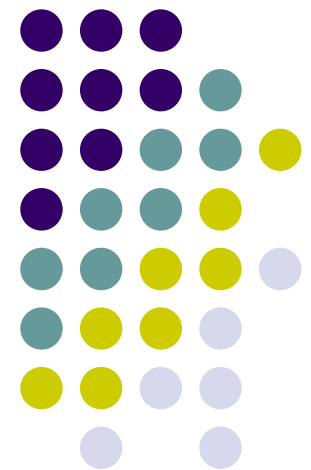


***City of Dallas  
Environmental and Health Services  
Bureau of Vital Statistics***

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***Presented To  
Health, Environment and Human Services  
Commission  
February 28, 2005***



# History



- The recording of all births and deaths in Texas is the responsibility of the State's Bureau of Vital Statistics, a division of the Texas Department of Health. It is governed by Chapter 191 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.
- The state of Texas began registering births in 1910. Death registrations began in 1887.
- The manager of the City's Vital Statistics operation has been designated as the Local Registrar, whose duties are performed under the direction of the State Registrar.

# Performance Indicators



Description of Services: Issuance of Birth & Death Certificates
Service Quality (Effectiveness): Issuance of 100% of all birth & death requests available to customers 5 days a week.
Community Indicators (Outcomes): Ensure timely response to customers requesting birth and death certificates
Target: 100% issuance of records requested
Responsible Person: Lynda J. Humphrey

Input	Output	Efficiency	Service Quality
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. \$77,468</li> <li>2. BVS has 11.5 FTE'S</li> <li>3. .5 Local Registrar .5 Deputy Registrar</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issue 87,347 birth records.</li> <li>2. Issue 85,254 death records</li> <li>3. Net Revenue 1,486.566</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Timely response to all request for birth and death request</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 95% percent of customers satisfied with services rendered</li> <li>2. Weekly mortality reports is submitted on time</li> </ol>

## Services Provided by Local Registrar



- Register each birth and death that occurs within the city of Dallas
- Provide, on request, certified copies of such records to properly qualified applicants
- Issue burial transit and cremation permits
- Submit mortality reports for all communicable diseases reported in the City of Dallas to the Centers for Disease control weekly

# Registration of Birth Records – Manual System



- Hospitals manually complete a paper certificate for each birth that occurs in the City of Dallas
- Certificates are remitted weekly to the Local Registrar, along with a summary listing of the week births
- Local Registrar verifies that the form is complete and appropriately filled-in
- Local Registrar assigns a certificate number, notes the date received, and signs the certificate to authenticate it
- Copy is maintained locally; the original certificate is sent to the State Bureau of Vital Statistics

# Registration of Birth Records – As of 01/01/2005



- Hospitals now register births directly with the state via a new on-line system called the Texas Electronic Registrar system (TER).
- The state assigns a number a file number and file date.
- An electronic image of the certificate is forwarded to the local Registrar, who then assigns a local file number, local file date and the Registrar's name.
- Certificate is then downloaded, printed, and signed by the Local Registrar.
- Certificate image is scanned for future retrieval as requests for certified copies are received.

This new process for registering births is mandatory, effective January 1, 2005. Currently there is only one local hospital this is not filing electronic birth records to date.

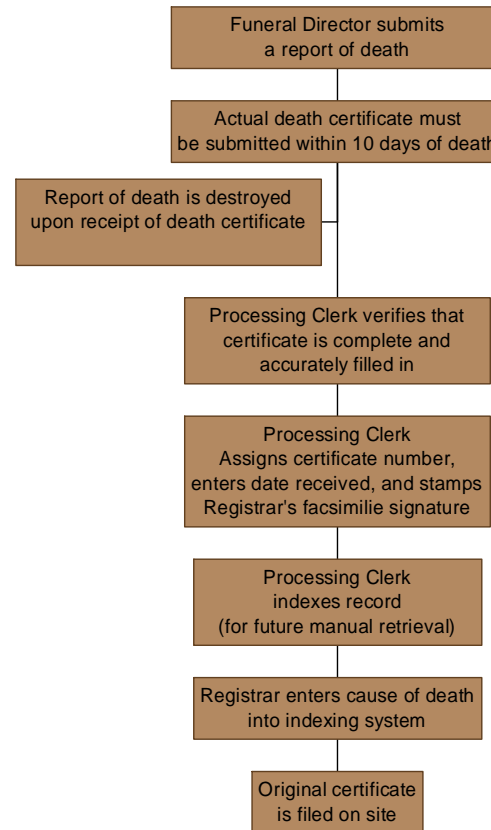
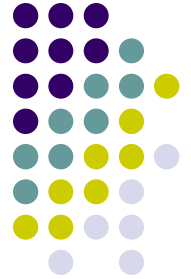


# Benefits of (TER)

The new TER system provides the following benefits:

- Reduced registration time
  - Currently certificates are registered and available for issuance within 10-30 days of the birth event. Once the system is working as planned this will be reduced to 3-6 days
- Less paper is transferred from hospitals to City, and from City to State
- More efficient access to certificates for city (electronic vs. paper copy)

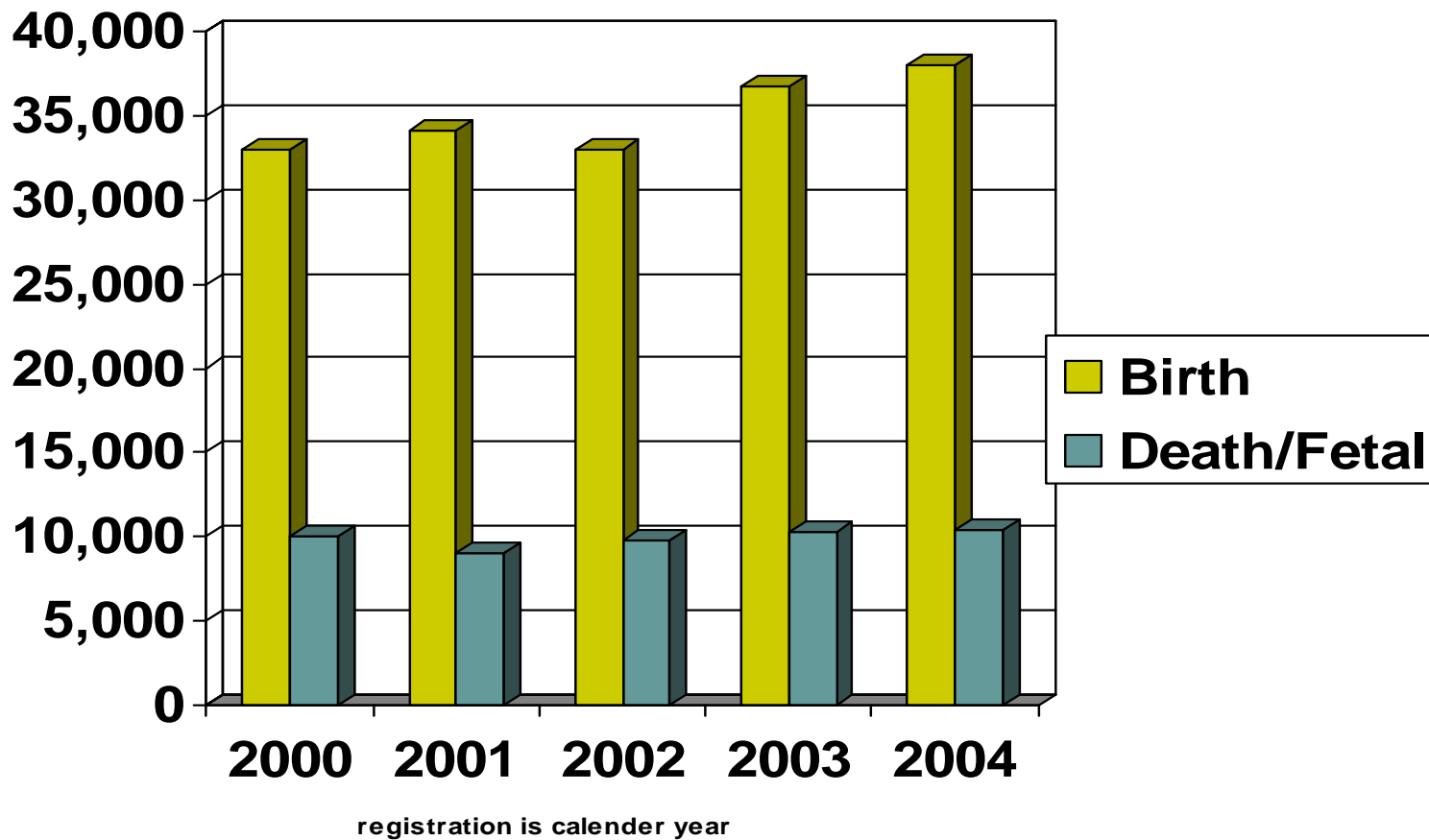
# Registration of Death Records



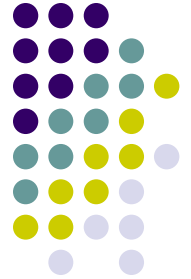


## Birth and Death Records Registered Annually

The graph below shows the number of records registered in the City of Dallas during the last five calendar years.



# Issuance of Records to Qualified Applicants



- Certified records (birth or death) may only be issued to a qualified applicant, which is defined as ***the registrant, or immediate family member either by blood or marriage, his or her guardian, or his or her legal representative.*** There are special requirements and confidentiality issues that must be addressed when issuing copies of records. All certified copies are issued with an official City of Dallas raised seal indicating authenticity
- In certain instances, local, state and federal law enforcement or governmental agencies may be designated as properly qualified applicants
- Persons who do not meet the definition of a qualified applicant may request a Verification of Birth or Death Facts
  - The verification consists of a letter which includes only the person's name, date of the birth or death, county in which the birth or death occurred and the state file number.



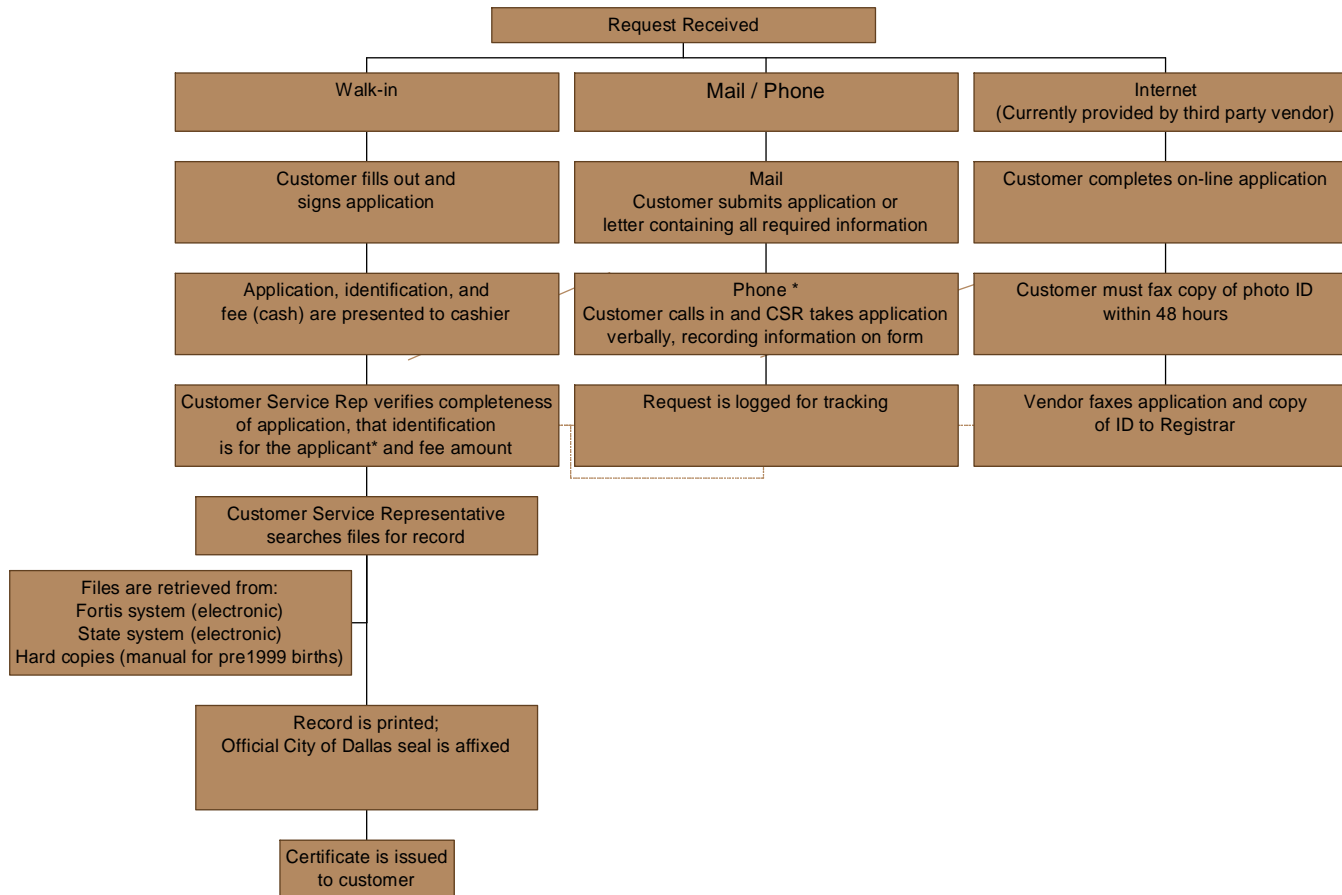
# Identification Requirements

- Each qualified applicant requesting a copy of a birth or death record must provide a reason for the request and their relationship to the person on the birth or death record sought
- The request must be signed by the applicant
- Applicant must provide a picture ID (i.e. driver's license, passport, military or student ID, current resident alien card)

Note: Per the Open Records Act, no signature or picture ID is required for birth records older than 75 years and death records older than 50 years,



# Issuance of Records



NOTE: Telephone and internet applicants must fax signature and copies of identification before request is filled



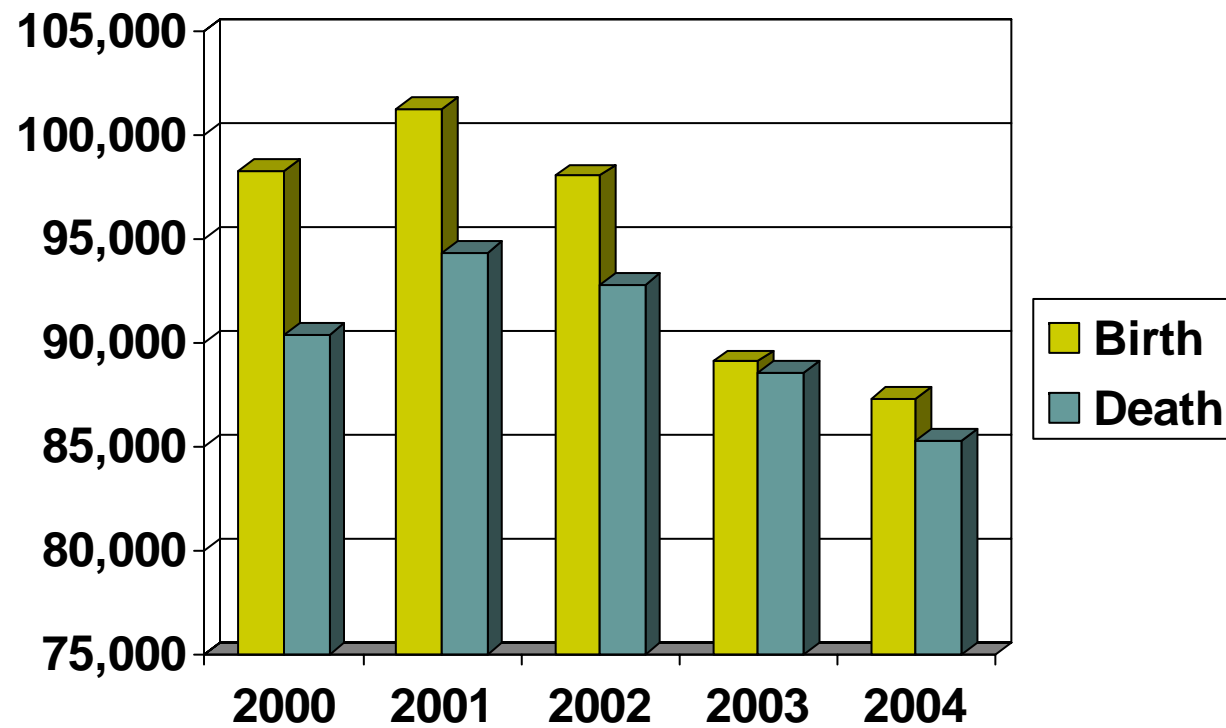
# Issuance of Records

In 2003-04 94,258 records issued:

- 72% Walk-ins (68,047)
- 19% Mail request (17,702)
- 9% Internet (8509)



# Issuance of Vital Records



# Service Statistics



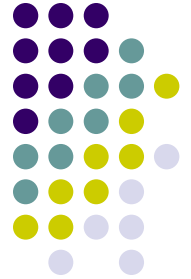
	<u>Revenues</u> <u>(in millions)</u>	<u>Records</u> <u>Issued</u>
➤ 1999-00	\$1.5 M	189,020
➤ 2000-01	\$1.5 M	196,094
➤ 2001-02	\$1.4 M	191,234
➤ 2002-03	\$1.5 M	178,221
➤ 2003-04	\$1.5 M	187,742 *

During fiscal year 2003-04 Vital Statistics served 94,258 customers:

- 72% In Person
- 19% Mail request
- 9% Internet/Online

\*In October 2003, fees for birth certificates increased from \$11 to \$12

# Fees



## Walk-Ins

- \$12.00 for one birth certificate
- \$10.00 for each death certificate; \$4.00 for each additional copy of the same record in the same request
- \$12.00 to search or verify a record

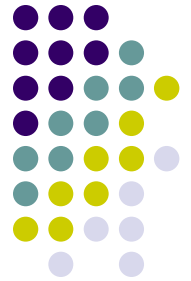
## Mail and Fax Requests (in addition to the costs above)

- \$5.00 for expedited service
- \$1.00 for regular mail
- \$17.50 for overnight service

## Internet Requests (in addition to all costs above, except mail)

- \$7.00 additional is charged by the 3rd party vendor for regular mail; \$23.00 for next day delivery

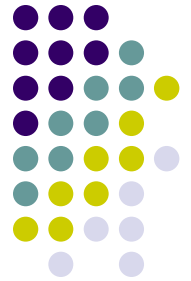
# Enhancements and Cost Savings - Record Scanning



In 2002, the department purchased a scanning system and began scanning the paper copies of birth certificates maintained. With this system, we are now able to scan an image of the certificate when it is received from the hospital. This allows us to retrieve and print copies electronically when a request is received. The purpose was twofold:

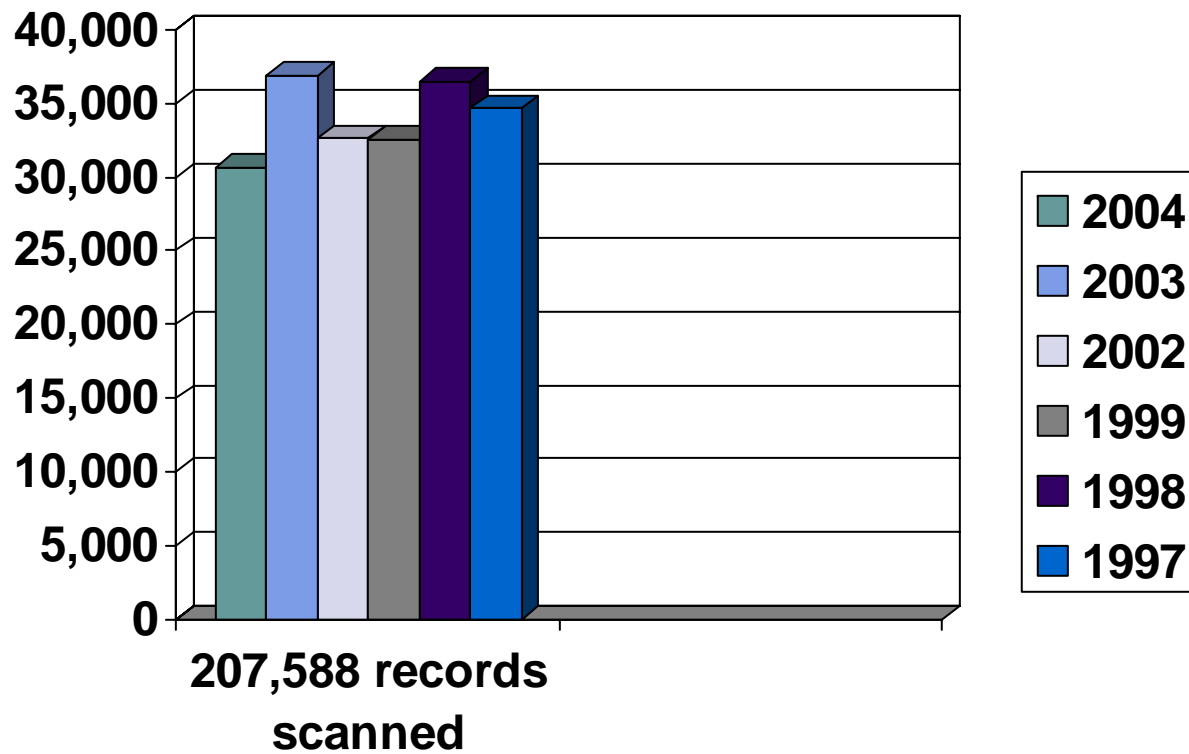
- Cost Savings – 45% of the requests for birth certificates were filled by downloading a copy from the State Bureau of Vital Statistics at a cost of \$1.83/certificate. For each record scanned, we no longer need to download from the state system.
- Customer Service – Certificates can be retrieved much faster electronically than manually, resulting in a reduction in the wait time for walk-in customers (from 30 minutes to 15 minutes currently; should reduce even more as more records are scanned).

# Enhancements and Cost Savings - Record Scanning



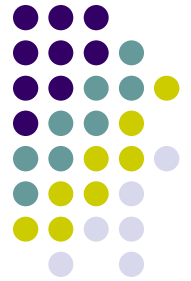
- Efficiency – The remaining 55% (requests for birth certificates from 2001 and earlier) entailed the following steps to fill the order:
  - Locate the certificate number on a master list
  - Locate the certificate in one of the 2000 binders in which the certificates are maintained
  - Retrieve the certificate from the book, make a photocopy, and return the certificate to the binder
- Ultimately, decreased storage space will be required. Approximately 50% of the Vital Stats office is currently taken up by the paper records. As these prior year records are scanned, we will no longer need to maintain the paper copies thereby freeing this space for other uses.

# Records Scanned As of February 2005



# Enhancements and Cost Savings

## -Record Scanning



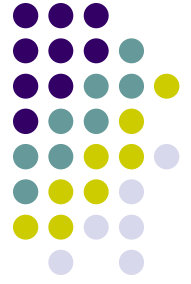
To date, we have focused on scanning all current records as they are received, and records from 2000 – 2001. These prior years were chosen due to the large number of requests received at the start of each school year, for kids just starting school (i.e. kids born in 2000 would have started school in 2005, etc.)

One clerk is dedicated to scanning, and averages approximately 6,000 records per month. Each record scanned can potentially save the City the \$1.83 that would otherwise be paid to the State.

Prior to the installation of the scanning system 72% of records issued were retrieved from the state at a cost of \$1.83/record.

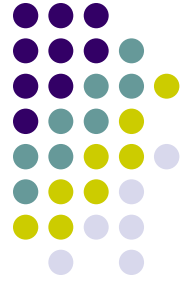
With the scanning system FY 2003 – 2004, 33% of records issued were retrieved from the state system, a decrease of 39%.

# Enhancements and Cost Savings - Record Scanning



***If we were able to add another scanning clerk on a temporary basis, the savings could potentially double, while cutting in half the time required to scan all paper certificates.***

# Enhancements and Cost Savings – Kiosks

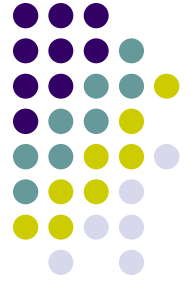


Currently, no vital records are issued via kiosk in the state of Texas. The state of California is the only state of which we are aware, to attempt to use kiosks for issuing vital records. Due to problems encountered with fraud (non-qualified applicants obtaining certificates) and concerns about securing the safety paper on which the certificates are printed, use of the kiosk was discontinued.

## **Key Issues to Address**

- How to verify qualified applicants
- Only applicants with credit cards could use (no cash or checks accepted)
- Would not be able to access the State's database
- How to ensure that the security paper is safeguarded

# Enhancements and Cost Savings – Internet Requests



Currently internet requests for birth and death certificates are handled by a third-party entity, Vital Chek, which also manages this service for many states throughout the United States. Vital Chek assesses a shipping and handling surcharge for each order filled (see page 14), and payment is by credit card only.

Before we can implement acceptance of internet applications directly with the City, the following would need to happen:

- Meet with the City's Computer Information Systems (CIS) department to determine costs and timeline for revamping the web site to accommodate on line ordering
- For efficiency, obtain credit card authentication software and authorizations. This will ensure that no invalid credit cards are accepted.