

Voter Services News

Another election is in the books. We have lots of uplifting news as we head into the holidays with pictures and reports recapping many of our election-related activities -- first time voters, first time poll workers, and the successes of the Topeka Voter Collaborative. AND, the highest voter turnout in a local election in many years. The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that 20.25% of Shawnee County registered voters participated in the local elections – the highest voter participation in a local election since 2009. That compares with 19.4% in 2017 and 12.1% in 2013, which also were elections for Mayor of Topeka.



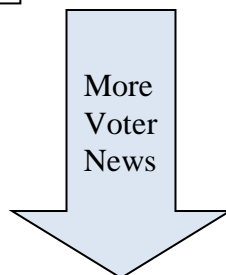
A big “Thank you” to all who contributed to the increased turnout by reaching out to your friends and neighbors encouraging them to vote. We have shown that we can each be a get-out-the-vote campaign!

You can provide feedback on your experience on this [survey](#).

Thanks to Seaman High School for sharing these pictures of students voting for the first time this fall. Most of the students were in classes where LWVTSC volunteers presented voter education information. Kudos Seaman teachers for reinforcing the lessons with an opportunity to vote in person.



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LEARN THE VOTING PROCESS - BE A POLL WORKER

At 72 years old, I applied to be an election poll worker for the first time. I found the job easy, enjoyable, and rewarding. The Shawnee County Election Office did an outstanding job of setting up its polling places and training and overseeing its workers. I was given a 46-page manual filled with detailed instructions, photos, and lists for each task. At a half-day in-person training session, Shawnee County Election Commissioner Andrew Howell, new Assistant Commissioner Jake Fisher, and their IT staff walked us through the manual section by section. The three machines used at the polls were explained and made available for practice. All questions were answered.

For the November 2, 2021 election, which was an off-year election with an expected turnout of 20 percent, the Election Office set up 94 voting locations. One thousand poll workers will be needed for each of the two elections in 2022.

Prior to Election Day, I received a telephone call from the experienced “Judge” in charge of my assigned workplace. No one leaves for meals, so we took our own food and optional snack to share. My Judge also emailed a list of my assigned tasks for the day. Election workers on full-day duty arrive by 6:00 a.m. to help set up the polling place and may leave around 8:00 p.m. after closing.

On Election Day, a voter enters the polling location and shows their photo ID to the poll worker who scans the ID’s barcode using a new “ExpressPoll® electronic pollbook.” This iPad-like device has a cell phone connection to the Poll Book at the Election Office and no internet connection. The poll worker verifies the voter’s identity from the photograph and their signature on the pad. The voter is asked to state their address. Verified voters who request a paper ballot are given a ballot, which they complete and insert into the “DS200 Scanner” machine. If a voter prefers to use the touchscreen on the “ExpressVote” machine (instead of filling-in ovals with a pen), they have that option. This machine creates their paper ballot, which they then take and insert into the DS200. The ballots remain in the bottom of the DS200 in a tote that is locked for transport back to the EO.

All verified (non-provisional) Election Day votes are thus recorded on paper ballots. Neither the DS200 nor the ExpressVote machine is connected to the internet.

If you worry, as I have, about election integrity, become part of the process and see for yourself how voting is secure in Shawnee County, or talk to a poll worker, judge, or Election Office employee.

Leslie Prentice, Member
Voter Services Committee

TOPEKA COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE

The Topeka Collaborative Committee was formed in the late summer of 2021 with the purpose of improving the Shawnee County voter turnout in this year's local elections. It is composed of representatives from several not-for-profit community organizations working here in Topeka.

With no budget and only volunteers, this group focused on incentives and reminders to vote. Select major businesses were provided a list of suggested incentives they could offer their employees if they voted. Stormont Vail acted upon the suggestions and offered their employees the opportunity to arrive two hours late or leave two hours early for the purpose of voting.

LWVTSC initiated the word-of-mouth campaign by asking each of you to remind 10 people to vote and then ask each of those 10 contacts to spread the word to 10 more people. The Collaborative Committee put this plan into action as well. KNEA used the word-of-mouth reminders to their statewide staff and educators in addition to their ongoing get-out-the-vote efforts. By the end of Election Day these small efforts helped boost Shawnee County's voter turnout to 20.25% which is the highest local election turnout rate since 2009. We opened the door. Thank you for the effort you put into this election.

Jan Martens, Member
Voter Services Committee
Representing LWVTSC on the Collaborative Committee

REPORT OF THE FAIR VOTES FAIR MAPS COMMITTEE

The Fair Votes Fair Maps Committee presented its report and recommendation to the Board at the November 9 meeting. The Committee is composed of Vicki Arnett, Mary Galligan, Cindy Lash, Leslie Prentice, Susan Quinn, and Mary Torrence. The report described the Committee's findings regarding the existing State House and Senate districts and principles for development of new districts from which representatives for this area will be elected.

The report concludes, "In the absence of legislative committee-adopted guidelines for the 2022 round of redistricting, we recommend that districts in Shawnee County and the four adjacent counties on the north (Jackson), west (Wabaunsee and Pottawatomie), and south (Osage) be based on the following principles:

- Equalize population within the traditionally-applied +/- 5% range of ideal district size.
- Comply with the Voting Rights Act.
- Confine districts in Topeka to the area within the city limits to the extent possible thus recognizing the common interests of Topeka residents.

- Where equality of population among districts requires city districts to include areas outside the city limits, acknowledge common interests of residents by including outlying areas of similar character as the city portion of the district.
- Keep surrounding counties whole within the limitations of equal population requirements and do not split cities other than Topeka.
- Create districts that recognize common interests among residents and that are easily identifiable by voters by using major streets, roads, highways, and natural features as district boundaries to the extent possible given the configuration of precincts.
- Create districts that are compact and contiguous.”

Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the Board provide these principles to the Shawnee County legislative delegation as suggestions for the basis of new state House and Senate districts for Topeka and Shawnee County.

The full report and supporting information can be accessed [here](#).

Mary Galligan, Chair
Fair Votes Fair Maps Committee

ELECTION AUDIT

League Board members Mary Galligan and Mary Torrence attended the Shawnee County audit of the November 2021 Topeka councilmember elections. Election Commissioner Andrew Howell explained the procedure and the numerous safeguards used to ensure the count was accurate and the original machine ballots were preserved. Three bipartisan panels counted the votes for each council member candidate in selected precincts, using copies of the original voting machine ballots. When the count did not coincide with the machine count, another panel repeated the count. This happened in one instance and the second time the count was the same as the machine count. No discrepancies were found during the audit. The results of the audit were sealed and preserved for any possible future litigation.

Mary Torrence, Member
Voter Services Committee

CANVASS OF THE VOTE

The last step in election procedures local involves dealing with provisional ballots during the canvass of the vote. This occurs when the County Commission meets as the Board of Canvassers. As you will see in the report ably provided by Voter Services volunteer Camille Nohe, there are many reasons a voter might vote a provisional ballot. In this election, the majority of those ballots were counted.

Board of Canvassers Meeting November 15, 2021 For General Election held November 2, 2021

Total provisional ballots received:	234
Provisional ballots counted:	185
Name or address change	77
Technicalities cleared (poll worker couldn't find but office verified voter was registered)	6
Advance voter issues cleared	48
Wrong polling place (so partial count)	40
Qualified electors per clerk (poll worker couldn't determine for Sherwood Improvement & Drainage District Directors)	12
Permission to open (voter registration card not on envelope: 1 partial count and 1 OK, voter registrations inside)	2
Provisional ballots <u>not</u> counted:	49
Voter not registered	26
Advance voter did not sign envelope (office tried unsuccessfully to contact)	10
No ID at polls & didn't bring into office	06
Not qualified (for Sherwood Improvement & Drainage District Directors)	7

FYI: 114,139 registered voters in Shawnee County
20.5% voted, i.e., 23,399
185 provisional votes = .79% of number of ballots cast (185/23,339)

Camille Nohe, Member
Voter Services Committee