

The election eye...

County commissioner contests few for 1980

April 17 1980

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In keeping with the trend of few contests for the Legislature, most incumbent county commissioners face little competition.

This is a drastic reversal of most past years when they were generally the feature. This year as observed earlier, the sheriff contests prevail in eight of the 10 counties of East Idaho and take the spotlight on the local level.

A recapitulation shows that of a possible 40 county commissioner races, if the primary is included, there are only 12.

County commissioner competition has generally been keen in Bonneville County.

This year, the situation is at low key, indicating either citizens are satisfied in the way the county is being run, or there aren't many who are willing to spend the time, effort and money for this so-called part-time job.

Jefferson and Bingham counties, also have been hotbeds of county commissioner contests but the situation this year is comparatively placid.

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In Bonneville County with a population of 60,000 and third only to Ada and Canyon counties (it is slightly ahead of Bannock) the only contest is one in the Republican primary between the incumbent, Tom Loertscher, and an Ammon feeder, and former teacher, Delmar Anderson.

A rather startling development is the fact two Democrats are unopposed, County Commission Chairman Clyde Burtenshaw, and Prosecuting Attorney Jerry Woolf.

The only other county contest is between Republican Sheriff Blaine Skinner and Democrat Richard Ackerman, veteran city detective.

Loertscher kept his campaign promises of two years ago when he ousted Artell Suiter in the Republican primary.

He voted against the appointment of controversial Richard Skidmore on the county planning commission, favored expanding the county commission from nine to 10 and this extra one went to a Swan Valley representative, scheduled more evening commission meetings when the occasion demanded and helped bring about closer relations with the city.

Since reorganization last fall, Skidmore, a building developer, was replaced as chairman by Mark Hoff.

However, Skidmore signed Anderson's petitions which would indicate a bone of contention there, although Anderson did not mention this in his campaign statement.

The present county commissioners, however, hold a rather formidable position. They even reduced county taxes about 2.5 mills, or from nearly 25 to 22.5 the past year.

The county plans to oil about six miles of road every year. It is earmarked for this year a mile on the Eastern section of Fairview road, mile on Willow Creek Inn Road and mile on Cinder Butte Road. Burtenshaw remarked the oil costs have risen per ton from \$107 to \$200 in a year, bringing about some reduction in oiling.

Burtenshaw and Loertscher said they have been desirous

holding more evening meetings but the demand has not been that great. They have been held when there were topics of general interest but generally attendance has been small and there is overtime costs for clerks.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable achievements and in existence for the first time in many years is a closer relationship with the city. Mayor Thomas Campbell said the relationship with the county is the best he has encountered since being in office.

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In Custer County, incumbent Republican Ivan I. Taylor is challenged by Democrat Bollen Uresti.

In Jefferson, Republican incumbent Clyde Terry is opposed by Democrat Lynn Jensen; and Democrat Commissioner Glenn Scott faces one of three Republican contenders, N. LaVar Summers, Rex Furness or D. Reed Sanders. This is in keeping with traditional lively Jefferson races but it appears mostly based on personal popularity.

In Bingham, incumbent Dale Arave is opposed by Ronald Truman and another incumbent, Vincent O'Brian, is challenged by LaMar Whyte, both

races in the Republican primary.

In Butte, Democrat incumbent Kenneth McAffe faces Republican Willard O'Bell.

In Madison, Ruth Smith and Wayne Beck, both Republicans, are competing for one post.

In Fremont, Democrat incumbent Frank Tanner is challenged by Democrat Lyle Nielsen and two Republicans, Laurence Parker and John S. Dexter.

In Teton, Republican incumbent Reid Brower is challenged by two Democrats, Dean E. Wade and Danny K. Arnold.

County central committees, however, can appoint nominees to vacancies by no later than Tuesday.

The bill authorizing raises in county commissioner salaries applies to 28 of the 44 counties. This includes Bonneville, from \$12,000 to \$14,000, and increases were allowed for Jefferson to \$5,000, Fremont to \$7,000, Clark to \$3,000, Custer to \$3,000 and Butte to \$2,400.

The Bonneville salaries are below those of three smaller counties, Nez Perce \$18,500, Twin Falls \$12,500 and Bannock \$17,400 and even with Bingham \$12,000. Ada is at \$22,785 and Canyon at \$17,500.