

Lindemann keeps seat; Williams ousts Lee in York County Council

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Paul Lindemann contended his drunken driving arrest wouldn't affect the election.

He was right.

Voters convincingly returned the embattled York County Councilman to office Tuesday, keeping him in the District 1 seat that covers much of the northern area of the county, including Fort Mill and Tega Cay.

The night ended in victories for three of the four County Council incumbents running opposed, but for Lindemann, who was elected to his second term, the vote confirms his assertion that he could win despite being charged in July with his third DUI and losing the support of the local Republican Party.

"The bottom line is that experience and integrity and honesty with facing the party, and facing the media ... people said, 'Look, this guy will stand up through adversity and we want him back in for two more years,'" Lindemann said Tuesday night.

The 29-year-old Republican campaigned on his youthful energy and experience -- his opponents have never held public office.

He'd also predicted straight ticket voters would go to the polls, and a heavily Republican district would be in his favor.

Lindemann said Tuesday that exit polls confirmed his theory.

Challenger Marion Davenport, a Democrat, said she was disappointed with the outcome, but thanked her supporters and congratulated Lindemann.

Bryan Smith, a Green Party candidate, said he never expected to win and was pleased to receive nearly 6 percent of the votes in the race.

"I'm actually happy about that," Smith said. "It just means that a fairly significant number of people at least heard my message and supported some of the views that I held."

Here's how the other County Council races ended:

District 7: Williams unseats Lee

Chad Williams narrowly defeated four-term incumbent Rick Lee in the race for the District 7 seat, which includes a large swath of urban Rock Hill.

"One of the biggest things I want to do is make sure that the citizens of York County are heard," said the 42-year-old Democrat. "I'm looking forward to taking the things that I've learned talking to all the people and represent the voters that put me in there."

Williams had criticized Lee for the lack of civility on the council, and claimed the recent peace among county leaders had been a tactic to get

elected.

But on Tuesday he thanked Lee for his service and wished him well. Lee was equally civil.

"I recognize the will of the public," said the 57-year-old Republican. "I had eight good years. I'm glad to have been able to be a public servant for that period of time and I wish him the best of luck."

District 3: Cox holds off Lee

Councilman Joe Cox held onto his western York County seat, defeating challenger Eddie Lee in a close race.

Cox won in all precincts outside of the city of York, where Lee is mayor. Cox said he was very grateful that York County residents kept him in office.

"To see the appreciation of the voters is very important to me," Cox said. "It's important for me to know they care enough to turn out and keep me in office."

Lee said he hopes Cox does well during his time in the District 3 seat.

"I wish him all the best," Lee said. "I'll continue to serve as the mayor of York for at least the next three years, and will continue to do great things here in York."

District 4: Blake wins re-election

Incumbent Roy Blake crushed Republican challenger Tom Hardin in the race for the District 4 seat, which includes south Rock Hill.

Blake, 60, was elected to his third term by an overwhelming margin. He primarily campaigned on his experience and his support of a prescription drug discount card program.

He said Tuesday that he was glad voters put him in office again and happy to have another Democrat on the council.

"I'm looking forward to really an action-packed two years," he said, "with a nonstop going to get it, get it, get it."

Hardin, 60, also thanked his supporters and attributed his loss to straight ticket voters in a heavily Democratic district.

"One of those effects that I didn't think was going to carry over down to the County Council race anyway, but it did," he said. "I'm not discouraged at all as far as that goes. We'll just look at it two years from now and see if things are still going that way, then we'll run again."

County Council members serve two-year terms and are paid \$15,544 annually.

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