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Election '93/Metro Races

Record voter turnout in Gwinnett

Stellville incumbents are returned to office

By Mark Rose Williams
STAFF WRITER

Controversy spawned record turnouts in two Gwinnett County municipal elections Tuesday, leaving every election worker counting paper ballots into the wee hours of the morning.

While their neighbors in Norcross, Lithia Springs, Decatur, Buford, Berkeley Lake and Loganville voted in person, voters in Duluth and Sugar Hill remained at city halls, calling one vote after another as they processed the ballots.

The scenario in Sugar Hill was aggravated by a paperwork mistake that delayed the opening of the ballot box until about 11 p.m. Duluth, which normally attracts 600 voters in a city election, was swamped with about 1,225 ballots.

Snellville, which struggled through a summer of controversy over a proposed regional mall and a cross-country connector road only to move into a campaign season accented by scuffles at City Hall and candidate-on-candidate pole reports, drew 2,450 of its nearly 7,000 registered voters to the polls. Mayor Emmett Clower called it the city's largest turnout ever for a non-mayoral municipal election.

Incumbents retained each of the three contending Snellville-City Council seats, despite complaints from residents who said they wanted a new council that would act on behalf of citizens rather than "big money developers."

Miss Soley defeated Jarrett S. Blankenship and Jeff Shary; Leonard T. Martin best challenger Paul Eric Andrews; and incumbent Troy Carter won over Rick Leonard.

In Sugar Hill, poll workers had not early today finished counting a turnout estimated at 45 percent of the city's registered 2,944 voters. Turnout was high because of bitter debate over the City Council's decision to allow the city landfill to expand and accept waste from outside the area.

An investigator with the Georgia secretary of state's office was assigned to monitor Sugar Hill's election Tuesday after a complaint was filed with the state elections board.

Duluth also had its heaviest turnout in about 20 years, said Conclusions Victor Gerber.

Early today, Mayor Bobby Williams was trailing challenger Shirley Fanning-Laseter by a narrow margin—at one point by just 24 votes.



Gwinnett County school officials monitor election results Tuesday night.

School improvements approved in Gwinnett bond referendum

By Linda Jacobson

Gwinnett County voters gave their blessing Tuesday to a \$225 million school bond issue to build 10 new schools, improve computers and technology education and finance an addition to Gwinnett Tech.

"I'm certainly pleased," said county schools Superintendent George Thompson.

By comfortable margins, voters approved the three issues. The \$190 million to build the new schools, along with numerous additions and renovations to others to relieve crowding, \$25 million for computers and technology education programs, and \$10 million to build a health science building at Gwinnett Tech in Lawrenceville.

School officials said the bond issue was critical because thousands of students already attend classes in trailers and the system was predicted to be 17,000 students over capacity by 1997.

Passage of the bond issue means the owner of a \$100,000 home will see a \$78 annual tax increase.

Construction on some projects will begin right away and two new schools and a 48-classroom addition will open by the end of 1995-96 school year.

The NAACP's Gwinnett chapter opposed the bond issue, saying the school system was not working hard enough to hire minorities. The group also argued that no construction projects are planned in communities with higher concentration of black residents.

School officials countered by saying they regularly recruit minority applicants and site several of the building projects will relieve crowding at schools with an 8 percent or more black student population.

In a first, Decatur elects school board

By Diana Loupe
STAFF WRITER

Decatur voters, casting their first school board ballots Tuesday, elected a majority-black majority-female board to oversee the nine-school district.

Incumbent Sara Turpin, a 45-year-old lawyer, easily defeated incumbent Tom Keating, a 52-year-old educator, for the two-year seat in District 1, while legal investigator Susan Medlock, 47, trounced 46-year-old substitute teacher Mack Gill for the four-year seat in District 1.

Incumbent W. Don Demart, a 43-year-old treasurer, defeated Atlanta public school teacher Mary Nell Thomas, 56, for the District 2 four-year post.

Also in District 2, community development administrator Cynthia Nash, 30, defeated opponents Audrey Malone, a 25-year-old hair stylist, and 73-year-old retiree W. H. Simmons Sr. for the two-year seat. Eugenia Wingate withdrew from the race too late to have her name removed from the ballot.

Longtime board member Edith Hembree, a microbiologist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was suspended for board's 18th meeting and garnered 1,790 votes, the most of any candidate on Tuesday night's ballot.

Decatur current seven-member appointed school board with three black members, will become a five-member-elected board with three black members —Hambree, Nash and Demart— on Jan. 1. Board members' terms will be staggered.

Early this year, when Decatur officials redrew districts for the board and commission election, some black residents expressed concern that the new U.S. Justice Department approved the districting plan, which included the predominantly black District 2 in southern Decatur.

In the Decatur City Commission race, Anne J. Brannan, 47, won the District 2 race, outdistancing three opponents, Michael Harris, 37, a minister, teacher and lawyer Randy S. Jones, 53, and social services counselor Ollie Mahone, 49.

Malone and Jones had argued that Brannan's election would create a conflict of interest because of her marriage to former City Manager Curtis Brannan, now the administrative assistant to the DeKalb County Commission and chief executive officer.

District 1 Decatur City Commission incumbent Andrew Harris, who faced no opposition, gathered 968 votes to win another term.

District 2, which includes most of south Decatur, turned into an open political playing field two months ago when former Mayor Mike Meers resigned his post and declined to seek reelection.

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Marietta mayor cruises to re-election

By Laura Winiewski
STAFF WRITER

Marietta Mayor Ansley Meaders glided to victory past a professional clown Tuesday, but three close city council races and one school board race were forced into runoffs.

Unofficial results show 4,323 ballots were cast, which is 23 percent of Marietta's registered voters.

The election was a first for the school board since a new state amendment changed it from an appointed to an elected body. But only two of the seven seats had contested races.

Incumbent Cathy Lipsett, a public relations company owner, and incumbent Gaye Anderson, a homemaker and former teacher, will battle it out in runoffs in southwest Marietta District 2. Anderson got 29 percent of the votes; Lipsett had 31 percent.

Nate Martin, the only other incumbent in the school board election, lived in the same district as Lipsett, who focused on safe

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In the Marietta mayoral race, incumbent Meaders got the last laugh Tuesday night when she triumphed over professional clown John "Johnny O'Farmer" Naugle. Meaders, who was elected in June to fill the unexpired term of the late Joe Mack Wilson, had 90 percent of the votes; Naugle had 10 percent.

In the four contested city council races, out of seven seats that were up for election, three were forced into runoffs.

James Dodd, who shifted from the school board to fight for a seat on the council, had 46 per-

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49 percent of the votes in District 5. He and R.L. Moran, who had 29 percent, will take their battle into the runoff. Deane Bonner received 23 percent of the votes.

Another former school board member, Pete Waldrop, fell just two percentage points shy of winning the District 1 post, with

49 percent of the votes. He and Eric Robinson, who had 49 percent, are headed to the runoff.

In the west Marietta District 1, Patrice Cummings, a financial planner, had 49 percent of the votes. His runoff opponent, Paul Sabatino, an attorney, had 28 percent. They gaped out Tom

Marietta School Board

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