

# The Post-Register

## The political pulse

B-2

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The election eye

## Keen interest lags in primary election

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The 1982 primary election is now entering its final stages but the interest is noticeable lacking the campaign of 1980 and 1978.

Only a little more than three weeks remain for the May 25 balloting but the contesting candidates are facing a difficult time in overcoming the apathy of voters. This is understandable because in a primary the few candidates who are locked in contests dislike to vigorously attack their opponents of the same party.

It appears at this time, the contests have settled to one of personal candidate appeal, rather than any burning issue.

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This election lacks the provocative aura of 1980 when there was the contested presidential nomination primary, Republican congressional race, and some local contests. There was a bitterly-fought Republican gubernatorial tussle among six aspirants and a brisk congressional battle in 1978.

About the only interesting state race this year is between House Speaker Raloph Olmstead and Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Unlike 1978, however, they have pulled punches against each other. Perhaps as the smell of victory become stronger they may take off their gloves. Olmstead seeks to pin a moderate label on Batt who steadfastly maintains he is also is a conservative, particularly on fiscal matters.

About the only other race of any interest is for Republican state auditor where State Sen. Dan Van Engelen, Burley, known as the leading state budget slicer, is opposed by Nolan Young, longtime Idaho Falls CPA but who recently moved to Boise.

The other two primary contests appear lopsided. Attorney General David H. Leroy is opposed by a little known Hayden Lake naturo-

path, Ronald R. Hove. The only Democratic primary race pits Richard H. Stallings, Ricks College instructor, a formidable campaigner, against George W. Anthony, Buhl data processing owner, who hasn't even made a formal announcement or campaign appearance in east Idaho.

All of the candidates acknowledge they face problems in trying to get out the vote for the election and it likely will fall well below the 40 percent of two years ago.

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The local contests offer a skimpy fare and hardly enough to send voters flocking to the polls in great numbers. There are only two local races in Bonneville, three each in Jefferson, Madison, Fremont and Custer, two in Teton and Bingham, one in Butte, and none in Clark or Lemhi, or total of 15. All are on the Republican ballot except two on the Democratic ticket.

The four competing for district judge on a non partisan ticket adds some interest but it is unlikely one will get a majority which means the two highest will face a runoff in the Nov. 2 general election.

The Bonneville Republican assessor contest between Assessor John Wasden and his former appraiser, Sherman Norris, who has criticized his office practice, has brought some ripples out of the ordinary.

The other Bonneville Republican state legislative fracas in Legislative District 30 among Dale Leatham, high school teacher; J.F. Chadband, furniture merchant, and George J. Bever, realtor, appears mostly a popularity contest.

The primary is only a warmup for the November general election and this promises to be highly interesting. A number of existing vacancies also can be filled by write-ins at the primary.