The election eye...

Efforts to fill ballot vacancies commended

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

As observed previously, incumbents usually experience little competition once they are elected. It's not a desirable situation because it does not give the people the opportunity to judge whether the incumbents have performed to what they consider at least satisfactory level.

In looking over the ballot more than half the incumbent county officials and legislators are unopposed. Perhaps that speaks well for them because possible challengers are not going to run unless they feel that have a fairly good chance for election.It would appear where the office holder is unopposed that would appear the case.

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Republicans do a much better job of filling their ticket and that is understanble because East Idabho is strongly Republican. All factors being equal, the Republican will win. Yet it is seldom that factors are equal and it is nothing unusual to see Democrats win.

Close at home it was refreshing to see two Democratic Legislative committees fill vacancies. Legislative District 29 named Charles Amberson, retired scientist, to again oppose Sen. J. Marsden Williams, R-Idaho Falls, while Legislative District 30 did even better in appointing Cyril Slansky, also a retired scientist but a part-time consultant, to challenge Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, and Don Aupperle, the highly respected retired school vocal director, to vie against Rep.Gary L. Paxman, R-Idaho Falls.

In District 28, made up of Fremont and Madison counties, the Democratic committee appointed Larry Hossner, Ashton auctioneer, to contest Sen. Mark Ricks, R-Rexburg, and John L.Clarke, the venerable Ricks College former president, to seek the office vacated by Rep. Doyle C.Miner, R-St.Anthony.

Democratic leaders feel that Watkins, Williams, Ricks and Paxman are far too conservative to satisfy the majority of moderate voters, meaning Democrats.

Even the East Idaho delegation was astounded at Paxman's voting record, which showed him to be on the radical right. Bonneville legislators said Paxman, instead of following their votes on many issues, apparently voted similar to one of the most right extremists in the Legislature, Rep.Rusty Barlow, R-Pocatello. Paxman is a first termer but one would believe that he would follow the advice of such veteran lawmakers as Reps. John O. Sessions, R-Driggs; Elaine Kearnes, R-Idaho Falls; Linden B.Bateman, R-Idaho Falls, and Kurt L. Johnson, R-Idaho Falls. Most are conservative but not to the the point of a consistent negative voting record.

The existing vacancies must now be filled by no later than Tuesday night. This can be done by filing declaration of candidacy, paying the $40 filing fee and filing petitions containing not less than 50 bonafide signatures with the secretary of state.

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It's hopeful more candidates will jump into the fray to help whip up some enthusiasm for the coming elections.

Most counties of East Idaho have few primary elections and whether the presidential primaries can coax a large number of voters is dubious. Both Ronald Reagan among the Republicans and President Carter among the Democrats would appear to hold commanding leads over their rivals.

In fact, the Democratic presidential primary is little more than a beauty contest as the caucuses last week selected most of the convention delegates. Carter won these 8 to 5 with four more to be named at the state convention in June.

The Republicans, however, will select their delegates based on the primary and it would appear most of their 21 convention delegates will go for Reagan with possibly four or five, at the most, going toBush.