

Jack Buell will run; McCall undecided

By Mary Orr

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Will the long-serving county commissioner duo of Jack Buell and Bud McCall be broken by departure?

Followers of the Benewah County Commissioners pondered the question last week following a statement by Mr. McCall indicating he was unsure whether he would seek re-election.

The two have served together 36 years, since Mr. McCall's election in 1976. Mr. Buell first won election in 1974.

Mr. Buell left no doubt about his plans to stay on.

"Why not," he said. "I think Bud and I can both help people and we have. With budget cuts goals are going to be hard to meet. We are just going to have to figure out how to survive."

Mr. McCall expressed ambivalence saying that he might retire.

"I don't know," he said. "I still have a couple projects that I need to finish including a bridge in Fernwood. Hopefully I can get it done this next year. I didn't really plan on staying but I may have to in order to get this done," Mr. McCall said. "I've really done this long enough. It is somebody else's turn."

Among remaining challenges for the county, he believes building a new jail will be paramount.

"All our challenges are big," he said. "We've got a jail to build, which is probably the biggest one, and a lot of other things to do in the county this next year."

Mr. McCall said he will decide whether or not he will run within the month.

Two other positions on the ballot are the magistrate court judge, currently held by Patrick McFadden, and the county prosecutor position held by Doug Payne. Each position comes with a four-year term.

Mr. McFadden has served in the office since 1995.

"I enjoy my job as judge and would like to continue at least for another term," he said. "I

like to be the guy who listens to both sides and makes a decision, rather than having to be an advocate for one side or the other.”

He said his goal remains to do the best job that he can. Challenges that face his office are budgetary constraints.

“Judicially we are always dealing with finances,” Mr. McFadden said. “In a tough economy, any fines we assess become more difficult to collect.”

Despite the funding issues, he is proud of the drug court program the county has established and hopes to continue to make improvements.

Mr. Payne has served as county prosecutor since the fall of 1994.

“It’s a great job, interesting work and never are two days the same,” he said. “It can be frustrating work but interesting nonetheless.”

Mr. Payne said his biggest challenge is budget constraints, also.

If re-elected he said he plans to do the best he can with the available resources.

The sheriff’s position, currently held by Bob Kirts is also on the ballot but the incumbent will not run. Four candidates have declared their interest, so far, in the position. They are Bob Loe, Dave Resser, Larry Sotin and Rick O’Donnell.

All precinct committee chair positions are up for election as well. The precinct committee chairs are two-year terms. One chairperson from each party may be elected per precinct. There are 11 precincts.

The last day to pre-register to vote in the primary is April 20.

Those who wish to run for an office must file a declaration of candidacy between Feb. 27 and March 9 at the courthouse. Though independent candidates will not appear on the primary ballot, they will still be required to file within those dates.

Absentee ballot applications can be obtained online at www.idahovotes.com and mailed or faxed to the county courthouse.

The primary election is May 15 and Election Day Nov. 6.