

Few upsets in primary election

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Results of last Tuesday's primary went pretty much as expected, but there were some upsets by close margins.

Many of the standings are subject to minor alterations by the inclusion of absentee ballots and the official canvasses next week, but they are not expected to reverse any results.

Turnout in Bonneville County was

larger than anticipated. It totaled 12,030, or 37.1 percent of the 32,425 registered. Of this, 8,310 voted Republican ballot and only 1,460 Democrat. A turnout of about 10,000, or 30 percent, had been predicted.

In summary of the Democratic presidential, senatorial, and Republican 2nd District congressional, seven legislative and two Bonneville County commissioner contests, predictions were accurate in all but two legislative races and a Bonneville County commissioner post. All were extremely close.

The featured race was the congressional tussle between U.S. Rep. George Hansen and Jerome County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Adamson, and, as expected, it went down to the wire. Hansen pulled it out by about 1,600 votes, a smaller margin than the 5 percent forecast. The final unofficial tabulation showed Hansen ahead 34,431 to 32,763.

This indicates, however, that Hansen apparently has lost some of the thin margin that has carried him to victory in past elections. It could indicate serious trouble for Hansen in November's general election, but the outcome probably will depend on how the general election campaign is waged.

A study would indicate, however, erosion of much of his approximate 5 percent advantage of past elections. He will retain his avid conservative Republican support but the 5,000-10,000 swing votes of moderate Republicans and independents might go against Hansen unless he can miraculously change it during the campaign ahead.

For example, Hansen beat Democrat Richard Stallings, Rexburg, by only 7,200 votes two years ago. A switch of some 3,700 votes could reverse the result.

Another factor that trimmed Hansen's victory margin is the crossover of many Republicans and independents to vote for Adamson. This is apparent because of the dearth of Democratic races in many counties, including Bonneville.

As predicted, Colorado Sen. Gary Hart vanquished Walter Mondale for the Democratic presidential nomination, but by a larger margin than expected. It was nearly 2-1 in a non-binding balloting. The final ballot was 29,803, or 68 percent, for Hart, to 14,926, or 29 percent, for Mondale. The Rev. Jesse Jackson trailed with 2,932, or 6 percent.

Most of the legislative contests went along pretty much as expected.

The only mild upset, if it can be called that, was the featured legislative race for the Democratic nomination for state representative in District 31 made up of Madison and Fremont Counties. This was for the relinquished by House Minority Leader Melvin Hammond, D-Rexburg, who will become president of the Bolivia LDS Mission.

In this contest, Tom Kershaw, Sugar-Salem school superintendent, edged out Keith Larsen, Rexburg businessman 323 to 307. It was a reverse of the close race predicted between the two. Trailing close behind were Darrell Moss, Sugar City councilman and former educator, 271, and Roger J. Hoopes, Rexburg attorney, 183.

All other legislative contests were on the Republican ballot.

In the Bonneville commissioner contest, incumbent Tom Loertscher was upset by Clifford B. Long, of Iona, 3,690 to 3,669. Trailing was Bruce Flora, Idaho Falls accountant, with 1,648.

Long's intensive campaigning is attributed by observers as the main reason for Loertscher's ouster.