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ALERT FEATURED TOP STORY BREAKING

Sheriff Michelle Duncan takes lead in early Linn County results

Maddie Pfeifer

Nov 8, 2022



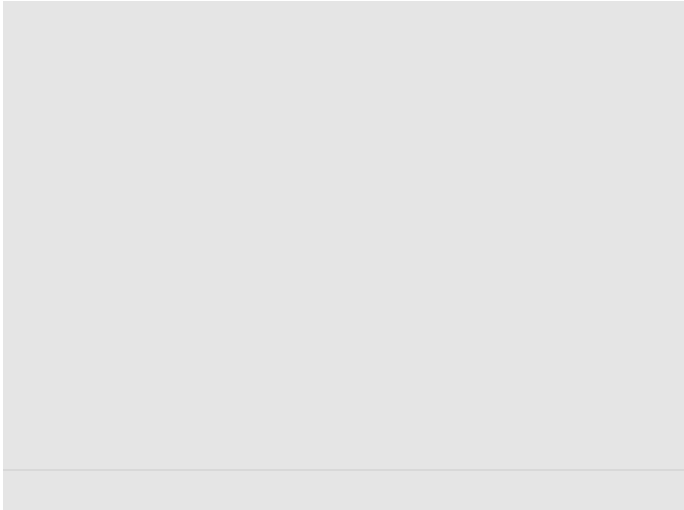
Incumbent Michelle Duncan is facing off against Deputy Jon Raymond for the position of Linn County Sheriff. Kylie Graham and Andy Cripe, Mid-Valley Media

Maddie Pfeifer

Incumbent **Michelle Duncan**'s sizeable lead over opponent **Deputy Jon Raymond** in the race for Linn County sheriff appears to be insurmountable in unofficial results from the Tuesday, Nov. 8 General Election.

Duncan was in the lead after the first round of unofficial results and held on to that lead throughout the night.

As of around 1 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, more than 57,000 ballots had been counted.



The latest results show Duncan receiving 56.3% of the votes while Raymond receiving 43.4%. This is an ever-so-slight shift from the first round of results in which Duncan received 56.6% of the votes and Raymond received 43%.

Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan hopes voters will officially elect her in the Nov. 8 General Election. Appointed to her current role, she has served as sheriff since January.

Kylie Graham, Mid-Valley Media

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"I'm feeling really good," Duncan said Tuesday night. "I think the voters went with the integrity I showed during the campaign and the experience needed to run the sheriff's office."

This was the **first contested General Election sheriff's race** in Linn County in 26 years.

A heated race

The race for Linn County Sheriff has been highly contentious, with former and current Linn County Sheriff's Office employees taking sides, and a **state police organization filing an election violation complaint** against the incumbent.

"We'll have a lot of healing to do," Duncan said Tuesday night. "It's going to take some time."

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She added that she believes a lot of agency employees just want the election to be over. She acknowledged that while employees who supported her opponent may be disappointed, she will still listen to their concerns.

The community has also been deeply invested in the election, as residents have attended **debates** and helped contribute to the **more than \$250,000 donated** in 2022 to both campaigns.

"I'm super thankful to the voters of Linn County, and I promise to give them my best for the next four years," Duncan said.

Keeping her job

Duncan was **sworn in as sheriff** in January after former Sheriff Jim Yon **stepped down** and retired early. That's a path many sheriffs before her tread and a point of contention to Raymond, who called that system an "old boys' club."

Duncan worked her way through the ranks, starting as a deputy in 1997. She was endorsed by the five previous sheriffs.

During her campaign, Duncan emphasized her leadership experience and her self-described commitment to always taking the high road despite her opponent's supporters allegedly making "untruthful" and "ugly" comments about her and her campaign.

Some of her main goals for the upcoming term include bolstering hiring efforts, improving staff morale, opening up the jail to full capacity and **addressing the mental health crisis in the county**.

The challenger's campaign

Raymond ran his campaign on promises of change. He called for better leadership and questioned Duncan's ability to lead the office through difficult times. He has been a deputy at the agency since 1999.

Supporters of Raymond's campaign included many former Linn County Sheriff's Office employees as well as the deputies' union. Local farms and small businesses backed the deputy, and his campaign raked in more than \$130,000 in contributions in 2022 alone.

During candidate forums, Raymond promised to open the jail to full capacity, even at the risk of breaking statewide health guidelines, and also emphasized his commitment to the Constitution and the rights of citizens.

He said morale is extremely low at the agency, and he intended to be the one to make change happen by trusting his employees to do their jobs.

During a September interview with Mid-Valley Media, Raymond said should he not win, he would hope to continue on as a deputy.

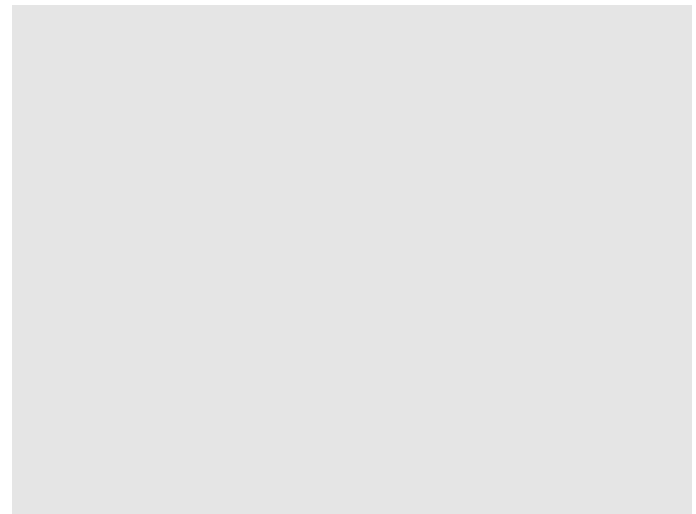
Raymond did not return multiple phone calls for comment Tuesday night.

In a statement posted to his campaign Facebook page Wednesday morning, Nov. 9, Raymond appeared to acknowledge defeat.

"Thank you to everyone who came out in our support! This was a long hard battle and worth every second," he said in the post. "We appreciate every one of our supporters and wish you the best. We can all hold our heads high knowing we supported what we believe in. We never sold out our beliefs or backed down to the popular opinion in the room."

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Jon Raymond is a current LCSO Deputy who is running for Linn County Sheriff.

Andy Cripe, Mid-Valley Media

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