

Winners: Nichols, Hansen, parks tax

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

A boring ballot and lousy weather are being blamed for poor voter turnout in Tuesday's Oakland County primary election.

The pace was so slow that one disappointed incumbent, Commissioner George Berton Jackson, R-Birmingham, sees it as a major reason for his defeat. "People just didn't get out and vote," he said sadly.

"The heat and late afternoon storm killed off a lot of voters," explained County Clerk Lynn D. Allen, who like most major officeholders ran unopposed in Tuesday's Republican primary. "And there was a lack of real significant issues."

BUT MUCH voter apathy seemed to stem from the fact that there were few exciting issues and races.

The only countywide ballot proposal was the

five-year parks millage renewal, which narrowly passed 37,547 to 33,432, less than 53 percent. The one-quarter-mill tax (25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation) supports nine county parks.

The county saw both contested races for sheriff in both parties' primaries. Incumbent Sheriff Johannes Spreen, a Democrat, is vacating the post to run for county executive.

Democrats nominated Sheriff's Lt. Henry L. Hansen in a three-way primary. He will face Republican winner John F. Nichols, Farmington Hills police chief, also winner of a three-way primary.

The votes were: Democrats — James D. Contu, 5,099; Hansen, 7,960; Niles E. Olsen, 5,811; Republicans — Nichols, 34,890; Bill Ortmann, 5,191; James Stewart, 14,338.

Republicans had two choices for drain commissioner, sticking with three-term incumbent George W. Kuhn.

Statewide, the only race was the Republican U.S. Senate primary. Former astronaut Jack Louma soundly beat builder Jim Dunn to challenge Sen. Carl Levin, first-term Democrat, on Nov. 6. In Oakland, the vote was Levin, 23,547; Dunn, 19,811; and Louma, 38,612.

EXPECTING 130,000 voters (20 percent), election officials recorded much less action. In fact, almost all the returns were in by 3 a.m. Wednesday — which would have been a record if Royal Oak Township's results hadn't come in late, as expected, at 8:30 a.m.

The low — 40,000 votes (13 percent) — turnout was traced to mild-90s temperatures during the day

and heavy rain at dinnertime.

One candidate returned home to change his shirt three times because of heat outside the polls where he had out flyers.

IN LOCAL races, the biggest upset in Oakland was the surprise defeat of George Berton Jackson, a second-term commissioner, by William A. Hatzberger, Beverly Hills council president, in the 32nd District Republican primary. All other incumbent county commissioners won their primaries.

Seeking a second term, state Rep. Robert D. McFee, R-Union Lake, was defeated by attorney David Hoenigman, who will run against Democrat Marvin H. Surowitz in the 24th House District which takes in West Bloomfield and Orchard Lake.



John Nichols

Work force rises, jobless rate steady

Michigan's unemployment rate held steady at 11.3 percent in July, the third straight month of no change, according to A.R. Jan, wkl, acting director of the Michigan Employment Security Commission.

Jazowski reported that 508,000 Michigan workers were without jobs in July, an increase of 3,000 from June's level.

But total employment also increased in July, climbing by 28,000 to 3,975,000. Most of the job growth occurred in seasonal construction and tourist-related industries, Jazowski said, and helped employment reach its highest level in the state since November 1979, when it was at 4,004,000.

Michigan's seasonally adjusted July unemployment rate edged down to 11.5 percent from 11.6 percent in June.

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