

# McHenry County Voters Decide local races in 2026 General Election

Reporter Heather Tudor

McHenry County residents joined voters across North Dakota on Tuesday, November 3rd, to cast their ballots in the 2026 General Election. While Statewide races and ballot measurers attracted attention, several local contests gave county residents an opportunity to make decisions that will directly affect their communities.

With the election canvassing process completed and statewide results are certified, the November election produced several notable outcomes for McHenry County.

Two contested McHenry County Commission races appeared on the November ballot, with one race decided by just six votes.

In District 1, Shawn Vedaa received 265 votes, or 66.9%, defeating Armann Anderson, who received 129 votes, or 32,6%. Two additional votes were recorded as write-ins.

District 3 produced the closest county race. Lance Johnson received 187 votes, representing 50.5% of the vote, while Pat Bachmeier received 181 votes or 48.9%. Two write-in votes were also recorded.

Johnson's six vote margin made the District 3 contest one of the closest local races in the county.

In District 5, incumbent candidate David Schmitt ran unopposed. Receiving 309 votes, along with 11 write-in votes.

There were several McHenry County offices who also appeared on the ballot, with candidates running unopposed. Darlene Carpenter, running for County Auditor came in with 1,620 votes. Tina Powell, running for County Clerk of District Court came in with 1,673 votes. The County Recorder seat went to Johnna Torr with 1,649 votes, and Trey Skager is in the County Sheriff seat with 1,647 votes, and County State's Attorney went to Oliver W. Bromke with 1,578 votes. Each candidate ran without an opponent listed on the ballot. Write-in votes were also recorded in these contests.

One election question of particular interest to local residents involved the designation of McHenry County's official newspaper. Voters were given the choice between the Mouse River Journal and the Velva Area Voice. The Mouse River Journal received 1,104 votes. Representing 60% of the vote, while the Velva Area Voice received 737 votes, or 40%. Making the Mouse River Journal as McHenry County's official newspaper. This designation is a particularly relevant outcome for local residents because office newspaper publications provide a public record of county proceedings, legal notices, as well as other government and local information. For the Soil Conservation and other local positions, several additional local positions were included on the ballot. For the North McHenry Soil Conservation District, Darrell Rice received 683 votes, along with 16 write-in votes. For the South McHenry Soil Conservation District, Terry Krumwiede received 924 votes, with nine write-in votes. Both candidates ran unopposed. McHenry County also had an election for the Director of the Garrison Diversion Conservatory, which recorded 221 write-in votes.

In the Northeast Judicial District, Judge Anthony Swain Benson received 1,593 votes in McHenry County, with nine write-in votes.

As far as how McHenry County voters participated in several statewide contests, in the race for North Dakota's at-large seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Julie Fedorchak received 1,239 votes in McHenry County. Trygve Hammer received 521 votes, Charles Tuttle received 107 votes, and Helene Neville received 23 votes. Fedorchak went on to win reelection statewide.

Other statewide results included, Secretary of State Michael Hower Received 1,399 votes in McHenry County, compared with 473 for Ryan Braunberger. Attorney General Drew Wrigley received 1,434 votes in McHenry County compared with 444 for Tim Lamb. Agriculture Commission Doug Gohring received 1,408 county votes, compared with 468 for Vern Thompson. Public Service



Commissioner, Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, received 1,383 county votes, compared with 474 for John M. Pederson. Public Service Commissioner, unexpired two-year terms; Jill Kringstad received 1,381 county votes, compared with 470 for Scot Kelsh. Tax Commissioner, Brian Kroshus received 1,365 county votes, compared with 437 for Mark Nelson. Superintendent of Public Instruction, unexpired two-year term went to Levi Bachmeier, who received 1,286 county votes, compared with 427 for Tracy Layne Foss. North Dakota Supreme Court went to Jerod Tufte who received 1,071 county votes, compared with 511 for Ariston E. Johnson.

On the Constitutional Measures that were up for vote there were two statewide measures to consider. Constitutional Measure No. 1 proposed increasing the approval requirement for future constitutional amendments from a simple majority to 60%. McHenry County voters rejected the proposal, with 1,162 voting no and 699 voting yes. The measure was also defeated statewide, with approximately 56.5% voting no. Initiated Constitutional Measure No. 2 addressed funding for school breakfasts and lunches. McHenry County voters also rejected this measure, with 1,109 voting no and 773 voting yes. Statewide, the measure narrowly failed, receiving 50.6% no votes and 49.4% yes votes.

On to the Surrey School Bond Proposal which was one of the more significant local election developments involving the Surrey Public School District and it's proposed $5.8 million school bond issue. The proposal was intended to replace aging portable classrooms and address the fire-code concerns involving the breezeway connecting the portable classrooms to the main school building. Although the proposal received approximately 59,46% approval, it failed short of North Dakota's required 60% approval threshold for school bond measures. The election also brought attention to a ballot coding error involving McHenry County residents. According to North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe, an investigation found that improperly coded street segments resulting in 29 eligible voters in the Surrey School District not receiving the bond question on their ballots. Twelve of those residents voted in the November election with having an opportunity to vote on the school bond proposal. Howe acknowledged the error and apologized to the affected communities. On November 21st, the Surrey School Board voted to move forward with an election challenge in district court. The court will determine whether the challenge is accepted and what remedy, if any, may be appropriate. The situation has added another chapter to the discussion surrounding the district's facility needs and the future of the proposed improvements.

According to the North Dakota Secretary of State, 239,442 ballots were cast statewide in the November 3rd General Election, representing approximately 39.8% voter turnout.

For McHenry County, the 2026 election included decisions involving county leadership, public information, conservation districts, judicial positions and important school funding questions. As the results become part of public record, the decisions made at the ballot box will help shape McHenry County and its surrounding communities in the years ahead.