

***Hutchens PR Key Election Analysis
San Diego County
November 4, 2008***

The General Election of 2008 was an historic event. On a national basis, Election Night was both a cause for celebration for the Democratic Party *across the board*, and a major “wake-up call” for the Republican Party. That theme and energy was maintained in California and throughout San Diego County.

Simply stated, this election was a classic example of what political scientists refer to as very long “coattails.” It will be a time for a changing of the old guard, and much of the conventional political wisdom of the past will be rewritten. It has never been more important to stay abreast of the political winds.

Hutchens PR has looked at the results of the election and are providing this summary and interpretation of the results. We hope what follows is both interesting and helpful to you.

Local Ballot Propositions

County of San Diego: Proposition A, a measure to create an annual \$52 per parcel tax to fund fire fighting equipment, received 63.21%...but needed a two-thirds vote to be passed. Despite having the support of nearly two-thirds of the voters, protection from the wildfires that have plagued the county over the past decade will be left to the County’s general fund budget, leaving funding up to annual decisions by the Board of Supervisors.

City of San Diego: City-wide, voters were definitive on ballot measures.

- Voters rejected a developer’s plan to build a massive deck 40 feet above the Tenth Avenue marine terminal, intended to be used for hotels, a football stadium or other uses (70.46% against). This was actually a vote of the five Port District cities (San Diego, Chula Vista, National City, Coronado and Imperial Beach).
- They chose to dedicate Mission Bay-produced revenue strictly to Mission Bay capital projects (66.5%), despite the Mayor’s opposition that was based on “tying his hands” on efforts to balance the city’s budget without losing necessary services. Sanders announced \$43 million in service cuts on Wednesday, following the election.
- Voters chose to make the ban on alcoholic consumption at city beaches permanent (53%). Both the “booze ban” and Mission Bay initiatives were successfully generated by Councilmember Kevin Faulconer.

Other cities: Among other initiatives throughout the county, the key decisions by voters included:

- approval of seven school bonds with over 55% support, with no rejections;
- approval of an increase in sales tax in La Mesa, rejection of a move by the Libertarian Party to eradicate a sales tax increase in National City that was approved in 2006, and rejection of a sales tax increase in El Cajon;

- make the City Attorney position in Chula Vista an elected position in 2010 (with no term limits or residency requirements);
- make Santee a charter city;
- advise the Coronado City Council to purchase its only hospital from its private owners.

Elected Officials

Federal: The incumbent members of Congress won their races, and a familiar name retained a seat.

- In the 49th District, Republican Darrell Issa's 58% was 20 points higher than Democrat Robert Hamilton in his inland North County district.
- In the coastal north county 50th District, the GOP's Brian Bilbray garnered just over 50%, with Democrat Nick Leibham surprisingly close at 46% after a highly negative campaign.
- Democrat Bob Filner won his race handily, with a 72% vote in his south county-Imperial County 51st District.
- Susan Davis will return to Congress representing the central City of San Diego 53rd District after receiving 57% of the vote
- Duncan D. Hunter received the coronation in the 52nd District, and will represent the east county constituents served by his father, Duncan M. Hunter, for the last 24 years. His 57% vote total was substantial, though Democrat and political newcomer Mike Lumpkin picked up 39% of the district vote.

State: One seat changed party hands and the rest remained "status quo."

- Democrat Senator Christine Kehoe easily won re-election in the 39th State Senate District and will return for her final term in Sacramento. Her 65% exceeded the 31% garnered by Republican newcomer Jeff Perwin.
- Incumbent victories by seated Assembly members included:
 - Republican Kevin Jeffries (58%) in the 66th District, including the very northern part of the inland county and parts of Riverside County
 - Republican Martin Garrick (50%) in the coastal north county 74th District
 - Democrat Lori Saldana (65%) easily in the central 76th District
 - GOP's Joel Anderson (56%) in the east county's 77th District
 - Democrat Mary Salas (69%) had a simple race in the south county's 79th District
- Republican and returning combat Marine Nathan Fletcher will succeed termed-out George Plescia in the central inland 75th District, garnering 52% of the vote in his first try at elective office and a ten-point victory over Democrat Darren Kasai.
- In the hotly-contested race to succeed Republican Shirley Horton in the 78th Assembly District, Community College Board President Marty Block (Democrat) out-pollled Chula Vista City Council member John McCann (GOP) by ten points, 55%-45%. Over \$2.5 million was spent on this race by the respective political parties, and it was one of the most negative and highly-televised races in the state.

City of San Diego: With half of the eight-member city council termed out, Mayor Jerry Sanders hoped to pick up one or two votes that would not side with Organized Labor on key issues. While optimistic early in the evening, he was disappointed with the final results at the city council level...but ecstatic over the defeat of the incumbent City Attorney.

San Diego City Attorney

Incumbent City Attorney Mike Aguirre has been a lightning rod for media attention, and a thorn in the collective sides of the business community and Mayor Sanders for the four years since he took office. He quarreled bitterly and frequently with the mayor and most of the city council on public policy and financial issues, making accusations of criminal intent on pension issues, and using the “bully pulpit” to take on city processes, staff and even citizen commissioners.

Aguirre faced Judge Jan Goldsmith in the general election. The two received the largest vote totals in the June primary election, outpacing two members of the city council and a female former attorney from Aguirre’s staff who was suing him for workplace harassment.

Goldsmith, on leave from the bench, is a former member of the State Assembly and was the first elected Mayor of Poway. He was substantially backed by the Republican party and the business community. Aguirre, who was backed by Labor in 2004, had fallen out of favor with the unions because of his strong and very public stand against city employee work unions.

Goldsmith easily defeated Aguirre by 20 percentage points on Tuesday, securing 60% of the vote. After Aguirre’s staff vacates the City Attorney’s offices in early December, Goldsmith will occupy the suite with what he has promised will be a “return to providing legal guidance to the city instead of public policy pronouncements.” It is sure to be an environment that will be more welcoming to the business community.

San Diego City Council Races:

District Five: Conservative newcomer Carl DeMaio won election during the June primary election. He has already shown a propensity to question conventional thinking and is focused on the financial health of the city. He will settle into the role quickly, and will be a willing ear for development, progress, and financial stability. He will not, however, be a “push over” in any way...simply supportive of thoughtful and logical policy decisions.

District One: Flight school owner Phil Thalheimer has been seeking the city council seat that represents a largely-affluent district in the north of the city that stretches from La Jolla and north Pacific Beach into highly-diversified Mira Mesa and part of Rancho Penasquitos. He ran against incumbent Scott Peters in 2004, spending over \$1 million of his own money. Favored by the conservative side of San Diego politics, he repeated that strategy in 2008 in his efforts to replace the termed-out Peters.

Sherry Lightner is a community activist and co-owner of a computer consulting firm who counted on environmentalist support and did an excellent job of riding the wave of

change wrought by the Obama furor. She was outspent by a substantial margin, yet held a slim lead throughout the evening and ended up with a victorious margin of two percentage points. It will be important to stress environmental and sustainable responsibility, as well as programs that are culturally and socially sensitive, when discussing issues with Ms. Lightner; she has a long history of fighting development projects.

District Three: Todd Gloria has served as the popular and very visible District Director for Congress member Susan Davis for the past two terms. The son of blue-collar Hispanic parents, Todd knew the district well because of his ongoing relationship with the community. Steve Whitburn arrived in San Diego just a few years ago to work for a local non-profit. Both are openly gay in a largely-LGBT district and are Democrats. Toni Atkins, who recently married her life-partner and campaigned heavily against state Proposition 8, was termed out.

Gloria secured the backing of much of the business community, as well as a number of elected officials including his boss, Susan Davis, and Mayor Sanders. Whitburn's backing came from smaller organizations and city councilmember Donna Frye. Gloria came out of the blocks Tuesday night with a ten point lead and maintained it throughout the evening. He will be a reasonable member of the city council who will listen to reason and support projects and issues that are sensitive to human rights, the environment and labor. At age 30, he will be the youngest member of the council in recent memory.

District Seven: Longtime conservative political activist and CPA April Boling has spent the past 20 years doing the campaign disclosure reporting for many of the region's Republican political candidates. Following the 2006 election cycle two years ago, she sold her accounting firm and focused on her own race to replace termed-out Jim Madaffer. Boling's campaign stressed financial stability and accountability for the city.

Marti Emerald spent 15 years as a consumer reporter for the local ABC affiliate, KGTV. She resigned over a year ago to focus on her efforts to secure the 7th District seat. She campaigned as "the Consumer Advocate in City Hall" and was clearly the "anti-establishment" candidate.

Boling out-pollled Emerald by two percentage points in the June primary and held that lead early in the evening on Tuesday. That lead dwindled as the poll results started to come in. In the end, Marti Emerald won the seat narrowly, with less than a two percent margin. Like Ms. Lightner and Ms. Frye, Councilmember-elect Emerald will be a challenge for the business community. It will be important to appeal to her sensitivities to the environment and sustainability, and she may be most effective when enabled to solve problems and concerns for her constituents.

Chula Vista: In addition to the Elected City Attorney ballot initiative, two of the city council's four seats were up for grabs:

- Incumbent Steve Castaneda, who survived a Grand Jury indictment earlier this year and trailed most of the evening, eventually held-off first-time challenger

Scott Vinson, a realtor and Planning Commissioner, 53%-47%. Vinson was backed by Mayor Cheryl Cox and much of the business community.

- Former Planning and Parks & Recreation Commissioner Russ Hall appears to have held off Planning Commissioner Pamela Bensoussan, and is leading by just 119 votes with several thousand late and conditional ballots still to be tallied. Hall is the business community choice and was backed by Mayor Cheryl Cox.

Coronado: City Councilmember Casey Tanaka will succeed retiring airline pilot Tom Smisek after topping investment banker Tom Stickel by 14 points. Stickel is a past chair of the California Chamber of Commerce and was San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders' roommate in college at SDSU.

Status quo city council elections included:

Carlsbad

Coronado

Del Mar

El Cajon

Encinitas

Escondido (City Council and City Treasurer)

Imperial Beach

La Mesa (City Council and City Clerk)

Lemon Grove (City Council and Mayor)

National City (City Council, City Clerk and City Treasurer)

Oceanside (City Council and Mayor)

Poway

San Marcos

Santee (City Council and Mayor)