

I.F. city officials to seek re-elections

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By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register columnist

This fall's elections are generally limited to those for Idaho municipalities. The election in Idaho Falls likely will offer little in the way of competition because of the city incumbents' imposing record.

The opening date for filing is next Thursday and the closing date is 5 p.m. Oct. 5, only an eight-day period, for the Nov. 5 city election.



Thomas Campbell

If there is to be anyone contesting the incumbents, they have been lying low. It is highly probable there could be none, or maybe for one or two council positions.

Up for re-election for four-year terms are Mayor Thomas Campbell and three councilmen. They are Ralph M. Wood, funeral home director; Melvin L. Erickson, advertising manager for a publishing company; and Paul L. Hovey, budget manager for EG&G. Holdovers for two more years are Sam Sakaguchi, partner in an asphalt company; Art R. Chandler, credit union manager; and Wes W. Deist Jr., insurance salesman.

All of the councilmen have obtained their nominating petitions and the mayor said he will get his next week. All four plan to file on the opening day. Each must obtain 40 names of qualified voters on his petition.

The mayor at the end of this year will have served eight years, or two terms. This is the third longest,

exceeded by Mayor E. W. Fanning, 16 years; and Mayor S. Eddie Pedersen, 14 years. Erickson has served since 1966, or 19 years; Hovey since 1970 or 15 years, and Wood since 1974, or 11 years. Campbell also was a councilmen two years before vaulting to the mayorship.

The mayor's salary, which has been \$39,500 yearly, rises to \$45,000 starting next year. The councilmen's salaries jumps next year from \$5,400 to \$6,000 annually.

The mayor and city councilmen leave no doubt they are proud of the record they have marked up the past four years of the present administration.

The outstanding accomplishment listed by the enthusiastic mayor, is, of course, the hydro turbine project for which construction is just getting under way. It was approved by the city voters in two bond elections, one with a 96 percent majority and another with 76 percent margin. It will cost city electric customers only 3.3 cents per kilowatt hours, one of the lowest in the state. When the \$48 million project south of the city is completed, the city will be capable of furnishing 50 percent of its power it uses.

Among other leading projects are rebuilding the airport terminal for \$2 million and improving the runway, the latter with some federal funds; installing five bridges costing between \$300,000 and \$500,000 each on E. 1st street, Kearney street, Brentwood Drive and Lincoln Road; participating in construction of the new Broadway Bridge; and construction of a new railroad underpass and four lane approaches on 17th Street between Yellowstone and South

Boulevard.

The mayor is also proud of the many city parks added and improved. They include extension of the Snake River bank greenbelt, new park at Sugar Mill on Kearney at Bel Aire, and a new park at Bellin Road. In addition, completed was a park at Grandview, the Sand Creek golf course, and improvements at Sand Creek rodeo grounds, including a 100-horse barn which is furnishing rental revenue to the city.

The city's public safety arm was also beefed up. Three new police officers were added to the 90-member force.

"We have especially strengthened the narcotics squad," said the mayor. "People have only to read the newspaper daily to learn this squad is catching lots of criminals."

Campbell said that in all departments, the city has devised a method to pay in advance for equipment and replacing those when needed. For example, the city has cash on hand to replace 10 police cars in 1986. The city fire trucks are leased for about five years, then purchased by the city.

With the city budget at about \$47 million, it is the second largest city budget in the state. That's primarily because the city owns its own electrical system which only three other Idaho cities do. There is a city staff of 450.

"Only 11 percent of our budget is from property taxes," said the mayor. "I believe that our property tax is one of the lowest in the state and certainly the lowest of any of the larger cities of the state."

Bulk of the revenue comes from the electrical department, which amounts to about half. Bulk of the

other income emanates from water, sewer and garbage service.

While nearly all other cities are screaming for funds and facing deficits, Idaho Falls is on a cash basis and avoiding future debts.

"We already have cash to pay for six months of the current fiscal year," said Campbell. "In about another year we will have cash in advance to pay for the entire year. This is probably the only city in the state with such a situation."

The anticipated federal revenue-sharing loss will hurt the city somewhat, but the city is making provisions to get along without it after this year. Of the \$750,000 in the fund, only half is being spent for ongoing projects, said the mayor. This will ease the impact from anticipated loss of those funds in the future.

The mayor said the U.S. Corps of Engineers has also been delegated to devise a method for preventing any possible flooding on the upper dam. He said that despite statements to the contrary, there is no such flood threat on the new dam south of the city.

The mayor, 49, has been mentioned as a candidate for congressman and even governor, but he hastens to say his present plans are to seek re-election this year, again in 1989 and as long as the people want him.

Before being elected to the City Council, Campbell served as a principal at schools in the Bonneville School District for 20 years. An articulate and well-informed speaker, the mayor knows the inner workings of the city in detail. He hopes for no opposition, but if there is any, the personable mayor said he is proud to run on his record.