

CANADIAN POLITICS

TRENDING [Rivers](#) | [Sotloff](#) | [Ukraine](#) | [Israel](#) | [Redford](#) | [Ford](#) | [Williams](#) | [Ebola](#) | [Iraq](#) | [Coyne](#) | [Tim Hortons](#) | [Blatchford](#)

Alberta PC leadership vote plagued by bugs as ballots cast using new electronic voting system



JAMES WOOD, POSTMEDIA NEWS | September 5, 2014 5:49 PM ET
[More from Postmedia News](#)



Progressive Conservative party member Linda Mendleman gets some help from volunteer Faizal Somji as she prepares to vote for the party's new leader at Jim Prentice's campaign headquarters on the first day of voting for the party's on Friday September 5, 2014. Gavin Young/Calgary Herald

There appears to be a few bugs in the system as Progressive Conservative party members began casting their ballot for leader Friday using a new electronic voting system for the first time — prompting the Tory party executive director to ask supporters to remain patient.

PC member Jeremy Hexham said Friday he renewed his membership this spring, but still hadn't received the personal information number needed to vote online or by telephone.

He tried the party's help line a number of times, but was either left on hold or unable to get through because of technical difficulties.

"It's frustrating," said Hexham, a University of Calgary grad student in political communication.

"I'm active in politics, I'm interested in politics ... I'm very actively involved and I'm not getting a chance to vote."

Related

[Alberta PCs have likely 'bottomed out' — but scandal-plagued party still has 29% support: poll](#)

[From platforms to scandals, everything you need to know about Alberta PC leadership candidates](#)

[One more bill for Alison Redford, who quit as Alberta premier — \\$12,000 for her official premier's portrait](#)

Tory voters are given a 20-digit PIN. They must also have their party membership and the three numbers in their postal code.

On social media, other party members reported having their PIN but found they were still running into trouble.

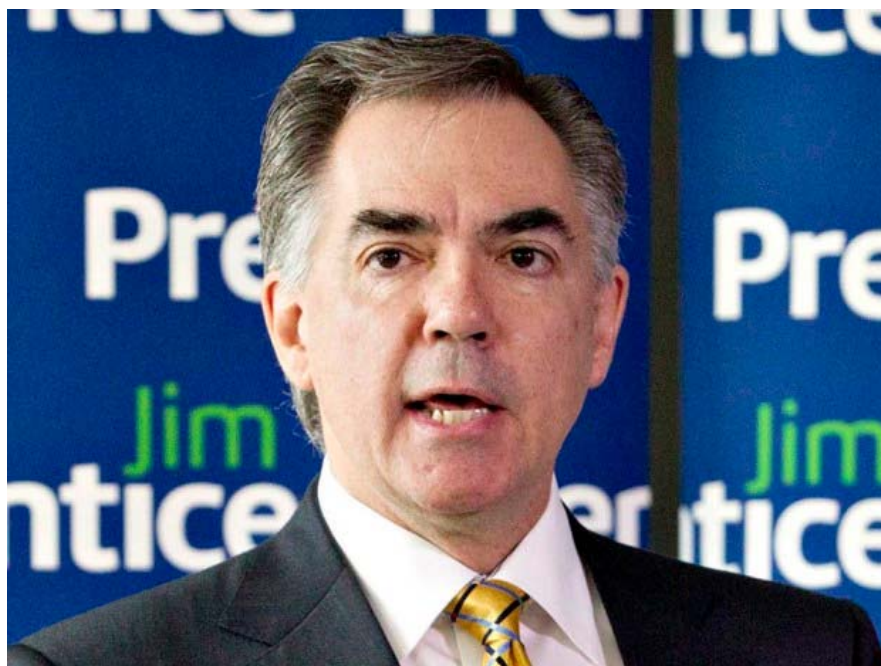
Joey Oberhoffner, a regional director for the PC party in Calgary, tweeted that he had his party membership and PIN but had received the message “unknown user or incorrect password” when he tried to cast his ballot.

Oberhoffner said he had taken part in the party’s tests of the voting system beforehand and had not encountered these problems. He said he had been unable to get through on the help line Friday morning.

The PC Alberta Twitter account said the 1-800-360-1465 number set up to help voters was overloaded with phone calls and advised people to call back in a couple of hours.

Oberhoffner said he’s a motivated voter who will keep on trying to cast his ballot but he’s concerned about the potential impact of the “glitches” on the leadership race.

“People who are only peripherally involved or who are voting just because they have a spare couple of minutes, they may not be able to cast a ballot and I think that reflects less than favourably on the system,” he said in an interview.



Former federal cabinet minister Jim Prentice officially launches his campaign for the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership in Edmonton on Wednesday, May 21, 2014. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jason Franson

Oberhoffner later tweeted that he had unexpectedly received an email with a new party membership number and he had successfully voted.

Another Twitter user, Rob Wiebe posted that he entered his data on the voting website only to be told that it was invalid information.

“Tried voting via phone. Same issue. Phone help down,” he tweeted.

On Friday afternoon, PC executive director Kelley Charlebois encouraged members to be patient as issues are being resolved, but he insisted any problems aren’t tied to the electronic system.

“We’re not having problems with the actual voting process. Our issues are more around people having people misplaced their memberships or having a problems with their number,” he said. “Once they are into the actual vote — either phone on online — we’ve had no complaints about that side.”

Charlebois acknowledged the party did experience an influx of Tories wanting to vote early Friday, leading to a number of calls being made into its help line.

In some cases, people misplaced their membership, or their membership number didn’t line up with their account number.



There are three men vying to become leader of the PC party, who will automatically become Alberta's next premier. Left to right: Jim Prentice, Thomas Lukaszuk and Ric McIver. National Post Wire Services

There have also been some cases of mistakes being made with voters' e-mail addresses, meaning the member didn't receive the information required to get a PIN and vote, he said.

The party changed its own information technology system in the middle of the leadership race and a series of memberships originally sold in the old system had problems translating into the new system, Charlebois added. Finally, the party is getting basic requests from some members who simply need help navigating an electronic system.

"We're just asking for some patience," he said. "I don't mean to be cocky. I am not worried. ... We expected the surge, it's bigger than we expected but that's a nice problem to have."

Voting began Friday at 6 a.m. in the race to become the leader of the PC party and Alberta's next premier, with party members selecting between Thomas Lukaszuk, Ric McIver and Jim Prentice. Voting closes at 6 p.m. Saturday.

Previous PC leadership races in 2006 and 2011 saw members cast paper ballots at polling stations.

With files from Chris Varcoe, Calgary Herald



Find National Post on Facebook

Most Popular



U.S. releases mock ISIS recruitment video that shows...



University of Waterloo student struck and killed by...



New York CEO and wife killed in crash off Jamaica after plane...



Vicious beaver attacks Halifax snorkeler off Nova Scotia's coast

Topics: Canada, Canadian Politics, News, Alberta, Alberta Politics, Joey Oberhoffner

Follow