

Commission change(s)?

The guy who toiled to get signatures enough to put the question(s) of increasing the number of county commissioners to five and electing each by district was successful and voters will have the chance to make that change.

I favor the increase from three to five. The other part of the question is unimportant, in my opinion. The sought after purpose of electing by district will not be met and will more likely produce the WTE's desired effect of electing all commissioners with City of Cheyenne addresses.

My support for five commissioners has been expressed here before. And it has nothing to do with any possibility of one of the commissioners being from one of the small towns in Laramie County. That would be nice but is unlikely to happen with an end of commissioners "at-large."

Like most candidates who seek public office, there was a primary thing that led to my decision to push for an increase to five commissioners. That was the danger presented in the small number of three and the power so concentrated. Two commissioners constitute a majority - two commissioners can make any and all decisions in county government. While five is a two-thirds increase, it will not guarantee the elimination of that danger but it is a step in the right direction.

The City of Cheyenne governing body has an elected mayor and nine city council members to represent about 59,000 residents. The three Laramie County commissioners represent over 89,000 residents. That is not an apples to apples comparison but the basic math applies. Council members, on average, represent about 6,500 residents - with a mayor superior to them for all intents and purposes of governing - and each commissioner represents more than four and a half times that number of residents.

I would just feel that all residents' interests might be better represented with five commissioners instead of three.

Beyond the simple "power" issue, it makes sense for the largest population county in Wyoming to have as many commissioners as most of the other counties.

Sweetwater County just went through the petition process and approved a similar increase in commissioners - from three to five.

What is interesting now about the number of commissioners in each county is how there is a similarity to the smaller number (3) to the Democratic counties along the UP tracks of southern Wyoming.

Laramie County, Albany County, Carbon County, Sweetwater County, Uinta County and Lincoln County all presently have three county commissioners. All are considered predominantly Democratic counties, with some exceptions.

By population, Wyoming's larger counties usually have five commissioners or are headed that way. From the 2009 U.S. Census estimates:

1.) Laramie County (88,854)	3*
2.) Natrona County (74,508)	5
3.) Campbell County (43,967)	5
4.) Sweetwater County (41,226)	5**
5.) Fremont County (38,719)	5
6.) Albany County (33,979)	3
7.) Sheridan County (29,163)	5
8.) Park County (27,976)	5
9.) Uinta County (20,927)	3
10.) Teton County (20,710)	5

Key: * Referendum in November which could increase number to five. ** Election in November to increase number of commissioners to five. Converse (13,578) and Weston (7,009) counties also have five commissioners.

If Laramie County voters approve an increase from three to five commissioners, over 70% of Wyoming's population will live in counties with five commissioners. If that happens, only two of the ten largest counties in Wyoming will have only three commissioners (Albany and Uinta).

It was comical to read Jeff Ketcham's comments about "cost." His real concern is dilution of power - not additional cost. If it's the right thing to do, and I believe it is, the cost is secondary. I supported the second petition question being whether the current salary for three should be redistributed to five if voters choose five. There is still a way to accomplish that.

Election 2010

I am frequently asked when candidates will tell voters about their stands - their positions on issues. That is a fair question. On the day this issue hits the streets, it will be five weeks until primary election day. And little is known about many candidates in the crowded races.

There are several women vying to become Clerk of the District Court and County Treasurer. Except for the color of their yard signs, little distinguishes one from another. Karen Fortney, who advertises on these pages, touts her experience and position, which is helpful to voters making the choice.

The race for governor on the Republican side seems to be a battle of 4x8' yard signs. Being the largest city, it probably makes sense that there would be a few thousand of their yard signs but hopefully they will soon be telling voters where they stand on issues. Attending poorly attended forums reaches few voters.

Voters here probably know as much about Sharron Angle, Rand Paul and Nikki Haley as they do about Ron Micheli and Matt Mead. Even the race for state superintendent of public instruction has turned out to be a yawner.

For the life of me, I don't know what Trent Blankenship is doing - campaignwise. I am told he isn't attending forums and I haven't seen anything in print from him. He did what I thought was a terrific interview with the Casper Star but only a few dozen of us would watch all of it.

Several of the city council candidates ran (and lost) two years ago and they may think voters know enough about them and are hoping some little bit of name recognition will get them over the top this time. Very seldom does a candidate do better on their second try, or in an election after they've been defeated, than the first time.

In Ward 1 in 2008, Sean Allen finished in a virtual tie for fifth/sixth and Glen Chavez came in seventh. That's a lot of ground to make up even if the candidates who finished ahead of them are not on this ballot. Neither Allen nor Chavez, obviously, survived that '08 primary - both losing to previously unknown Amber Ash as well as three other candidates who had run (two had won) before. Allen is an ally of Tom Segrave and Patrick Collins (I am told) and had the endorsement (yikes!) of the WTE in the 2008 primary and still was badly beaten. They both have their work cut out for them.

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- ✓ Limited Government and Conservative Spending
- ✓ Adherence to Our Founding Principles
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Jim and his wife Judy are long-time residents of Cheyenne and are both retired real estate agents, business owners and NRA instructors. Jim was born at Fort Francis E. Warren and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy. Jim and Judy have been married 37 years and have 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 1 great grandchild.
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