

The election eye

City council incumbents heavily favored to win

By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

The three City Council incumbents will have little trouble returning to office in the Nov. 8 Idaho Falls city election, although the entry of the three challengers will give voters acceptable choices.

Councilmen Sam Sakaguchi, Wesley W. Deist and Art Chandler will roll up margins of better than two to one over the three challengers, George Price, Jesse Schow and Jeffrey Trunzer. Sakaguchi should lead with Deist and Chandler battling for the qualifying second and third place. Out of the money and following in order should be Price, Schow and Trunzer.

Sakaguchi plans to leave Oct. 30 for a month's tour of Japan and the Far East with a local Japanese contingent and this could lose him votes.

Sakaguchi he could not change the tour or mixup the dates without great financial loss to himself and wife, Martha. He said he plans to wage much of his campaign the coming week before departure.

"I know I may lose some votes but it just can't be helped," he said.

The number of votes for each candidate also will depend on how intense their campaigns are from now until election day.

The lack of burning municipal issues and the fact this is an off year when the mayor's seat is not at stake removes much of the interest.

It will be a light turnout, possibly equal to that of two years ago when Mayor Thomas Campbell was unopposed and the three council incumbents were challenged by only two newcomers. At that time, only 5,914 cast ballots, 27.4 percent of the 21,550 registered.

The council incumbents will amass topheavy margins for the simple reason the city ship of state is sailing along smoothly

Post-Register, Idaho Falls, Idaho, Sunday, October 23, 1983 **C-9**

with no great outcry among city residents for drastic changes. As a result, the vote will be one of resounding confidence for the present city administration.

The city's power contract with the now defunct Washington Public Power Supply System might have been a key issue but that was erased when the courts held the city had no right to sign such an agreement.

All of the councilmen are of middle-aged and of necessity will run on their record of achievement. Their campaign statements cite municipal achievements. Some of these include completion of three bulb turbines capable of producing a third of the city's present power needs, completion of the airport expansion, westside sewer interceptor and a number of parks, street, sewer and water improvements.

The present councilmen are completing one four-year term. They won tough races four years ago in a record field of 14.

The three challengers, all neophytes in serving in public office, offer a varied choice of background. Their greatest thrust is to the effect they would exert greater effort for various city improvements and activities but offered no specific criticism at the actions of the present administration.

Trunzer is the baby of the challenging trio at only 25 and no one of that age as far as can be remembered has ever been elected to a major city, county or state officer from Bonneville County.

His statement that some people

are interested in getting rid of "deadwood off the council" will hardly meet the favor of many who feel the present councilmen have served with distinction.

Trunzer was active in Bonneville County Republican politics in 1982 and active as a campaign worker. He served as the youth person with the Bonneville Republicans.

Price, 33, advocates more attention to the city's northside and endorses more diversification of the city's economy. His excellent business and educational background should enable him to handily lead the challengers.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Schow, a retired postal employee, is nearing 65. He has been rejected twice by voters for county commissioner. In 1976, he ran a fairly strong race as a Democrat but was beaten by Republican County Commissioner A. Wylie Snarr 12,638 to 10,569. Two years later he did much worse, losing to Republican County Commissioner Tom Loertscher 12,456 to 7,538.

The city's finances are reputed to be among the best of any city in Idaho, not only in the black but with surpluses. It has contingency or surplus funds in the main departments of water, power, garbage, electrical and streets. Of its \$45 million budget, \$25 million is in the electric department, all operating in the black. Mayor Thomas Campbell said he has been told by accountants the city's strong cash flow is the best in the city's history.

Politics