



1-866-4PA-SURE

# NEWS

309 North Office Bldg ■ Harrisburg, PA 17120 ■ e-mail: ra-st-sure@state.pa.us ■ www.dos.state.pa.us/sure ■ 717.346.0462

## Secretary's Corner—Pedro A. Cortés, Secretary of the Commonwealth



Dear SURE users:

I hope that you are enjoying the summer months. Just like you, the Department and the SURE Office have been busy over the past few months. Early this spring, the SURE team finalized its plan to move forward to improve the SURE system's functionality and performance. This plan, called the SURE Go-Forward Strategy for Full Implementation, is posted for your reference on our website at [www.state.pa.us/sure](http://www.state.pa.us/sure).

The SURE project is at a crucial juncture. A software build designed to improve the SURE system's performance was released on June 16. This performance build is being tested against carefully constructed scripts, which were designed with user input to simulate some of the busiest days for SURE's users during last year's presidential election. The results of these tests will be compared against a baseline test that was performed a few weeks ago, before the performance build was released into production. If the results of these tests prove that SURE meets the target performance goals and is capable of handling the remaining 11 counties with minimal performance issues, we will move forward with the final conversion and training of the next 11 counties in preparation for go-live.

The Department, at the suggestion of the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania, has contracted with a third party vendor to conduct a review of this SURE testing process to ensure that the results are reliable. Stay tuned for an update on the results of the performance testing.

The SURE team is working hard on many other important initiatives that will be detailed in future communications. In the meantime, I would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation as we continue to improve the SURE system and work together toward full implementation.

Sincerely,

Pedro A. Cortés  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

### SURE At-a-Glance

- 56 Counties live, 4.8+ million voters in SURE, several elections in which SURE is responsible for over 60% of all PA voters.
- A decision about going or not going forward with the 11 remaining counties is expected to be made over the summer. They will receive refresher training before SURE is deployed.
- 12 Counties successfully completed redistricting in SURE (Franklin, Venango, Wayne, Adams, Westmoreland, Bucks, Cumberland, Allegheny, Berks, Lehigh, Columbia and Washington).
- The new performance build was released on June 16, 2005.
- The new functionality build was released on July 18, 2005.

### Be SURE to...

- Complete voter removal programs at least ninety days prior to an election.
- Set up future elections, including the upcoming 2005 election and the 2006 primary election.
- Remember that the last day to REGISTER voters before the November election is October 11, 2005.
- Remember that the last day to receive absentee ballots is November 4, 2005.
- Maintain the Correspondence print queue by deleting any unnecessary correspondences.
- Review the 'Release Notes' regarding the functionality build.

## SURE Features and Functions—Voter does not respond to NCOA

Later in this newsletter, in the 'Productivity Tips' section, you will find additional tips and techniques that will help to make processing NCOA more effective and efficient.

In addition, the 'How to process NCAs in the SURE system' can be found on the SURE PIC website. The Job Aid describes to county users the correct way to process the NCA mailings as part of the annual National Change of Address process. This Job Aid has been updated, specifically the section regarding 'how to process non-responses'. For your convenience, here is the updated section:

Scenario #6

1. From the Reports tab, click on the [Reports] button. Select 'NVRA' from the 'Select Report Type' dropdown at the top of the screen.

2. Choose the 'PA – AVN' report.

a. On the right side of the screen, select the checkbox next to 'Unconfirmed Address Between' and enter the date the DOS ran the file in **both** fields (6/28/05).

b. \*From the Options tab, select 'StatusChangeDate' from the Report Item. In the Starting With field, enter the day after the DOS run. In the Ending With field, enter the current date. Click on the Exclude checkbox. (This will exclude the voters whose confirmation mailings were returned undeliverable).

c. Check the box next to 'Sort Alphabetically by Name' if you wish to print the letters in alphabetical order.

\* updated section

## Preview of HAVA PENNDOT/SSA Verification Project

**Note: Parts of this policy have been superseded as of August 9, 2006.**

Over the past several months, the SURE office has been working closely with PENNDOT to identify the requirements of the interface that will permit the verification of driver's license and partial social security numbers as required by HAVA in January. The project involves two elements: 1) the technical design of the interface with PENNDOT and the Social Security Administration (SSA) that will transmit the numbers from SURE and back, and 2) the functional changes to SURE that will permit users to send numbers to the interface for verification and process the results of the verification process for individual applications.

Starting on January 1, 2006, you will be required to verify whether a driver's license or partial social security number submitted on a new voter

application is current and valid. Under federal law, this verification must be completed successfully before a new voter is permitted to be registered. For the purposes of HAVA, new voters are those voters who are registering for the first time in the Commonwealth—those for whom no duplicate records are found in SURE.

Although the process adds an additional step to voter registration, the SURE team is working to minimize user intervention in the verification process where possible. For instance, after a user approves an application in SURE, the system will send relevant data to the interface for verification. If the number is verified by PENNDOT or SSA, the user will not need to view the application again. The SURE system will automatically queue an ID card for the voter. If the number does not verify, the user will open a new screen to view each application that failed and queue

a notice, or reject or manually approve the application.

The SURE office is currently working with PENNDOT and SSA to design the technical interface. Requirements for the software changes are being finalized with the help of the SURE Advisory Board. Stay tuned for more information on this important endeavor.

## Productivity Tips—NCOA

- The NCOA mailings must be sent to the address on record, not the unconfirmed address.
- When recording the mailings as returned, be sure to choose the correct letter type, NCA not AVN.
- To clear a response that was inadvertently recorded, use the Response History tab via Record Mailings.
- NCOA letters must be confirmed (i.e. Do you want this item to be recorded as being sent?). This will update the Correspondence tab on the voter's record.
- Be certain to click the [Make Changes] button when updating an unconfirmed address. If this is not done, the voter's record will not be updated.
- If you send your mailings to a third party vendor, please ensure the following:
  - Rename the export file 'VOTERS.TXT' for each type of notice (In County, Out-of-County & Unknown County).
  - You must confirm the mailings at the time of the export, not after, hence the vendor will have the correct correspondence ID.