

## Dixville Notch readies for another first



**The Balsams Grand Resort Hotel in Dixville Notch, N.H., is undergoing major renovations. The resort is the traditional voting location for the town's midnight balloting during the New Hampshire primary. (Globe File Photo)**

MOULTONBORO, N.H. — The tiny, unincorporated town of Dixville Notch in New Hampshire is readying itself once again for its quadrennial moment of fame.

Midnight voting in the first-in-the-nation primary is expected to take place in Dixville Notch next Tuesday, despite major renovations underway at the Balsams Grand Resort Hotel, the traditional balloting place.

Scott Tranchemontagne, a hotel spokesman, said votes would be cast, as always, in the Balsam's Ballot Room, which is adorned with photographs of previous candidates, both winners and losers. The hotel is not open for business and will not provide lodging to the expected crush of media.

Rick Erwin, the Dixville Notch town clerk, said the town now has nine registered voters — four undeclareds, two Democrats and three Republicans. "They all will be present at the polls Tuesday night," he said.

Towns with fewer than 100 people are permitted to open polling places at midnight and close as soon as all registered voters have cast ballots.

Traditionally, the voting in Dixville Notch takes place in less than a minute.

The hotel was sold last year by the Tillotson family, the owners since 1954.

Neil Tillotson, the family patriarch who founded a rubber products company and bought the hotel at auction, is credited with creating the voting spectacle. Discovering that the nearest voting place was 50 miles away, Tillotson had Dixville incorporated for voting purposes. In 1960, the town held its first midnight elections.

Another tiny northern New Hampshire community, Hart's Location, started its own midnight voting tradition in 1948 because many of its residents were railroad workers who couldn't make it to the polls during daylight. But Hart's Location stopped midnight voting after the 1964 election; it began again in 1996.

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