

The New York Times

National

HOME

SEARCH [Go to Advanced Search/Archive](#)

GO TO MEMBER C

▶ JOB MARKET

 Past 30 Days

Welcome, op9

▶ REAL ESTATE

▶ ALIENS AREAS



✉ E-Mail This

🖨️ Printer-Frien

📄 Most E-Mails

🔍 Reprints

NEWS

[International](#)[National](#)[- Columns](#)[Washington](#)[Business](#)[Technology](#)[Science](#)[Health](#)[Sports](#)[New York Region](#)[Education](#)[Weather](#)[Obituaries](#)[NYT Front Page](#)[Corrections](#)

OPINION

[Editorials/Op-Ed](#)[Readers' Opinions](#)

FEATURES

[Arts](#)[Books](#)[Movies](#)[Travel](#)[NYC Guide](#)[Dining & Wine](#)[Home & Garden](#)[Fashion & Style](#)[Crossword/Games](#)[Cartoons](#)[Magazine](#)[Week in Review](#)[Multimedia/Photos](#)[Learning Network](#)

SERVICES

[Archive](#)[Classifieds](#)[College](#)[Book a Trip](#)[Personals](#)[Theater Tickets](#)[NYT Store](#)[NYT Mobile](#)[About NYTDigital](#)[Jobs at NYTDigital](#)[Online Media Kit](#)[Our Advertisers](#)

MEMBER CENTER

[Your Profile](#)[E-Mail](#)[Preferences](#)[News Tracker](#)[Premium Account](#)[Site Help](#)[Privacy Policy](#)

NEWSPAPER

[Home Delivery](#)[Customer Service](#)

Order Soundly Defeats Chaos as Florida County Goes to Polls

By DANA CANEDY

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., March 11 — Finally, a chaos-free election in South Florida.

Broward County, home of lost ballots and missing voting machines, held countywide municipal elections today, and officials said they were free of the widespread problems that had defined recent elections here.

In a county where past elections have shown that votes are not always guaranteed to count, many people consider that an achievement.

Even today, some voters were uncertain whether their trip to the ballot box would make a difference. "I don't know if my vote will count but staying home and not voting doesn't help," said Josephine Ugarte, 25, who voted in Miramar near here.

Plagued by problems at the polls since the contested 2000 presidential election, Miriam Oliphant, Broward's elections supervisor, was under pressure by voters and state officials to pull off a smooth election. She appears to have done that, though with some outside assistance.

Workers reported no major problems at precincts by the time polls closed this evening, as voters elected four city commissioners in Fort Lauderdale, chose mayors in some other cities and decided referendums and charter amendments related to public works project in others.

"I called this a 12-step program with Miriam," said Ben Graber, a Broward County commissioner. "In January, she admitted that there was a problem and that she had to correct it. Step 2 was her trying to get on the right track. Step 3 is today," Mr. Graber said.

After Ms. Oliphant was elected supervisor of elections and took over in January 2001, she promised to restore confidence in the office after the 2000 presidential election, which resulted in a 36-day battle for Florida's crucial 25 electoral votes.

Advert

[Electronic Edition](#)
[Media Kit](#)
[Community Affairs](#)
[Text Version](#)

What followed instead were botched primary and general elections last fall, a budget deficit of nearly \$1 million and loss of many longtime employees.

In the weeks leading up to the elections today, state and local officials said they had lost all confidence in Ms. Oliphant's ability to oversee orderly elections and had called on her to resign. It had become so bad in Broward County, where recounts had become common, that officials from one city, Coral Springs, said they had decided against putting several referendums before voters this month because they had so little confidence in the voting process.

Advertiser Links:

[Get 25
commission-free
trades from
Ameritrade.](#)

Even Gov. Jeb Bush had said he was unhappy with Ms. Oliphant's performance but was powerless to do anything about it since she was elected rather than appointed.

Ms. Oliphant refused to step down but was forced to relinquish much of the control over her office. She has said she inherited many of the problems that resulted in flawed elections and that her office's budget shortfall was caused by an increase in the number of precincts that required more poll workers and by new voting machines that required more staff training and voter education.

With outside elections experts helping with worker training and precinct logistics planning, the elections department today avoided another crisis. "The more elections we have the better we get," Ms. Oliphant told television reporters outside one precinct.

Elections workers reported a few minor problems to a command center that had been set up to troubleshoot glitches. Electronic ballots were not sent to one polling place, prompting workers to switch to paper ballots, but no one was turned away without voting. Machines at another precinct had to be moved to make room for a voter using a wheelchair.

Critics who had anticipated many more problems at the polls today acknowledged that the voting had gone smoothly, but they refused to give Ms. Oliphant credit for the county's improved performance.

"This is a municipal election so there is involvement by the municipalities that wasn't there for the general election," said Diana Wasserman-Rubin, Broward County mayor and one of Ms. Oliphant's harshest critics. "The level of involvement by the county is not as high this time."

Ms. Oliphant was making the rounds of polling places today, and her aides said she was unavailable for an interview.

Ms. Oliphant's few but loyal supporters say she deserves at least some of the credit.

Wri



TIMES NEW

Topics

[Elections](#)

[Florida](#)

"She made her mistakes as a supervisor," said Josephus Eggleton, a county commissioner. But, he added, "any time you switch to new technology you're going to have growing pains."

[Create Your Own](#)
[Take](#)
[Sign Up for](#)

SEARCH RESULTS FROM THE ARCHIVE

[THE 2002 ELECTIONS: THE OVERVIEW; G.O.P. RETAKES CONTROL OF THE SENATE IN A SHOW OF PRESIDENTIAL INFLUENCE; PATAKI, JEB BUSH AND LAUTENBERG WIN](#) (November 6, 2002) \$

[THE 2002 ELECTIONS: NEWS ANALYSIS; President's Risks Are Rewarded at Polls](#) (November 6, 2002) \$

[Renewed Calls for Revising Policy on Haitians](#) (October 31, 2002) \$

[THE 2002 CAMPAIGN: THE POLLS; Revamping Lags for Polling Service Tied to Flawed Data in 2000](#) (October 31, 2002) \$

Find more results for [Elections](#) and [Florida](#) .

PREMIUM

Is Your Business
Future of T



[Tech Forecast](#)
[Download V](#)

Doing research? Search the archive for more than 500,000 articles:

Since 1996

- E-Mail This Article
- Printer-Friendly Format
- Most E-Mailed Articles
- Reprints



[Click Here](#) to Receive 50% Off Home Delivery of The New York Times Newspaper.

REAL

Spotlight on..



• [Search Other](#)

[Home](#) | [Back to National](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Help](#) | [Back to Top](#)



[Copyright 2003 The New York Times Company](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)