

Oregon makes history with first mail-in ballot

By Anna Seeley
For the Emerald

Oregon's place in history is now irrevocably set: Not only is it serving as one of the few crucial swing states, but has garnered national attention for conducting the first-ever all mail-in ballot system.

It is still debatable, however, whether this year's tense election or the convenience of mail-in ballots brought out more voters than ever before.

Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury projected an 84 percent voter turnout for this year's election, and by press time, 72 percent of registered voters' ballots had been cast. As of Nov. 6, 1,183,902 ballots had been returned, 114,878 coming from Lane County. In the 1998 general election, there was only a 59 percent turnout, with 1,160,400 ballots being cast.

Candidates and staff members of various campaigns contribute this high percentage of turnout to it being a presidential election year and the large number of initiatives on the ballot.

"There is always a larger turnout during Presidential elections. There is also a large number of ballot measures on this year's ballot," said Phil Barnhart, the Democratic candidate for the District 40 race. "We are facing enormously

destructive ballot measures, that if passed, Oregon would cease to be Oregon. A lot of voters know that."

Dr. Bill Young, the Republican candidate for the District 40 race, agreed.

"We had a greater turnout in this election than past elections," Young said. "This is because of the motivation that this state may have great impact on the national ballot."

State Sen. Tony Corcoran, D-Cottage Grove, said the voter turnout for this year is remarkable.

"For 17 days, people have been voting," Corcoran said. "More people voted earlier than they expected."

The strategies to encourage voters to get out and cast their ballot consisted of many phone calls, walking door to door and waving to motorists as they drove by.

"We were walking door to door for days," said Ron Craig, Democratic campaign staff member. "It was scary because 50 percent of [people] we talked to were going to mail their ballots in on Sunday. We had to tell them they needed to drop it off themselves. It's too bad because a lot of elderly people couldn't get out to vote, and we probably lost a lot of votes because of it."

Volunteers spent many

hours walking door to door collecting ballots and making phone calls to encourage people to get out and vote. Volunteers also worked on the Get Out the Vote campaign, which was aimed at getting college students to vote.

"We bugged a lot of people," Barnhart said. "The earlier people voted, the less calls they would get. Registered voters have no excuse this year for not voting."

The mail-in ballot system also played a positive role in getting people to vote, although many candidates had problems with this system of voting.

Politicians had mixed reactions to the mail-in system of voting.

Jeff Miller, Republican candidate for the District 41 race, said this year's election was long and tiring because of the mail-in ballot system.

"We had to constantly campaign because we didn't know when people were going to cast their votes," Miller said.

Corcoran said that while the standard assumption is that mail-in ballots increase voter turnout, that might not always be the case.

"It is hard to analyze for sure, but we are watching [its effect] closely," Corcoran said. "This is a new world and is happening for the first time."



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Eugene resident Susan Connolly wears political buttons at the Lane County Fairgrounds Tuesday evening.

Students congregate to watch election results roll in

Students gathered in the EMU Fishbowl and Allen Hall to watch the election unfold

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

More than 400 students stayed in the EMU until the doors were locked Tuesday night waiting for the results of the presidential race between Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

The UO Students Rock the Vote 2000 Election Night Party, sponsored by the EMU Student Activities Resource Office, started at 6 p.m., but students parked themselves in front of the large-screen television in the EMU Fishbowl as early as 5 p.m.

As students mingled with each other, engrossed in commentary, they started out with high energy and nervous anticipation for the election results. But as the night wore on, students grew impatient.

Jeff Wiklander, a freshman business major and Republican, said despite the excitement, he felt outnumbered. The crowd seemed to

favor Gore more than Bush, booing each time Bush won a state.

"Gore was talking about how his campaigning would help senior citizens, so I was a little surprised that the senior citizens in Arizona pulled for Bush," Wiklander said.

Wiklander said he would be surprised if Bush won Oregon because a Democrat has claimed the state in the last four elections.

Most of the crowd in the Fishbowl seemed primarily interested in the presidential race, but a few state measures held the interest of students. "None of the measures seem to directly have an impact on my life as the presidency and Measure 9 do right now," said Wayne Bund, a sophomore theater arts major.

Martha Mosqueda, a freshman undeclared major, said she was expecting the presidential race to be close and knew it would come down to a few electoral votes.

Mosqueda said she was frustrated that Nader took votes away from Gore, but she added that if Nader wasn't there, the country wouldn't be a democracy.

Mosqueda said she was comforted by Hillary Clinton's and Vice Presidential candidate Joe Lieberman's wins for U.S. Senate seats.

A lot of Democrats said Clinton's win will give her a chance to speak about issues such as women's rights and national health care.

Jaime Crandall, a freshman the-

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Ken Stamper
senior, sociology major

ater arts major, said Bush is apparently not thinking of the long term when it comes to issues such as a woman's right to choose, military spending and the environment.

"Gore would have been better on environmental issues, especially

because he has proposed such things as electric cars and other alternative forms of energy," Mosqueda said.

Ken Stamper, a senior sociology major and Republican who favored Gore, said, "I am surprised [Oregon] is such a battleground. Usually by the time you get to the West Coast, the election is decided."

Hours before the presidential race turned into a dead heat, the Public Relations Students Society of America sponsored a discussion about the influence of the media and public opinion on the candidates and issues.

The group, led by political science professor Jerry Medler, met at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in Allen Hall.

More than 30 people watched televisions tracking the candidates' progress. The tight results and predictions from the New York Times served as a basis for the discussion.

Medler spoke about the media's influence on public opinion and the public's lack of knowledge about the Electoral College.

The candidate who wins the popular vote in a state gets the elec-

toral votes for that state, and thus the electoral vote ultimately decides the presidency. Oregon has seven electoral votes.

"Today is a unique day in our lifetime due to the attention given to the Electoral College," Medler said, pointing to CNN's election coverage on the television screen. "What you see is an accumulation of information from east to west."

Medler said Bush started with his home state of Texas as a base, but used a "little state" strategy, while Gore campaigned the heaviest in and won states with more electoral votes such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois.

Medler also said this year the wait for Washington's decision took so long because half the state used absentee ballots.

He said people have termed Nader a "spoiler" because they believe support for Nader is taking votes away from Gore and possibly throwing the election to Bush.

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Republicans will keep majority in both House and Senate

By Alan Fram
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Republicans retained their hold on the Senate for two more years Tuesday though by a narrower margin, as Democrats boasted history-making triumphs by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in New York and a dead governor in Missouri.

Remarkably, joining Mrs. Clinton in the Senate winners' circle was Jean Carnahan, widow of Missouri Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan, killed three weeks ago in a plane crash. In perhaps Election Day's most poignant drama, he outpolled GOP Sen. John Ashcroft anyway, and his wife has said she will accept the new governor's appointment to the job.

"We remain heirs of a legacy, heirs of a dream," Mrs. Carnahan, 66, told her followers. "On this night, I pledge to you, rather, let's pledge to each other, never let the fire go out."

No one had ever posthumously won election to the Senate, though voters on at least three occasions sent deceased candidates to the House. Some Republicans have said they might challenge the Carnahan victory, asserting that the late governor was no longer a state resident.

But for now, the Carnahan win assured Democrats at least 47 seats — more than enough to use the minority's power to wreak havoc with the GOP's legislative agenda by forcing procedural delays.

By David Esposito
AP Political Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans retained control of the House early Wednesday by the slimmest of margins, barely turning back a ferocious, well-financed Democratic bid to gain a majority.

"We figured it was going to be close," said Speaker Dennis Hastert — and it was.

Republicans picked up six Democratic seats in scattered states, enough to renew their hold for two more years. But their majority shrank when they gave back eight other seats elsewhere, including four in California.

On a night extremely kind to incumbents, only three lawmakers lost their seats, although a handful of others remained in races

too close to call.

A half-dozen seats remained in doubt, some of them agonizingly close.

Shortly before 4 a.m. in the East, the national trend showed Republicans had won 218 seats and were leading for 4 more, with 218 required to seal control.

Democrats had won 209 seats, and were leading for 2 more.

In addition, each party could count the support of one independent.

Republicans had won six seats formerly held by Democrats, and were leading for two more.

Democrats had won eight seats formerly in GOP hands, and were leading for one more.