



'Where the biggies leave off...'

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## In high-turnout November 6 election, how did we do? Definitely above average.

By Michael Wilson

Elections and voting are the bedrocks of our democracy, the guarantors that our noble and sometimes seemingly fragile American experiment in self-governance can continue to endure. After two tumultuous years on the national political scene and with the very integrity of "one citizen, one vote" increasingly under attack, the November 6 election was foreseen as a bellwether for the health of our system. Would large numbers of eligible voters tune out, or would they instead make their voices heard.

Former President Barack Obama exhorted students at the University of Illinois on September 7 to "vote because our democracy depends on it." And close to 120 million Americans, just over 50 percent of eligible voters, got the message, according to latest data from the United States Election Project. The 2018 totals edged past 1966, the previous high-water mark, when 49 percent of eligible voters showed up at the polls.

Minnesota once again led the nation with more than 2.6 million or 64.25 percent of eligible voters casting ballots, according to the Minnesota Secretary of State's office. "We were No. 1, and not by a little bit," Secretary of State Steve Simon said. "We beat the second-place finisher, the state of Colorado, by over a full percentage point, which in election terms is a lot."

The 2002 midterm election retains the highest-turnout distinction with 64.89 percent participation of eligible voters, the most since modern record-keeping began in 1950.

### City sees record midterm-election turnout.

Minneapolis topped the statewide turnout figure this year with 67.7 percent of eligible residents casting a total of 207,114 ballots. (The technical term for "eligible residents" is Estimated Citizen Voting Age Population, derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey.) The city's Elections and Voter Services department, using the precise number of registered voters who actually cast ballots, reports that 76 percent of registered voters cast ballots this year.

Minneapolis has had 13 City Council wards since 1887, a number fixed in the city's Charter. The number of precincts -- currently, 132 -- as well as the boundaries of both wards and precincts can change following a process specified in the Charter. The decennial census is almost always a time for such changes.

If "all politics is local," as former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Tip O'Neill famously said, how did our four Hill and Lake neighborhoods do on November 6? We might like to believe that Kenwood, Lowry Hill, East Isles, and Cedar-Isles-Dean outdid the fictional children of Lake Wobegon,

but the truth is our turnout among Minneapolis precincts this year was ... above average.

### Six Ward 7 precincts top 80 percent turnout.

Among the Seventh Ward's ten precincts, the turnout champion is invariably Precinct 1-C -- Bryn Mawr north of I-394 and Cedar Lake Road -- where a remarkable 89.4 percent of registered voters did their civic duty. Not only were the north Bryn Mawr folks tops in Ward 7: once again, 1-C posted the highest turnout of all the city's 132 precincts. (Ward 11's Precinct 5 claimed second place with 88.8% turnout.)

Precinct 7 -- Bryn Mawr south of I-394 and Cedar Lake Road -- had Ward 7's second highest turnout at 86.0 percent. It must be something in the drinking water.



The four Hill and Lake precincts ranked third through sixth in Ward 7 turnout.

- Kenwood and Lowry Hill west of Irving Avenue (Precinct 2D): 85.7 percent, 1382 ballots.
- East Isles (Precinct 9): 84.4 percent, 2251 ballots.
- Lowry Hill east of Irving Avenue (Precinct 3): 83.5 percent, 2321 ballots.
- Cedar-Isles-Dean (Precinct 4D): 80.2 percent, 2169 ballots.

Overall, Ward 7 placed sixth among the city's 13 wards with 78 percent turnout. The southern tier of wards once again captured the three top spots: perennial top-turnout Ward 13 at 86 percent, with Wards 12 and 11 at 83 percent. Ward 8, which straddles I-35W in south-central Minneapolis, had 81 percent turnout. Ward 1, northeast Minneapolis, had 79 percent turnout. Ward 5, which lies between Ward 7 and Lowry Avenue N., had 58 percent turnout.

### For a deeper dive ...

There's a wealth of data available for those who want to dive deeper into voting and election results. Go to <[vote.minneapolismn.gov](http://vote.minneapolismn.gov)> and click on "Results" and "Data & Resources." For statewide results, go to <[electionresults.sos.state.mn.us](http://electionresults.sos.state.mn.us)>.

And to read or listen to President Obama's moving, impassioned September 7th speech, google "Obama September 7." His words give hope that our noble experiment in self-governance will continue to endure.