

Lost bid won't deter Miksic

by **Kristine Goodrich**

Staff Writer

North Oaks resident and White Bear Township business owner Boris Miksic lost his bid to become president of Croatia. After unsuccessfully appealing the election results, the independent candidate now says he plans to run in his homeland's local elections this spring.

Miksic, who immigrated to the United States in 1974, returned to Croatia this fall to run for president. His campaign was deemed a long-shot from the start, with only a single-digit percent of the vote in early polls.

The final results were much higher than



Miksic

expected, but not high enough. According to official election results, Miksic came in third out of 13 candidates with about 18 percent of the vote.

Croatian law requires a second runoff election if no candidate receives a majority of the votes. The top candidate, current president Stjepan Mesic, received only about 49 percent of the vote, forcing the runoff. Miksic narrowly lost the second place spot to

Jadranka Kosor, the government minister from the ruling conservative party, who received just

more than 20 percent of the vote.

In a phone interview last week, Miksic pledged to fight the results.

"I'm not accepting this," he said. "I'm going to keep fighting this. I am prepared to use all the legal means I can to get justice."

But after losing two appeals to Croatia's supreme court, Miksic announced in a press conference on Friday he would accept his defeat.

Miksic said in the phone interview that exit polls placed him in second place up until the polling locations closed. But when the official results were released a few hours later, Kosor had somehow mysteriously gained the lead, he said.

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"Those votes came out of nowhere," he said. "The count of votes was rigged. It was definitely a setup so I couldn't get to the second round."

Miksic said if he had made it to the second round, he believes he would have had a good chance of winning.

Despite the loss, Ivana Borsic, Miksic's assistant campaign manager, said Miksic's supporters were encouraged by his unexpectedly strong showing.

"(Miksic) was really the biggest surprise in this election," Borsic said. "It showed that people in Croatia do want change — that they are tired of the same political scene."

A successful businessman in the United States, Miksic said he wanted to become Croatia's president to help improve the country's stagnate economy.

Miksic returned to North Oaks on Sunday to take a short respite from the political scene.

"I've still got a business to think about," said Miksic, who owns the multimillion-dollar Cortec Corp.

Miksic said he plans to stay active in Croatian politics, however. He said he will return to run for mayor of Zagreb, the county's capital and his hometown, in the local elections in April.

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