

Incumbents fare well in El Dorado County

By Susan Wood and Kathryn Reed

While some longtime El Dorado County officeholders faced opposition for the first time in years, they all retained their seats.

The challenges had a lot more to do with political sparring on the West Slope and less about how well the incumbents were doing their job.



It was a slow start to voting at the Lake Tahoe Community College precinct.
Photo/Lesia Witkowsky

The heads of the four offices that were challenged were not leading departments that received unfavorable reviews by employees in a recent county survey.

Retaining their seats are: Auditor-Controller Joe Harn, District Attorney Vern Pierson, Recorder-Clerk Bill Schultz and Treasurer C.L. Raffety.

“I’ve lived in the county for 40 years. I’ve been doing a pretty good job for 20 years. I’m not surprised I got re-elected,” Harn told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Schultz found himself in the position of working election night and being on the ballot.

“You know, I do everything the same each time. I don’t touch anything,” he said shortly after posting the first wave of results about 8pm when 70.24 percent of mostly absentees had been counted.

Absentee ballots are a notable distinction of county voter behavior year after year. Of the 106,944 registered voters in El Dorado, 72,251 cast their ballots by mail. The whopping 67.56 percent of registered voters can help some call or predict election results before all the precincts report in.

Schultz and staff have worked to increase the trend with new ideas and funding to support that effort. El Dorado County not only received a \$1 million grant to fund a special website for military personnel to plug in their votes overseas. Now 13 other California counties are doing the same.

“We’ve heard nothing but good things about it,” the registrar said.

Call it tradition that El Dorado County voters may boast a better turnout than the dismal one predicted up and down California in this primary election – with some estimates as low as 25 percent.

“We’re doing a little better, and I hope it stays that way. We’re usually ahead of the pack on that. I was hoping for 40 percent, but I think I way overestimated,” Schultz said.