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For immediate release

## Turnout up slightly, absentee ballots down, director tells Canvassing Board

The percentage of Rice County voters casting a ballot in last week's election (72.86%) exceeded turnout in the 2018 midterm contest by the narrowest of margins: .36 points. That's well above the state's total, which [Secretary of State Steve Simon](#) last week put at about 60.66%.

In all, 28,557 votes were cast in Rice County, Property Tax and Elections Director Denise Anderson told the county Canvassing Board Monday morning during the required certification of votes. Of those, 81% voted at the polls Tuesday; 19% submitted absentee ballots.

The Canvassing Board, which includes the Property Tax and Elections director, two members of the Rice County Board of Commissioners not candidates in the election, the mayor of the county's largest city and the county's court administrator, verified Tuesday's results as reported by county Elections staff.

Anderson began the meeting by reviewing the election process, which included issuing absentee ballots for voters living overseas and the work of elections judges, who this year took on a larger role.

Nine election judges were hired from political party lists, she said, and were solely responsible for accepting or rejecting absentee ballots. Voters whose ballots were rejected were sent a replacement along with a letter with instructions on how to resubmit their new ballot.

"It was a very rewarding experience," said Sharon Kaisershot, who has served as a township clerk for over three decades, of her work this year as an election judge. "I had no idea what this staff does for elections. They have my utmost confidence. I can't imagine it could be run any better."

At one point, election judge Pam Wunderlich suspected duplicate ballots, and brought her concerns to Elections staff members.

"Everything stopped" until all concerns were alleviated, she said.

"They took my word for it. They believed me. They're so efficient," she added. "It's just a machine that works and it works well."

More than 2,500 new voters registered to vote Tuesday, a figure Anderson called "pretty typical." About 45% of those were students at one of Northfield's two college.



Members of the Rice County Canvassing Board, from left, Faribault Mayor Kevin Voracek, Rice County Commissioners Jim Purfeerst and Jeff Docken, and Rice County Court Administrator Lisa Kuhlman review results from Tuesday's election. (Rice County photo)

The county also set up a viewing room for residents to observe the absentee ballot review process, but the room went unused, said Anderson.

Polls opened Tuesday as scheduled and no issues of significance other than a loss of power at the Cannon City Township precinct were reported. The outage lasted about 20 minutes and only impacted lights at the polling place. All election equipment except poll pad printers are equipped with battery backups.

Three modems in areas of the county with poor broadband access were unable to transmit results from their location and brought to the county's Government Services Building where the data was uploaded.

Anderson, and Assistant Property Tax and Elections Director Jody Wagner reviewed results from three of the 32 precincts -- Bridgewater, Richland and Forest -- for the board Monday and provided members a summary report.

Only one race in the county – Rice County attorney – is close enough to warrant a recount. The losing candidate, incumbent John Fossum, has until 5 p.m. Monday to request a recount. Candidates in city and school board races could also request a recount, which county staff would complete.

All records except for the abstracts (summary) are kept for 22 months. Abstracts must be retained permanently.

Hand recounts of two precincts will take place at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 22 at the Government Services Building as required by state statute. Those precincts – Northfield Township (P2) and Morrystown city -- were selected at random Monday. The meeting is open to the public.

Find canvassed results from the Nov. 8, 2022 election at [ricecountymn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6482/11-8-22-Rice-County-canvassing-results](https://ricecountymn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6482/11-8-22-Rice-County-canvassing-results).

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Elections Coordinator Elissa Jones, from right, passes documents showing tallies from Tuesday's elections to Faribault Mayor Kevin Voracek, later shared with all Canvassing Board members. Also pictured, clockwise from left, Rice County Commissioners Jim Purfeerst and Jeff Docken, Court Administrator Lisa Kuhlman, Property Tax and Elections Director Denise Anderson and Assistant Property Tax and Elections Director Jody Wagner. (Rice County photo)