

McKinley County: 21,000 voted Nov. 8

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 18 November 2016 07:52

Matter now heads to Sec. of State

The canvassing of the Nov. 8 election went well and there were no major problems, officials said. Results still indicate that McKinley County is heavily Democratic and voters tend to be shy about turning out on Election Day.

McKinley County Director of Elections Rick Palochak said 21,208 people cast their votes in this year's general election — out of 40,400 registered votes in McKinley County. That amounted to about a 52 percent voter turnout.

"Of course you always want those numbers to be as high as they can be," Palochak said. "I'd say the numbers are usually low in McKinley County, but the numbers do fluctuate."

Palochak said 15,274 registered Democrats voted, compared to 3,647 registered Republicans. The numerical difference is with people who declare themselves as not a member of a major party, Palochak said.

The canvassing revealed a slight problem at a voting machine on the city's south side, Palochak noted. That problem was attributed to a machine becoming unplugged, but that was quickly fixed, he said.

Canvassing, or vote certification, took place at the McKinley County Courthouse over a few days as compared to typically just one, due to the fact that there were Veterans Day preparations and other area public meetings that coincided with the canvassing. There were quite a few provisional ballots that took time to go through as well, Palochak said.

There were six workers who canvassed votes on Nov. 9 and seven who participated in canvassing on Nov. 15.

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Palochak noted that election certification isn't final until everything clears the New Mexico Secretary of State's Office. There are 62 voting precincts in McKinley County.

McKinley County Attorney Doug Decker said prior to canvassing that he'd heard of no major problems with people or machines on Election Day.

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