

St. Paul switches to Ranked Choice Voting

Written by

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 17:40

As back-to-school time, autumn has long been a time of transition – and of learning. This fall FairVote Minnesota is partnering with the city of St. Paul to educate voters about the city's upcoming switch to Ranked Voting (or Ranked Choice Voting). Voters approved the change in 2009 and will begin using RV for municipal elections this November.

The education effort is a grassroots one, designed to engage St. Paulites through community events, demo elections, neighborhood gatherings, door-knocking and more – particularly in Wards 1, 2, and 3, where there will be three or more city council candidates on the ballot. Ramsey County Elections has a wealth of information, including videos and translated materials, available on its http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/elections/Ranked_Voting.htm website and will also be sending a mailing to St. Paul voters.

A Ranked Voting presentation is slated for Sept. 20, 6:30 p.m. at Mad Hatter's Coffee Café and Teahouse, 943 W. Seventh St. and at the Festa Italiana, Sept. 23 and 24 at Harriet Island.

Under Ranked Voting, instead of voting for just one candidate, voters rank their preferences – first choice, second choice, third choice, etc. Voters can rank as many candidates as they prefer, but may rank only one candidate if they wish.

The ballots are counted in rounds. According to Ramsey County Elections, if a candidate receives a majority of votes (50 percent + 1) in the first round on election night, that candidate wins. On election night, the vote totals will be available online at www.rcelections.org.

If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the counting will resume on Monday, November 14.

In each round, the candidate receiving the fewest votes is eliminated and votes for that candidate are reassigned to remaining candidates based on the next preference on those voters' ballots. This process continues until one candidate receives a majority. If only two candidates remain and neither has received a majority of initial votes cast, then the candidate with the most votes is the winner. See www.rcelections.org for more detail on how the process works.

One effect of the switch that voters may already be noticing is the absence of a primary: Ranked Voting eliminates the primary election and consolidates the primary and general into a single election in November.

FairVote Minnesota has posted a comprehensive [list](#) of upcoming Ranked Voting educational events, which are updated regularly. Contact Voter Education Coordinator

[Brian Kimmes](#)

for information about these events. We welcome promotion and coverage of any of the events.

For more information on Ranked Voting and the transition, visit the

[Ramsey County Elections](#)

website.