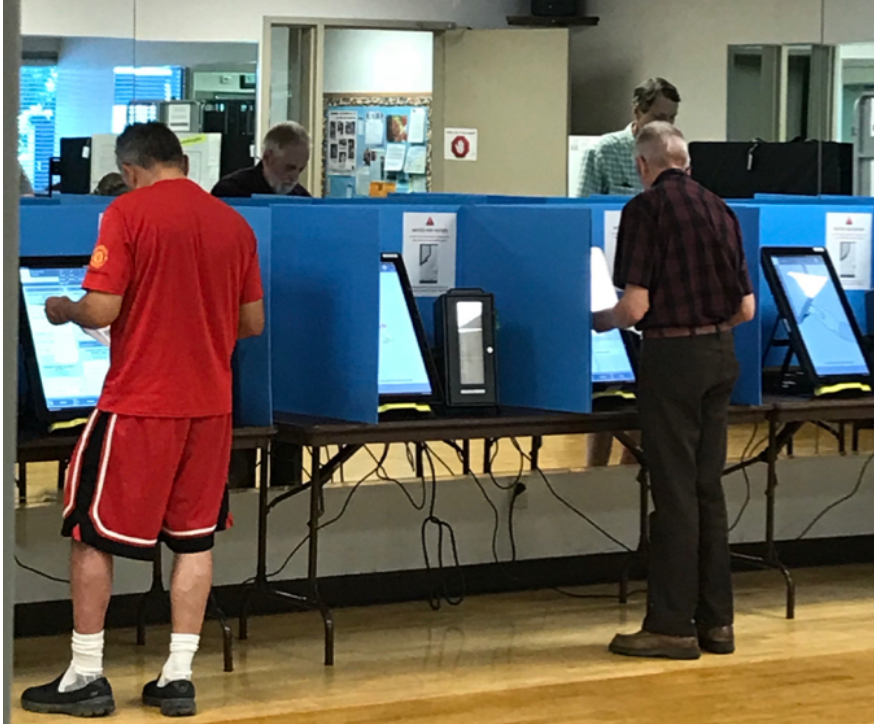


# Rice, Engels win DC Commission primary



Voters on June 12 cast ballots at Kahle Community Center. Photo/LTN

**Updated 11:05pm:**

**By Susan Wood**

Douglas County Board of Commissioners will see two new faces come November for seats representing the lake and the valley.

Deputy constable and Round Hill General Improvement District board member Wesley Rice has 52.69 percent of the vote amounting to 4,420 ballots cast in Lake Tahoe's District 4 seat to be vacated by Nancy McDermid. His opponent, Janet Murphy – an engineer-turned-government consultant, brought in 3,968 votes at 47.31 percent.

"I'm very pleased. We fought a clean campaign. We were very respectful. I just came out and said why we were the best

choice, and the people responded,” Rice told *Lake Tahoe News*. Screaming could be heard in the background of the phone call, as he attended an election party with his friends.

The Republican candidate will face undeclared Kristi Kandel, a real estate consultant, in November during the general election.

Rice plans to approach his race with Kandel with a continuation of his principles and much talk of the role of vacation home rentals at the lake. He believes they differ, something Rice would like to stabilize since the “pendulum has swung” from rare intervention to overbearing enforcement. He cited the \$1,000 parking citation the city of South Lake Tahoe handed down.

The shocker for the June 12 primary was the race for the valley’s District 2 seat – with political newcomer John Engels beating incumbent Steven Thaler. Engels garnered 52.57 percent with 4,445 votes over Thaler’s 47.43 percent with 4,011 votes.

Engels will appear on the November general election ballot unopposed.

“It’s been a lot of work. One common denominator we’ve encountered throughout the campaign – all told me they wanted to maintain the rural character of our area,” Engels told *LTN*. “Look at what’s happened to the lake – all that congestion.”

Engels ran on shying away from the county’s seemingly pro-growth stance he said his opponent has supported.

The growth of Douglas County is matched by its political activism.

Despite having less population than neighboring Carson City, Douglas touts more active voters. Its 33,442 voters amount to about 4,000 more people practicing their civic duty. The capital city houses about 7,000 more people than Douglas.

Active voting is a relative term. Traditionally, the primaries don't pull the kind of numbers that general elections do. But this year elections officials witnessed a spike in activity compared to most.

California's primary staged a week ago pulled in at least a 40 percent turnout, with El Dorado County coming in at a strong 48.3 percent. Nevada's last primary in 2016 brought out 34.5 percent registered voters. This year's stands at 39.72 percent.

County Clerk Kathy Lewis, the registrar of voters, expected a greater return compared to two years ago. Nevada has accelerated the process with procedures and protocols to spur the voter turnout.

With early voting starting a few decades ago, Nevadans wanting to cast their ballot as soon as they get it may do so. This year brings the first primary in which seniors ages 65 and older as well as the disabled may elect to have a permanent absentee ballot, without the elections department needing to ask.