

Government review

Study commission sets date for hearing

By Cathy Young
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The Anaconda-Deer Lodge County local government study commission will conduct a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 1, at the county courthouse to discuss alternative forms of county government.

A second public meeting, also to discuss the governmental options, is set for 2 p.m. March 6 at the Etcalf Senior Citizens Center.

"The study commission has decided to first examine and evaluate

alternate forms of local government," commission chairman Jake Maciag said. "After the evaluation is completed, the commission will focus in on one form of government and consider the details of how that government could best serve our local community."

Several additional public hearings will be held concerning the chosen government form and reports will be drafted with the study commission's recommendations. If the study commission recommends change, those recommendations

will be placed before the voters on the November 1996 ballot, Maciag said.

Listed below are the forms of local government that will be reviewed and evaluated, followed by two forms of governmental powers that can be adopted.

Charter: Under the charter form of government, a city or county may draw up its own charter. A charter is essentially a local constitution, which spells out the structure, powers, and duties of local government.

A charter form of government is very flexible; different ideas and structure from other forms of government may be used within a charter. The charter is initially written by the study commission, and then must be approved by local voters before going into effect. This is the current form of government used in Anaconda-Deer Lodge County.

Commission-Executive: The commission-executive form of government consists of an elected com-

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mission and one elected executive. In this form, the commission has all legislative, policy-making and financial powers. Most of these powers are controlled by state law.

The chief executive has the power and duty to enforce laws, ordinances and resolutions; administer affairs of the local government; carry out policies established by the commission; and to execute the budget adopted by the commission.

Commission-Manager: The commission-manager form of government consists of an elected commission and a manager appointed by the commission, who is the chief administrative officer of the local government. The commission has all legislative, policy-making and financial powers. Most of these powers are controlled by state laws.

In this form, the manager has the power to enforce the laws, ordinances and resolutions; administer all departments and offices of the local government unit except as oth-

erwise provided for by law or ordinance; prepare and present the budget to the commission for its approval and execute the budget adopted by the commission.

Commission: The commission form of government consists of an elected commission and other elected officers. All legislative, executive and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers reside in the commission.

The commission appoints the heads of departments and other employees, except for those appointed by other elected officials. Duties are shared and divided between the elected commission for all activities not covered by other elected officials. A commission chairman is elected within the group. The chairman of the commission is the presiding officer and is designated the "head of the local government unit."

Commission-Chairman: The commission-chairman form of government consists of an elected commission and a commission chairman. The chairman is elected from the commission, and serves at the

tains all legislative, policy-making and financial powers. The chairman has the power to enforce laws, ordinances and resolutions; prepare the budget and present it to the commission for adoption; administer all departments and offices of the local government except as otherwise provided by law or ordinance; and to appoint all department heads with the consent of a majority of the commission. The chairman may remove department heads and may appoint and remove all other employees.

Town meeting: The town meeting form of government will not be considered since Anaconda is not eligible for this form. Only areas with fewer than 2,000 people may have the town meeting form in Montana.

Self-governing powers: Local government has any powers not specifically denied by federal and state constitutions or laws. These powers are available in all forms except the commission form of government.

General powers: Local government has only powers specifically given to local government by federal and state constitutions and laws. These powers are available in all forms