

ESTABLISHING A SITE FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON U.S. ELECTIONS

On March 19, under the auspices of a Steering Committee composed of leading state and local election officials, IFES embarked on Collecting Election Resources in the United States, or the CERUS project, an initiative designed to compile, develop, and present critical information concerning U.S. elections in a user-friendly manner to practitioners, scholars, policymakers, and journalists.

CERUS marks the Foundation's efforts to make a practical contribution to current election-reform activities in the United States. Two programs in particular exemplify IFES' capacity with CERUS: the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project, a global, electronic information-resource on elections; and the F. Clifton White Center for Participatory Democracy, a research library on elections and governance materials worldwide located at IFES' Washington headquarters.

The CERUS project's value will not only be in the collection of materials, but in the electronic access to information, as well. CERUS will be made available through a website that will disseminate information about the project through the steering committee and through the state-and-local associations the committee represents and supports. It is comprised of the National Association of Secretaries of State; International Institute of Municipal Clerks; International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers; the Election Center; and the National Association of State Election Directors.

CERUS materials and services will include:

- updates on electoral problems recently experienced and current hot issues
- compendium of innovative practices (e.g., access for disabled voters or cost-saving measures)
- data on management standards
- data on types and procedures of voting equipment (and vendors)
- demonstrations of voting-equipment use
- examples of ballot design and use
- profiles of jurisdictions that include statistical information on issues such as poll-worker training and pay, languages on ballots, absentee-voting standards, etc.

CERUS Steering committee members include Lance Gough, *Executive Director, Board of Election Commissioners, Chicago*; Ernest Hawkins, *CPO, Sacramento County Registrar of Voters*; Conny McCormack, *Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, Los Angeles*; Alice Miller, *Executive Director, Board of Elections & Ethics, Washington, DC*; Sharon Priest, *Secretary of State, Arkansas*; Richard G. Smolka, *Editor of Election Administration Reports, Washington, DC*; Christopher Thomas, *Director, Bureau of Elections, Michigan*; Barry H. Weinberg, *Voting Rights Section, U.S. Department of Justice (retired), Washington, DC*; and Thomas Wilkey, *Executive Director, State Board of Elections, New York*.

Other participants in the inaugural meeting were Connie Kaplan, *Director of Community Services, Training and Special Programs for the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners*, and Floyd Gilzow, *U.S. Representative Roy Blunt's key staffperson on election issues*.



IFES President Richard W. Soudriette addresses the CERUS Steering Committee, March 2001.