TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Kim Strach, Executive Director
RE: 2016 Kickoff
DATE: December 1, 2015

Dear Directors,

At noon today, we officially begin the 2016 election season. I thank each and every one of you for the work you have done to prepare for today and for the work you will do over the next year. The voters of our great state are counting on us to work together to ensure successful elections in 100 counties. My pledge to all of you is that you are supported in your efforts. If you need any assistance or have any questions, please don’t hesitate to let us know.

**Election Official Training Tools**

Training our election officials for the 2016 elections will be one of the most critical duties you will perform over the next year. As we have discussed at previous training seminars, uniform, statewide training of precinct officials is an absolute necessity. Voters in any precinct or early voting location in North Carolina should expect and receive the same application of all election regulations.

With your assistance, we have created several training tools, including training videos, a comprehensive precinct manual, and station guides for precincts and early voting locations. We will also be providing regional training during the weeks of January 11th and January 18th. More information on these regional trainings will be provided as soon as we have confirmation for the locations.

We previewed one of the training video modules at our last statewide training session. Many thanks go to MSA Marketing and to everyone that assisted in the production of these videos. Now that production has been completed for all of the modules, you may access them at the following location: [https://vimeo.com/user45500401](https://vimeo.com/user45500401)
We are providing station guides for all of your precincts. Hard copies of the guides will not be delivered until early January but the content of the guides will be available by the end of the day at ftp://alt.ncsbe.gov/Training/Station_Guide/.

The comprehensive precinct manual will not be printed, but should be available to you online by December 15th. We are currently finalizing all of the forms that will be used for the March primaries. The forms are located on the CBE Resources page under the Directory of Forms. All forms should be finalized by December 15th.

**Content of Information on County Board websites**

Section 5.3 of S.L. 2013-381 and Section 8.(g) of S.L. 2015-103 require that “[t]he public shall be educated about the photo identification to vote requirements” contained in the Voter Information Verification Act (“VIVA”) and, specifically, that “[c]ounties that maintain a board of elections Web site shall include information about the provisions of [the] act.”

It is of the utmost importance that the public be able to rely on the content of the State Board of Elections website and each of our county boards of elections websites to make decisions about voting. If a county board of elections (“CBE”) maintains a website, or if a county government maintains a website containing information pertaining to elections or the CBE of that county, the public education requirements of S.L. 2013-381 and S.L. 2015-103 are triggered.

A website maintained by a county government that merely provides general information about or contact information for the county’s CBE as part of a listing of county departments is not considered a “board of elections website” for purposes of this Numbered Memo. Rather, the requirements are triggered if a CBE has a website or a county maintains a section of its website for the purpose of providing information on elections or on voting to the general public.

If a CBE or county maintains a website for such a purpose, the information contained on the website must accurately describe requirements for registration and voting generally, and the requirements of VIVA specifically, and must be regularly reviewed and promptly updated should those requirements change.

However, if a CBE provides its own content, any information about the following must be uniform:

1. Information pertaining to methods of registration, deadlines for registration, and registration eligibility requirements, including the availability or unavailability of a same-day registration option;
2. Information pertaining to methods of requesting, completing, or submitting absentee ballots, and any applicable deadlines or requirements for so doing;
3. Information pertaining to requirements applicable to in-person or curbside voters, including but not limited to requirements that voters present photo identification or
other documentation in order to cast a ballot, requirements that in-person voters cast their ballots at a particular location or within a certain time period, or the consequences of casting a provisional ballot in a precinct other than the one to which voters have been assigned;

4. Information pertaining to compliance with or exceptions to the photo identification requirements, including but not limited to information regarding the types of acceptable photo identification for voting, the applicability of exceptions to certain voters, the availability of and procedures pertaining to a Reasonable Impediment Declaration option for voters unable to obtain photo identification, procedures for declaring religious objections to being photographed, the availability of and requirements for obtaining free photo identification from the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (“NCDMV”), and the requirements or procedures for obtaining free identity documents from the North Carolina Office of Vital Records or county Registers of Deeds.

If your website only links to the State Board of Elections website for voting or election information, you do not have any responsibility regarding that content or its maintenance. Please bear in mind that it is not the intention of the State Board to limit the amount of information you provide to your voters but to ensure that the information provided is consistent and accurate.

Because the nature of the information regarding VIVA and photo identification is fluid due to ongoing litigation, you may find it most effective to prominently display a “button” or link for more information on these topics which will re-direct visitors to the SBE “Voter ID” site, in lieu of maintaining comprehensive information.

You will receive an email later today containing several questions related to your county BOE website. Please respond as soon as you are able. We understand and appreciate that you will be engaged in candidate filings; the questions will not take more than five minutes of your time.

**National Change of Address**

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) limits certain list maintenance activity within 90 days of an election event that involves a contest for federal office. Accordingly, we have pushed up the mailing period for the next National Change of Address (NCOA) mailings. NCOA data is now available for each county. You must begin your mailings no later than **December 15, 2015**. Contact the Help Desk for assistance if you have questions pertaining to generating your county’s NCOA mailings.

Again, my sincere gratitude goes out to all of you. Here’s to a successful 2016!