

What to know before you vote: Expect lines

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - With more than 30,000 people taking advantage of early voting, **Madison County Clerk Debra Ming-Mendoza** expects Tuesday to be bursting with people practicing democracy.

With more than 180,000 registered voters in the county, Ming-Mendoza said the majority of voters have not yet cast a ballot, meaning they would most likely do so Tuesday. With each voter taking approximately one minute to process, Ming-Mendoza said voters should prepare for lines Tuesday.

"At the precincts tomorrow, you need to be prepared to wait," she said. "There is a strong possibility people may be waiting for a while."

During early voting outside Ming-Mendoza's office, she said people waited as long as 90 minutes, yet no one complained to her about the wait. She said there was a line out the door Monday morning, as the **Madison County Administration Building** was one of the last locations open Monday for early voting. Early voters could cast ballots at the building until 7 p.m. Monday. The **Alton Law Enforcement Center**, located at 1700 E. Broadway and the **Granite City Township Building**, located at 2060B Delmar Ave. were the other two locations allowing early voting on Monday.

Those who are not yet registered to vote may register at their polling place until polls close Tuesday. Ming-Mendoza said those wanting to register Tuesday must bring two forms of identification, with one having an individual's name and current address.

While this election year has not yet broken any **Madison County** early voting records, Ming-Mendoza said it is "on par" with the 2008 presidential election, and has already surpassed the 2012 presidential election.

"There is a lot of interest, so we're grateful people have taken early voting and vote-by-mail options," she said.

Approximately 9,000 people have taken the vote-by-mail opportunity.

Besides the presidential race between **Republican Donald Trump**, **Democrat Hillary Clinton**, **Libertarian Gary Johnson** and **Green Party candidate Jill Stein**, several localized elections are also heavily-contested on the Madison County ballot.

The maximum tax rate for the entire county being lowered is on the ballot. Voters can choose to lower the possible rate from 0.25 percent of the equalized assessed value (EAV) of their properties to 0.2 percent. Other tax referendums, including for the **Cottage Hills, Fosterburg and Godfrey Fire Protection Districts** are also on ballots for people within those districts.

Another hot-button issue on the ballot for residents of **Wood River**, **East Alton** and **Hartford** is the proposition for school consolidation. If it passes, the **Wood River**

/Hartford, East Alton and East Alton Wood River High School districts will be dissolved and reintegrated into one consolidated district.

The **Edwardsville School District** is also asking for their maximum annual tax rate to be raised from the current 2.15 percent to 2.7 percent of property owners' EAV. This proposition comes in the wake of a proposed bond measure being forced to a ballot by community petitions. The district declined putting the bond measure on the ballot and instead chose to pursue a tax proposition.

Many Madison County offices are running unopposed, with the notable exception of Madison County Board Chairperson and Madison County State's Attorney. Current **Madison County Treasurer Kurt Prenzler** is running against current **Madison County Chairperson Alan Dunstan**. Prenzler is a Republican and Dunstan is a Democrat. Incumbent **Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons**, a Democrat, is running against former public defender and **Republican Ron Williams**.

Several county board positions are also being contested on the ballot, and the retentions of **Judge A. Andreas Matoesian** and **Judge William A. Mudge** are also up for a public vote.