

## Voter turnout much slower than expected

June 3, 2022



The number of ballots received by the registrar's office is substantially lower than during the 2018 Primary Election at this time, according to Del Norte County Registrar of Voters Alissia Northrup.

Of the 15,510 registered voters in Del Norte County, only 1,732 ballots were received by the close of business on May 31.

Of course, Northrup is prepared for whatever the final turnout might be.

"You never know what's going to happen," she said. "You have to prepare for a big party, even if you're not sure how many people are going to show up."

With just four days before the election, Northrup hasn't concluded why people are waiting to submit their ballots. Mail-in, absentee and drop-off ballots represent approximately two-thirds of registered voters. Precinct voters on Election Day usually represent one-third of the voters.

Your options including dropping off your ballot at the clerk's office at the Flynn Administrative Center at the corner of 5th and H streets, place your ballot in an official ballot box at the Senior Center on Northcrest

Drive, at your polling precinct Tuesday, June 7 or voting in person at your designated precinct.

Voters who chose to cast their ballots at the polling place on Election Day are reminded that one must be standing in line at the polling place no later than 8 p.m. next Tuesday. Polls open at 7 a.m. Northrup reminds polling place voters to bring the vote-by-mail ballot they already received to the polling place so that it can be surrendered and replaced with a new ballot.

The reasons for the slow turnout? Voters may be waiting to see what happens in the final days of the campaign, or “they’re not sure” who to vote for, or “are still making up their minds,” she said. Voters need to know that Election Day “is sneaking up on them.”

She did speculate that the number of open seats on the Board of Supervisors – three districts, rather than just two, and the 12 candidates running for those three seats could have something to do with the slower turnout. There were many more candidate forums during this election cycle, and lots of candidates knocking on doors.

The Triplicate would like to think that voters are still studying its May 20 Special Election issue, which was packed with campaign advertisements and a “candidates forum” questionnaire that featured all candidates for each supervisorial district race.

For those who are waiting to make a decision, the Triplicate encourages them to review today’s issue of the newspaper for the dozens of letters of support for candidates from local residents.

A reader will get a whole new perspective on who is running for office. It has been a joy – and a struggle – to read and process so many letters without mixing them up, or leaving anyone out.

You can begin to see what wonderful community-minded people have stood up to seek public office, and get a strong sense of what impact these candidate have had on their community and the people who live here.

All candidates, regardless of how much their campaigns spent or how many doors they knocked on deserve our respect and appreciation.

The same goes for the voters themselves. Every vote counts regardless of one’s station in life. As a small county, with so many candidates, and with a possible low voter turnout, each and every vote will make a big difference in the outcome.

Your vote is confidential, while the Registrar’s Office will know who voted, and the vote tallies for each candidate, it will not know how a particular voter voted.

Registrar Northrup wants to dispel a myth that a voter must cast a vote for everything on the ballot. “It’s a two-page ballot,” she said, “you don’t have to vote on everything.” You may decide that only one issue or candidate is important to you; your vote will count on any candidate or issue you vote upon. And your reasons for voting are entirely up to you.

Northrup said her staff is available to help voters no matter what the problem might be. If someone has lost his or her ballot, didn't receive a ballot, misplaced it or threw it away by accident, or made a mistake and want a new ballot, Northrup's election office staff can determine if the original ballot has already been cast, if not then a new ballot will be provided on the spot. If there is some uncertainty, the voter can cast a provisional ballot that must be submitted by 8 p.m. on June 7.

Whether the turnout is big or small, Northrup needs volunteer poll workers on Election Day. Volunteers can reach Registrar Alissia Northrup at 707-464-7216.