

By EARL WATT

- Daily Leader

According to Seward County Clerk Stacia Long, advanced voting for the special bond election to improve Southwest Medical Center may outpace the special election for the capital improvement for USD No. 480.

As of 9:30 a.m. today, there were 339 advanced ballots cast for the hospital bond issue. If passed, Southwest Medical Center will be able to make \$17 million in upgrades to modernize the hospital, replace the 12-year old MRI machine and convert some areas to better serve outpatient care which has become 72 percent of the hospital's patient load. The last upgrade to the hospital was completed in 1992 and addressed in-patient upgrades.

In the last special election, Long said there were 365 advanced votes cast.

"We're already at 339, and we have the rest of today and until noon on Monday," she said. "Monday will typically be pretty busy."

A total of 1,743 ballots were cast in the last special election which was down from the 2,943 that were cast in April's school board and city commission elections.

In that election, there was a tie between Nick Hatcher and Cliff Abbott. Seward County Commission chair Joyce Hibler flipped a coin to break the tie, an indicator that every vote truly does count.

Advanced voting ends at noon Monday. The election will take place Tuesday at the Seward County Activity Center and in Kismet.

According to Long, those who are supposed to vote in Kismet will not be able to vote at the Activity Center and vice versa.

“If they show up at the Activity Center, we will not have their ballots,” she said. “We have a link on our Web site that can tell people where they need to vote if they are not sure, or they can give us a call.”

The Clerk’s Web site can be found at [www.sewarcountyks.org](http://www.sewarcountyks.org). The phone number is 626-3355.

“I encourage everyone to exercise their right and vote,” she said.