

STATE BOARD TO HOST ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN SARATOGA

Board officials will demonstrate Internet capabilities for state and local boards

The State Board of Elections will hold its 39th annual 3-day conference and seminar on May 6, 7 and 8 at the Gideon Putnam in Saratoga Springs. The board hosts three days of seminars each year for county commissioners and staff, usually in the Capital District area.

The program this year will highlight a Thursday segment on the latest technological systems that improve communication, access and accountability in the elections community and how they affect local boards of elections. Michael Vlahos of the US Internet Council, a clearinghouse for research and information on Internet-related state policy, will address the conference about the effects of the Internet on the administration of elections now and in the future, and other related topics. He will join the round table presentation after his address.

"We expect about 200 people to attend these sessions and the board has a lot of information for the commissioners to hear and see," said Thomas Wilkey, Executive Director of the State Board. "At a round table presentation on Thursday morning, we'll be presenting a sneak preview of the campaign finance reporting system that the state legislature and the governor authorized for implementation in 1999. Much progress has been made by our staff in preparation for testing the system later this year, and we will be able to demonstrate to everyone in attendance how the data will be entered and accessed on the Internet. Since the campaign finance program is being developed in conjunction with existing data programs, the system will utilize the board's state of the art hardware and software."

The Thursday morning program will also include presentations of the State Board's web page and those of Oswego County, New York and Johnson County, Kansas. Connie Schmidt, Elections Director for Johnson County will discuss that board's award winning page. "With all the other programs and discussions we offer at our conferences, I am most excited about this one. Sooner or later we all will be using these new technologies. We have an excellent opportunity at this conference to learn from the best and get a head start," said Wilkey.

Among the other presentations during the conference, board staff will discuss campaign financial disclosure rules, pending legislation that deals with elections, petition rules and regulations and postal regulations.