

Date Printed: 06/11/2009

---

JTS Box Number: IFES\_74  
Tab Number: 29  
Document Title: Our Success Story  
Document Date: 1997  
Document Country: United States -- Kansas  
Document Language: English  
IFES ID: CE02266



\* E 3 1 6 2 A A 8 - 9 8 6 9 - 4 3 2 D - A F O E - C 7 5 5 E 8 C E F C 7 7 \*

# OUR SUCCESS STORY

# November General Election Stats

---

**Final Unofficial Election Results On Internet - 10:06 p.m.  
100% Of Votes Cast**

**First Unofficial Partial Election Results On Internet - 8:25 p.m.  
57% Of Votes Cast**

**Second Unofficial Partial Election Results On Internet - 9:30 p.m.  
99% Of Votes Cast**

---

Voter Registration - 246,497  
Voters Processed - 192,202  
Voter Turnout 78%  
Longest Wait In Line To Vote - 20 Minutes

---

Advance Voting Ballots Requested - 72,876  
Advance Ballots Voted - 66,200  
Voting In Person In Advance - 14,414  
Largest Number Of Advance Ballots Mailed On A Single Day - 5,276  
Largest Number Of Advance Ballots Issued In Person On A Single Day - 3,187

---

Precincts - 318  
81 Precincts - Over 40% Of The Voters Voted In Advance  
8 Of These 81 Precincts - Over 50% Of The Voters Voted In Advance

---

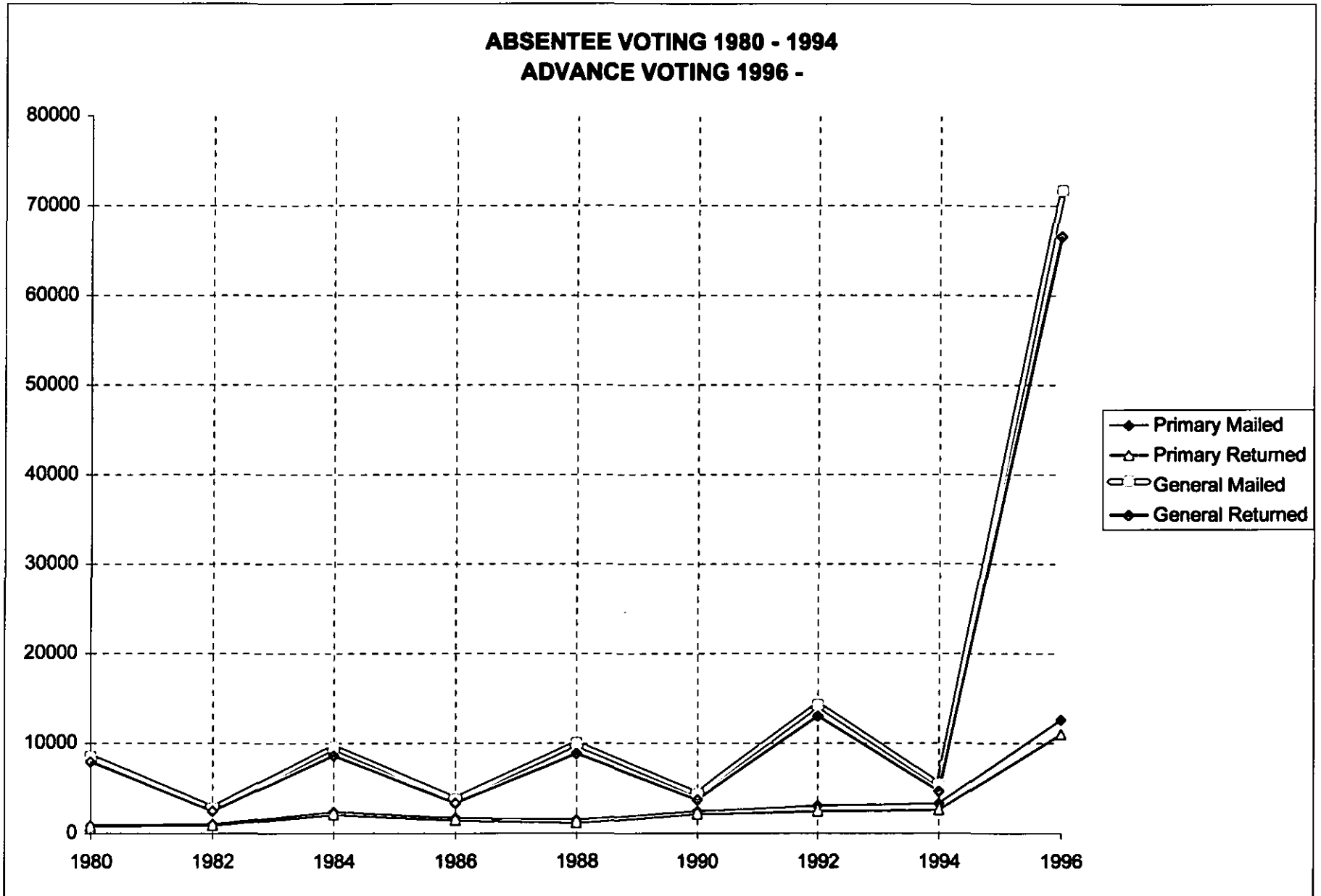
Polling Places - 299  
Electronic Voting Machines - 853  
145 Portable Voting Booths - 106 Locations Where Potential Voters Numbered Over 660  
Election Workers - 1,500  
Student Field Assistants On Election Day - 154  
Student Runners On Election Night - 48

---

**RETURN TO OPENING PAGE**

JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS

**ABSENTEE VOTING 1980 - 1994**  
**ADVANCE VOTING 1996 -**



Tuesday, October 29, 1996  
The Kansas City Star

# Early ballot seems popular choice in county

By DIANE CARROLL  
Staff Writer

The general election may not be until next Tuesday, but tens of thousands of people already have voted in Johnson County.

Advance voting — available for the first time this year — seems to be a hit, county Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said Monday.

"We were guessing 50,000 to 60,000 (would vote in advance), but that was sort of a high guess," Schmidt said. "We'll definitely

reach that."

By Monday, 54,226 persons had voted, either by mail or in person at the county election office, county officials said. The number should hit 60,000 by Friday, which would be about one-fourth of all those who have registered to vote, Schmidt said.

Also Monday, Schmidt reported that she did not foresee any problems at the polls next Tuesday, even though more people have



registered to vote in the county than ever before.

"So far, it's going very smoothly," Schmidt said.

Lines are difficult to predict, she said. If a lot of people show up to vote at the same time, there might well be some wait, she said. However, the large number who have voted in advance should help ease congestion, she said.

County figures, tabulated over the weekend, show that 246,636 had registered to vote by Oct. 21, the last day registration was

allowed. That's 10.7 percent more than 222,815 registered in 1992, the last presidential election year.

Schmidt was not surprised by the increase. Federal legislation passed in recent years has made it easier for people to register to vote, she said, and the county's population has increased since 1992.

People who wish to vote in advance should go to the election office at 2101 E. Kansas City Road in Olathe, near Interstate 35 and 119th Street. Advance voting will be permitted until noon Monday.

Thursday, October 31, 1996  
-The Kansas City Star

**DIANE  
STAFFORD**

At work



## *A vote for voting in advance*

The big blue maw of a U.S. Postal Service box already has eaten my advance voting ballot. Come Tuesday, if I'm late to work, it won't be because I'm standing in an 85-percent-of-registered-voters-turnout line snaking through the neighborhood elementary school.

Thanks to the new Kansas law that allows either in-person or mail-in voting in advance of Election Day, tens of thousands of area voters will have done their civic duty before polls open Nov. 5.

Providing a workplace benefit probably wasn't what legislators had in mind when they passed the law. But it looks to be a good thing. Harried workers (at least those who live in Kansas) won't have to worry about squeezing in balloting before or after work.

But what about workers who live in Missouri? Are they fated to fight the before- and after-work voting crunches?

Sometimes the answer is yes. For one-person shops, where business hours aren't flexible, there's no other way to vote. Many big employers, though, exercise a kind of corporate citizenship to make it easier for individuals to exercise theirs.

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, the company encourages workers to make "reasonable efforts" to vote before or after work. If that can't happen, the company will allow up to three hours of paid time off on Election Day.

In fact, a Missouri statute requires employers to give three hours off without penalty on Election Day — but only if required work hours don't allow a three-hour block of time when polls are open either before or after work. The law would be summoned rarely; because polls are open 12 or 13 hours, most workers would have at least three hours before or after work.

Hallmark Cards Inc. pushes employees toward the polls by having workplace voter registration drives. On Election Day, the card king has no formal policy but kindly will look the other way if employees are late because of voting.

Sprint, the area's largest nongovernment employer, tries to help its employees exercise an educated franchise. Throughout the campaign, it has brought candidates to its headquarters for workplace forums. On Election Day, Sprint encourages employees to work out an unpaid time-off arrangement with their supervisors, if necessary, to cast their ballots.

Another big area employer — the federal government — encourages workers to vote on their way to or from work. But, if the polls aren't open three hours before or after the employee's regular work hours, then employees get paid time off to provide enough time to get to the polls.

Some employers haven't had to address the voting issue. At the General Motors plant in Fairfax, for example, the first shift ends at 2:30 p.m., and the second shift doesn't start until 4:30 p.m. Either shift gives workers time to vote in non-peak hours.

As always, some unenlightened employers will dock pay or throw nasty looks when workers arrive late or duck out early. Also as always, some irresponsible employees will use any excuse, reasonable or not, to cut work.

Meanwhile, Missouri residents can work on their legislators to get the same workplace — and civic — benefit as their Kansas cohorts.

*Diane Stafford's workplace column appears on Thursdays. You can write her at The Star's business desk at 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, Mo., 64108, or send an e-mail message to [stafford@kcstar.com](mailto:stafford@kcstar.com).*

# Early votes prove a hit in county

Nearly one in three expected  
to cast ballots in advance.

By DIANE CARROLL  
Staff Writer

Johnson County residents really like advance voting.

If projections pan out, it appears that almost one of every three voters will have cast a ballot before Tuesday, county Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said Friday. That's quite a few, she said, considering that this year is the first for advance voting in Kansas.

"Our parking lot is bulging right now and it has been all day," Schmidt said. "People love it."

On Monday 54,226 ballots had been issued. By Thursday night more than 65,000 had been issued. Schmidt predicted Friday that the number of advance voters probably would reach 70,000.

A total of 246,636 county residents have registered to vote. Schmidt is expecting a turnout of 85 percent to 87 percent.

In Wyandotte County, fewer than one in 10 voters is expected to vote in advance, county Election Commissioner Pat Rahija said. The county hasn't had long lines at its polls as Johnson County has, Rahija said, "so I don't think it's catching on as quickly here."

See VOTING, C-2, Col. 1

## Voting in advance is a hit in Johnson County

Continued from C-1

About 5,000 of the 70,000 registered to vote in Wyandotte County are expected to vote in advance. About 80 percent or so of the registered voters are expected to vote.

The Kansas Legislature approved advance voting last year. It is not allowed in Missouri.

Throughout Kansas, advance voting is going well, a spokesman in the secretary of state's office said Friday. It seems to be particularly attractive for people who don't think they will have time to go to the polls Tuesday, the spokesman said.

Johnson County residents may continue to vote in advance until noon Monday at the county election office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road in Olathe. The office will be open to voters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. today. It

will open at 8 a.m. Monday.

Residents who have filled out ballots they received in the mail may drop them off anytime at the election office until 7 p.m. Tuesday. A drop box has been set up at the front door. No more ballots should be returned by mail because, the office might not receive them in time.

People voting at the election office are not having to wait in line, Schmidt said. The office has six workers checking voter eligibility at one time, she said, and 50 or 60 voting booths.

Johnson County officials hope the state Legislature expands the law to allow advance voting not only at the county election office, but also at city halls and libraries throughout the county, Schmidt said.

If that happens, she said, the number of advance voters in future elections could climb to 50 percent.

# Turnout of 85 percent-plus expected in Johnson County

A day of suspense, for many, will end with a night of celebration.

By PHILLIP O'CONNOR  
Staff Writer

Voters should get a respite today. If not from the steady barrage of political campaigning, at least from the steady drizzle. Forecasters predict mid-60 degree temperatures, cloudy skies, but no rain for Election Day. But

you might want to take an umbrella to any election night party. Showers are expected late.

Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Johnson County and in Missouri, and from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties.

Johnson County election officials expect that 85 percent or more of the county's registered voters will go to the polls today. Those unsure of where to vote should call their city hall or the Johnson County election board at 782-

3441. Or check the election office's Internet site at [www.jocoelection.org](http://www.jocoelection.org).

Wyandotte County election officials predicted about an 80 percent showing, and Kansas City officials projected a turnout of about half or slightly more of registered voters.

At the top of the ballot, voters will decide who will serve as president and vice president for the next four years.

Kansas voters will select U.S. See AREA, A-6, Col. 1

## Area voters to settle local races, issues

Continued from A-1

senators to replace Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum. And voters in the state's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Johnson County will choose a successor to U.S. Rep. Jan Meyers.

In addition, residents in five area counties — Johnson, Jackson, Clay, Platte and Wyandotte — are being asked to approve a one-eighth-cent sales tax to renovate Union Station and convert it into a science museum.

Voters in Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties will decide whom to send to the Kansas Senate in six contested races and to the Kansas House in 15 contested races. They also will decide whether to retain state Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and District Court judges.

A Johnson County Commission seat is on the ballot, as is the post of county treasurer. And voters in the De Soto School District will decide on a \$57.5 million bond issue for new schools.

Voters in eastern Johnson County and the part of Lake Quivira in Wyandotte County also will fill a seat on the Kansas Board of Education.

In Wyandotte County, voters will choose a county commissioner and a public administrator.

In Leavenworth County, voters will decide whether a 10-year, 1-cent sales tax should be levied to build a \$23.5 million jail and judicial center.

When the voting's done, Dole supporters in Johnson County will

begin gathering about 6:30 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel, 10100 College Blvd., for their Victory Party '96. Clinton backers will hold a rally beginning about 7 p.m. at Democratic Party headquarters, 7327 W. 79th St. in Overland Park.

In Missouri, voters will decide whether to raise the minimum wage by \$1.50 to \$6.25 an hour, with two more increases by the year 2000.

Five statewide posts will be filled — governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, treasurer and attorney general. Also, 27 local contested races for the Missouri House and three contested races for the Missouri Senate are on the ballot.

Six constitutional amendments are to be determined, including one involving term limits and one creating a Department of Aging.

Kansas City-area residents also will fill three U.S. House seats from Missouri, as well as a host of other issues such as school bonds, storm-water improvements and water projects.

Contested sheriffs' races are on the ballot in Jackson, Cass, Platte and Clay counties.

In Jackson County, Clinton supporters will assemble beginning at 7:30 p.m. for their Victory '96 party at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center, 2345 McGee St.

Dole supporters will gather at 6:30 p.m. at the Adam's Mark hotel, 1-70 at the Truman Sports Complex, for Republican Watch '96.

Staff Writer Lynn Franey contributed to this article.



BEVERLY BYNUM/The Star

Registered voters in Johnson County streamed into the election office in Olathe on Monday to cast their votes in advance.





Dave Kaup/The Daily News

His mother's desire to vote early didn't deter Alec Linebarger, 3, from his afternoon nap Friday as he sleeps on the shoulder of Deb Linebarger at the Johnson County Election Office.

# Voters line up to cast early ballots

Max Evans  
Daily News Reporter

Whew!

That exclamation could have come from several groups Friday at the Johnson County Election Office.

First there was the rush of early voters, anxious to beat election day lines by voting in advance. There were also the election office workers who have been juggling new requirements during an already-busy election season.

To say the office was busy would be an understatement. Early voters crammed the parking lot in search of a parking space. Once inside, the line of advance voters snaked through several rooms.

Behind the scenes things were every bit as busy. Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said employees had been working all week to distribute the 849 voting machines that must be in place around the county by Tuesday morning.

Add to that bedlam election worker training sessions, plus the approximately 3,000 people who came into the election office Wednesday and Thursday to vote. It's easy to see why the pace has been a bit hectic.

Schmidt explained that presidential elections are always busy in Johnson County. Election officials expect 55 percent of registered voters to turn out for this election.

In addition, the office is busy complying with two new mandates that went into law since the August primary: Advance voting and the National Voter Registration Act, which ensures that anyone who shows up in person to vote, whether or not they've

YOUR  
VOTEX

previously registered, must be allowed to vote. "We go ahead and register them and give them a provisional ballot," Schmidt explained.

The provisional ballot will not count in the gen-

eral election, she said.

Advanced voting has seemingly been a popular option. Schmidt calls it the "21 election days" because the regulation allows for voting 20 days in advance of election day.

Schmidt said there had been 65,852 advance ballots issued. By Thursday night, the election office had received 41,954 mail-in ballots, and 7,767 people had come by the office to vote in person.

Those figures are approximately 27 percent of the 246,499 voters registered in Johnson County. Schmidt said if voters keep coming, mail-in and advance ballots may account for as much as 30 percent of the total ballots cast.

"It's like having three major elections at one time," she said of the rush. "We have the largest mail ballot election that we've ever had, and the largest number of people voting (1.512) in one day in one place."

The mail-in and advance ballots don't get tallied until after the polls close Tuesday, which might mean shorter lines at the polls — but don't count on it.

Schmidt stressed that if voters plan to use mail-in ballots, they must be received at the election office by Tuesday.

"If you're worried about the post office getting them here on time, you might want to drop them off," she said.

Schmidt also noted that Johnson County

■ See VOTERS, Page 2A

## Voters line up to cast early votes

■ VOTERS, From Page 1A

is the first in the country to have sample ballots on the Internet. The sample ballot, which can be called up at [jocoelection.org](http://jocoelection.org), gives the voter an advance look at the candidates and issues. You cannot, however, cast your ballot over the Internet — not yet.

Remember, the polls open at 6 a.m. Tuesday, an hour earlier than usual, and close at the usual time of 7 p.m.

# Voters able to skirt long waits in line

By LAURIE J. SCOTT  
Staff Writer

It was much too quiet for one election volunteer at St. Thomas Aquinas High School.

"It was actually a lot more boring than I thought it'd be," said Shawnee Mission South senior Ashley Lloyd, who was sitting by the doors to greet voters.

But Johnson County election officials were delighted that it was not a repeat of 1992, when some people had to wait up to three hours to vote. They credited ad-

vance voting for alleviating the problem.

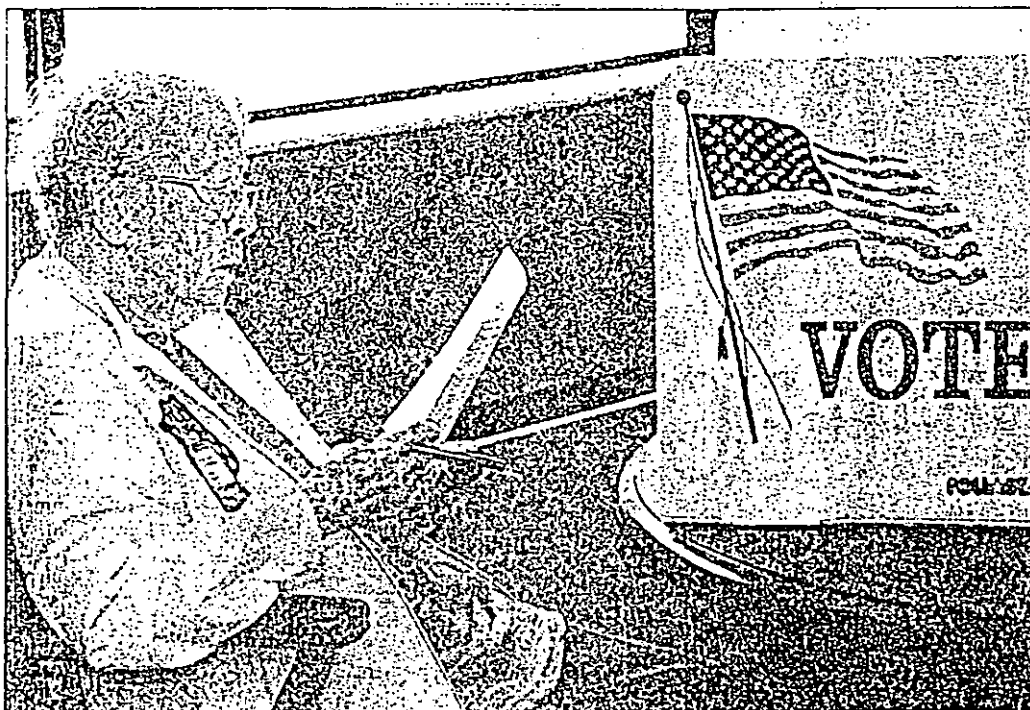
"The longest wait we've heard is 20 minutes, and that's not a problem at all," said Connie Schmidt, county election commissioner.

About 73,000 voters received advance ballots in Johnson County, which had a 77 percent voter turnout Tuesday.

The Kansas City Board of Election Commissioners said turnout was about 55 percent, lower than normal for a presidential election.

In 1988 and 1992, turnout was

See LONG, C-4, Col. 1



SUSAN PFANNMULLER/Special to The Star

Doris Wall filled out a provisional, hand-written ballot Tuesday at the Ward 1, Precinct 10 voting loca-

tion, Overland Park Place, 6555 W. 75th St. Wall had moved recently and wasn't listed on the roster.

## Long lines for voters are history

Continued from C-1

about 75 percent, said Sharon Turner, election board director.

Jackson County election officials expected a 75 percent turnout, while the turnout was about 70 percent in Wyandotte County. Clay County had a 50 percent turnout, and about 67 percent of registered Platte County residents

voted.

In addition to regular voting, students at several school districts in the area cast ballots Tuesday as part of Kids Voting USA, a program to encourage voter turnout.

In Missouri, students in Lee's Summit, Liberty and Park Hill districts, as well as the Ritenour district in the St. Louis area, chose Bob Dole over Bill Clinton. The

vote was 3,247 for Dole and 3,012 for Clinton.

In Kansas, students in the Kansas City, Kan., Turner and Piper districts backed Clinton 3,114 to 1,071.

Staff Writers Susan White, Roberta Johnson Schneider and Mike Kennedy contributed to this article.

## Voter turnout sets record

Steve Porter

Daily News Reporter

Stunned, but pleased, voters casting their ballots at the uncrowded polls Tuesday had 72,873 Johnson Countyans to thank for the short or non-existent lines.

A record turnout of 189,089 voters, some 76.7 percent of the 246,497 registered voters in Johnson County, cast their ballots, less than the more than 84 percent who turned out four years ago. More than one-third of all Johnson County voters had already voted before election day.

Among those pleased with the ease of voting was Dana Smith, who stepped into the voting booth at about 4:45 p.m. in the Ward 2, Precinct 1 polling place at Rolling Ridge Elementary School.

"We were very happy because we have come in here to see long lines," he said. He was the 364th voter to come in at the polling place Tuesday. Another 259 advance ballots already had been cast by those in the precinct by the noon Monday deadline. Smith, who has voted for more than four decades, said "This has been the best for a presidential election. This has been the best of *any* election."

At the Ward 4, Precinct 9 polling place at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 13145 Blackbob, Stephanie and Bryce Pepper took turns voting while the other sat in the car with their 10-month-old baby.

"We were expecting the wait to be a little bit longer, especially this late in the evening," Stephanie Pepper said after casting her ballot at 5:35 p.m. She had waited less than a minute for one of the three polling booths to become available.

Pete Heckmann was pleased with the lack of a line.

"I'm from Chicago, and it seems like there's always a line," he said.

Larry McDonald, supervising judge at the precinct, said that more than 70 percent of the precinct's voters had already cast their ballots. He said only 14 people waited in line at the busiest period in the morning.

Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt sat in her office after 4:30 p.m. Tuesday and could notice a palpable change in the atmosphere inside the building.

"It almost feels like we're coming down," she said. Advanced voting had been going on for the past three weeks, reaching a crescendo Saturday with 3,000 casting advance ballots at the election headquarters.

The Sun Newspapers November 6, 1996.

## Over one-third of county's voters use advance ballots

By Rea Willson

*Sun Correspondent*

Advance voting was wildly successful in Johnson County, with an estimated 35 percent of voters in Tuesday's general election casting ballots early.

Even Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt was surprised at the popularity of voting before Election Day.

According to Schmidt, 72,873 people cast ballots either by mail or in person at the election office. Schmidt had predicted about 60,000 would use the new system.

That's 30 percent of the registered voters and 35 percent of those who were expected to vote in the general election.

"Advance voting has been a big success," said Johnson County Administrator Gene Denton. "It's a challenge for us to keep up with it."

Advance voting is new to Kansas this year. In the August primary, Johnson County exceeded any other county in the state in advance voting turnout. About 12,000 people voted early then.

The biggest difference advance voting will make on Election Day will be the shorter lines. Four years ago, voters in some precincts waited hours to cast their ballots. This year, Schmidt hopes lines will be minimal.

By Tuesday morning, Schmidt had only 20 precincts out of 299 that had more than 800 people who could show up at the polls, primarily because of advance voting.

"We also had eight precincts with over 500 people who voted in advance," Schmidt said. Many others recorded at least 400 people voting before the election.

Schmidt's office was jammed over the weekend and on Monday morning with people wanting to cast ballots. On Monday, about 1,500 people came in to vote between 8 a.m. and noon, Schmidt said.

Altogether, 14,414 people went to the election office in Olathe to vote in advance, she said.

"No one waited any longer than 10 minutes," Denton said.

More than 58,000 people received mailed ballots. Schmidt did not have a final tally Tuesday of how many people actually returned mailed ballots.

Schmidt predicted at least 85 percent of the 246,003 registered voters would cast ballots in this election.

November 8, 1996 The Sun Newspapers

**☎ Super vote**

Being able to vote early in the presidential election was wonderful. It saved standing in line for many of us and especially for those with small children. Thank you. That was super.

THE OLATHE DAILY NEWS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8 1996

**What a difference**

I have just come from the county elections offices, after voting.

Although there was a large crowd at 8:15 a.m., the entire process only took fifteen minutes (five minutes to park).

Last week I renewed my car tags at the county auto tag center (one hour and fifteen minutes).

It seems to me that County managers should take a close look at the ladies at the election office. They were very courteous, helpful, upbeat and seemed to be enjoying their jobs.

This training should be canned and opened at the auto tag agency. Perhaps it would get in the air and infect the grouches hired to work with the public, who are trying to pay taxes. Maybe, the managers of the auto tag division should talk to the managers of the election office, because in their first try at mass on site voting; they got it right.

**PHIL SNYDER**

Olathe

## COMMENT

### Applauds early voting process

I want to suggest that appropriate media recognition be given to the management and staff of the Johnson County Election Commission for making the early voting process such a success.

The system had obviously been well thought out and there was an adequate staff on hand to make the program work even on the busy Saturday before the election. The staff was pleasant and friendly, from the man that had the unglamorous job of directing traffic to the smiling lady who was monitoring the ballot box.

The legislature made this process possible, and these people, along with their management, made it work. They did a great job and should be recognized!

Other government agencies should take notice of how well-organized, user-friendly operations really stand out and are appreciated.

Thomas C. Owens,  
Overland Park

### Voting prior to election day is best

In the left hand column on page two of today's *KC Star* were two brief articles on people "... filling out absentee ballots in Kansas ..." and "... nearly 700,000 voters requesting absentee ballots ..." in Oregon. Those are not absentee ballots. Those are specific requests by registered voters who are choosing the option to vote by mail or go to the election office, rather than waiting to go to the polls on election day. The concept of the absentee ballot, which required that a voter provide a specific, acceptable excuse for not voting on election day, no longer exists

in the states of Kansas and Oregon, as well as several other locales. Local editors need to catch up with the times.

My wife and I voted two weeks ago, and we have been able to ignore all the know-it-all pundits, nay-sayers, yea-sayers, TV ads and pompous editorials since then.

Voting by mail or at the election office — up to 20 days ahead of election day — is a

great idea. No election lines. Convenient. It bursts the media's bubble of self-importance. Maybe even the candidates will be more civil to each other, knowing that the last few days' mud slinging before election day will no longer be as important in trying to sway an electorate who has already voted. It might even cut election costs.

Robert Potty,  
Overland Park

The Sun Newspapers November 8, 1996

THE  
**SUN** **O**pinion

## Schmidt and staff get two thumbs up

Congratulations are in order for Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt and all her staff.

Advance voting made for smoother sailing at the polls on Tuesday. But there was nothing automatic about it.

Schmidt's people took hold of advance voting, publicized it, made it smooth and efficient, and offered Johnson Countians a pleasant alternative to election day voting.

Smooth advance voting was followed by a smooth election day Tuesday, and it is hard to imagine how things could have been handled any better.

Schmidt and all those who work under her direction really deserve a thanks for a job well done from Johnson Countians.



WEEKEND

NOVEMBER 9/10, 1996

THE OLATHE  
**DAILY  
NEWS**

TIMOTHY P. O'DONNELL, PUBLISHER

SCOTT SMITH, GENERAL MANAGER

CHUCK KURTZ, MANAGING EDITOR

GERALD HAY, NEWS EDITOR

## Great job

### ■ Advanced voting helps election office make great strides in handling Tuesday's results

Our hats go off to Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt, her staff, and the hundreds of volunteers who worked before and during the general election.

The way results were distributed between the primary election and the general last Tuesday was vastly improved. There are a number of reasons why the general election went so smoothly. The main reason is probably because 72,873 people, nearly half of the 190,146 Johnson County residents who voted Tuesday, took advantage of advanced voting.

That dramatically reduced the long lines of voters who snaked their way through polls, sometimes for more than three hours, during the presidential election four years ago. It was the first year of advanced voting and we expect even more people to take advantage of it in future elections.

There were 853 voting machines used in Johnson County. All of them were back at the Johnson County Election Office before 8:30 p.m. and the county's final results were being distributed less than an hour later. Although it takes only three seconds to process the tabulations on the machines, Schmidt said it takes longer to physically handle the voting machine cartridges that store all the votes.

Results were even on the Johnson County Election Office Internet home page in a timely manner. The office's first attempt at using the Internet during the primary election was a fiasco. We are sure that by the next election, Schmidt will have found a way to get the results on the Internet even faster.

Advanced voting, opening the polls an hour earlier, getting results out more quickly both physically and on the Internet, all these show some positive steps being taken by Schmidt and her staff at the Johnson County Election Commissioner's Office. We hope she will continue to go forward by refining and improving on what she has learned and the programs she has implemented this election year.

# Johnson County Election Office

## ANNUAL SUMMARY

1996

---

*“Serving the public by administering the election process  
and promoting voter participation”  
(adopted December 19, 1995)*

---

Our mission statement, developed by Election Office staff, with the assistance of volunteer facilitators from the Shawnee Mission School District, Dr. Gene Johnson and Ms. Cynthia Anderson, provided the direction and focus for 1996. It is reflected in the past year's accomplishments and in our plans for the future.

### “Administering the Election Process”

- Implemented new Advance Voting state law. **Advance Voting** provided registered voters the option of voting 20 days in advance of Election Day, by mail or in person at the Election Office. During the August primary election, 10,216 advance ballots were mailed to voters, and 2,446 voters opted to vote in person at our office. In November, those numbers grew to 57,236 mail ballots, and 14,414 in-person voters. The largest number of ballots mailed on a single day was 5,276 on October 21. In-person voting peaked on Saturday, November 2, when a record number of 3,187 voters marked their ballots in person at the Election Office. Advance voting was very popular during the November 5 election, with over 40% of the registered voters voting in advance in 81 of the 318 precincts. In 8 of these 81 precincts, over 50% of the voters cast their ballots in advance. Across the state, approximately 149,960 ballots were cast in advance, with Johnson County advance voters representing 44% of the statewide total.
- Implemented the **National Voter Registration Act**, which became effective in the State of Kansas on May 1, 1996. It can best be summarized as “fail-safe voting”. Election workers received new instructions in special training sessions conducted in June and July, 1996. The number of provisional or “challenged” ballots increased dramatically as a result of the NVRA. After the August 6, 1996 primary election, 1,046 provisional ballots were processed; and following the November 5, 1996 general election, 4,128 ballots were processed. These statistics compare to the total statewide provisional ballots for August - 5,893, and November - 15,601.

- Conducted four elections - February 27, city primary (7 candidates filed; 2 contests); April 2, city general (27 candidates filed; 20 contests); August 6, national, state, and county primary (1,134 candidates filed; 1,328 contests); November 5, national, state, and county general (100 candidates filed; 76 contests).
- Programmed and transported 1,825 voting machines to 299 polling places. The programming included a total of 407 ballot layouts, with 789 different styles.
- Dispatched 145 portable voting booths and ballot boxes to 106 locations during the November 5 general election.
- Recruited, trained, and scheduled 2,756 election workers.
- Processed a total of 1,268 candidate filings, consisting of 1,426 election contests.
- Programmed the vote tallying software to electronically store the paper ballots utilizing a total of 1,590 "internal computer" machines.
- Processed 71,394 voter registration cards. Voter registration grew from 213,610 in January, 1996, to 249,170 at year end. Johnson County now has the largest number of registered voters statewide.

### **"Promoting Voter Participation"**

- Established a homepage on the Internet. Voter education was provided through biographical data on candidates and sample ballot and polling place information.
- Created a public relations committee to focus on voter education through printed materials and timely news releases.
- Maintained 87 voter registration sites throughout the County, including the division of motor vehicles, city halls, public libraries, high schools, community centers, multi-service centers, banks, and other agencies.
- Participated in numerous civic organization events, i.e. senior citizen nutrition sites, chambers of commerce, boy scouts, girl scouts, adults with disabilities, Johnson County Informational Fair, local festivals and community events.
- Developed the "Partner in the Election Process" project, which reached 50 of the county's largest businesses to provide election information to their employees.
- Coordinated 466 volunteers, who donated 2,470 hours at 196 special voter registration drives.

- Developed a Student Outreach Program to promote voter education and student participation in the election process. The program included (1) presenting demonstrations and programs to over 5,000 students, kindergarten through Community College; (2) conducting student elections on electronic voting machines; (3) distributing birthday cards and voter registration cards for 18 year olds; (4) coordinating a visual arts poster contest in all county high schools to promote advance voting; (5) serving as election headquarters for the Kansas Student Mock Election, with participation from over 1,000 Kansas schools; and (6) developing a student field assistant program for high school students.

**This office is especially proud of the following significant accomplishments:**

- First election office in the State to post election results on the Internet.
- First election office in the State to establish a homepage on the Internet.
- First election office in the State (and possibly the nation) to implement a voter interactive sample ballot and polling place listing on the Internet.
- Winning visual arts poster, designed by Tienhy Huynh, was distributed throughout the county, and was selected to represent the Secretary of State's office statewide. Printing of the posters was provided through a cooperative partnership with the Shawnee Mission School District and The Kansas City Star.
- Initiated and established a partnership with Microsoft Corporation to create and develop a complimentary web site for Secretaries of State, and local election offices nationwide.
- Microsoft Corporation donated approximately \$50,000 in computer equipment as a corporate sponsor of the Student Outreach Program.
- Developed a training video for election workers through a cooperative partnership with the Shawnee Mission School District.
- Implemented simultaneous electronic faxing of election results to the Secretary of State's office and area news media.
- Reported election results by precinct, merging vote totals from machines and paper ballots for the first time.
- Developed bar code technology to update voter history on returned mail ballots.

- Increased visibility at election office and polling places through placement of directional signs, advance voting banner, flags, and “Vote Here” signs.
- Partnered with the Shawnee Mission School District to provide Braille Ballots upon request.
- Showcased our electronic voting technology to international visitors from Venezuela and Ukraine.

**Listed below is a sampling of public comments received throughout the year:**

“All your hard work and planning made this election a success. Voting has been made easy and fast. A special thank you from this working voter.”

“I love the web site for the Johnson County Election Commission.”

“Thank you so much for the website to download sample ballots and advance voting requests. There are a lot of people in my office that live in Missouri and feel very jealous because they don’t have this.”

“I hope that this new mail-in procedure makes me a better voter. I get intimidated in the voting booth—afraid I’m taking too much time. Now I’ll be able to study the ballot more carefully and review my choices.”

“We wanted to compliment you on putting together a very informative and very helpful web site. There are way too many choices confronting voters that they have had little or no exposure to. Thank you for taking the time to put together this very important site.”

“Being able to vote early in the presidential election was wonderful. It saved standing in line for many of us and especially for those with small children. Thank you. That was super.”

“Voting by mail or at the election office - up to 20 days ahead of election day - is a great idea. No election lines. Convenient.”

“The staff did a great job and should be recognized...other government agencies should take notice of how well-organized, user-friendly operations really stand out and are appreciated.”

“Although there was a large crowd at 8:15 a.m. at the election office, the entire process only took fifteen minutes (five minutes to park). The ladies at the election office were very courteous, helpful, upbeat and seemed to be enjoying their jobs. In their first try at mass on-site voting, they got it right.”

## “Serving the Public”

As we end this year, it is important to note that successful elections require the efforts of the community-at-large...from the 299 polling places that are located in churches, city buildings, and public schools, to partnering with the news media to provide accurate and timely information to the voting public, to the civic organizations that distributed information about advance voting, to the high school students that volunteered as field assistants on Election Day...the 1996 election process reflects that commitment to the community that can be found throughout Johnson County.

In all instances, serving the public with a smile has become a trademark of this office. Our motto, “*We Make YOUR Vote Count*”, is taken literally by all staff members. In closing, I must pay tribute to the entire full-time staff - Richard, Karen, Peggy, Gloria, Jeannine, Clarice, Eileen, Jeanie, Debbie, Sarah, Emery, Marco, Kay, Rose, and Marilyn; the “election” part-time staff members; and the hundreds of Election Day workers. These employees are committed to one goal - timely, accurate, and honest elections. Thank you for your dedication to this office and to Johnson County voters.

JOHNSON COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie J. Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'C' and 'S'.

Connie J. Schmidt  
Election Commissioner

(12/31/96)