

## Voter turnout soars

By JOSH SALMAN STAFF WRITER

Voter turnout in Charlotte County for the 2010 gubernatorial general election fell just 100 votes shy of the county's mid-term record, while the totals in Sarasota were just as impressive, election officials said.

More than 60,525 Charlotte residents either voted early or hit the polls Tuesday to cast their votes in the election — a 52 percent turnout. It was the second-highest total for a mid-term recorded in the county, behind only 2002. The 2006 general election drew 55,774 voters. In 2008, more than 86,000 ballots were cast, but historically more people vote in presidential years, according to the Supervisor of Elections Office.

In Sarasota, 148,062 residents voted this election for a 56 percent turnout — slightly lower than the 59.9 percent reported in 2006. In 2002, 140,798 total ballots were cast for a 60.9 percent rate.

Election officials attribute the strong showing to a rise in voter frustration, with residents fighting through rainy conditions to make their voices heard. Most of the 193 polling locations between the two counties had few problems, although some lengthy lines were reported at heavy traffic locations like Port Charlotte Middle School and the Tringali Center in Englewood.

"This was an excellent election as far as I'm concerned," Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections Paul Stamoulis said. "Generally speaking, when people are happy, they don't turn out in record numbers. Obviously, for some reason or another, people were motivated to vote."

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