

Candidates: Don't overlook the early voting

The Laramie County Clerk and most others refer to the votes cast prior to election day as "absentee votes." I prefer "early votes" as many, probably the vast majority, are cast in the County Complex, and voters are not absent but prefer to vote ahead of election day for reasons of their own - early, not absentee, voters.

After the last general election, I did an analysis of the votes cast ahead of election day and those cast on election day.

The results tend to be amazing. By that, I mean they prove up my contention that early voting is very reflective of how voters will cast their ballots on Election Day.

For starters, consider the results of the U.S. House race (Laramie County only). The candidates received almost identical percentages of the votes cast for Lummis, her Democratic opponent and the Independent on the ballot. It couldn't be any more consistent - Cyndy received 45.45% of the early votes cast and she received 45.54% of the votes cast on Election Day.

Rick Kaysen and Jayne Mockler's percentages varied and that was, in my opinion, due to Jayne's limited campaigning near the election and a concern that her health was poor and she might not be able to serve well as mayor. Rick benefitted considerably from that news - or rumors.

In Ward 1, the race in which Amber Ash went from finishing fourth in the primary to first in the general election and Pete Laybourn reversing that order of finish, the percentages again were very consistent between early voting and Election Day voting. Amber received 25.81% early, then 26.71% on Election Day.

This analysis does not compare the consistency of votes cast by precinct within a ward but they are also startlingly similar. With the first few precincts' results, I can call an election. Not only do percentages remain close to the same during Election Day but the table at the right shows how Election Day is reflective of the early voting so the combination makes predicting the outcome fairly basic. Simple.

Some believe Amber Ash sprung out of nowhere and was elected on the strength of some last minute surge. And, while the early voting does pick up nearing Election Day, it is spread out over the total 45 days before Election Day.

Interestingly, Amber victory was predictive by early voting. Had the election ended with just the early votes, she would have finished second (still elected) to Jimmy Valdez - by 24 votes. Had voting been only on Election Day, she would have defeated Jimmy Valdez by 31 votes. Look at the Jimmy's consistency.

Jimmy Valdez received 26.30% of the vote in early voting. He received 26.30% of the vote on Election Day. Laybourn, who finished first in the primary election, did poorly in the early voting and again on Election Day. Very unusual.

In Ward 2, Patrick Collins support was very consistent, as was Sarah Landstrom's. Jack Spiker lost support and Jeff Goins gained support on Election Day, in my opinion, because of the firemen's PAC endorsement of Jeff and cold shoulder to Jack. In Ward 3, the two in the middle of the pack had pretty con-

sistent support from early voting to Election Day voting. Jim Brown, who finished first, and Donna Roofe, who finished fourth, had the greatest change in voter support among the council races.

Late, and anonymous, attack ads were run against Jim Brown and it is obvious that he benefitted from them. It is equally apparent that voters thought Donna was behind the attack ads. An "attack ad" is not the same as a "negative ad." And an anonymous ad, placed hiding behind a PAC that cannot be linked to specific individuals, is not like an opponent's negative ad against a candidate. Pointing out negative aspects of a candidate is acceptable. Hiding behind a PAC without using your own name and running attack ads with anonymity is unacceptable.

Donna Roofe may not have been behind the attack ads. If those who formed the last minute PAC were friends of hers, that was unknown to me. I didn't think so.

Another important fact that can be gleaned from the table at the left is the high percentage of the total votes that are cast in early voting. On average, between 35% and 40% of the votes a candidate will receive are cast for them before Election Day. In the U.S. House race, the three candidates received 37.5% of their total votes during early voting.

In Ward 1, it was 39.4%. In Ward 2, it was 40.75%. In Ward 3, it was 35.8%. In the mayor's race, it was 38.3%.

The importance of this fact?

Candidates who think they can wait until the last minute before campaigning may find it is too late to make up the lost ground and to change established choices. Every day counts. While this analysis is for the general election, if it likely there are great similarities in the primary election results as well. It is somewhat harder to assess because there are often several candidates and comparisons are more difficult. But, rest assured, those prevailing on primary Election Day probably did well leading up to that day.

2008 General Election - City of Cheyenne / Laramie County				
Early voting vs. election day voting				
<i>The consistency is amazing</i>				
	Total votes - %	Election Day - %	Early Voting - %	
U.S. House				
Cynthia Lummis	18642 45.48%	11649 45.54%	6993	45.45%
Gary Trauner	20818 50.79%	12937 50.54%	7881	51.22%
David Herbert	1487 3.63%	975 3.81%	512	3.33%
	40947	25551	15386	
Cheyenne Mayor				
Rick Kaysen	14565 57.39%	9138 58.37%	5427	56.02%
BY WARD				
Ward 1	3945 54.31%			
Ward 2	6009 62.70%			
Ward 3	4611 54.71%			
Jayne Mockler	10711 42.20%	6452 41.21%	4259	43.97%
BY WARD				
Ward 1	3319 45.69%			
Ward 2	3575 37.30%			
Ward 3	3817 45.29%			
Ward 1				
Amber Ash	3292 26.31%	2023 26.71%	1269	25.81%
Jimmy Valdez	3285 26.26%	1992 26.30%	1293	26.30%
Kurt Zunker	3013 24.08%	1816 23.97%	1197	24.35%
Pete Laybourn	2883 23.05%	1726 22.79%	1157	23.54%
	12473	7557	4916	
Ward 2				
Jack Spiker	5032 30.16%	2937 29.72%	2095	30.89%
Patrick Collins	4376 26.23%	2588 26.19%	1788	26.36%
Sarah Landstrom	3953 23.69%	2316 23.44%	1637	24.13%
Jeff Goins	3283 19.68%	2020 20.44%	1263	18.62%
	16644	9861	6783	
Ward 3				
Jim Brown	3898 28.94%	2559 29.58%	1339	27.83%
Don Pierson	3637 27.00%	2347 27.13%	1290	26.82%
Delmar Stone	3128 23.23%	2024 23.40%	1104	22.95%
Donna Roofe	2769 20.56%	1692 19.56%	1077	22.39%
	13432	8622	4810	

This data was first presented in the November 11, 2008 Herald - Write-in votes and "no votes" are not included in calculations.

Profit, nonprofit

There is one major difference between profit and nonprofit corporations.

And it isn't that one tries to make a "profit" and the other doesn't.

Profit (or loss) is the difference between the revenue a business takes in and the expenses the business incurs to generate that revenue. That's not quite a perfect definition but it's very close.

Officially, "Often referred to as the bottom line, net profit is calculated by subtracting a company's total expenses from total revenue, thus showing what the company has earned (or lost) in a given period of time."

Both a "for profit" and a "nonprofit" business have the same objective - to make a profit. To take in more than they spend.

But, it is a common misconception that a nonprofit does not try to turn a profit by the normal definition of the word.

They do.

The major difference between the two, other than deductibility for donations to many charitable nonprofits [501(c)(3), etc.] is that income (profit) from a "for profit" can be distributed to stockholders.

Income from a nonprofits operation cannot be distributed to shareholders in the traditional sense. We've seen, of course, how revenue in excess of expenses can find its way into the bank accounts of executives of nonprofits. And much of the diversion of funds is legal. It just takes a little ingenuity and sometimes some creativity. Even here in Cheyenne, there are nonprofits which were established as

much for the benefit of the principal(s) as to "do good" for a worthy cause.

Some even get public funds to further their personal objectives - increasing their own bank account.

Whatever a "for profit" company does should be its own business. If they want to pay their executives obscenely high salaries and provide them perks uncommonly generous, so long as they don't benefit from public funds in ANY way, that is their prerogative.

That is capitalism. The free enterprise system.

A nonprofit is different. They appeal to the public for funds and gullible members of the public often give to a cause, having no idea how their donation will be spent.

Nonprofits also often benefit from public funds - they convince government that the cause they are supposed to serve is legitimate and that the funds (after their take) will be used for that cause.

Sometimes there are 501(c)(3)+ entities that only collect money and distribute to those other nonprofits who are responsible for using the money allotted to them for the benefit of a needy or worthy cause. In that case, a percentage of the donated funds never reach a group that might be able to provide assistance to those in need. Donors are both naive and trusting. They want to believe their donations are being used well and wisely and never ask any questions to ascertain whether that is true or not. Ditto government. They fund nonprofits, believing the best, but have no oversight or audit of how those funds are spent. That should change.