

Lack of races dull city vote interest

By BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

The apparent lack of opposition to Mayor Tom Campbell and little more than what appears token challenges to the three incumbent councilmen could only be interpreted as meaning the vast bulk of city voters are apparently satisfied with the way the municipal government has conducted its affairs the last four years.

As far as can be ascertained in the city's history and certainly for more than 40 years when Idaho Falls left its swaddling clothes and became a city in fact as well as in name, there have been only twice that a challenger did not file against the incumbent mayor.

Those were in 1965 and 1969 against popular Mayor S. Eddie Pedersen. However, there were last minute writeins. In 1969, Terrell A. Toone gleaned 1,207 votes to Pedersen's 6,429. In 1965, Larry C. Anderson, managed to garner 986 votes to Pedersen's 5,695.

In the 1965 election however, there were brisk city councilmen races in which an incumbent, Philip C. Leahy, finished last in a field of six and brought the

San Oct. 11 1981
election of three newcomers, Mrs. Lyn Smith, Melvin L. Erickson and Jack A. Wood Jr. In 1969, Wood and Erickson were easily re-elected and Paul L. Hovey picked up the third spot when Mrs. Smith chose not to run, in a field of eight.

* * *

The three incumbent councilmen, Erickson, Ralph M. Wood and Hovey, face what appears comparatively light competition because the two challengers, William C. Lattin and Jan Brown, two EG&G workers, are comparatively unknowns. However, it is to their credit that they are willing to run and give voters a choice. Through intensive campaigning they could spring an upset.

Lattin, a project engineer in the waste management section of EG&G, has only lived in the city seven years. He apparently has not participated extensively in civic activities.

Ms. Brown, a public involvement specialist with EG&G, is better known as an active worker with the Idaho Conservation League, an environmental organization, and was a field executive for the Silver Sage Girl Scout Council. She has the disadvantages of being

comparatively young, (which is a nice disadvantage), single and an environmentalist, factors which past election records show do not help a candidate.

* * *

It's apparent the city administration is considered so well entrenched that many of what can be considered formidable challengers chose not to try their luck against the incumbents. In fact, dating back to 1963 when Petersen was first elected, incumbents have been easily re-elected where they chose to run except for Leahy's defeat in 1965 and he was actually a carryover from the previous administration.

It's possible a writein may be entered against the present mayor and also for council but as election records have shown they are longshots at the best.

Writeins have little luck except where there are burning issues. So far, there appears nothing on the present municipal political scene to indicate this will happen this year.

From all indications, this may be one of the most placid elections since the Petersen administration dominated the city political scene in the 60s and early 70s.