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## ELECTION 2011

# Voter turnout up locally

BY CHRIS TRABER  
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Higher voter turnout, nationally and in York Region, shouldn't be interpreted as renewed democratic gusto amongst the electorate, York University political science professor Robert MacDermid said.

York Region voter turnout was 58.4 per cent Monday, an increase from 55.25 per cent since your last trip to the polls in 2008, Elections Canada said.

About 14.7 million of 23.9 million registered electors voted, representing a 61.4-per cent turnout, a 2.6-per cent increase from 2008.

The numbers aren't cause for celebration, Mr. MacDermid said. "I'm not sure that's a great wave of enthusiasm."

Unlike many analysts, Mr. MacDermid is unperturbed by the spike in ballots, rationalizing that better attended advanced polls and more voters deciding to get involved, lead to the increased numbers.

Ultimately, four of every 10 registered voters displayed election day apathy, something he attributes to several factors, including a lack of interest in the campaign or politics in general.

"Some probably felt the races weren't close and the results would be a foregone conclusion," Mr. MacDermid said. "Part of it has to do with the negativity campaigns. That works to suppress voting. This campaign was full of it."

Canadians are permitted three workday

hours to vote, but many people are simply too busy, he said.

"It's hard for many to go and vote on a weekday," he said. "That speaks to having elections on weekends."

*Oak Ridges-Markham ranked third in the region with a 60.8-per cent turnout, a 3.9-per cent spike.*

In Newmarket-Aurora, 58,204 of the district's 91,275 registered voters cast ballots. The 63.8-per cent turnout was among the highest in Canada.

Thornhill's 59,766 voters (60.8 per cent) represented a 4-per cent increase from the last election.

Oak Ridges-Markham, which includes Whitchurch-Stouffville, ranked third in the region with a 60.8-per cent turnout, a 3.9-per cent spike.

York-Simcoe's 52,857 voters was a 2.2-per cent rise, while 55.8 per cent of eligible Richmond Hill voters turned out, a 3.7-per cent jump.

In Vaughan, 55.6 per cent, or 68,412 voters, showed up at polls, representing a 3.7-per cent increase from the 2008 vote.

Markham-Unionville, with 54.8 per cent of registered voters casting ballots, had the lowest York Region turnout. Still, the 49,898 votes was 2.8-per cent higher than in 2008.

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