State Board of Elections
Campaign Finance Office

CR

December 2011

Campaign *Reporter*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2011 Year End Semi Annual Report Due

The Official Notice of Report Due is included with this mailing and indicates which report you are required to file.
The 2011 Year End Semi Annual Report is due no later than **January 27, 2012**. Reports may be filed no earlier than January 1, 2012.
The report must cover the period from the last report filed through December 31, 2011.
Reports are filed on time if the US Post Office postmark is on or before **January 27, 2012**. Committees will incur penalties for reports postmarked on January 28, 2012 or later.
Reports may be hand-delivered, mailed or electronically filed. If you mail your reports, please consider using registered or certified mail. If your report is lost in the mail, your receipt will be proof of mailing. Remember that metered mail is not acceptable unless it is metered by the US Post Office. Faxed reports cannot be accepted.
Committees filing reports electronically must also submit the signed Disclosure Report Cover Page to the State Board of Elections. The cover page must be postmarked or hand-delivered on or before the report due date.

Contact us at campaign.reporting@ncsbe.gov or 919-733-7173

2012 Reporting Schedule—A Reminder

Candidates who have an existing committee, but are not up for election in 2012 will file Semi Annual reports in 2012. However, if these committees have activity for candidates who ARE up for election in 2012, then they are responsible for filing reports on the Quarterly schedule.

Candidates who are NOT up for election in 2012 will only receive a notice for the Semi Annual Reports. It is the Committee's responsibility to file Quarterly reports if activity warrants these reports.

We Are Moving

The State Board of Elections is in the process of moving offices. Our new location will be at 441 N Harrington Street, across the street from our current location. We do not have a firm date for the move yet. If we have moved by the time reports are due there will be a notice posted on both our website and the door of our current location.

Committees mailing their reports should use PO Box 27255, Raleigh NC 27611-7255, instead of the street address.

Common Errors When Completing Reports

In-Kind Contributions- Not only must an In-Kind Contribution be reported on the CRO-1210 form to show the value of the good or service being provided to the committee, but it must also be reported on the CRO-1510 to more specifically describe the In-Kind Contribution and show it on the "expenditure side" of the report. An In-Kind Contribution does not affect the bank balance of a committee but it is reported to show that value being received as a contribution. To avoid a false representation of actual funds, it is also shown as an expenditure to create "a wash" or zero out the two entries.

Transaction Dates- The transaction date for a contribution should be the date on which the committee took possession of the contribution, not when it was deposited in the bank account. Accordingly, the date for an expenditure should be the date the funds were actually expended, not when it cleared the bank. Using incorrect dates may present a problem when a report period ends or begins before an item clears the bank. The transaction may have actually occurred prior to the report on which it was reported.

Period Begin Balance- This is reported on the CRO-1000 (Disclosure Report Cover). It is the bank balance as of the beginning of the report period, which is a specific date for each report. The common error seen here is when committees use the balance as of the start date of the bank statement for that month. Bank statements do not always coincide with the start date of a report period.

Account Codes- This code is assigned by each committee and can be any combination of letters or numbers or just a single letter or number. Most committees use "1" or "A" for their primary account. The use of the code replaces disclosure of a bank account number on reports. All reports are public record; since the bank account number is confidential information, it should never be listed on a report.

Contributor's Job Title/Profession <u>AND</u> Employers Name/Specific Field- Not only do you have to disclose a contributor's name and address, but you are also required to provide his or her "Job Title/Profession **AND** Employers Name/Specific Field." If a contributor is retired, you may indicate "Retired" for the first field and the line of work or past employer's name in the second field (i.e. Retired, Librarian). Campaign Finance Laws require you to always use your best effort in obtaining this information.

Campaign Finance Remote Software

Campaign Finance Remote Filing Software can be a useful tool for assisting treasurers in ensuring that reports filed are completed accurately. However, for the software to work its magic, treasurers must follow a few simple rules when setting up their committees, entering detail information, and creating reports. Common errors that may cause a report filed to be noncompliant are detailed below.

Failure to set up elections

When setting up your committee, please remember to also set up your elections. You must input information about elections in which the committee is participating in order for the software to provide correct cycle and election totals. Remember, all committees have a Primary Election cycle and a General Election cycle, even if the candidate will not be on a Primary Election ballot, so both elections should be set up in the software.

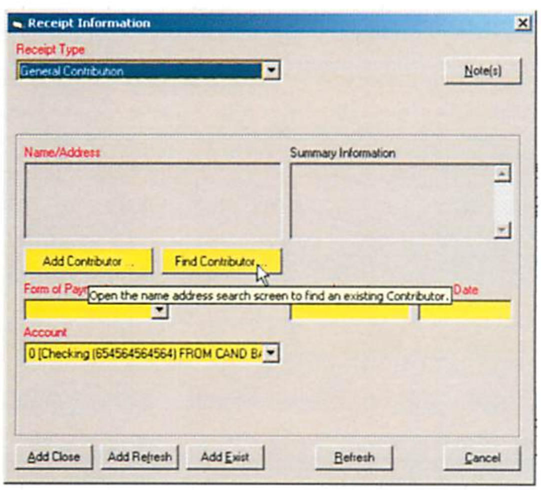
- In order to set up elections first select **Reporting**, and **Election Set Up**.
- At the **Elections List** window select **Add Election.**
- Finally at the **Outside Election** Information window input the required information and select OK

Note: Information required at this screen may vary depending upon committee type. Also, Legal Expense Fund Committees should not set up elections.

Duplicate entry of names

When recording detail information, please remember to always select Find Contributor or Find Payee if the Individual or organization's name has already been entered in the **Name List.** In order for the software to know that John Smith made two $50 contributions for an Election sum to date total of $100, both contributions must be attributed to the same John Smith.

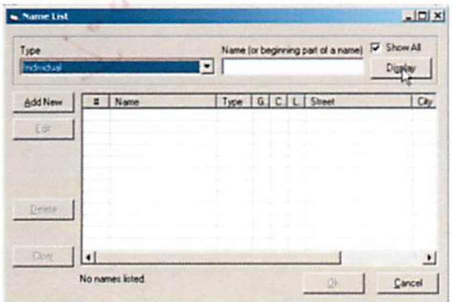
Example: When recording a contribution at the screen below, select **Find Contributor** instead of **Add Contributor** to ensure the individual is not already on the **Name List.** This concept is applicable to all transaction types.



Once you have selected **Find Contributor,** the **Name List** window will pop up (see next page). Click **Display** and **Name** to sort the contacts you have already entered alphabetically. Scan the contacts for the **Contributor/ Payee** for which you wish to record a transaction. If available, highlight the name and select OK. This will populate the **Name/Address** box of the information window above.

Campaign Finance Remote Software—Continued

Alternatively, using the **Name field** you can search for a specific individual or organization.
When searching for an individual, use only the LAST NAME. When searching for an entity other than an individual, you must use the first part of the name.



If you are unable to locate the name associated with the transaction, click **Cancel** and select **Add Contributor** at the information screen.

Failure to Edit Summary Values

If you are beginning to use the software mid Election Cycle, you must **Edit Summary Values** in order to provide the software information about transactions that occurred prior to your use of the software. This step is important and allows the software to calculate correct Cycle totals on the summary page.

If you have no previous report and you are mid election cycle, go to **Reporting** and **Report Information**. Select **Create Disclosure Report**. At the **Previous Report Link** field select **[no previous report]**. Select the **Edit Summary Values** button to the right.

You will then fill in each applicable piece of information asked for at the **Summary Amounts for the Pre-Software Reporting** screen so that the software will factor in what occurred within the cycle prior to software use.

This method will ensure that your Election Cycle to Date totals are correct on the Detailed Summary. Note that sum to date totals will not be correct if an individual gave before you started using the software and then gave again after software was in use.

The easiest way to ensure that all Election Cycle and Election Sum to Date totals are correct is to add all activity from the last election forward. Although this may be time consuming, entering many transactions at once is a good way to learn the software.

For more topics to assist you with CF Remote Software use please visit our website. Select Campaign Finance to the right, then select Reporting Software. Scroll to the bottom of the page to see a list of help topics.