



Hall County Election Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 22, 2022

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Historic Election in Hall County

The November 8, 2022 general election was a historic election in Hall County.

“Not only did Hall County have a unique and unprecedented local school board race with two candidates elected by more 4,000 write-in votes, it also had a diverse group of poll workers,” said Hall County Election Commissioner Tracy Overstreet. “That diversity included two of the youngest polling site managers in Hall County and a polling site that had two bilingual poll workers – one speaking Spanish and one speaking Arabic.”

Twin 20-year-old brothers Wyatt and Grant Kohles have been working Hall County elections since they were 16, the youngest a poll worker may be under Nebraska law. During the May 10, 2022 Primary Election, Wyatt took on the management duties of a brand new polling site at Abundant Life Church. The site had been added due to population growth in Grand Island after the 2020 Census. “I’ve always had an interest in the process,” Wyatt Kohles said. “It’s fun because you get to meet people – these are the people who are deciding the important decisions in your community.” Grant Kohles stepped up to manage a polling site at the Central Nebraska Regional Airport for the November 8, 2022 General Election. “I was glad to help out – to give back to the community,” Grant Kohles said.

Florentino Esquivel and Ekram Saleh both worked at the polling site at Grace Lutheran Church. Esquivel used his Spanish-speaking skills to assist voters in knowing some races were a vote for one candidate and other races, such as for school board, the voter could select more than one candidate. “Voting is important to elect the people who run the community, the state and country, that’s what democracy is all about,” Esquivel said. Saleh said some of the voters she assisted were surprised that they truly could make their own selections on the ballot. In her native Sudan, Saleh said voters might experience “no privacy” when casting a vote. Saleh became a United States citizen in February 2021. The November election was her first to cast a ballot – and to serve as a poll worker. “I liked it,” she said. “It was a new experience. I could choose the people that I want and support the people that I want. I can even run for election one day,” Saleh said noting an interest in school board.

Lucy Loveday also worked the November 8, 2022 general election, alongside her 16-year-old daughter, Elinor. Both Lovedays said they enjoyed seeing the processes and procedures that go into an election. “I was surprised at the number of safety measures,” Elinor Loveday said. “It gave me confidence in the election process,” her mother added.

Hall County had 45 percent turnout for the November 8, 2022 General Election. Of 15,562 votes cast, 3,918 were from early ballots, and 11,510 from voters at Hall County’s 24 polling sites.

(photos and captions included)

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Wyatt Kohles, the polling site manager at Abundant Life, said one of the best parts of working elections is meeting the voters. Kohles and his twin brother, Grant, have worked elections since their sophomore year at Grand Island Senior High. They both managed polling sites in Hall County in 2022.



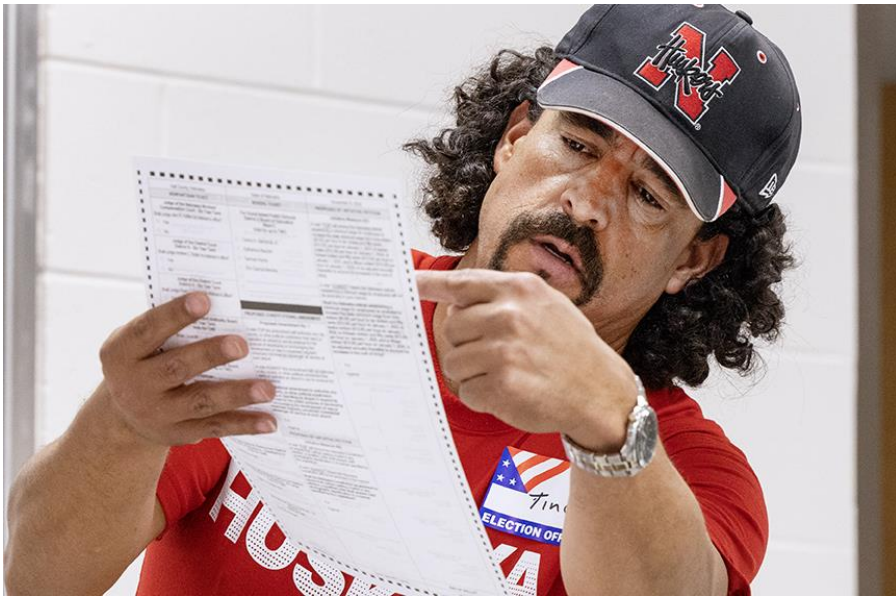
Wyatt Kohles, 20, of Grand Island managed the Abundant Life polling site in Grand Island for both the May 10 and November 8, 2022 elections in Hall County. Kohles, a Hastings College student, has worked elections in Hall County since he was 16 years old.



Grant Kohles, 20, of Grand Island, managed the polling site at the Hall County Airport for the November 8, 2022 General Election. “The staff I had was great and I appreciate the opportunity to help out,” Kohles said. He and his twin brother, Wyatt, have both worked Hall County elections since they were 16 years old.



Ekram Saleh became a United States citizen in February 2021 and voted for the first time in 2022. She served as a poll worker in the November 8, 2022 General Election in Hall County to better understand the election process and to help others from her native Sudan, including providing translation assistance in Arabic.



Florentino Esquivel reminded voters to mark both sides of the ballot in the November 8, 2022 General Election in Hall County. He provided Spanish translation to some voters at Grace Lutheran Church. “I wish more Hispanic people would take the time to vote,” Esquivel said. “Voting is what democracy is all about.”

Photos credit: Barrett Stinson, Stinson Photography, Hall County Election Office.

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