

Election sample ballots to be mailed soon

Voters to decide on measures Q and P in addition to state-wide propositions

By **David Richards**

(Updated Wednesday, September 28, 2005, 5:02 PM)

In less than two months, Mountain Area residents will have the chance to vote on eight state-wide propositions, two local measures and several school board positions during the Nov. 8 special election.

Sample ballots are scheduled to be sent to registered Madera County voters the week of Oct. 3, with the absentee-ballot period open from Oct. 10 until Nov. 1. The last day to register to vote is Oct. 24.

Among local measures on the ballot are Measure Q, regarding the construction of a new high school in the Chawanakee Unified School District, and Measure P, which if passed, would unify the Yosemite Joint Union High School District with the Coarsegold Union School District.

Measure Q needs a 55-percent margin to pass, while Measure P needs a simple majority.

In addition to the local measures, two seats are vacant on the board of trustees for the Chawanakee Unified School District, while five new board seats will need to be filled if voters agree to unify the Yosemite and Coarsegold districts. If Measure P fails, both district's board of trustees will remain unchanged.

For the Chawanakee Unified School District, five candidates are competing to fill two positions. Each position is a one-year term, with the candidate receiving the highest number of votes eligible to run for a four-year term in 2006 and the candidate receiving the second highest amount of votes eligible to run for a two-year seat in 2006.

Among the candidates are: Earl Collinsworth, 48, of O'Neals; Jessie Hutchens, 41, of North Fork; Sue Kern, 53, of North Fork; James McDougald, 38, of Friant; and Robert Owen, 63, of North Fork.

For the Yosemite/Coarsegold unification board of trustees, if Measure P passes, 11 candidates are competing for five open positions. The candidates receiving the three highest amount of votes will earn three-year terms, while the other two candidates will receive-year terms.

They include: Thomas Allcock, 54, of Ahwahnee; Ron Bucheger, 57, of Oakhurst; Dan Burrow, 56, of Oakhurst; Karen Hutchings, 58, of Raymond; Bert McSwain, 80, of Wishon; Monika Moulin, 52, of Ahwahnee; Linda Olson, 58, of Coarsegold; Priscilla Pike, 74, of Oakhurst; John Reynolds, 52, of Coarsegold; Gregory Schoonard, 44, of Coarsegold; and Christine Wilder, 45, of Coarsegold.

The filing period for open school board seats ended Aug. 12, but write-in candidates can still register through Oct. 25, although their names will not appear on the ballot.

Only voters in the respective regions will be able to vote on the local measures and school board positions.

Stephanie Sibley, elections division manager for the Madera County Clerk, said that while voter turnout is usually high in the Mountain Area, special elections generally draw a lower voter count.

"Anytime there's a special election, there is usually not a lot of voter turnout, but hopefully with these issues, it will encourage voter participation," she said.

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