

No excuse not to vote in Madison County says county clerk

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
October 11 2016 6:53 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Voting is easier than ever for registered and yet-to-be registered voters in **Madison County**, said **Madison County Clerk Debra Ming-Mendoza**.

Early voting, which is known as "in-person absentee voting," began on Sept. 29. Different sites around the county will start hosting early voting on Oct. 24. If someone in Madison County has yet to register to vote, Ming-Mendoza said voting registration can be done up until **Election Day**. The last date to register to vote with the deputy

registrar, however, is today, Oct. 11. She said, starting Wednesday, Oct. 12, there is a "grace period" of registration done through the county clerk's office. When registering during that period, however, an individual must place his or her vote at the same time as registration.

"We can do that all the way through election day," Ming-Mendoza said.

As of now, Ming-Mendoza said there are approximately 179,000 registered voters in Madison County. During the March 15 primaries, she said 72,740 came out to the polls. This number is compared to 2014's dismal showing of 27,000. If the primaries are any indication, voting on this year's Election Day may be crowded. Because of this, Ming-Mendoza is doing everything she can to encourage voters in Madison County to turn to early voting.

"We're trying to minimize long waits, long lines and people feeling like they can't vote, because they waited for the last minute," she said. "We hope voters go to early voting sites to avoid standing in line to vote."

If voters will be out of town for Election Day, Ming-Mendoza said she may mail ballots up until Nov. 3.

"There is absolutely no reason a voter in Madison County cannot vote," she said.

Currently, Ming-Mendoza is preparing as many as 70,000 voter guides to be sent throughout Madison County households. The voting guide includes all the issues in the county. Besides the highly-contentious presidential race, Ming-Mendoza said there are plenty of issues, which should bring people to the polls.

"There is a county referendum asking voters to make a decision to lower the general tax levy from 25 cents to 20 cents," she said. "There are many contested county board races, there are a few appellate judges on the ballot. There are a lot of issues and a lot of contested races that absolutely should drive people to the polls."

Another issue on the mind of many voters is hacking. Ming-Mendoza said the Madison County voting system is both "hack-proof" and "disaster-proof." She said the voting system is based entirely on paper ballots in 225 precincts.

"We are paper-based and disaster-proof," she said. "We do not transmit any results over the internet. The possibility of hacking is nill, because we don't do it."

On Nov. 8, polls across Madison County will open at 6 a.m. and will stay open until 7 p.m. Ming-Mendoza said three additional locations will be open on Election Day in order to contain the inevitable overflow.

"We'll have a site available for people, that is hopefully geographically close," she said. "People can register to vote and vote on site on Election Day as well."



Locations for early voting in Madison County are as follows:

Alton Law Enforcement Center, located at 1700 E. Broadway in **Alton**

Madison County Administration Building, located at 157 N. Main St. 1st Floor in Edwardsville

Granite City Township Building, located at 2060 Delmar Ave., Office B in **Granite City**.

Bethalto Village Hall, located at 213 N. Prairie St. in **Bethalto**

Collinsville Senior Citizen Center, located at 420 E. Main St. in **Collinsville**

Latzer Memorial Public Library, located at 1001 9th St. in **Highland**

Ahlemeyer Atrium at the **Trimpe Advanced Technology Center**, located at **Lewis and Clark Community College** in **Godfrey**

Madison Fire Station, located at 1800 3rd St. in **Madison**

Troy City Hall, located at 116 E. Market St. in **Troy**

Wood River Township Hall, located at 33 S. 9th St. in **East Alton**

Willow Room at the **Morris University Center**, located at **Southern Illinois University** in Edwardsville