

ANNUAL REPORT 2006



December 17, 2007

The Honourable George Hicke
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Room 244 Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

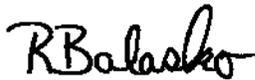
Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour of submitting to you my annual report on the activities of Elections Manitoba for the 2006 calendar year. This report is submitted pursuant to subsection 32(1) of *The Elections Act* and subsection 99(1) of *The Elections Finances Act*. In accordance with subsection 32(5) of *The Elections Act* and subsection 99(2.1) of *The Elections Finances Act*, annual reporting under these statutes have been combined.

The applicable legislation states that the Speaker shall lay the report before the Legislative Assembly forthwith if the Assembly is in session or, if not, within 15 days after the beginning of the next session.

Pursuant to subsection 32(4) of *The Elections Act* and subsection 99(3) of *The Elections Finances Act*, an annual report that contains recommendations for amendments to these Acts stands referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs for consideration of those matters. Furthermore, these subsections provide that the Committee shall begin its consideration of the report within 60 days after the report is laid before the Assembly.

Respectfully yours,



Richard D. Balasko
Chief Electoral Officer

Organizational Chart

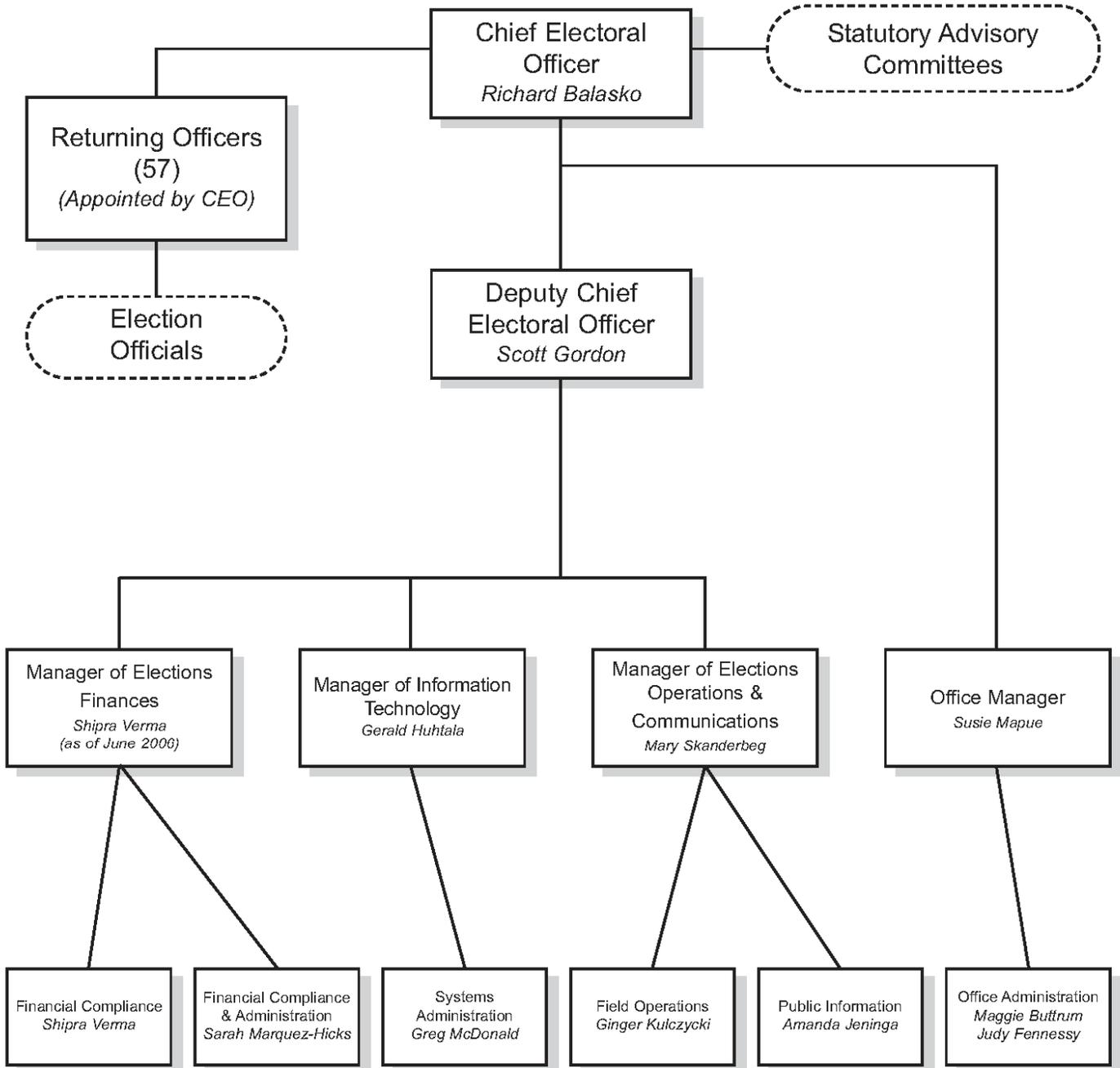


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Introduction

Substantial legislative amendments introduced in Bill 22, *The Elections Reform Act*, in 2006 fundamentally impacted Elections Manitoba's preparations for Manitoba's 39th General Election.

The Elections Act was rewritten in plain language, resulting in significant changes to terminology. It was also amended to expand voting opportunities. *The Elections Finances Act* was amended to further clarify regulations for political participants. *The Electoral Divisions Act* was also amended which will impact the composition and processes of *The Electoral Boundaries Commission* when it meets to review boundaries in 2008. The Legislature passed Bill 22 on June 13, 2006. The Bill came into force six months later on December 13, 2006.

Elections Manitoba – already focused on reviewing and revising materials for the 39th General Election – directed much of 2006 to incorporating the amendments into all aspects of a general election, including:

- revising voting area maps and voting locations
- comprehensive approach to enumeration
- developing a new process for advance voting
- expanding statutory advertising and public information campaigns
- revising guidelines for political participants

The amendments necessitated the revision of all of Elections Manitoba's advertising, literature and forms for the public, political participants and election workers. With the government heading into the fourth year of its mandate, Elections Manitoba aimed to have this completed by early 2007.

Conduct of the 39th General Election will be presented in the 2007 Annual Report. This 2006 report reviews the impact of legislative changes, preparations for the general election in addition to a potential by-election in Kirkfield Park, and finalizing *Your Power to Choose*, our new curriculum-based program for Manitoba schools and new voters.

All of these projects incorporated best practices gained from past experiences and other jurisdictions while incorporating new legislation to achieve our ongoing goal of making the electoral process more accessible to voters and expanding assistance to political participants.

Ongoing Activities

Extensive legislative changes, two party leadership contests and an approaching election made 2006 a year of transition and contingency planning.

Throughout the year we embraced the challenge to prepare for the 39th General Election using the new legislation, all the while prepared to run an election or by-election under existing legislation. This was an exciting opportunity to take an even closer look at election processes and enhance services for Manitobans.

Service to Voters

Sweeping changes to *The Elections Act* introduced Manitoba's most diverse voting opportunities yet. In 2006 we started developing processes to enact enhanced services for:

- extending advance voting to seven days to include Sunday and allowing voters to cast their ballot at any advance voting station in Manitoba
- broadening homebound voting to include caregivers and voters living with any kind of disability
- enhancing absentee voting by making it easier for students and workers away from Manitoba for extended periods to vote
- reducing travel distance to rural voting places by decreasing the average number of voters required in rural voting areas
- placing, wherever practical, voting locations in apartment and condo complexes with 100 or more units
- expanding Elections Manitoba's public education and information mandate

Voting area maps are important tools that help determine the number and location of voting places. Elections Manitoba had already reviewed and adjusted maps to comply with new legislation. However, returning officers were asked to provide additional local knowledge and a thorough review of maps to ensure accuracy and a high level of service.

Voters List

In 2006, Elections Manitoba continued making the preparations necessary to create the most complete and accurate voters list. It is the job of the enumerator to contact every household in Manitoba to collect the names of qualified voters for the voters list. In an effort to better assist enumerators with this task, maps of each voting area in the province were created. These maps will be supplied to the enumerators during an election to help them with their planning and ensure that they were aware of the location of every household in their area. In addition, Elections Manitoba worked again with the cities of Brandon and Winnipeg, adding their address databases to our geographic information system to develop address lists to go along with the maps.

A process of double data entry for enumeration records was developed in 2006, ready for implementation in the next general election. Each voter's information will be entered twice into software that flags discrepancies, ensuring all data entered is accurate.

Returning Officers

In the field, elections are run by 57 teams of returning officers (ROs) and assistant returning officers (AROs). Where appropriate, Elections Manitoba may reappoint successful ROs and AROs from past elections. In 2006, approximately half of the ROs and AROs from the 2003 provincial election resumed their posts. However, recruitment continued throughout 2006 as changing responsibilities in professional and personal lives affected some people's ability to remain committed to their positions.

Recruiting methods involved a combination of province-wide advertising and community initiatives, personal contacts and employment notices posted on sites for retired professionals. Elections Manitoba worked with the Legislative Assembly's human resources branch in preparing advertisements and conducting interviews.

Strategic Communication Plan

The 2006 amendments provided additional tools to fulfill our new communications strategy aimed at building awareness of and confidence in Manitoba's electoral process. The amendments expanded our mandate to provide public education and information, particularly to persons and groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights. We planned our election communications campaign to better reach our broad audience through a more tailored mix of print, radio and television exposure as well as media never before purchased such as transit, cinema and web advertising.

Advertising content was enhanced by working with an agency to create aspirational messages and imagery in addition to factual information about the electoral process, important dates and voting locations. Conceptually, we wanted to invite Manitobans to reflect on the values of democracy and the significance of participation by focusing on the fairness and inclusiveness of the process.

The expanded mandate also strengthened *Your Power to Choose*, our new curriculum-based program for Manitoba schools. More information about *Your Power to Choose* is available under *Fulfilling Our Mandate*.

Service to Political Participants

Amendments to *The Elections Finances Act* offered further assistance with compliance through clarifying regulations and procedures for political participants regarding areas such as contributions, spending limits and filing financial statements. Those amendments include:

- setting loan restrictions on contributions to candidates, political parties or constituency associations
- clarification of who may collect contributions (only individuals normally resident in Manitoba) and how they may be collected
- extending the filing deadline for election financial returns to four months after election day
- making the minimum spending limit for parties and candidates known at the start of an election
- charging late filing fees for statements filed after the prescribed deadline
- allowing financial agents to request advisory opinions on whether acts or omissions contravene the law
- tightening restrictions on government advertising during an election

A dozen financial handbooks and guides for candidates, constituency associations, official agents, chief financial officers and auditors were revised with plain language and redesigned to highlight important concepts through flowcharts and tables. These in-depth handbooks were accompanied by a new summary guide for official agents that provided quick reference points for election legislation.

The guides and handbooks were distributed to candidates as they were nominated, starting in autumn 2006. By December 31, Elections Manitoba had received 68 nominations for the 39th General Election.

Elections Manitoba also completed the Leadership Contest Summary Guide for Contestants and Their Official Agents. The summary of important concepts with respect to leadership contests was also posted online. It was available for 2006 leadership contests held by the Green Party of Manitoba and the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba.

Our filing disk for annual party returns (Form 920), party campaign returns (Form 921) and candidate campaign returns (Form 922) was further enhanced with the addition of a computer spreadsheet. This addition allows political participants to enter data on one spreadsheet which automatically updates other required forms. The filing disk, similar to tax return software, simplifies preparation of financial returns which can be submitted to Elections Manitoba electronically.

Many forms for political participants were also revised with new terminology and plain language instructions.

Preparing Staff

The September 2006 resignation of Kirkfield Park MLA Stuart Murray put Elections Manitoba on standby for a possible by-election. With legislative amendments not coming into force until December, Elections Manitoba prepared to run a by-election and assist political participants under the old legislation until new amendments came into effect. However, the by-election was not called and Kirkfield Park residents voted in the 39th General Election.

The new plain language approach of *The Elections Act* prompted Elections Manitoba to revise training materials for election workers. Materials were revised with new legislation and a stronger focus on plain language to make the information more accessible to new and returning election workers.

Returning officers are responsible for financial administration of their offices. In 2006 we increased our support for ROs through enhanced software for recruitment and payroll processes. The Employee Registration Application (ERA) was introduced in 2006. The Returning Office Payroll Program imports ERA data to streamline payroll processing. We also started planning for a new accounts processing contact to provide telephone support for returning offices.

Bringing Home Best Practices

Improvements in electoral process continue to be generated through sharing ideas with our counterparts across Canada. Through a combination of visits, conferences, telephone conversations or online dialogues we have connected with virtually all of the jurisdictions in an attempt to gather best practices from across the country.

Meeting other election officials at conferences continues to generate opportunities to share ideas and learn new information first hand. Throughout 2006 Elections Manitoba participated in several activities that allowed us to exchange ideas with other election officials. Elections Manitoba personnel were invited to organize panel discussions, lead workshops and observe election procedures and technology in various jurisdictions.

In April 2006 Elections Manitoba hosted the Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) for a week of meetings. The main topic of the first three days was geographic information systems (GIS) systems. Presentations of their respective GIS processes and systems in-use were given by Elections Manitoba, Elections B.C. and Elections Ontario.

The Canadian Election Resource Library (CERL) celebrated its third year in 2006. This online information resource for election offices across Canada received an average 250 hits per month. Elections Manitoba manages CERL and in 2006 we started exploring upgrades to the software to improve its operation.

Elections Manitoba experienced two changes in management and one retirement in 2006.

- Elections Finances Manager Scott Gordon took on the role of Deputy Chief Electoral Officer after Lorne Gibson accepted a position as Alberta's Chief Electoral Officer. The Finance Manager position was filled through the promotion of Shipra Verma, who was previously our Financial Compliance Analyst.
- Elections Manitoba's front desk also changed with the retirement of Judy Fennessy after 10 years of service.

Fulfilling Our Mandate

Public Information and Education

Our strategically-driven approach to communications and public information was strengthened by the broader public information mandate presented in the 2006 amendments. In addition to a new advertising strategy, we met that mandate through revising our schools program – now called *Your Power to Choose* – and preparing for its province wide distribution.

Your Power to Choose is a long-term commitment to the people of Manitoba with the goal of developing the habit of participation among Manitoba youth. Citizenship is a core concept in Manitoba's new Social Studies curriculum, and the lessons within *Your Power to Choose* dovetail with many of the curriculum outcomes.

Your Power to Choose goes beyond simulating election day. It prepares youth for the complete election experience by guiding them through the four phases of an election:

1. *pre-election experience* (history of elections in Manitoba, demonstrating values and benefits of participation)
2. *election experience begins* (creating a list of voters and values inherent to that process)
3. *political experience* (the political campaign, role of the media and making informed choices)
4. *democratic experience* (act of voting and its impact)

This experience helps students gain understanding of the electoral process and respect for its inherent values.

The *Your Power to Choose* pilot project in Manitoba schools ended in the spring of 2006. Feedback from teachers and students, gathered through comment cards and focus groups, was incorporated into the revised, self-contained curriculum guide for teachers. Design and printing of the guide and support materials continued through autumn with distribution planned for 2007.

Elections Manitoba also laid the foundation to offer a student election kit for senior grade levels. The kit, to be completed in 2007, provides tools and information to support the student election process.

While education work continued behind the scenes, Elections Manitoba met educators to promote *Your Power to Choose*. In late 2006 we participated in a provincial social studies teachers conference that resulted in invitations to visit more schools including education classes at the University of Winnipeg.

Financial Administration

Financial planning for the general election neared its final phases in 2006. Due to new legislation, special consideration was given to revising existing material and production of new signs, posters, forms and manuals in addition to staffing and location costs to administer the election with new processes. Budgeting continued throughout the year as new processes were further developed.

Compliance and Assistance

The Elections Finances Act lays out detailed financial requirements for political participants. Elections Manitoba promotes compliance pro-actively by helping political participants better understand those requirements.

Financial regulations are primarily consulted by campaign and party volunteers; some of whom do not have a professional financial background. We assist them on an ongoing basis through training sessions plus the distribution of advisory opinions and guides. When candidates are nominated and official agents appointed, each are sent a package outlining some of their basic responsibilities under the legislation and highlighting some of the important next steps they should take. Political participants are also invited to call us at any time with questions.

In addition to its ongoing support program, in 2006 Elections Manitoba enhanced its assistance to political participants by updating financial guides with the amendments introduced in 2006, better organized information and a stronger focus on plain language. Guides were updated for:

- chief financial officers
- constituency associations
- candidates
- official agents
- auditors
- leadership contestants

Time was also spent in 2006 updating the information sessions, bringing them in line with the new legislation and ready for implementation in 2007, once changes to legislation had come into effect.

Registration of Parties

According to *The Elections Finances Act*, a political party can register with Elections Manitoba. A registered political party may issue official tax receipts for contributions and have its name printed on the ballots with the name of the candidates endorsed by the party. Once registered, a political party's name and abbreviation are protected under *The Elections Finances Act*. Other registered political parties may not use the same name or abbreviation.

Registered Political Parties in 2006

Political Party	Date of Registration	Registration Number	Chief Financial Officer	Date of Appointment
CPC-M	Apr. 30/99	P-9905	Cheryl Pena	May 18/03
GPM	Aug. 28/99	P-9907	Michael Jack	July 15/06
Liberal	Dec. 12/80	P-8003	Cecilia Connelly	May 17/04
MMP	Mar. 9/88	P-8808	Don Ives	Dec. 30/93
NDP	Nov. 17/80	P-8001	Wayne Copeland	Nov. 24/03
PC	Nov. 25/80	P-8002	Kenneth Lee	Apr. 19/04

Unofficial abbreviations used in this report for registered political parties:

CPC-M	Communist Party of Canada – Manitoba
GPM	The Green Party of Manitoba
Liberal	Manitoba Liberal Party
MMP	Manitoba Marijuana Party
NDP	New Democratic Party of Manitoba
PC	The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba

Yearly Comparison of Number of Registered Political Parties

Year	# of Registered Political Parties	Year	# of Registered Political Parties
1980	3	1994	7
1981	3	1995	4
1982	5	1996	4
1983	5	1997	4
1984	6	1998	4
1985	7	1999	7
1986	7	2000	7
1987	7	2001	7
1988	8	2002	7
1989	8	2003	6
1990	7	2004	6
1991	7	2005	6
1992	7	2006	6
1993	7		

Political Party Annual Statements and Returns for Contributions

Parties are required to file financial returns each year. (Separate returns are filed for financial activities during an election.)

Returns filed with the Chief Electoral Officer are public information and are open to inspection by anyone. Copies of the latest annual party returns and an archive of past returns can be found on Elections Manitoba's website. Original copies of returns are also available for viewing at Elections Manitoba.

Annual statements for 2005 were required to be filed by March 31, 2006 and were filed as follows:

Political Party	Extension Date (if applicable)	Filed Date
Communist Party of Canada - Manitoba		May 3/06 ¹
Green Party of Manitoba	Apr 30/06	Apr 18/06
Manitoba Liberal Party	Apr 21/06	Apr 19/06
Manitoba Marijuana Party	Apr 18/06	Apr 21/06 ²
New Democratic Party of Manitoba		Mar 30/06
The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba		Mar 31/06

¹ Statement filed after expiry of extended deadline but within 30 days of receiving notice under section 69 of *The Elections Finances Act*. Amended statements were subsequently filed.

² Amended statements were subsequently filed.

Registered Political Party Annual Financial Statements (2005)¹

	NDP \$	PC \$	MMP \$	GPM \$	CPC-M \$	MLP \$
Income and Expenses						
Contributions ²	677,908	441,159	0	3,126	4,699	97,150
Transfers	3,526	2,257	0	0	0	0
Other Income	80,117	148,708	0	1,425	0	26,931
Total Income	761,551	592,124	0	4,551	4,699	124,081
Expenses	798,663	622,330	18	10,293	4,804	132,052
Surplus (Deficit)	(37,112)	(30,206)	(18)	(5,742)	(105)	(7,971)
Assets and Liabilities						
Assets	348,509	221,758	94	1,000	2,168	60,209
Liabilities	74,970	15,041	343	0	2,970	31,789
Net Worth (Deficit)	273,539	206,717	(249)	1,000	(802)	28,420

¹ Financial statements for 2006 are filed in 2007 and will be summarized in the 2007 Annual Report.

² Excludes contributions received during the election period.

Contributions Received by Registered Political Parties (2005)¹

	NDP \$	PC \$	CPC-M \$	MMP \$	GPM \$	MLP \$	Totals
Total value \$250.00 or more	474,767	369,320	2,517	0	1,615	69,446	917,665
Total value \$25.00 to \$250.00	287,826	167,680	2,167	0	1,721	62,442	521,836
Total value less than \$25.00	27,589	20,512	15	0	849	3,920	52,885
Total of all contributions	790,182	557,512	4,699	0	4,185	135,808	1,492,386

¹ Includes all contributions received during the year, including the election period.

Limits on contributions to registered political parties, their constituency associations and provincial candidates have been in place in Manitoba since 2001. Only individuals normally resident in Manitoba may make contributions. Individuals must use their own resources when contributing, and both money and donations in kind are considered contributions. The combined total of all contributions made by an individual to all recipients may not exceed \$3,000 per calendar year.

Annual Contributions to Political Parties

Reporting Year	NDP\$	Lib.\$	PC\$	Other	Total
1999	1,959,005	491,194	2,687,564	10,531	5,148,294
2000	1,006,214	923,036	1,286,390	15,724	3,231,364
2001	630,586	92,909	393,674	11,997	1,129,166
2002	752,644	186,806	426,069	8,485	1,374,004
2003	1,309,763	174,730	536,538	24,231	2,045,262
2004	715,532	127,028	547,563	9,849	1,399,972
2005	790,183	135,808	557,512	8,884	1,492,387
2006	862,684	138,985	864,393	12,750	1,878,812
Total	8,026,611	2,270,496	7,299,703	102,451	17,699,261

Constituency Association Annual Returns for Contributions

Constituency associations are also required to disclose their financial activities. Constituency association returns state the name and address of all contributors, as well as the aggregate value of their contributions to the constituency association during that year. An aggregate annual contribution to the constituency association totaling \$250 or more is public information. Returns that show a constituency association had financial activity

are posted on Elections Manitoba's website. Paper copies of these and all other returns are also available for inspection.

Contributions of \$250 or More to Constituency Associations (2006)

	Liberal	NDP	PC	GRN
Total Number of Constituency Associations	57	57	57	1
Number Reporting Contributions of \$250 or more	1	3	1	0
Contributions \$250 or more	\$1,284	\$2,133	\$329	\$0

*The Communist Party of Canada – Manitoba and the Manitoba Marijuana Party do not have constituency associations.

Yearly Comparison of Constituency Associations Reporting Contributions of \$250 or More

Year# of Constituency Associations	# Reporting Contributions of \$250 or more	Total Contributions of \$250 or more
1986	163	\$27,635
1987	161	9,152
1988	181	23,633
1989	187	2,472
1990	176	6,807
1991	172	925
1992	171	0
1993	171	0
1994	171	1,312
1995	171	2,039
1996	171	0
1997	171	10,536
1998	171	5,690
1999	171	11,637
2000	171	7,323
2001	171	1,895
2002	171	9,673
2003	171	940
2004	171	3,555
2005	171	2,595
2006	172	3,746

Candidates' Campaign Deficits and Loan Balances

- From the 2003 General Election, one candidate had an outstanding campaign deficit and/or loan balance at the beginning of 2006. This candidate reported their balance to be remaining as outstanding at the end of 2006.
- From the 2005 Fort Whyte by-election, one candidate had an outstanding deficit and/or loan after their campaign period. This candidate's outstanding balances were eliminated by the end of 2006.

Manitoba Tax Credit Program

The Income Tax Act (Manitoba) allows for a tax credit for a percentage of eligible monetary contributions made to a registered political party and registered candidate.

Manitoba Tax Credits Claimed for Political Contributions (1982 - 2005)*

	Individual	Corporate	Total
<i>Tax Year</i>	<i>Returns \$</i>	<i>Returns \$</i>	<i>Credits \$</i>
1982	293,500	54,200	347,700
1983	429,200	47,300	476,500
1984	520,400	69,000	589,400
1985	642,900	90,100	733,000
1986	863,356	119,598	982,954
1987	476,617	65,708	542,325
1988	1,115,750	136,091	1,251,841
1989	642,722	68,720	711,442
1990	1,019,617	93,542	1,113,159
1991	470,509	54,817	525,326
1992	512,373	38,387	550,760
1993	539,930	87,426	627,356
1994	634,297	91,109	725,406
1995	1,038,872	123,903	1,162,775
1996	558,774	87,700	646,474
1997	560,071	71,617	631,688
1998	553,526	82,243	635,769
1999	1,229,513	116,735	1,346,248
2000	562,901	98,876	661,777
2001	537,700	26,545*	564,245
2002	623,059	6,037*	629,096
2003	1,195,568	2,342*	1,197,910
2004	728,462	0	728,462
2005	792,686	0	792,686
Total tax credits claimed since 1982	\$16,542,303	\$1,631,996	\$18,174,299

*As of January 1, 2001, contributions from corporations are not permitted under *The Elections Finances Act*. Credits claimed by corporations are for contributions prior to 2001.

Leadership Contests

Two parties held leadership contests with financial statements coming due in 2006.

- The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba held a leadership contest in 2006. Three contestants filed returns. Of the three contestants, Hugh McFadyen and Ken Waddell still had outstanding loan and/or deficit balances at the end of 2006.
- The Green Party of Manitoba held a leadership contest in both 2005 and in 2006. There were no outstanding loans or deficits for any of their contestants in either contest.

2006 Leadership Contest - PC Party of Manitoba - Filing Deadline July 31/06

Contestant	Return Filed	Extension Date
McFadyen, Hugh	28-Jul-06	—
Schuler, Ron	21-Aug-06	18-Aug-06
Waddell, Ken	11-Aug-06	14-Aug-06

2005 Leadership Contest - Green Party - Filing Deadline February 20/06

Contestant	Return Filed	Extension Date
Nelson, Holly	17-Feb-06	—

2006 Leadership Contestants' Financial Statements - The PC Party of Manitoba

	Hugh McFadyen	Ron Schuler	Ken Waddell
Assets and Liabilities			
Assets	13,731	431	1,842
Liabilities	92,642	23,784	12,168
Surplus/(Deficit)	(78,911)	(24,354)	(10,326)
Income			
Contribution	121,858	47,860	17,515
Other	10,000	0	0
Total	131,858	47,860	17,515
Expenses	210,769	72,214	27,841
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(78,911)	(24,354)	(10,326)

2005 Leadership Contestants' Financial Statements - The Green Party of Manitoba

Holly Nelson

Assets and Liabilities

Assets	1
Liabilities	0
Surplus/(Deficit)	1

Income

Contribution	40
Other	0
Total	40

Expenses	39
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Surplus/ (Deficit)	1
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Looking Forward

The 39th General Election will be the first opportunity to apply changes arising from the 2006 legislative amendments. Our new strategies and processes, as well as revised training materials, will be introduced to all stakeholders. As these changes were designed to enhance participation, we're excited to implement them and see the results.

Preparation for the general election will continue into 2007 as we finalize recruitment and election materials. The election operations and finance departments will also continue preparing information and training sessions for election workers and political participants.

Conduct of 39th General Election and financial returns from political participants will be reported in the 2007 annual report

The Manitoba Electoral Divisions Boundaries Commission is scheduled to meet in 2008 for its 10-year review of provincial electoral boundaries. Amendments introduced in 2006 expanded the commission from three members to five. Preparations for its work to begin are also planned for 2007.

Recommendations

THE ELECTIONS ACT

Recommendations to amend *The Elections Act* arising from the conduct of the 39th General Election will be published in the 2007 Annual Report.

THE ELECTIONS FINANCES ACT

The following recommendation is carried forward from the 2005 Annual Report. Recommendations to amend *The Elections Finances Act* arising from the conduct of the 39th General Election will be published in the 2007 Annual Report.

1. Plain language

[no references in *The Elections Finances Act*]

Recommendation: *The Elections Finances Act* should be re-written in plain, gender-neutral language.

Background: *The Elections Finances Act* is an important statute and it is essential that it be understood by candidates, election officials and the public. Many volunteers also regularly use *The Elections Finances Act* to assist candidates, political parties and constituency associations in complying with the legislation's requirements. At the May 2, 2006 meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, the Premier of Manitoba proposed bringing in a plain-language rewrite of *The Elections Finances Act* after the next general election. A plain-language rewrite of the Act would streamline and enhance processes that exist in the present statute. It would also provide an opportunity to bring Manitoba's election provisions in harmony with best practices in other jurisdictions across Canada and benefit people who have difficulty reading. The principles of plain language have been applied to the amended sections of *The Elections Finances Act*. However, many sections remain more complex and wordy than they need to be. It is recommended that *The Elections Finances Act* be rewritten in plain language just as *The Elections Act* has been rewritten.

OTHER ACTS RELEVANT TO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

The following recommendation is carried forward from the 2005 Annual Report.

1. Referendum regulations

Recommendation: That a *Referendum Act* be developed. The act should deal with the administrative conduct of referendums and campaign finance provisions.

Background: At the May 2, 2006 meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, the Premier of Manitoba proposed bringing in a *Referendum Act* after the next general election. There are now three statutes in Manitoba that require a referendum to be held under certain circumstances. They are:

1. *The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Protection Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act* ('*The Balanced Budget Act*')
2. *The Manitoba Hydro Act*
3. *The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act*

All three Acts instruct the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct and manage the referendum in the same manner as an election under *The Elections Act* with any necessary modifications.

Many provisions of *The Elections Act* are readily transferable to a referendum; however, some provisions are not.

The following questions need to be addressed in either an Act or regulation:

- How and when, precisely, is the referendum question established?
- What is the duration of the referendum period given that no nomination period exists?
- Are there to be referendum committees? How are they to be established, registered and/or regulated? May referendum committees appoint scrutineers to be present at the voting stations?
- Would there be unique referendum recount rules?
- Who may apply for a recount?
- May referendums and elections be held simultaneously?
- Does the same tariff for payment of officers apply?
- Are there to be "referendum" offences?

The Acts also allow for the possibility that the subject of campaign finance be included in either a *Referendum Act* or regulations. General elections have campaign finance provisions for such participants as candidates and political parties. Referendums should contain similar campaign finances provisions for groups and individuals participating in a referendum (i.e. referendum committees).

2. *The Legislative Assembly Act*

Recommendation: The following matter is not dealt with by *The Elections Act* nor *The Elections Finances Act*, but by *The Legislative Assembly Act*. Nevertheless, this matter impacts directly on the electoral process. At this point, the matter is referred to the Legislative Assembly for consideration.

Background: Over the past few elections, Elections Manitoba has received suggestions that a set date for elections should be implemented.

The representatives of two registered political parties brought forward similar suggestions during past meetings of the ad hoc committee on *The Elections Act*.

Approximately half of Canada's electoral jurisdictions, including Canada, now have fixed dates for their general elections. Many jurisdictions adopted this change after 2005.

Jurisdictions With Fixed Election Dates

Jurisdiction	Scheduled Day	Next Scheduled Election
Canada	Third Monday in October	October 19, 2009
Newfoundland and Labrador	Second Tuesday in October	October 11, 2011
Prince Edward Island	Second Monday in May	May 9, 2011
New Brunswick	Fourth Monday in September	September 27, 2010
Northwest Territories	First Monday in October	October 3, 2011
Ontario	First Thursday in October	October 6, 2011
British Columbia	Second Tuesday in May	May 12, 2009

As of this writing, other jurisdictions did not have fixed-date elections.