



CREATING A COMMUNITY
VALUING DIVERSITY, EQUALITY
AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Citizens Project FreedomWatch

Colorado Springs Votes for Change

By Erin Bennett

ELECTION RESULTS

Mayor	
Lionel Rivera	59.23%
Council At Large	
Jan Martin	13.77%
Tom Gallagher.....	13.52%
Randy Purvis.....	12.95%
Larry Small.....	12.93%
Issue A Remove City Treasurer	
Yes	83.27%
Issue B Mayor Term Limits	
Yes	67.07%
Issue C Stipend for Council	
No	53.20%
Issue D Memorial Health System	
Yes	64%
Issue E Porchlight Franchise	
Yes	78.26%

April 3, 2007 marked a historic day for Colorado Springs. The citizens of our community voted to change the status quo of city politics. Some pundits have responded to the results of the recent City Council race by saying that we voted to keep the status quo, but a closer investigation reveals seeds of change. Yes, Lionel Rivera is still mayor and three at-large incumbents were re-elected. However, more than twice as many citizens of Colorado Springs voted in 2007 as compared to 2005, a non-incumbent received the most votes among councilmember candidates, and 40% of voters opposed Rivera's second term as mayor.

Let's look at the actual numbers. In 2005, 34,352 registered voters (14.95%) cast their vote in the municipal election. This year, the numbers rose to 61,338 registered voters (41.48%). The 2007 election included a mail-only ballot, allowing all registered, active voters to receive a ballot and vote without having to go to a polling place, which may have increased turnout. The number of voters nearly doubled in two years, showing that the citizens of Colorado Springs want to make their voices heard.

Now let's look at the candidates. The only non-incumbent elected to City Council was Jan Martin. Aside from being the only non-incumbent—and the only woman—Jan was the number one vote-getter in the election. Jan's slogan was, "We can do better!" She vowed to reach beyond the status quo, invigorate economic development, promote civic engagement, and advocate for our arts

and culture. Jan stood for change and diversity in our community. By giving Jan more votes than any of the other eight candidates, voters made a statement that they are ready for a new vision for Colorado Springs.

Lionel Rivera was voted to a second term as our mayor. Although he had three opponents, Rivera was predicted to win the race as he raised the most money and had the advantage of being the incumbent. To quote the *Colorado Springs Independent* (3/22/07), "No one has gained any serious traction...[Rivera] will win handily." Even though he was basically running unopposed, 40% of voters did not vote for Rivera, which indicates that many in Colorado Springs are looking for something different.

In addition to the local municipal election, the last six months in Colorado have demonstrated that the whole state is eager for change. In November 2006, Colorado voted for a big alteration in our state legislature. Because of a major shift in both the Senate and the House, bills are being introduced and passed that would have previously died immediately. Bills for science-based sex education, an employment non-discrimination act including sexual orientation and gender identity, second-parent adoption, and emergency contraception in the ER have all had great success in the 2007 legislative session.

Contrary to popular belief, Colorado Springs did not vote for the status quo this month. It may be slow and incremental, but it seems that the citizens of our community are ready for positive change.

Read *Freedom Watch* columns every other week to stay updated on the Colorado Springs community and on any changes coming our way! For more information on the City Council election or on 2007 Colorado legislation, please call (719) 520-9899.

We congratulate Citizens Project Board Member Jan Martin for receiving the most votes in the City Council election. Although she is leaving our board to focus on her City Council duties, we are excited for her to bring a fresh voice to city policy debates!

Citizens Project did not endorse or oppose any candidates during the 2007 Municipal election.

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