

the election eye...

Record turnout looms for Nov. 4 election

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Inclusion of the retail sale wine proposal — which appears almost certain now — indicates there will be a record voter turnout for the Nov. 4 general election.

Penny Young Ysursa, administrative secretary at the secretary of state's office at Boise, a former Bonneville County clerk office worker, also predicts a statewide record.

The presidential contest nearly always coaxes out a record vote, especially if one appears tight nationwide as is the present one. This year, however, more interest appears to be centered in Idaho on the bitter senatorial battle between Democrat Sen. Frank Church and Republican Congressman Steve Symms.

Less attention is given to the congressional races this year but there are number of bristling fights on the legislative and county levels.

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The all-time record vote in Bonneville County was the 21,685 cast in the 1976 presidential election. There were only 21,172 in 1978, 17,422 in 1974 and the second high of 22,251 in the 1972 presidential balloting. Indications are the Bonneville balloting will top well over 25,000 this year. The registration was 32,188 in the May primary but this will likely surpass 35,000 for the general.

At Boise, Mrs. Ysursa said the May primary attracted 199,894 votes, or 41.34 percent of the 483,564 registered, a record for a primary election.

She said the 1978 general election drew 297,363, a lowly 56.51 percent of the record 526,253 registered, the 1976 presidential election resulted in a turnout of a record of 354,556 citizens, or 68.13 percent of the 520,384 registered.

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The general election ballot will contain the names of five presidential contenders, three for the U.S. Senate, two for each of the two congressional districts, two constitutional amendment proposals, the state senate and state representative contenders in each of the 35 legislative districts, and the county races for two county commissioners, sheriff, prosecuting attorney and coroner. Where there are vacancies, there may be additions, such as county clerk in Bonneville County.

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For president, there are the president and vice president candidates and their four electors each for Republican, Democrat, Independent, Libertarian and American parties.

Church and Symms are the prime contenders for U.S. Senate but Larry Fullmer, Pocatello, is entered for the Libertarian Party.

For the two congressional districts, it's Republican U.S. Rep. George Hansen and Democrat Diane Bilyeu in the 2nd District; and Democrat Glen Nichols and Republican Larry E. Craig in the 1st District.

The two statewide proposals are House Joint Resolution 12, which would permit non-profit religious-sponsored hospitals and extended care center to get financing through the Idaho Health Facilities Authority; and Senate Joint Resolution 12, which would permit an initiative to be voted on at all biennial general elections, not just the quadrennial gubernatorial contest.

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An alltime record vote is seen in Bonneville County, the third largest in the state, next to Ada

and Canyon, because of the highly controversial wine proposal, besides the senatorial and congressional contests. There are no county commissioner, prosecuting attorney or coroner races, but there is what appears a tight one for sheriff where Republican Blaine Skinner faces the formidable challenge of Democrat Dick Ackerman, veteran city police detective sergeant; and a number of interesting legislative tiffs.

Most other counties also offer

legislative, county commissioner and sheriff races, with even a few for prosecuting attorney and coroner. In a few cases, there is some balloting for magistrates.

Eastern Idaho, and particularly Bonneville County, can tip the scales in close elections. The heavy vote is usually more liberal, or at least more moderate than usual. This could have a significant effect, helping the retail wine proposal, Church and the Democratic contenders.