

Jim Rice offers his reaction after receiving the results from Tuesday night's Seward County Commission election that gave him the Dist. 5 seat over incumbent Shannon Francis. Francis mounted a strong write-in campaign to retain the seat but received 42 percent of the vote to Rice's 58 percent.

Daily Leader photo/

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By EARL WATT

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In a rematch from the primary election, Jim Rice defeated Seward County Commission Chairman Shannon Francis Tuesday night despite a strong write-in campaign by Francis. Rice won a narrow victory in the Republican primary that involved a recount due to sample ballots being counted in the original total.

Rice was declared the winner in the primary, but Francis, who was also the President of the Kansas Association of Counties, mounted a write-in campaign to retain his position on the commission.

But the voters selected Rice, 58 percent to 42 percent.



"We knocked on a lot of doors and talked to a lot of people," Rice said. "The vote difference is evidence of that."

Rice based his campaign on his ability to listen to the views of those in Dist. 5, and he went door to door to find out what those views were.

"I wanted to hear what they had to say," he said. "A lot of people offered their ideas."

Rice and Francis varied on their views of economic development, and Rice believed that may

have been a contributing factor to his win.

“There was a lot of interest in economic development,” he said.

“People wanted to know why small business wasn’t coming to town, why we weren’t keeping pace with Garden City. I think it was interesting to hear, and I hope they stay involved.”

Francis, who served eight years, was instrumental in the establishment of the cotton warehouse, the ethanol plant and in the construction of the new administration building.

“I appreciate all the support I got from the community,” he said.

“Seward County is a great place to live.”

Francis garnered 42 percent of the vote with a write-in campaign, which can be considered a moral victory.

“Obviously we wished we got a few more,” Francis said. “I can’t say enough how much I appreciate the support of those who went through the trouble of writing me in.”

Rice will take the oath in January.