

Markham's high-tech election included Web results

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Whitchurch-Stouffville voters seem a little more dedicated.

Voter turnout averaged about 30 per cent there as well, but the number would have been higher if not for the acclamation of Ward 2 candidate Mark Carroll.

Ward 6 garnered the highest voter turnout at 49 per cent. Forty-five per cent of eligible voters in Ward 5 came out to their polling stations, while 40 per cent of those eligible voted in the mayor's race.

It sounds even worse when you consider the actual numbers — of Markham's 182,110 voters, only 41,956 made the effort. In Whitchurch-Stouffville, there were 33,230 eligible to vote and 12,300 did.

Town clerk and returning officer Michele Kennedy said while she didn't have the actual figures, last election's turnout was about the same.

"There was not a huge difference," she said. The biggest difference between the two towns was the price tag — it cost Whitchurch-Stouffville about \$50,000 and Markham about \$500,000 to run Election 2000.

"Well Markham has a few more voters than we do," Kennedy pointed out.

Not to mention a few more toys. In keeping with its reputation, Markham went high-tech with 20 call stations and eight large-screen televisions providing Vote 2000 election results to a small public turnout at the Civic Centre Monday night.

The call station was headquarters for the 2000 election webpage, updating vote count and vote per centage. Results were called in from polling stations, then transferred to the website by election staff.

"The tabulating equipment worked great," said Edwards.

"We had a very successful advance vote, about 1,000 more voters than last election," he said. "The machines operated without any flaws."

He said the total 3,100 advance votes were counted and displayed within five minutes of the polls closing Monday.

"As for the rest of the night, everything came in and was displayed without any glitches. Our webpage did not go down, like it did in Toronto," Edwards gloated. "It was the fastest election in years — I was home by 1 a.m."

In Whitchurch-Stouffville, while votes were counted manually everything went according to plan, Kennedy said.

"We had two close races (Ward 1 and

4) but you have to ask for a recount and we haven't heard from anyone," she said. "The only automatic recount is for a tie."

In Ward 3 Peter Dobrich edged out Sophie Angelis by a six-vote margin, while Steve Pliakis beat Ivanka Bradley by 15 votes in Ward 1.

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents did not benefit from a town Web site during the election, she added. While the site has been up since last week, there wasn't enough time to compile information and design an election page prior to Monday's vote.

Kennedy said official numbers will be ready tomorrow, explaining returning officers have 48 hours after an election to tabulate and double check ballots. Markham staff are also double-checking ballots for the official declaration, due today.

And all candidates in both towns, win or lose, must remove their signs from town roads by Friday. If they aren't, town staff will remove them at a cost of \$10 each, taken from the \$200 deposit each candidate handed over in exchange for the permit.

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