

We say farewell as Dani Connors-Smith retires...

Dani Connors-Smith retired from Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services this past February. She leaves a legacy that is 27 years strong and will be missed by all who have worked with her throughout her career in the public service. Dani began her career as a seasonal employee in 1988 and became a permanent full-time member of the Division's team in 1999. In addition to running the absentee voting program for Minneapolis, Dani's tenure featured many highlights, including:

- Surviving the 1991 election following the Halloween blizzard;
- Helping implement ranked-choice voting in the 2009 municipal election and, again, in 2013; and serving as one of the primary tabulators in both elections;
- Effectively executing Minneapolis' first "No Excuse" absentee voting elections in 2014; and
- Participating in a total of 7 recounts.



Dani also earned two professional designations during her time with the Division: that of Minnesota Certified Municipal Clerk (MCMC) from the Minnesota Clerks & Finance Officers Association and Certified Elections & Registration Administrator (CERA) through the National Association of Election Officials/Auburn University.

In her retirement, she looks forward to wearing jeans every day, traveling to Canada and Indiana to spend time with family, and enjoying time with her cat. Nevertheless, Dani says she will miss all the wonderful people she has worked with throughout the years!

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And welcome as the team grows!

Please join us in welcoming two recent additions to the Elections & Voter Services Division: Justin Adams (former Ward 3 Precinct Support Judge) and Barb Suci! Justin, filling some big shoes, is taking on the tremendous responsibility of administering absentee voting, and Barb, serving in a newly created role, will be advancing the Division's voter outreach and education efforts. While they have traveled different paths to get here, both bring with them many years of experience with elections and a distinct passion for public service. It is a pleasure to have these two dedicated public servants on board as members of the team.

See page 2 to learn more about Justin and Barb.

Justin

Justin Adams is no stranger to the world of elections; to his name he has a variety of experiences at both the municipal and county levels. 2004 was the year he decided to join the Minneapolis election judge corps as a team judge, a position in which he served on and off for the next five years. His talent, not going unnoticed, earned him a recommendation from his Head Judge to be promoted to Head Judge himself. The position was offered to him, and he, not one to shy away from a challenge, accepted the opportunity to take charge of a polling place in 2009. That year, the inaugural year for ranked-choice voting in Minneapolis, presented a unique challenge in that all voters in the city had to acclimate to a new way of casting their ballot. Justin rose to the occasion, and during that time also served as part of the ranked-choice voting tabulation team. Fast-forward a few more years, and he was invited to become a Precinct Support Judge, giving him the opportunity to serve the entirety of Ward 3. He did so diligently for the next couple of years, and while he enjoyed the work, he missed the kind of direct voter interaction that that being a head judge allowed.

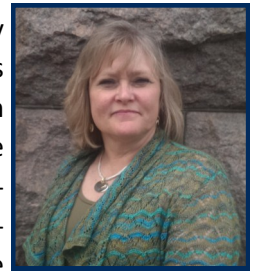


Certainly not to be forgotten is the time he also spent serving with Hennepin County. In 2008 he was able to add to the experience already gained as an election judge by assisting with the absentee voting program, the maintenance of voter registration records, and recount preparation among other things.

Justin is a Minnesota native. Born in Saint Louis Park and raised in Edina, he now calls Northeast Minneapolis home. When he is off duty, he can be found spending time with his son, Lennon, checking up on the art scene at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, or visiting one of Northeast Minneapolis' fine brewpubs.

Barb

Barb Suci (SUE-CHEE) comes to us fresh from a nearly twelve-year tenure as the City Clerk of St. Anthony Village, where she alone was responsible for administering elections. She brings the knowledge that comes from running all aspects of municipal elections. From candidate filing, to the training of election judges, to absentee voting, and everything in between, she has done it all. Not only that, but because St. Anthony's voting precincts are split between Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, the two most populous counties in Minnesota, she became adept at collaborating with both groups at the same time. This dynamic was particularly interesting with two different ballot counters and training of judges with these different machines.



Before that, Barb served as a Payroll and Utility Billing Clerk for the City of Little Canada for two years. There she dipped her toes into the election administration pool for the first time, primarily working as part of the in-person absentee voting team. She greatly enjoyed it even though it was only a small portion of her job.

Born and raised in Saint Paul, MN, she now lives in Little Canada along with her husband Jamie and one of her three sons, Jeremy. Of her sons, two are now in college, Joshua and Jacob, and the third Jeremy is in high school. From oldest to youngest, career aspirations of the three include public accounting, electrical engineering, and playing professional hockey. When she finds herself with some free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, going to her youngest son's hockey and lacrosse games, and scrapbooking.



Election judge debrief + dinner

The Elections & Voter Services Division was very pleased to host a post-election judge debrief and dinner on Monday, December 8, 2014 at Cross-town Covenant Church in south Minneapolis. A debrief is held after every general election and



provides Minneapolis head, assistant head, and precinct support judges an opportunity to direct feedback to the Division regarding their experiences

serving in the past election cycle. This year, all three groups of judges (a total of 275) were invited, with approximately half in attendance.

Following dinner, attendees broke off into smaller feedback sessions where elections staff recorded well over 100 comments, suggestions, and requests. All judges and election staff members then came back together to share each smaller group's list with one another. The Division has been working since December to sort, combine and prioritize each piece of feedback and assign each to a particular team member for follow up / follow through.



The elections staff depends on the input from the judges to continually improve the voting process for voters and election officials.

Election judge recognition

Annually, the first week of May is Public Service Recognition Week. Accordingly, the Elections & Voter Services Division would like to recognize election judges who have served in 15, 25, or 30 or more elections with the City of Minneapolis.

15 Elections

Greg Carlson	Shawn Isenhardt	Cynthia Nelson
Julia Curran	Barbara Johnson	Carol O'Brien
Shirley Doble	Natonia Johnson	Theresa Rooney
Andrew Favorite	Michelle Juneau	Patricia Sandbakken
Alice Geronsin	Carolyn Juntunen	Jan Sandberg
Rose Marie Gram	Bill Lachner	Judy Schreiner
Linda Haller	Barbara Meade	Mike Shannon
Doug Heckenliable	Linda Merriam	Nathan Short
Karen Helfand	Ada Miller	Lois Mae Skinner
Janice Holmberg	Bob Miller	Lynnette Strickland
Sandra Hunter	Dave Moe	Charles Wefel

25 Elections

JoAlice Boatright	Candice Frick	Jane Schallert
Sharon Day	Jean Heidenreich	Celeste Spehar
Dorothy Dolezal	Nancy Nies	Linda Taylor
Christopher Foster	Virginia Sarat	Todd Vandecar

30 or more Elections

Lynn Anderson	Kim Jeppesen	Mary Smith
Gary Arntsen	Carol Johnson	Judith Sonstegard
Victoria Carlson	Jeff Johnson	Betty Spano
Ken Fraser	Gayle Lamb	Marilyn Stebbins
Paul Garmers	Julia Nelson	Peggy Stevenson
Evelyn Hansen	Dorothy Pitheon	Dave Tykwinski
Sylvia Herkenhoff	Mary Rice	Donna Wagner
Edna Jackson	Elizabeth Sadler	

The Elections & Voter Services Division appreciates all of our election judges and the work you perform on Election Day. Our operation could not function without you. **Thank you!**

Top five 2014 precincts in turnout

In the November General Election, the following precincts demonstrated the highest levels of overall and Election Day registration turnout. Extra kudos to the election judges in these precincts for serving an exceptionally large amount of voters on Election Day. Thank you for your hard work!

	Precinct	Overall Polling Place Turnout
1	Nokomis Community Center (12-5)	1894
2	Kenny Community School (13-7)	1849
3	Martin Luther King Park Gym (8-7)	1842
4	Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church (13-5)	1786
5	McRae Park Recreation Center (11-4)	1764

	Precinct	Election Day Registration Turnout
1	University Lutheran Church of Hope (3-1)	761
2	Grace University Lutheran Church (2-10)	710
3	Weisman Art Museum (2-4)	526
4	Jefferson Community School Gym (10-2)	422
5	Whittier Park Recreation Center (10-7)	413

For judges serving in these precincts, know the Division takes these numbers into consideration as preparations are made for the next election. (See page 5 for more on this work.)

A complete [voter turnout report](#) can be found on the Elections & Voter Services website: vote.minneapolismn.gov under “Maps & Results” then “Voter Turnout Information.”



Primary —Aug. 9, 2016

Presidential General Election—Nov. 8, 2016

Election Management System (EMS) updates

The Elections & Voter Services Division hires the largest single day workforce in the City of Minneapolis. The Division currently uses an Access database called Elections Management System (EMS) in order to cohesively manage all the of the people, supplies and data that need to come together on Election Day. This software system has been in use since the 1990s, and has become outdated, making the management of facilities, election supplies and election judge records very challenging. Due to EMS’s inefficiencies, the Division has submitted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the acquisition of new election management software. The projected implementation of this new system should take place in early 2016 before the next election.

How will this new system affect election judges?

Although the new election management system will help improve the overall election planning process, there are two areas of enhancements planned with a new system that are particularly anticipated. First, the system should provide a streamlined hiring process which will ultimately lend itself to more efficient record-keeping. Therefore paychecks will also be processed more efficiently and with an even higher percentage of accuracy. Second, a new system will allow staff to more closely manage the inventory at the elections warehouse by automating an inventory and tracking system at the warehouse. This will permit real time tracking instead of relying on the current time-intensive inventory system that takes several months prior to and following each election to implement. These advances mark just the beginning; we look forward to developing even more innovations through this exciting new system to better meet the needs of our election judges, seasonal and year-round staff.

2015 first quarter activities

Following the 2012 Presidential Election, in which voters across many parts of Minneapolis experienced long wait times at the polls, the Elections & Voter Services Division has been working on a variety of ways to improve voter experience at the polls and to minimize lines. Such work continues in preparation for 2016.

While several new precincts were added in 2014, there remain many large precincts (2,000-2,500+ registered voters) in the city. Staff is analyzing all of our precincts and polling places to see where it may be beneficial to relocate a poll or add a precinct. The Division is also approaching Minneapolis Public Schools in an effort to coordinate the scheduling of an “in-service” or “record keeping day” on Election Day, one of the many recommendations put forward in the Presidential Election Commission Report of January 2014. Schools are well-known to many residents in the neighborhoods they serve and typically include large, open, and accessible spaces; without students present, there would be less congestion in and around the buildings, likely more parking available on and/or near the school site, and concerns regarding student safety would be eliminated.

With “no excuse” absentee voting in place, the Division is also busy with plans to maximize absentee voting, which further reduces the chances of long lines at the polls on Election Day. As was done in 2014, there will be extended hours offered at City Hall for in-person absentee voting, including some weekends. The possibility of offering absentee voting at additional sites beyond City Hall is also under consideration.

Where lines were found in 2014, they typically occurred at the tail end of the process—at the tabulators—so training will continue to focus on line management techniques and guiding voters through the process of inserting ballots in the relatively new (and somewhat slower) tabulators. Staff is also exploring the possibility of additional tabulators being provided at a number of the busiest precincts.

Finally, the Division is committed to maintaining a high number of election judges at the polls, to assist in greeting voters, registering voters, and to help voters move as quickly through the polls as possible. Staff is excited to be continuing and expanding the Student Election Judge program, along with efforts to increase the number of judges with applicable second-language skills where needed most.

Watch for more news to come on Creative CityMaking

The Office of City Clerk and its Elections & Voter Services Division are excited to be participating in the next round of Creative CityMaking efforts bringing the arts into public work with a project centered around electoral engagement.

Creative CityMaking Minneapolis (CCM) is a multi-year arts-based innovation initiative within Minneapolis City government designed to advance City priorities through in-depth collaborations between City departments and community artists. Creative CityMaking is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Kresge Foundation.

The scope of work within the Office of City Clerk encompasses multiple forums through which residents engage directly with their government. The Elections & Voter Services Division administers all elections for Minneapolis residents, including at the local, state, and federal levels. The Office also manages the open appointments process for Appointed Boards and Commissions, and includes a Legislative Support Unit responsible for making the actions of the City Council accessible to the public and ensuring that residents are able to engage in the Council process and provide input on proposed policies and actions.

The specific project intended for this collaboration involves a focus on nurturing a culture of electoral engagement across the city. Look for an announcement next month of the artist who has been selected to work with the department for the next year, and for the results of the collaboration to begin to be found incorporated into the work of the office as we move through 2015 and begin preparations for 2016.