



San Diego Union-Tribune, The (CA)

Voters keep city officials for another 4-year term

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Published: November 5, 1998

Voters are pleased with their mayor, City Council and treasurer and have told them to stay the course for four more years.

Mayor Art Madrid won handily in Tuesday's election and will serve a third term at the helm of this city of 56,000 residents.

"I feel honored and privileged at the confidence that the people have demonstrated by their vote," Madrid said from Election Central in El Cajon. "I pledge that I will be just as committed to doing my job during my term in office."

Madrid, 63, was challenged by former Councilman Ed Senechal.

The two council members seeking re-election, Jay La Suer, 58, and Barry Jantz, 39, easily defeated three challengers: Michael Moon, 39, a machinist at Solar Turbines and part-time law student; Sherry Howard Nichols, 41, a business owner and activist; and Rick Reese, 42, a structural engineer, business owner and previous council candidate.

La Suer, who finished first in the council races, said he was humbled and thankful for the votes.

"I think it's basically that I and the other members who were re-elected have been very sincere in doing the absolute best for the city," he said.

La Suer said he and the rest of the council have long pushed for several changes to reduce crime, such as hiring more police officers, applying for funds to buy a mobile police substation and making redevelopment plans along University Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard.

"There's always room for improvement," he said.

Moon, who finished last, said he was happy to have drawn attention to violent crime in his neighborhood in southwestern La Mesa.

"At our last forum, Barry (Jantz) made the comment that he would work with the challengers to help address the issues they had raised," he said. "If that's all I accomplish, I will consider the campaign a success."

Nichols, who finished third, said she was "shocked and very pleased" with the support she received.

"I appreciate all the people who supported me," she added. "They obviously have the same beliefs and concerns that I have about the supposedly fabricated issues that are going on (about violent crime and vandalism)."

Treasurer Kenneth Trent, 77, was a shoo-in, because he faced no opposition. The retired banker, who has served as treasurer for 22 years, said he has no worries about putting in four more years.

Final unofficial returns showed Madrid winning with 72 percent of the vote, or 10,508 votes, compared with 28 percent, or 4,155 votes, cast for Senechal.

La Suer attracted the most votes among council candidates, with 8,888, or 38 percent, while Jantz won re-election with 8,020 votes, or 34 percent. Nichols finished a distant third, with 2,737 votes, or 12 percent; Reese netted 2,400 votes, or 10 percent; and Moon chalked up 1,646 votes, or 7 percent.