

The Post-Register

The political pulse

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The election eye

Efforts commended for filling vacancies

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Political committees are to be commended for wanting to fill vacancies on the election ballot which provides for a more healthy and interesting situation.

Incumbents usually experience little competition once they are elected. This is not a desirable situation because it does not give the people the opportunity to judge whether the office holder has performed to what they consider at least acceptable levels.

At the same time, many prospective candidates can't be blamed for not spending time and money seeking to oust incumbents when history shows that such efforts are rarely successful. This occurs even when most agree that many incumbents show a woeful lack of ability.

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In looking over the ballot nearly half the incumbent county officials and legislators in east Idaho are unopposed but the competition this year is greater than it has been in the past.

Perhaps that speaks well for the incumbents because possible challengers are not going to run unless they feel they have a fairly good chance for election.

It's also sorrowful to relate that many qualified men and women who might be interested in holding public office can't afford the time nor money. Furthermore, they are unwilling to take the abuse from the public which is one of the hazards that go with the territory.

In the past 20 years in eastern Idaho, there have been only a half-dozen incumbent legislators who have been defeated for re-election. The casualty rate among county officials is much higher, particularly county commissioners, and in a few cases, sheriffs.

Republicans do a much better job filling their tickets and that is understandable.

East Idaho is strongly Republican. All factors being about equal, the Republican will win in most counties with the possible exception in Butte, Custer and at times, Bingham.

In Bonneville County and the state, Republicans have completely filled their ballot. The Democrats have done a better job than in the past but unopposed Republicans are Reps. Gary L. Paxman, Idaho Falls, in District 30, and John O. Sessions, Driggs, in District 31, County Clerk Ron Longmore, County Treasurer Mabel Bingham and parttime County Coroner Vernal G. Rydalch.

On the state level, the Democrats have no challengers against Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa and State School Supt. Jerry Evans but incumbent Democrats Gov. John V. Evans, Auditor Joe Williams and Treasurer Marjorie Ruth Moon must be considered decided favorites for re-election.

The Republicans must be applauded for prevailing on Doyle Miner, a former St. Anthony legislator and now Board of Pharmacy director at Boise, to qualify as a write-in state treasurer Republican nominee to oppose formidable Miss Moon.

Galen Williams, 32-year-old Ucon farmer and Mason, also must be praised to qualify as a write-in Republican nominee to oppose the popular Democrat County Commissioner Clyde A. Burtenshaw.

Contests in nearly every congressional, state, legislative and county race give citizens a choice and help stir interest for the Nov. 2 general election. This was badly missing in the May 25 primary for both parties, but particularly the Democrats. As a result there was a light turnout of only 26 percent in Bonneville County and 27 percent in the state, the lowest in years.