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Voters may ax partison politics

By Steve Devitt

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HARDIN—Partisan politics may become a thing of the past in Big Horn County elections.

County voters will decide in November if they want party politics in county elections because of an initiative placed on the ballot by the Big Horn County Government Study Commission.

Dave Seder, chair of the commission, said the commission made the decision to place the question on the ballot because of a questionnaire that was sent to all county voters during the summer of 1994.

Eight percent of the voters responded, a high return for those kinds of surveys, and 80

percent of them want partisan politics out of county elections.

The commission believes that it is such a good idea that it plans to run ads before the election recommending that voters vote for the change.

Seder explained that the commission has the power to make recommendations to the commissioners and place initiatives on the ballot.

While it cannot "endorse" or "promote" a change, according to state law, he said it can "recommend."

"It's a gray area," he said, referring to the restrictions on the commission's activities.

The advertising will be paid for by the 1/2 mill allotted to it, which comes to about \$27,000.

Seder is very supportive of the change. "It (partisan politics) has no place in county politics," he said. "The issues are local, not national."

The key advantage, he said, is that people would have a broader choice during primaries.

"You wouldn't be locked into parties," he said. "You could vote for the person."

He pointed out that people voted for the person in the general election, but couldn't change parties during the primary.

The only people who gain from the present partisan politics are politicians who are unopposed during the primary, he said.