



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

There's a new sheriff in town come January.

Kevin Mueller, who got on the ballot by petition, defeated incumbent Tim Sutherland 885-736 in Tuesday's General Election.

That race helped draw Chase County to the poll with 63 percent of eligible voters casting ballots in Tuesday's election.

Of the 2,616 eligible voters, 1,646 cast ballots in the election. This included 239 voters who cast early or absentee ballots. Statewide, voter turnout tallied only 43 percent.

The sheriff's race was just one of many races decided Tuesday on the local, state and federal levels.

The only other contested race at the county level saw incumbent Republican commissioner Don Weiss Jr., defeat Democratic challenger Joe Langin, 417-95 for the District 3 seat.

In the 44th District legislative race, incumbent Mark Christensen cruised to a wide margin of victory over former state senator and challenger Tom Baker of Trenton.

Christensen captured 61 percent of the vote by winning nine of the 10 counties in the district with 7,016 votes compared to 4,507 votes. Baker won Red Willow County with 52 percent of the vote.

City of Imperial

Dwight Coleman prevailed over Derek Russell in the Imperial mayoral race.

Coleman got 493 votes, or 61 percent, compared to Russell's 319 votes, representing 39 percent.

In the city council race, incumbent Chad Yaw was re-elected with newcomer John Arterburn winning the other seat over incumbent Lynn Luhrs and J.D. Reeder.

Arterburn garnered the most votes with 535 while Yaw finished with 424. Luhrs finished with 389 votes with Reeder following with 283 votes.

Incumbent Jeff Pribbeno and Blake Moreland were elected to the Imperial Airport Authority, with Bill Mollring finishing third.

There were no contested races for the Lamar or Wauneta village boards.

School boards

In the Chase County Schools board race, incumbents Penny Strand and Dirk Haarberg retained their seats while newcomers Jeff Olsen and Dan Reeves will take over the other two seats.

Strand garnered the largest number of votes with 753, followed by Olsen with 748, Haarberg 648, and Reeves 606. Kelly Clevenger was only seven votes away.

There was not a contested race for the Wauneta-Palisade school board.

In Perkins County, Ryan Hendricks, Scott Osler and Amy Kroeker won seats on the Perkins County Schools board.

Other regional races

Perkins County voters elected Brett Bullock of Madrid to the Upper Republican Natural Resources District board. He unseated incumbent Greg Pelster of Elsie by just 10 votes, 126-116.

There were no other contested races for the URNRD board.

Voters also decided races for the District 7 UNL Regents race and state board of education. In the Regents race, incumbent and board chair Bob Phares of North Platte defeated Frank Svoboda of Ogallala 55-45 percent. However, Svoboda carried Chase County.

Molly O'Holleran of North Platte defeated Cindi Allen of Ogallala 60-40 percent for the board of education.

State and federal races

On the state level, Republican incumbents Governor Dave Heineman, Secretary of State John Gale and Auditor Mike Foley all won re-election in contested races by a 70 percent margin or more.

Voters resoundingly selected Republican Don Stenberg as the new state treasurer.

A constitutional amendment to abolish the state treasurer position in four years failed statewide, 67-33 percent.

An amendment that would have allowed municipalities other sources of funding for development narrowly failed 50.6-49.4 percent.

Third District Congressman Adrian Smith (R) won reelection by grabbing 70 percent of the vote.

District Court Judge John Murphy, who sits in the 11th District, appears unofficially to have retained his seat 53-47 percent.

Murphy withstood a heavy campaign, primarily in Lincoln County, to remove him from the bench for his conduct.