

The election eye . . .

Local candidates may face exciting races

By BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

Although the presidential, senatorial and congressional contests may grab most of the headlines, a small but exciting number of legislative and Bonneville County races are expected.

Nearly all the incumbents are expected to run, and based on past records most must be considered favorites.

Election activities begin early this time because the primary election was moved up to May 27 to coincide with the presidential primary. This is a change from the August primaries of past years.

The filing date is April 1-7, compared with the July deadline of previous years.

Aside from the president, one Senate and two congressional contests, all of the 105 legislators, two county commissioners, sheriff, prosecuting attorney and coroner also will be voted on. In Bonneville County, the electors also will vote for a county clerk because of the death this year of DelRoy C. Bodily from a brain tumor. Under state law, this office comes up for election for the remaining two-year term.

It's odd that the sheriff should come up for election at times when the other county officers do not, because they all serve four-year terms. It's a peculiarity of the state law.

It's also a quirk in state law that the prosecuting attorney and coroner serve only two-year terms, while all the other county officers serve for four years.

The county commissioners are in a category of their own. Unless there is a vacancy, two are elected every two years, one for a two-year term and one for four years, while the third one is a holdover from the four-year term.

* * *

The only incumbent who indicates he will not seek re-election is Prosecuting Attorney Jerry Woolf, a Democrat, who observers say has done an excellent job. Woolf ran two years ago at the request of other attorneys and leaders to bring some effectiveness to the office and this has been done. He says now he wants to return to his private practice. A number of young attorneys are expected to vie for the spot.

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Sunday, Dec. 16, 1979 Section E

The Post-Register

The political pulse

If there are others who do not plan to seek re-election they haven't said so. Most have indicated they hope to remain in office.

This year there will be no election for the state offices, judges or magistrates and the one Senate seat of Sen. James A. McClure.

The salaries are not exactly all that enticing.

The legislators earn about \$7,500 a year, based on the pay boost they received last year from \$3,000 to \$4,200, and the daily expense raise — from \$40 to \$44 — while they are in session.

They also are allowed \$25 daily living expenses if they establish a second residence, as is the case for those who do not live in the Boise area. They al-

so are paid expenses for five round trips during the session, plus other benefits.

The county commissioners are paid \$12,000 a year for their so-called parttime job, which actually is nearly fulltime; the sheriff \$18,250, clerk \$17,250 and coroner \$2,270. The prosecuting attorney gets \$24,000 for full-time duty. This was changed last year from the \$12,000 part-time duty.

Legislative talk indicates the sheriff, county commissioner and prosecuting attorney salaries may get a boost in the 1980 legislature sessions.

* * *

A number of local issues are brewing which should add interest to the legislative and county races.

The legislators will need to stand on their record on how they voted on a number of bills.

The terms of County Commissioners Clyde A. Burtenshaw, Democrat, and Tom Loertscher, Republican, expire while County Commissioner A. Wylie Snarr, Republican, holds over for two more years.

There are a number of county issues that likely will come up for airing, such as the park alcoholic ban, a myriad of zoning approvals and disapprovals, the

reappointment of developer Richard Skidmore to the County Zoning and Planning Commission and various other county policies.

Ron Longmore, who was appointed clerk to replace Bodily, said he expects to file for the post as a Republican.

The sheriff's race may develop into one of the features as a well-known and popular city police officer is considering the race to oppose Republican Sheriff Blaine Skinner. He prefers to not be identified, however, until he has definitely decided.

Skinner appears vulnerable because of widespread criticisms against many of his restrictive office policies, charges by most local law enforcement offices that he is aloof and non-cooperative, grievances among his own staff, and his high escalating budget. For example, he has 41 deputies.

Democrat Karen Norell, now a department store employee, who had had some coroner training and who ran four years ago, has indicated she may again oppose the veteran Republican Coroner Vernal Rydalch.