

Americans prepare for Election Day

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Voters in Montgomery County will join the rest of America in casting ballots next Tuesday, Nov. 5 for the general election.

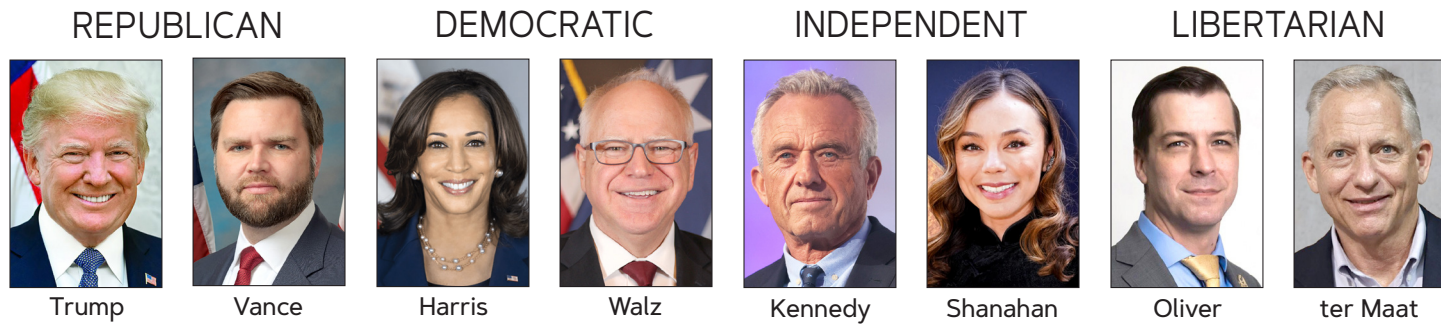
In Kansas, polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Obviously, the race for the U.S. presidency highlights this year's election. In Kansas, there are four candidates seeking the nation's highest office. The presidential candidates and their vice presidential running mates are:

- Republican: Donald J. Trump and J.D. Vance
- Democratic: Kamala Harris and Tim Walz
- Libertarian: Chase Oliver and Mike ter Maat
- Independence: Robert Kennedy Jr. and Nicole Shanahan.

The race for the presidency is probably the most-watched in the nation's history, as it pits the two top contenders: former President Donald J. Trump as the Republican nominee and current Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic Party nominee. Harris was thrust into the race late in the campaign when President Joe Biden chose to remove himself out of contention. That gave Harris only three months to be on the campaign trail.

The race for the U.S. presidency is not based on the popular vote but, as the U.S. Constitution provides, through the electoral college process. The entirety of Kansas' popular vote will guide the state's designated electoral votes, which are six (electoral votes are based on the number of U.S. senators and U.S. House of Representatives in each state). Those electoral votes are then cast in December based on the Nov. 5 general election

Candidates for U.S. President-Vice President



vote. The electoral votes are then counted in a session of Congress in early January. The candidate who receives at least 270 electoral votes is declared the winner.

U.S. House race

Montgomery County is in the 2nd Congressional District of Kansas. There are three candidates seeking the U.S. House seat that is being vacated by the current office holder: U.S. Rep. Jake LaTurner, a Republican from Topeka and a Galena native.

Seeking the seat are Independence native and former Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt as the Republican nominee, former U.S. House of Representative Nancy Boyda of Baldwin City, Kan., as the Democratic nominee, and John Hauer of Topeka as the Libertarian candidate.

The overall winner in the 2nd Congressional District will assume the oath of office for a two-year term in early January.

Legislative choice

There is only one contested race involving a state office on the Nov. 5 general election ballot. The race for the Kansas Senate, 15th District, will see incumbent officer holder Virgil Peck, a

Republican from Havana, being challenged by Jerry Reeves, a Democratic Party nominee from Altamont.

Both men were unopposed in their primary races.

The 15th Senate District includes a majority of Montgomery and Labette counties and the entirety of Neosho County.

The only portion of Montgomery County not included in the 15th District is the northwest corner, which includes Elk City and much of Louisburg Township. Residents in that area in the 14th District, which is represented by State Sen. Michael Fagg, a Republican from El Dorado. Fagg is unopposed in his re-election bid for the 14th District.

Also unopposed in their races are State Rep. Ron Bryce of Coffeyville, a Republican seeking re-election to the 11th District in the Kansas House of Representatives, and State Rep. Doug Blex of rural Independence, a Republican who also is unopposed in his re-election bid for the 12th District seat.

County offices

There are no contested races on the election ballot for county offices.

However, an effort is underway for a write-in cam-

paign for the office of county clerk.

Ami Standridge of Independence was the declared winner for the Republican nomination for Montgomery County Clerk. However, an organization known as Concerned Citizens of Montgomery County have campaigned for the write-in candidacy of Misty Wilson of Independence for the county clerk seat. Wilson lost to Standridge in the August primary election.

The Concerned Citizens of Montgomery County have touted Wilson's experience as a deputy county clerk.

Standridge enters the political ring as a newcomer and having not had any previous experience in the county clerk's office. Standridge is employed in the Montgomery County Health Department.

Other uncontested county races will be:

- 14th Judicial district, Division 3 judgeship: Jeffrey W. Gettler, Republican.
- County sheriff: Ron Wade, Republican.
- County treasurer: Mandi Hargis, Republican.
- County attorney: Melissa Johnson, Republican.
- Register of Deeds: Marilyn Calhoun, Republican.

those two wards.

City councilors serve two-year terms.

Coffeyville sales tax

Coffeyville city voters will confront a special election question concerning continuation of a one-half cent sales tax on the Nov. 5 ballot.

Coffeyville city commissioners are asking city voters to retain a one-half cent (0.5%) sales to be used to finance the costs of general transportation improvements throughout the community, including, but not limited to, streets, curbing and sidewalks.

An existing sales tax devoted to that purpose will expire on March 31, 2025. If voters chose to retain the sales tax, it will remain on the local tax rolls on and after April 1, 2025. If voters reject the sales tax, then the local sales tax will be lowered by one-half cent . . . and the sales tax revenue that has been dedicated for street upgrades will be removed from the city expenditures.

City commissioners advise that the sales tax question does not represent a new sales tax. It is a continuation of an existing transportation sales tax that has been on the books since 2015.

Commissioners also said the sales tax is paid not only by local residents through the goods and services they purchase but also by visitors who purchase items or use local services. It's estimated that about 33 percent of the sales taxes collected within Coffeyville are paid by visitors.

Commissioners also said the sales tax revenue will stay in Coffeyville and be used for transportation-related improvements throughout the city.

Court of Appeals judges

The Nov. 5 general election ballot will ask Kansas voters whether to retain several members of other Kansas Court of Appeals, including judges Sarah E. Bruns of Olathe, G. Gordon Atcheson of Overland Park, Karen Arnold-Burger of Olathe, Rachel L. Pickering of Topeka, Angela D. Noble of Salina, and Kathryn Gardner of Topeka.

Caney City Council

When Caney city voters cast ballots in the Nov. 5 general election, they will be confronted with four council positions.

The Caney City Council has one person from each ward to serve a two-year term.

- On the ballot are:
- Ward 2: Incumbent councilor Kenith Butts.
 - Ward 3: Incumbent councilor Debra Wood and challenger Elizabeth Burch.
- No persons from wards 1 or 4 filed for candidacy. Those current officer holders are Val Hurd, ward 1; and Addie Traxson, ward 4.

Because no one filed for those two seats, the winner will be determined by the most write-in votes from each of

Hand delivery of early ballots to county election office encouraged

TOPEKA — Secretary of State Scott Schwab, who is the state's chief elections officer, is encouraging voters who are casting advanced ballots in the Nov. 5 general election to hand deliver those ballots — if they can — to their county clerk's office.

If not, those advanced ballots should be mailed by Nov. 1 due to possible delays in mail processing.

Schwab, a Republican, en-

couraged Kansans to avoid mailing delays by hand-delivering ballots to a county election office or a ballot drop box prior to the Nov. 5 election.

The secretary of state said an alternative would be for voters to place their ballot in the mail by Nov. 1 or seven days ahead of the Nov. 8 deadline in state law for counties to accept postmarked ballots.

"We are encouraging voters who vote by mail to use

a more secure way of returning your ballot to the county election office, if possible," Schwab said.

Following the August primary election, Schwab sounded an alarm in September by disclosing results of a survey of Kansas' 105 county election offices.

The survey showed as many as 1,000 mail-in ballots were received by county election offices within the three-

day, post-election grace period established by state law, but were rejected because they lacked a postmark to prove they were mailed prior to close of polls at 7 p.m. Election Day. Without an official postmark, the Kansas ballots couldn't be counted.

Schwab released a letter he sent to the U.S. postmaster highlighting a "troubling pattern" associated with USPS' handling of mailed ballots.

He said it was "unacceptable that voters, who follow the rules for requesting, voting and returning their mail ballot, are disenfranchised by the USPS."

Schwab later said he had spoken with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy about operational failures in handling Kansas ballots in August.

"I had a productive conversation with Postmaster General DeJoy," Schwab said. "He

assured me that the USPS will implement new measures to prevent similar issues in the upcoming general election."

The 2017 Kansas Legislature created the three-day window for post-election acceptance of mailed ballots. The motivation was to account for mail delays involving ballots from military personnel, but state law now allows for electronic transfer of those ballots.

Sample ballots can be viewed via VoterView

Any registered voter in Kansas can view a sample of their specific ballot for the Nov. 5 general election through the Kansas Secretary of State's election website: votekansas.gov.

The official website includes numerous features about the electoral process.

Of most importance to voters is the feature called "VoterView." By clicking on VoterView, a registered voter can type his or her name as well as his or her birth date in the applicable fields. A sample of that voter's ballot will then be available to preview. The sample ballot

will be the same as what will be given to the voter at her or her polling site.

VoterView also includes the polling address (with map) for that voter.

The website also allows registered voters to see a history of their previous election participation.

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