

Forum gives voters opportunity to hear candidates' positions

By Dick Crockford
Leader Editor

Monday night's local government political forum probably did not result in any mass conversions for one candidate, but it did offer local residents a chance to scope out in person those running for office.

About 90 persons were on hand at the Metcalf Center to hear the 10 candidates for local office pat themselves on the back and respond to questions from the forum panel and

then from the audience. Featured were the six candidates for city-county commissioner, two for chief executive and two for chief of law enforcement.

The commission candidates are Paul Beausoleil and Terry Wilkinson, District 1; Bert Freer and Russ Bilodeau, District 2; and Jane Anderson and Dave Beatty, District 3. Running for chief executive are Cheryl Beatty and Carl Stetzner, with Jim Connors and Joe

Guiberson running for law enforcement chief.

The candidates' responses to the questions ranged from earnest to bombastic ... from informed to bewildered, and though most queries received some degree of response, others got no answer at all.

Also on the agenda was the Local Government Review Commission which presented a summary of its report. The summary was introduced by the commission's vice

chairman, Tom Radonich, and the recommendations summary was read by Mike Grayson, another member.

Grayson urged the voters to read their ballots carefully, noting that for each question, the choice would be to either approve the proposed amendment or to retain the existing provision which would otherwise be replaced.

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Generally, all the commission candidates agreed that the community Visioning report which was published earlier this year provides a valuable blueprint for the future. However, the degree of support for the document varied, with Freer calling it "one of the best processes to come along." His opponent concurred.

Anderson rode the same bandwagon, referring to the Visioning project as "one of the greatest things to happen in this community."

Commission candidate Beatty told the audience that Anacondans must create "fresh visions," to see trends as they develop. To attain a goal, he said, "a person has to be a medium to keep attention focused on the future."

Wilkinson said he believes the success of the Vision document will require pulling together for the same goals, noting that it would "need all the cooperation we can get out of the community and businesses."

Beausoleil interpreted the medium as the message.

"I believe the goal should be priorities," he said.

Among other questions, the candidates were asked their positions on sales tax proposals and the controversial Initiative 122.

All indicated they were opposed to any sales tax

proposals. I-122 drew no visible support, though the responses from a couple of the commission candidates appeared to surprise the audience.

"It's none of your damned business," Dave Beatty said. "When I close that curtain (on the voting booth), it's my con-

cern." That sentiment was echoed, though less vehemently, by Bilodeau, who said simply that he regarded that to be a private matter as well.

Freer offered the opinion that I-122 is discriminatory and would be found to be unconstitutional.