

## New report gives paper ballot system high marks

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A new report from independent researchers at four universities on the administration of the 2006 general election found that more than eight in 10 voters rated their voting experience as excellent or good.

State officials are touting the findings as confirmation that New Mexico's transition to a paper ballot system has been successful.

"Our experience clearly demonstrates that states can transition to paper ballots in less than a year and conduct accurate and transparent elections," said Gov. Bill Richardson in a prepared statement.

The study was done by researchers at the California Institute of Technology, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of New Mexico and the University of Utah. The report provides election day observations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana and Santa Fe counties, examines the attitudes and experiences of a random sample of poll workers and analyzes the experience of a random sample of registered voters in the First Congressional District.

New Mexico is the first state to move from a predominantly electronic voting system to a single, durable, paper ballot system statewide using optical scanners, say the researchers.

According to the report, three in five poll workers were satisfied with the new system and 65 percent of poll workers considered the optical scan paper ballot system better than previous systems. The report recommends improvements in voter, poll worker and poll judge education, as well as poll worker and poll judge training and precinct preparations.

Funding for the report came from the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology project, the Carnegie Corp. of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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