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Extra Info
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Maryjane Kenney

From: Kathy A [kka5@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 09, 2006 1:43 PM
To: Board of Selectmen
Subject: polls

Here's an article from the Metro West Daily News I thought you might be interested in. I do believe Acton needs more than one polling place like most other towns.

Kathy Adams

METROWEST DAILY NEWS

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Town clerks: Schools and elections can mix
By **D. Craig MacCormack**/ Daily News Staff
Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Town and city clerks across MetroWest and the Milford area say they do a good job of making sure schoolchildren do not interfere with voters and that voters don't disrupt any classes on Election Day.

Most schools that double as polling places today remain open, but clerks say voters are often directed into a side entrance that is closer to where they vote rather than into the main entrance.

Framingham public schools are closed, but Keefe Tech -- which includes two of Framingham's busiest precincts -- stays open. Assistant Town Clerk Lisa Ferguson said safety officials have added extra parking spots at Keefe.

"There's definitely going to be a lot of traffic there, but everything is pretty well marked so I think we'll be fine," she said.

While the governor's race will likely mean high turnout across the region, the write-in campaign for the late Deborah Blumer's 6th Middlesex District state representative seat could generate more action, Ferguson said.

Already, the town clerk's office has seen almost 1,000 absentee ballots, more than the 2004 presidential election, she said. That led Ferguson to say she expects about 25,000 voters today, representing between 65 percent and 70 percent.

Ashland Town Clerk Tara Ward said she expects between half and two-thirds of the town's voters to cast ballots. Schools are open, even though voting is in the middle school and high school, she said.

So far, Ashland has seen about 250 absentee votes, Ward said.

Milford Town Clerk Joe Arcudi, who is coordinating the last election before his retirement at the end of the year, said he has seen about 600 absentee ballots, about the same number as he did in the

September primary.

He expects about 8,500 voters today, which would be just shy of 60 percent turnout.

Setting up the town's three polling places, including the senior center, was completed over the weekend, said Arcudi. He does not remember any problems with voters trying to sneak into the center on election days.

In Marlborough, the almost 800 absentee votes are "slightly more than usual," said City Clerk Jo-Ann Reynolds. She expects a good turnout today.

"We can only hope," she said.

The city's eight polling places started being set up at 5:30 a.m.. Each precinct will be manned by a constable, which is especially important when voters come to schools, Reynolds said.

School Committee policy dictates background checks on all Marlborough poll workers.

"The schools are diligent in not letting people walk around," she said. "People keep an eye on someone who looks like he's wandering or looks lost."

Ashland Town Manager John Petrin, who worked for the Marlborough School Department when it conducted background checks on poll workers, said it is up to the School Department whether a similar practice is followed in Ashland.

In Marlborough, said Petrin, some precincts vote in the school library while students are in class.

"You're always concerned, but we use separate entrances to try to make sure the business of the school and the election don't mix," he said. "I think we know our poll workers here. They're taken from a smaller group."

(Craig MacCormack can be reached at 508-626-4429 or cmaccorm@cnc.com.)