Early voting ends Saturday; ballot questions adding to wait

By David Rogers

With hotly contested elections for the presidency and congressional seats at stake, residents have limited time to vote ahead of Tuesday’s general election.

Saturday is the last day for early voting, with hours set from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The location closest to Palm Beach is the Supervisor of Elections office, at 240 S. Military Trail in West Palm Beach.

As of Thursday, nearly 89,000 county residents had cast early ballots, according to the office’s website.

In addition to the races, there are several proposed amendments to the state Constitution.

There are long lines at early voting sites, and the shorter span for early voting, the number of locations available and those ballot questions are contributing to the wait, according to Kevin Wagner, an associate professor of political science at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton.

Wagner said he drove by an early voting site Friday in Palm Beach Gardens, his hometown, but the long line discouraged him from voting then. “The line was literally winding out the door and around the building. A lot of working people don’t have time to wait like that,” he said.

Wagner said voters should read the ballot amendments carefully before going to their polling site. “If the first time you see them is when you walk into the voting booth, it’s going to be very difficult.”

He suggested voters review the sample ballot before voting. They also can turn to their local newspaper and websites such as the League of Women Voters, lwvpbc.org, for information about ballot issues.

Wagner also suggests voters visit PolitiFact.com and FactCheck.org to get reliable information on claims made in political ads. For campaign financing information, visit OpenSecrets.org.
“It’s fairly standard for political advertisement to exaggerate or leave out pivotal information. However, I will say the amount of outright falsehoods seems pretty high” in this particular election cycle, Wagner said. “You can find out the information. What worries me a little is people often don’t take the time and they are unduly influenced by misleading 30-second advertising.”