741	$6,300
Putnam	$23,727	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,797	$12,180
Randolph	$19,147	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,847	$10,500
Ripley	$19,768	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,946	$9,072
Rush	$15,201	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,531	$8,820
Scott	$14,351	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,175	$5,376
Shelby	$30,004	$5,400	$300	$0	$7,504	$16,800
Spencer	$18,607	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,307	$10,500
St. Joseph	$169,457	$36,000	$2,000	$0	$55,521	$75,936
Starke	$17,670	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,050	$8,820
Steuben	$17,790	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,656	$6,384
Sullivan	$15,585	$2,700	$150	$0	$4,335	$8,400
Switzerland	$7,873	$1,800	$100	$0	$1,941	$4,032
Tippecanoe	$86,858	$21,600	$1,200	$0	$29,198	$34,860
Tipton	$13,274	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,704	$6,720
Union	$7,010	$1,800	$100	$0	$1,750	$3,360
Vanderburgh	$119,168	$24,300	$1,350	$0	$38,078	$55,440
Vermillion	$14,611	$2,700	$150	$0	$3,193	$8,568
Vigo	$80,844	$13,500	$750	$0	$22,242	$44,352
Wabash	$21,943	$4,500	$250	$0	$6,693	$10,500
Warren	$9,203	$1,800	$100	$0	$1,843	$5,460
Warrick	$47,361	$9,000	$500	$0	$13,081	$24,780
Washington	$16,560	$3,600	$200	$0	$5,368	$7,392
Wayne	$50,464	$9,000	$500	$0	$14,504	$26,460
Wells	$19,870	$4,500	$250	$0	$5,880	$9,240
White	$16,527	$3,600	$200	$0	$4,999	$7,728
Whitley	$25,964	$5,400	$300	$0	$5,984	$14,280

Background Information

Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute

The Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute was formed in 1987 as a private, non-profit governmental research organization. The IFPI is Indiana's only independent statewide source of continuing research into the impact of state taxing and spending policies, and it is privately supported by a variety of organizations, corporations, associations and individuals in Indiana and surrounding states. The IFPI's Mission is to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of state and local government through the education of public sector, business, and labor leaders on significant fiscal policy issues and the consequences of state and local decisions.

GrowthEconomics Inc.

Graham S. Toft Ph.D. is founder and president of GrowthEconomics, of Sarasota, Fla., and Indianapolis, Ind., focused on the growth dynamics of states and regions. The firm seeks to understand how good pay jobs grow, growth companies multiply, businesses create value, and self-reliant families prosper in today's super–charged, disruptive economy. He spends much of his time with government and business leaders striving to grow their economies through entrepreneurship, innovation development, smart government and pro-growth strategies. GrowthEconomics has a bias toward the measurement and monitoring of competitive position as a means to grab attention and focus on actionable strategies. To that end, GrowthEconomics prepares annual state Competitiveness ScoreCards for several state Midwest states. In these circles, Graham has become known as 'Dr. Benchmark'. The GrowthEconomics team works out of Florida, Indiana and Ireland.

Graham brings over 30 years experience preparing state benchmark, competitiveness assessments and policy studies. He has strong Midwest ties and familiarity, including service as President of the Indiana Economic Development Council for 13 years from 1989 to 2002.

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