



Voting activity vigorous at Carlton County polls

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Pine Journal - 11/06/2008

Following the lead of the rest of the country, voters in Carlton County turned out in high numbers for Tuesday's general election, surpassing its previous norm for presidential election years and outpacing the state average as well.

According to Carlton County Auditor Paul Gassert, Carlton County recorded some 20,000 registered voters going into Tuesday's general election. In addition to that number, some 3,500 voters registered on the day of the election. Gassert reported a total of approximately 18,500 county residents voted during Tuesday's election, which he said amounts to a total registered voter turnout of around 80 percent, compared to the state norm of 77.5 percent. He said the turnout in the county during a presidential election year has traditionally been around 75 percent.

One of the areas of the county demonstrating the most active new voter registration was within the boundaries of the Fond du Lac Reservation in Cloquet's Second Precinct. Gassert indicated much of that can likely be attributed to the fact the reservation launched an extremely active get-out-the-vote campaign, utilizing both door-to-door visits and followup mailings. As a result, the area recorded 81 new voter registrations, which amounts to some 25 percent of Tuesday's total voter turnout of 300 in Cloquet's Second Precinct.

Carlton County Commissioner Ted Pihlman once again garnered the mandate of the Fifth District by earning 60 percent (1,688) of the vote over opponent Gary Halverson's 39 percent (1,092). Pihlman, who has served on the county board since 1978, commented after the election, "I really appreciate the confidence of the constituents, and I will continue to do the best I can, especially when it comes to key issues such as facilities and budget."

Tom Proulx earned the nod for county commissioner from District 3 by defeating his opponent, Mark Roberts, by a margin of 1,894 to 1,097. Proulx could not be reached for comment.

In the race for the Cloquet City Council at-large position, Barb Wyman successfully outbid opponent Clare Mills Cassandro by a vote of 3,399 to 1,881.

"I'm very pleased with the voter turnout and wish to thank everyone for their support," stated Wyman the day following the election. "I really appreciate your votes and will remain diligent in presenting your voice to city government."

Challenger Leola Rodd defeated incumbent Carlton Mayor Dennis Randelin on a final tally of 228 to 157.

"I'm very excited about this new opportunity," reflected Rodd following her victory. "This is a new chapter in my life, and I'm excited about working more closely with our city administrator, who is very helpful and knowledgeable, as well as with our new city councilors. The council has always worked together as a team to better our community. The voters have put a lot of faith in me, and I will do the best job I can."

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