

Madison County reports ‘slow turnout’ so far at polls; clerk hopes pace picks up with key issues at stake

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Today is Election Day throughout Illinois and a check of Madison and Jersey counties reveals a mixed turnout so far.

Madison County Clerk Debbie Ming-Mendoza reports turnout as “very slow,” so far and a quick survey of a polling place in Madison County discovered the same thing.

“Unfortunately, people see it as less important than the presidential elections,” she said. “I think the weather is also keeping some indoors. The shame is these types of elections are most important locally.”

The election today will directly influence the local population now and in the future. Now is the time for locals to have a say in how the political future shapes out in their own areas, Ming-Mendoza said.

“We have our mayors, trustees, city aldermen, school board, library trustees and fire district trustees all up for election throughout the county. The people who govern our lives locally have the least attended voter turnout and that is truly a shame.”

In early voting that ended this past Saturday, only 3,400 voted out of 174,000 in Madison County, Ming-Mendoza said, which is roughly 2 percent of the population.

“It is very expensive to put on this election,” Ming-Mendoza said. “We pay 1,100 election judges at polling locations. We also pay rent and just the expense of the election itself leasing equipment and printing the paper ballots. It is a lot of work for three months leading up to today.”

Ming-Mendoza said she thought Madison County would be lucky to have a 15-16 percent turnout today. Madison County looks at previous elections around the same time to judge how many ballots to print. Ming-Mendoza said she was uncertain whether or not a lower voter turnout will help the incumbent candidates or those challenging them.

“It will be interesting on how lower voter turnout might change the face of local government,” she said.

Jersey County Deputy Clerk Kim Skinner said there had not been many calls into the office about the election this morning, but there were 38 absentee ballots turned in on Monday.

The deputy clerk reported that Jersey County Clerk Pam Warford was out visiting polling places on Tuesday morning.

Polls will remain open until 7 tonight throughout the region.