

Early voting begins Monday but 5,200 have already decided

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Putnam County residents who want a head start exercising their right to vote can start Monday in three local early voting locations.

The polls will be open 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. through Oct. 31 at the Supervisor of Elections Office in Palatka, 2509 Crill Ave. in Palatka; the South Putnam Government Complex, 115 N. Summit St. in Crescent City; and the Interlachen Community Center, 135 S. County Road 315.

Mail ballots can still be requested from the Elections Office through Oct. 24.

As of 6 p.m. Friday, 50,693 Putnam residents were eligible to vote in this year's presidential election and 5,280 mail ballots have already been cast.

Elections Supervisor Charles Overturf III said this is the highest number of registered voters in county history and he hopes for a 75% higher turnout by the end of Nov. 3, Election Day.

“So many people have told me they want to vote early,” Overturf said.

He recommended residents fill out a sample ballot before voting to save time. This year's ballot is the longest one the county has had and includes six state constitutional amendments.

Overturf said sample ballots can be brought into polling locations and ballot boxes will be at each early voting location if residents want to drop off their mail ballot rather than mail it.

Residents can vote early at any of the three locations, but voting on Election Day must be done at their assigned polling place. Precinct and voting location information can be found at soe.putnam-fl.com.

Hand sanitizer, protective Plexiglas barriers, disposable cotton swabs to sign in, and a hands-free identification and ballot process are some of the measures the Elections Office is taking to ensure voters' health during the pandemic.

“We feel like we've got all three locations ready for Monday,” he said.

Overturf said he is confident in the safety and security of votes.

A logic and accuracy test was performed last week on the county's ballot machines. Everything went fine and the machines are ready to accept Putnam County votes, he said.

Residents are encouraged to wear masks when voting but will not be turned away from polling locations.

“We will not stop a voter from coming in if they refuse to wear one,” Overturf said.

All votes must be cast by 7 p.m. Nov. 3. More election information can be found by calling the Elections Office at 329-0224.

The Palatka Daily News and St. Johns River State College hosted candidate forums this week for select local races. Both forums can be found on the PDN Facebook page, [palatkadailynews.com](https://www.facebook.com/palatkadailynews) and the SJR State YouTube page.

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