

The election eye . . .

Few local races whet appetite for election

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

Only a few legislative contests are on the ballot for Tuesday's primary election, nearly all on the Republican side.

This is exclusive of the presidential primary and the congressional battle between U.S. Rep. George V. Hansen and Jim Jones, Jerome, for the Republican nomination which will be analyzed in a later column.

An unusual situation are races for sheriffs, which likely will draw more interest than those for county commissioners, usually the featured contests.

Five incumbent sheriffs are not seeking office this year, throwing these races wide open. Dropping from the political arena, mostly because they feel the pay is too meager for the responsibilities and long hours required are Sid Teuscher, Custer County; Earl Holden, Clark; Ford Smith, Madison; Karl Ljunggren, Fremont, and Donald Becman, Teton.

* * *

Among the leading attractions are Republican primary contests in three legislators districts. They include Don Penfold, Darby rancher, and William Floyd, Idaho Falls realtor, in District 31, East Bonneville and Teton; Rich Orme, St. Anthony farmer, and Daniel S. Hess, former Ricks College administrator and now Ashton farmer, in District 28, Fremont and Madison; and Rep. Wayne E. Tibbitts, R-Lorenzo, and Jerry Van Leuven, Roberts farmer, in District 20, Jefferson, Clark, Lemhi and Custer counties.

The only Democratic legislative contest pits Tom Harrington, Rigby High School teacher, and Douglas Holm, Roberts farmer, also in District 20.

The Post-Register The political pulse

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Thursday, May 22, 1980

F-2

Most observers feel Tibbitts is a decided favorite while only slight edges are given to Floyd, Orme and Harrington in their contests. Much will depend on these final few days and a victory for their opponents would not be considered startling. The victors are favored for apparently campaigning harder.

* * *

In Bonneville County, the only county race pits the incumbent, Tom Loertscher, against Delmar Anderson, Ammon cattle feeder, in District 2, the Ammon-Lincoln area.

Loertscher, by virtue of his incumbency, is picked as the decided winner and in his favor is keeping most of his campaign pledges in increasing membership of the County Planning and Zoning Committee, giving a voting voice to a Swan Valley representative, voting against Richard Skidmore's appointment on the commission, and holding night meetings when citizens requested them or they were deemed important enough. Skidmore was subsequently replaced as chairman by Robert Hoff.

Two proposals will be voted on in two counties, at Challis for a \$600,000 sewer and water district; and at Roberts for creation of a fire districts. The Bonneville County library district vote will now not be placed on the ballot until the Nov. 4 general election.

* * *

In Jefferson County, incumbent sheriff Joe Potter is generally viewed as a favorite to turn back two opponents, Garth M. Gunderson, former Jefferson deputy and now a Bonneville deputy; and J. Lloyd Leavitt, who must split the opposition vote in the Republican primary.

In Bingham County, Republican incumbent Sheriff Dee Jorgensen also has the edge against two who also must divide the opposition vote, Charles Bastian and Noble G. Taylor. In the Democratic ticket, Mike Shiosaki, former sheriff, is viewed as favorite over Fred McClain.

For county commissioner in District 2, Dale Arave, incumbent, is viewed with the advantage over Ronald Truman in District 2, and the same goes for another incumbent, Vincent O'Brian, over LaMar Whyte and Max Twiggs, in District 3, all Republicans.

Madison offers a sheriff battle between Edmund A. Richardson and Gray I. Clawson, for county commissioner between Ruth Smith and Wayne Beck, and for parttime coroner between Layne K. Ellis and Rick Davis, all Republicans.

In Custer the overcrowded sheriff field pits Democrats Carl Ellis, Daryl C. Hancock and Bill Woolsey and Republicans Robert G. Esterholdt, Gerald Hansen, Hall Moore and Gary H. Kelley.

The only Butte local primary is for sheriff between Dale Merrill and Clare Bowlen, both Republicans.

* * *

Fremont features a sheriff race with all six candidates either former or current law enforcement officers. They include Republicans Tom Stengelmeier, Robert Davis, Kenny Worrell and Carols Watts and Democrats Glenn Haws and Terry Thomson.

Also in Fremont, Frank Tanner, incumbent, is favored to

turn back Lyle Nielsen on the Democratic ballot, while Laurence Parker and John S. Dexter are paired on the Republican ticket for county commissioner in District 2.

Democrats Leo W. Ellis and David L. Johnson are seeking the nomination for sheriff; and Dean E. Wade and Danny K.

Arnold are hitched in a contest for county commissioner in District 3.

There are no local primary or general contests in Lemhi or Clark counties.

One important point—vacancies can be filled by write-ins, at least 50 votes for legislators and only five for county contests.