The school scene . . .

Trustee candidates show public spirit

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Tribute must be handed to the many public spirited citizens who have filed for the thankless task of trustees to help direct school districts which are financially strapped and face a complex of increasing educational problems.

Trepidation was expressed beforehand that school trustees positions appealed less than promising in view of the financial morass brought about by the paralyzing 1 percent tax limitation.

That appeared the case as many incumbents announced they would not seek re-election and the vacancies failed to draw much early interest. Then on the last day or two before the filing deadline April 27 there was a flurry of entries. Many said they filed with the belief no one else wanted the position. As a result there are a number of brisk contests, although a few announced their withdrawal after the filing.

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In Idaho Falls School District 91, a wholesome situation of contests developed for positions that incumbents vacated.

These are concentrated in Zone 1, the area bounded by Snake River on the west and Holmes Avenue on the east, north of Ash Street, and held by Harold Christensen; and Zone 2, west of the Snake river and north of Broadway, held by Ken Carroll, present chairman. Both incumbents announced they would not seek re-election after serving three terms each, or nine years.

In zone 1, Beverly T. Branson, a secretary for both Mayors S. Eddie Pedersen annd Thomas Campbell and a city employee since 1961, must be given the edge over two other competitors because of her long involvement in public affairs.

The other two are Ivon Fergus, nuclear safety engineer at Allied Chemical, and Janell K. Watson, 168 E. Crowley, both staunch conservatives.

Mrs. Branson's duties have acquainted her with all facets of the city where she has lived 25 years. The candidacy statement indicates a progressive approach to school problems.

Over in Zone 2, it's a family fight among three EG&G employees.

The qualifications of Richard G. Helmer, physicist at EG&G, appear most impressive and his statement also indicates a keen understanding and concern of school problems. It would influence giving him the favorite role over the two other contenders.

The other rivals for this position are Henry Peterson, radiological engineer for EG&G; and Harold E. "Gene" Leach, electrical engineer for EG&G. Their statements indicate a rather critical approach to school problems. Kareen Knight, a fourth entry, withdrew.

All have families, school children and fine educational backgrounds.

Clyde Toole, who was appointed recently to replace Rex Meikle, is unopposed on Zone 4, the northeastern section of the city.

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In burgeoning Bonneville District 93, Lively races also shape up in two zones.

In Zone 1, the Ammon area, most feel Glen R. Peterson as the likely winner with Sharon L. Affleck, wife of a physician, as a strong possibility. Others competing and very much in contention include Dennis Clegg, Alton Anderson and James Southwick for the largest field in any zone trustee race.

In Zone 3, the Lincoln area, Duane Oswald appears a decisive choice over Karen Hague.

In Zone 5, the Ucon area, most feel Gary Simmons, the incumbent, will be re-elected, with his stiffest competition coming from William Hill. Also competing and formidable are Galen Williams and Dean Jenkins. In such cases, the incumbent generally has his solid supporters and the challengers must split the opposition vote.

In Zone 2, the Iona area, Newell Richardson is unopposed after two challengers, Charles Carr and Etsel Sommer, withdrew.

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Contests also have developed in Madison School District 321, Butte 111, Snake River 52, Salmon 291, Teton 401, and Shelley 60 while opposition is lacking in Fremont 215, Sugar-Salem 322, Blackfoot 55, Challis 181, Rigby 251 and Ririe 252.

The election is May 15 for the 115 school districts in the state.

In most cases the trustee races are based mostly on personal popularity but in cases where incumbents are opposed it would indicate dissatisfaction with some school board policies.

Idaho Falls School District 91 passed its 7.92 levy while Madison failed badly in approving a 3.5 mill levy a week ago.

Also on May 15, Bonneville 93 patons vote on a $5.3 million bond which takes two-thirds majority for a new Cloverdale grade school and additions to Falls Valley and Bonneville senior high; and Clark, Snake River, Firth, Swan Valley and Teton will vote on mill levies.