

County voters go to polls

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JEFFERSON — Jefferson County-area voters were going to the polls today to cast ballots in primary elections and an operational referendum.

With a state Supreme Court and only a handful of other primaries on the ballot, overall turnout was sluggish, as expected. However, that was not the case in the School District of Jefferson, where residents were going to the polls to cast ballots in the operational referendum that also was on the ballot.

“It’s been steady,” Jefferson City Clerk Rita Baumann said about 8:30 this morning. “It’s been busy and we’re getting a lot of registrations at this time.

“If it wasn’t for the school, it wouldn’t be busy at all,” she added. “The school referendum is making it very busy. At 7 a.m. we had lineups and that’s good.”

She added that many people like to vote before they start work, so the polls were very busy then.

“It was very good and we’re happy to see that,” Baumann said. “The first hour we had 106 (voters). That’d be 4 percent (of eligible voters in the City of Jefferson) in one hour and that’s pretty darn good.”

She noted that the figure did not include absentee ballots.

The referendum question on the ballot reads: “Shall the School District of Jefferson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin, be authorized to exceed the revenue limit specified in Section 121.91, Wisconsin Statutes, by up to \$775,000 per year for a period of three years on a non-recurring basis beginning with the 2016-17 school year, and ending with the 2018-19 school year, for the purpose of maintaining the current level of educational programs and staff?”

In the City of Watertown, where there was a three-way primary for mayor, turnout was steady, as well.

“We do have four districts here at city hall,” Watertown City Clerk Cindy Rupprecht said. “We’ve had a pretty good stream of voters, but we typically do.”

She continued: “With the mayoral primary, I think we will have a higher turnout than what there will be statewide. I know statewide they’re predicting about 10 percent. I would expect us to be somewhere between 20 and 25 percent.”

In Fort Atkinson, however, where the high court primary was the only thing on the ballot, turnout was slower.

“Polls opened at 7 a.m. We had approximately 15 voters right at 7 a.m.,” City Clerk Michelle Ebbert reported.

“They were in and out at a decent rate, considering we had one position on the ballot, but I still want to encourage everyone to get out and vote.”

Turnout was at 2 percent by 9 a.m., with 181 voters.

Also on the ballot was a primary for the District 10 seat on the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

Incumbent Supervisor Al Counsell filed noncandidacy papers and is not running for a new term.

Newcomers Mark Groose, Marilyn Buelow and former supervisor Lloyd Zastrow was facing off to narrow the field to two candidates for the April 5 general election.

There also was a three-way primary for Walworth County Circuit judge.