YOUR GUIDE TO THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

The eyes of the nation are on North Carolina this year as voters decide what might be a pivotal race in determining which party will control the U.S. Senate. But local and state races will have just as big an effect on our daily lives. The News & Record compiled this guide to help voters as they make these important decisions Nov. 4.

Inside you'll find candidate questionnaires on contested races in Guilford and Rockingham counties. Candidates provided the biographical information. An (i) denotes incumbent; party affiliations are identified as (D) Democrat, (R) Republican and (L) Libertarian. The following are nonpartisan races, which means candidates do not have to indicate party affiliation: High Point municipal, boards of education. We did not ask candidates for Soil and Water Conservation supervisor or judicial races to fill out questionnaires.

These candidates did not return questionnaires before the deadline: Phil Berger (N.C. Senate 26); John M. Blust (N.C. House 62); Elretha Perkins (N.C. House 65); Monique Morgan (Guilford County Board of Education-District 4); John Ferrell (Rockingham County sheriff); and Rockingham County Board of Education candidates Miriam (Darlene) Pinnix Aikens and Bill Best (who withdrew).

Responses were edited for space and clarity. The full questionairres can be found at News-Record.com.

— Elections editor Jennifer Fernandez

NEWS-RECORD.COM: FIND CANDIDATE AND ELECTION STORIES, PHOTOS AND VIDEOS.

SALES TAX REFERENDUM

Voters in both Guilford and Rockingham counties will be asked to vote "for" or "against" a quarter-cent increase to the local sales tax rate. The ballot question can't specify how the money will be spent, and future commissioners aren't bound by plans made now on how to spend the money. Commissioners don't have to collect the tax even if voters approve the request.

Why: To raise money for local schools.

Cost: Adds 25 cents per $100 of eligible purchases.

How much?: Would raise $14 million in Guilford and $1.5 million in Rockingham, annually.

When: Would not begin collecting until April 2015.

Benefit: Proponents say more people, including tourists and renters, would pay, as compared to a property tax increase.

Drawback: Opponents say it disproportionately affects the poor.

Source: News & Record research

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Voters will be asked to vote "for" or "against" a constitutional amendement that would allow people charged with a felony to decide if they want a judge or a jury to hear their case.

Such a waiver would require the consent of the trial judge and would not be allowed in a death penalty case. The amendment would put North Carolina in line with 49 other states and the federal criminal justice system.

Benefits

- Could save time and money.
- Judges may be better suited than juries to decide certain types of cases.

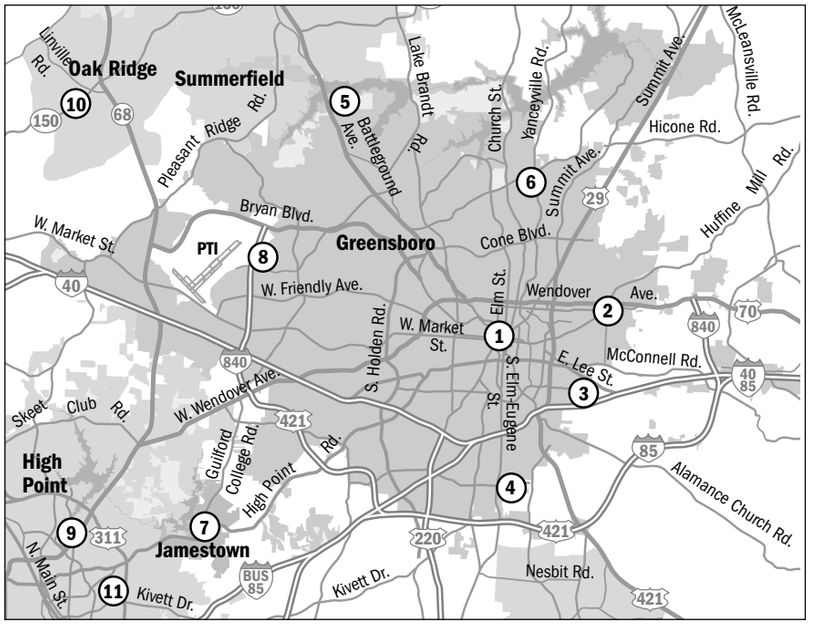
Drawbacks

- Potential for "judge shopping."
- Defendants could be unduly pressured to waive jury trial.

Source: The Associated Press

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS IN GUILFORD COUNTY

Eleven sites were picked where voters can cast early ballots from Oct. 23 through Nov. 1.



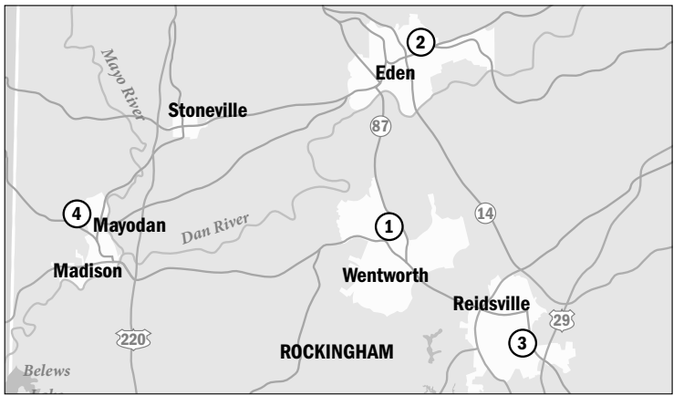
WHERE YOU CAN VOTE

1. Old Courthouse, (Blue Room, first floor), 301 W. Market St. , Greensboro
2. Agricultural Center (Barn), 3309 Burlington Road, Greensboro
3. Barber Park, 1500 Dans Road, Greensboro
4. Brown Recreation Center, 302 E. Vandalia Road, Greensboro
5. Bur-Mil Club, 5834 Bur-Mil Club Road, Greensboro
6. Craft Recreation Center, 3911 Yanceyville St., Greensboro
7. Jamestown Town Hall, 301 E. Main St., Jamestown
8. Leonard Recreation Center, 6324 Ballinger Road, Greensboro
9. Oak Hollow Mall, 921 Eastchester Drive, High Point
10. Oak Ridge Town Hall, 8315 Linville Road, Oak Ridge
11. Washington Terrace Park, 101 Gordon St., High Point

VOTING HOURS

Weekdays (Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 27-31)
- Old Courthouse: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- All other sites: 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Weekends (all sites)
- Oct. 25: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Nov. 1: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.



EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS IN ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

The following locations are open in the county for early voting for the Nov. 4 general election. Early voting runs from Oct. 23 to Nov. 1.

WHERE YOU CAN VOTE

1. Board of Elections office, 240 Cherokee Camp Road, Wentworth
2. Eden Mall, 201 E. Meadow Road, Eden
3. Pennrose Mall, 1601 S. Sales St., Reidsville
4. Former Mayodan Public Library, 101 N. 10th Ave., Mayodan

VOTING HOURS

Weekdays (Oct. 23-24 and Oct. 27-30)
- All sites: 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Wentworth: 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Oct. 31

Weekends
- All sites: 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Oct. 25
- Wentworth: 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Nov. 1

Maps and cover illustration by Margaret Baxter, News & Record