



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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Gale summarizes “enormously exciting” Election Day for Nebraska

LINCOLN – Election Day brought out a record number of voters in Nebraska, says Secretary of State John Gale. It is likely that the percentage of voter turnout will inch up, as counting continues over the next week. Currently, it sits just below 69 percent.

The last county reported its results to the state office at 5:30 this morning, boosting the unofficial number of voters to 831,438. That surpasses the number of voters in the 2008 presidential election (811,923), which was the highest number for any statewide election previously.

Not only did the election set a new record for number of voters, but voter registration soared to 1,211,409.

“It was an enormously exciting day for us as election officials. I am very proud of those who took the time to register and then took the time to vote in this election,” said Gale. “It points to the remarkable interest that citizens had in this election, from very early on.”

In 2008, the percentage of voter turnout reached 70 percent. In 2012, it was about 69 percent. Gale says he expects that turnout will reach at least what it was in 2012 with the additional tabulation of ballots between now and November 15.

“The counties have seven days to complete the tabulation process,” explained Gale. “That will include all provisional ballots as well as early voting ballots that were received at the last minute, either at county election offices or left in drop boxes.”

Once the tabulation process is complete in each county, election officials will convene their county canvassing boards to certify their results and report their totals to the Secretary of State's office. The Nebraska Board of Canvassers is scheduled to meet at 9:00 a.m. on December 5 to officially certify the statewide results.

Of the statewide races, two may qualify for a recount. One is in Legislative District 35. Candidates are currently separated by 61 votes.

"By law, in order to qualify for an automatic recount, the margin of difference must be less than one percent of the number of votes garnered by the highest vote getter," explained Gale.

Dan Quick is leading Gregg Neuhaus with 5,615 votes, which brings a recount to within five or six votes.

"That may happen," added Gale, "with the addition of provisional ballots. We'll have to wait and see."

The second race subject to recount is Papio-Missouri River NRD – Subdistrict 3, between Larry Bradley and Curt Frost. Fifty votes separate the two, falling within the window for an automatic recount.

As far as preliminary turnout goes, Gale said that only one county (Thurston, 41%) did not exceed 50 percent. The highest turnout was reported by Arthur County at over 81 percent.

Eighty-nine counties exceeded 60 percent voter turnout, 64 counties exceeded 70 percent turnout and five counties had greater than 80 percent turnout.

In terms of early voters, 238,925 people either voted in person or returned a ballot by mail, based on preliminary tabulation by the counties.

"If you look at that, compared to the unofficial voter turnout, early voting reached 29 percent in this election, which is a higher percentage than the last presidential election at around 26 percent," said Gale.

Overall, the general election was a smooth one. "From an observer's perspective, the issues were isolated and relatively few. Around three counties, including Douglas, encountered problems with their tabulation equipment, but those problems were resolved fairly quickly with no disruption to the overall process."

Gale said his office received a large volume of calls from people who thought they could still register to vote on Election Day, or who needed assistance checking their registration. Also, people reported more lines at polling places, but the heaviest volume appeared to occur when polls first opened and again after work.

He reminded those who may have cast a vote provisionally that they can track the progress of their ballot online at www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov.

“We’ve had a number of provisional voters inquire about their ballot status,” said Gale. “That link is the most direct way to track a ballot, including those cast by early voters.”

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