

R O O S E V E L T C O U N T Y
1986 L O C A L G O V E R N M E N T R E V I E W

STUDY COMMISSIONERS

Aldon Lee, Chairman

Robert Bell, Vice-chairman

Carsten Beck, member

Calmer Ersness, member

Dwight Vannatta, member

TO: Roosevelt County Clerk and Recorder

We, the Roosevelt County Local Government Study Commission hereby certify our final report to the Roosevelt County Clerk and Recorder pursuant to 7-3-187 MCA.

I. LETTER TO CITIZENS OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY

To the Citizens of Roosevelt County:

The Roosevelt County Study Commission elected by the voters on November 6, 1984, or thereafter appointed, present this final report to you, the citizens of Roosevelt County.

The purpose of the study commission, as defined in state law, is "to study the existing form and powers of a local government and procedures for delivery of local government services to compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state". After completing these two phases of the study it is the responsibility of the study commission to submit a final report recommending no change, or propose an amendment to the existing form of government or offer an alternative form of government to the qualified electors.

In every phase of this review this study commission sought advice and information from as many people in the county as possible. Opinions and recommendations were solicited from local government officials, community organizations and citizens. All meetings of the study commission were open to the public. Commission members appeared before various community organizations to explain the work of the commission and also to hear the viewpoints, ideas, and concerns of those present. Public hearings were held; a survey of citizen attitudes was made.

Our recommendations reflect the thoughts and opinions of those who participated in public hearings, those who attended our regular meetings, and those who responded to a survey, in addition to the independent efforts of this study commission.

In this final report we present our recommendations for an alternative form of government that we feel will provide the governmental services expected by the people both today and in the future. Our concern has been to provide a form of government that will be responsive to local citizens and provide the opportunity for devising solutions to local problems. We feel the citizens of Roosevelt County can achieve these goals by adopting the proposed Commission form.

The question of adopting this alternative form of government will be placed on the ballot November 4, 1986.

We solicit your support for its adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

Aldon Lee

Carsten Beck

Robert Bell

Dwight Vannatta

~~Calmer Erness~~

County Study Commissioners

SUMMARY OF COMPARISON

The Roosevelt County Study Commission has 5 proposals for the electorate of Roosevelt County. The first proposal is an alternative for the selection of county commissioners whereby they would be elected by district rather than at large. The smaller area increases personal contact of the candidate with the voters and allows the commissioner to be more responsive to his own constituency.

The next proposal is in regard to elections being partisan or non-partisan. The study commission feels that when dealing with small numbers of population partisan influence may be a hinderance because of its structural or labeling effect, and also limits boundaries.

Concerning the length of terms for county commissioners, the study commission proposes 3 year terms which they feel gives more voter control, makes the commissioners more accountable to their constituency, and gives the electorate a frequent opportunity to review the action on the commissioners.

The office of surveyor hasn't been functional in this county. The study commission proposes that this office not be included in this form of government because it has been more cost efficient to contract the services of a surveyor when needed by the county.

The final proposal the county study commission has concerns the office of county assessor. They propose that the assessor, may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance because the county commissioners have more expertise in making decisions that are for the good of the county and are in a position to know how to best dispose of that office.

COMPARISON OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED FORM OF GOVERNMENT

PRESENT FORM

PROPOSED FORM

SELECTION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Elected at large and nominated by a plan on nomination that may not preclude the possibility of the majority of the electors nominating candidates for the majority of the seats on the commission from persons residing in the districts where the majority of the electors reside.

The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

TYPE OF ELECTION

Partisan

Nonpartisan

TERMS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners in counties adopting the form authorized by Article XI, section 3 (2), of the Montana Constitution may not exceed 6 years. Terms of office shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters.

The term of office of elected officials shall be 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners which shall be three years.

SURVEYOR

A surveyor shall be elected.

A surveyor may (5) at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance; or (6) shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

ASSESSOR

An assessor shall be elected.

The assessor (5) may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance or (1) may be elected.

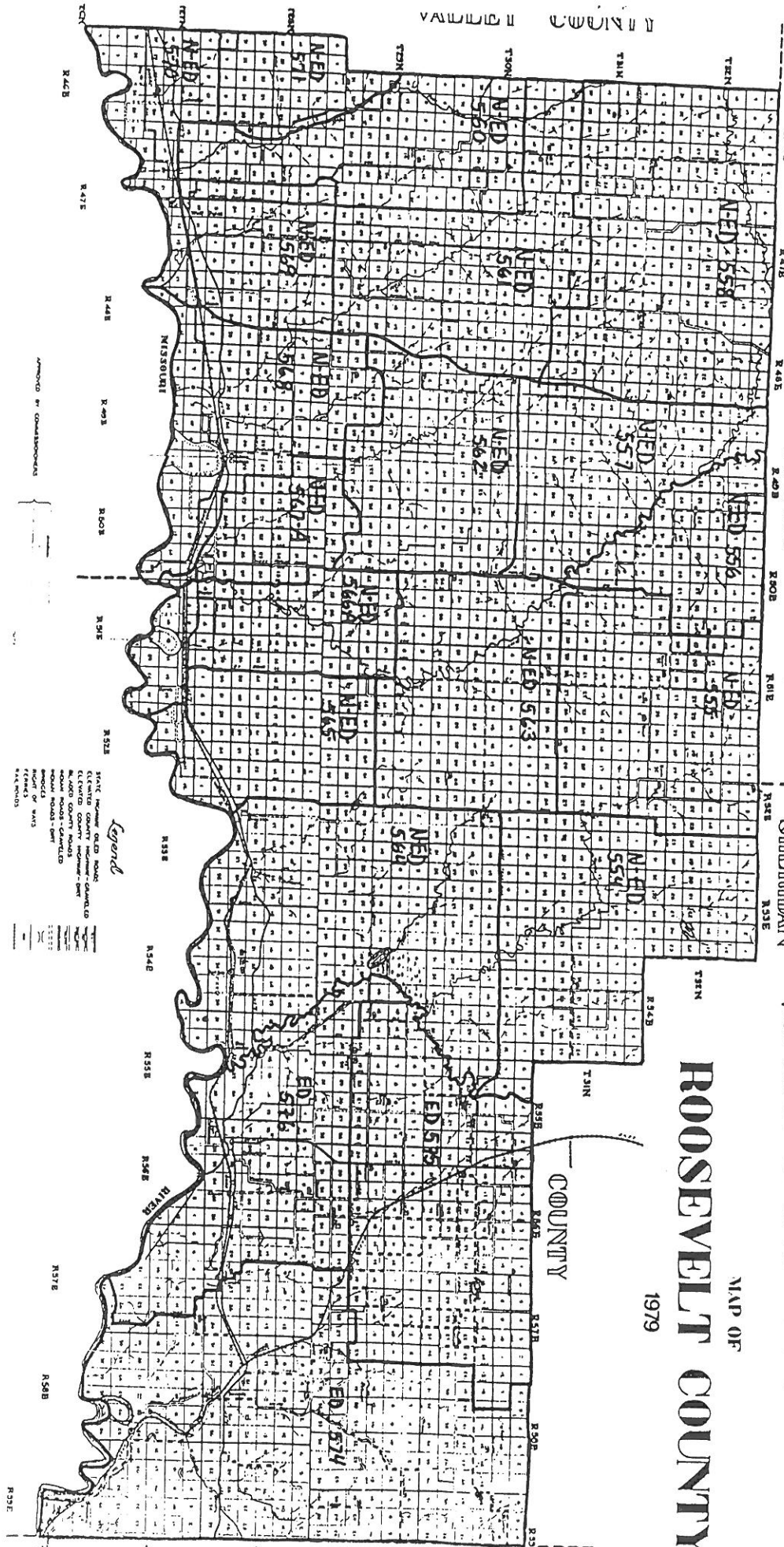
DANIELS COUNTY

SHERIDAN

1980 CENSUS ENUMERATION DISTRICTS

ROOSEVELT COUNTY

MAP OF
1979



TOWN BOUNDARIES
 CITY BOUNDARIES
 VILLAGE BOUNDARIES
 UNINCORPORATED
 COUNTY BOUNDARIES
 COUNTY SECTIONS
 COUNTY ROAD
 COUNTY ROAD - IMPROVED
 COUNTY ROAD - UNIMPROVED
 COUNTY ROAD - UNDER CONSTRUCTION
 COUNTY ROAD - PLANNED
 COUNTY ROAD - PROPOSED
 COUNTY ROAD - ABANDONED
 COUNTY ROAD - DECOMMISSIONED
 COUNTY ROAD - DISCONTINUED
 COUNTY ROAD - RELOCATED
 COUNTY ROAD - WIDENED
 COUNTY ROAD - NARROWED
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - TEMPORARY
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - PERMANENT
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - PARTIAL
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - FULL
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - OTHER
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - UNKNOWN
 COUNTY ROAD - CLOSURE - UNCLASSIFIED

Leonard

CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE EXISTING PLAN OF GOVERNMENT
FOR
ROOSEVELT COUNTY

If retained by the voters, the government of Roosevelt County shall be organized under the following provisions of 7-3-111 MCA which authorizes the elected county official form of government:

7-3-111. Statutory basis for elected county official government. (1) For the purpose of determining the statutory basis of existing units of local government after May 2, 1977, each unit of local government organized under the general statutes authorizing the elected county official form of government shall be governed by the following sections:

- (a) 7-3-401;
- (b) 7-3-402;
- (c) 7-3-412(3);
- (d) 7-3-413(1)
- (e) 7-3-414(1);
- (f) 7-3-415(2);
- (g) 7-3-416(2);
- (h) 7-3-417(2);
- (i) 7-3-418;
- (j) 7-3-432(1);
- (k) 7-3-433(1);
- (l) 7-3-434(1);
- (m) 7-3-435(1);
- (n) 7-3-436(1);
- (o) 7-3-437(1);
- (p) 7-3-438(1);
- (q) 7-3-439(1);
- (r) 7-3-440(1);
- (s) 7-3-441(1);
- (t) 7-3-442(6).

(2) This form has terms of 4 years for all elected officials except commissioners who are elected to 6-year terms. The commission consists of three members.

These sections establish the following form of government which shall be called the elected county official form of government.

7-3-401. Commission form. The commission form consists of an elected commission (which may also be called the council) and other elected officers as provided in this part. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees, except for those appointed by other elected officials. Cities and towns which adopt this form may distribute by ordinance the executive and administrative powers

and duties into departments headed by individual commissioners.

7-3-402. Nature of government. Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.

7-3-412 (3). Selection of commission members. The commission shall be elected at large and nominated by a plan of nomination that may not preclude the possibility of the majority of the electors nominating candidates for the majority of the seats on the commission from persons residing in the district or districts where the majority of the electors reside.

7-3-413 (1). Type of election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a partisan basis.

7-3-414 (1). Chairman of commission. The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-415 (2). Administrative assistants. The commission may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist them in the supervision and operation of the local government.

7-3-416 (2). Terms of commission members. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

7-3-417 (2). Size of commission and community councils. The size of the commission is three, and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

7-3-418 Terms of elected officials. The term of office of elected officials may not exceed 4 years, except the term of office for commissioners in counties adopting the form authorized by Article XI, section 3(2), of the Montana constitution may not exceed 6 years. Terms of office shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters.

7-3-432 (1) Legal officer. A legal officer (who may be called the county attorney) shall be elected.

7-3-433 (1) Law enforcement officer. A law enforcement officer (who may be called the sheriff) shall be elected.

7-3-434 (1) Clerk and recorder. A clerk and recorder shall be elected.

7-3-435 (1) Clerk of district court. A clerk of district court shall be elected.

7-3-436 (1) Treasurer. A treasurer shall be elected.

7-3-437 (1) Surveyor. A surveyor shall be elected.

7-3-438 (1) Superintendent of schools. A superintendent of schools shall be elected.

7-3-439 (1) Assessor. An assessor shall be elected.

7-3-440 (1) Coroner. A coroner shall be elected.

7-3-441 (1) Public administrator. A public administrator shall be elected.

7-3-442 (6) Auditor. An auditor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

(2) This form has terms of 4 years for all elected officials except commissioners who are elected to 6-year terms. The commission consists of three members.

We, the Study Commission of Roosevelt County do hereby certify that this is the existing Plan of Government as established by Section 7-3-111 MCA.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Roosevelt County this _____ day of August, 1986.

ATTEST:

Clerk & Recorder of
Roosevelt County

Robert R. Bell, Chairman

Aldon E. Lee

Carsten Beck

Dwight E. Vannatta

Dwight Vanetta

Calmer A. Ersness

CERTIFICATE
ESTABLISHING THE PROPOSED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT
FOR
ROOSEVELT COUNTY

Upon approval of the majority of the voters, the government of Roosevelt County shall be organized under the following provisions of Title 7, Chapter 3, Part 4, MCA which authorizes the COMMISSION FORM of government:

- (a) 7-3-401;
- (b) 7-3-402;
- (c) 7-3-403;
- (d) 7-3-412(2);
- (e) 7-3-413 (1) or (2);
- (f) 7-3-414(1);
- (g) 7-3-415(2);
- (h) 7-3-416(2);
- (i) 7-3-417(2);
- (j) 7-3-418;
- (k) 7-3-432(1);
- (l) 7-3-433(1);
- (m) 7-3-434(1);
- (n) 7-3-435(1);
- (o) 7-3-436(1);
- (p) 7-3-437 (5) or (6);
- (q) 7-3-438(1);
- (r) 7-3-439 (1) or (5);
- (s) 7-3-440(1);
- (t) 7-3-441(1);
- (u) 7-3-442(6).

These sections establish the following form of government which shall be called the COMMISSION FORM.

7-3-401. Commission form. The commission form consists of an elected commission (which may also be called the council) and other elected officers as provided in this part. All legislative, executive, and administrative powers and duties of the local government not specifically reserved by law or ordinance to other elected officers shall reside in the commission. The commission shall appoint the heads of departments and other employees, except for those appointed by other elected officials. Cities and towns which adopt this form may distribute by ordinance the executive and administrative powers and duties into departments headed by individual commissioners.

7-3-402. Nature of government. Local governments that adopt this form shall have general government powers.

7-3-403. Role of the chairman of commission. The chairman of the commission, who may be referred to as the mayor, shall be the presiding officer of the commission. All members of boards and committees shall be appointed by the chairman with the consent of the commission. The chairman shall be recognized

as the head of the local government unit and may vote as other members of the commission.

7-3-412 (2). Selection of commission members. The commission shall be elected by districts in which candidates must reside and which are apportioned by population.

7-3-413 Type of election. Local government elections shall be conducted on a: (1) partisan basis; or (2) nonpartisan basis.

7-3-414 (1). Chairman of commission. The chairman of the commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance.

7-3-415 (2). Administrative assistants. The commission may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist them in the supervision and operation of the local government.

7-3-416 (2). Terms of commission members. Commission members shall be elected for overlapping terms of office.

7-3-417 (2). Size of commission and community councils. The size of the commission is three, and community councils to advise commissioners may be authorized by ordinance.

7-3-418 Terms of elected officials. The term of office of elected officials shall be 4 years, except that the term of office for commissioners shall be three years.

7-3-432 (1) Legal officer. A legal officer (who may be called the county attorney) shall be elected.

7-3-433 (1) Law enforcement officer. A law enforcement officer (who may be called the sheriff) shall be elected.

7-3-434 (1) Clerk and recorder. A clerk and recorder shall be elected.

7-3-435 (1) Clerk of district court. A clerk of district court shall be elected.

7-3-436 (1) Treasurer. A treasurer shall be elected.

7-3-437 Surveyor. A surveyor (5) may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance; or (6) shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

7-3-438 (1) Superintendent of schools. A superintendent of schools shall be elected.

7-3-439 Assessor. An assessor (1) shall be elected; or (5) may at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

7-3-440 (1) Coroner. A coroner shall be elected.

7-3-441 (1) Public administrator. A public administrator shall be elected.

7-3-442 (6) Auditor. An auditor shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

We, the Study Commission of Roosevelt County do hereby certify that this is the Proposed Plan of Government as established by Title 7, Chapter 3, Part 4 MCA approved by the Study Commissioners of Roosevelt County.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Roosevelt County this _____ day of August, 1986.

ATTEST: _____
Clerk & Recorder of
Roosevelt County

Robert R. Bell, Chairman

Aldon E. Lee

Carsten Beck

Dwight E. Vanetta

Dwight Vanetta

Calmer A. Ersness

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF THE
SPECIAL ELECTION AT WHICH THE
ALTERNATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT
SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE ELECTORS
OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY

The alternative form of government proposed by the Local Government Study Commission of Roosevelt County shall be submitted to the voters of Roosevelt County at a special election to be held with the general election on November 4, 1986.

We, the Study Commission of Roosevelt County do hereby certify that this is the date of the special election approved by the Study Commission of Roosevelt County.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Roosevelt County this _____
day of August, 1986.

Clerk & Recorder of
Roosevelt County

Robert R. Bell, Chairman

Alden E. Lee

Carsten Beck

Dwight E. Vannatta

Dwight Vannatta

Calmer A. Ersness

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE OFFICIAL BALLOT

FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 1986, SPECIAL ELECTION

Instructions to voters: Place an "X" in the box which expresses your preferences.

OFFICIAL BALLOT

ON

THE PROPOSED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT

If the proposed plan of government fails to receive a majority of the votes cast on the question, the sub-options also fail. If the proposed plan is adopted, the sub-options require only a plurality of votes cast on the sub-option for adoption.

PLEASE VOTE ON ALL ISSUES.

1.

VOTE FOR ONE.

For adoption of the Commission plan of government proposed for Roosevelt County by the Roosevelt County Study Commission.

For the existing form of government.

2.

VOTE FOR ONE

Sub-option to be included in the new form of government, if it is adopted.

Local government elections:

Shall be conducted on a partisan basis.

Shall be conducted on a non-partisan basis.

3.

VOTE FOR ONE.

Sub-option to be included in the new form of government, if it is adopted.

An assessor:

Shall be elected.

May at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

4.

VOTE FOR ONE.

Sub-option to be included in the new form of government, if it is adopted.

A surveyor:

May at the discretion of the commission be selected as provided by ordinance.

Shall not be included in this form as a separate office.

We, the Study Commission of Roosevelt County do hereby certify that this is the official ballot approved by the Study Commission of Roosevelt County.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Roosevelt County this _____ day of August, 1986.

ATTEST: Clerk & Recorder of
Roosevelt County

Robert R. Bell, Chair
Aldon E. Lee Chr.
Aldon E. Lee

Carsten Beck
Dwight Vanetta
Dwight Vanetta

Calmer A. Ersness

Plan of Transition

Pursuant to law there will be a special primary election January 20 for the purpose of electing three County Commissioners by District. The general election will be held in conjunction with the usual School or municipal election to be held the first Tuesday in April. At this time, the three Commissioners will draw lots for one, two, and three year terms, and thenceforth elections will be held yearly in the appropriate Commission District.

Pursuant to provisions of MCA 7-3-158 if the voters decide to provide for the appointment of an assessor, the incumbent shall continue in office until the expiration of his present term of office.

Chairman _____

CERTIFICATE

ESTABLISHING THE DATES OF
THE FIRST PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS
OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY
IF THE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL IS APPROVED
AND ESTABLISHING THE EFFECTIVE DATE
OF THE PROPOSAL IF APPROVED

The date of the primary election for officers of the new government of Roosevelt County shall be held at a special election on January 20, 1987.

The date of the general election for officers of the new government of Roosevelt County shall be held at a special election on April 7, 1987.

The effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Roosevelt County takes effect when the new officers take office at 10 a.m. June 8, 1987.

We, the Study Commission of Roosevelt County do hereby certify that these are the dates of the special primary and general elections and the effective date of the alternative plan of local government of Roosevelt County approved by the Study Commission of Roosevelt County.

In testimony whereof, we set our hands.

Done at Roosevelt County this _____
day of August, 1986.

ATTEST: Clerk & Recorder of
Roosevelt County

Robert R. Bell, Chairman

Aldon E. Lee

Carsten Beck

Dwight E. Vannatta

Dwight Vannatta

Calmer A. Ersness

ROOSEVELT COUNTY STUDY COMMISSION CONCURRING REPORT

I have as, a member of the Roosevelt County Study Commission, met with the commission as we studied the present form and powers of government in Roosevelt County and compared them with alternative forms available to the county. While we agreed to submit certain changes to the voters of Roosevelt County, I do not believe that all the best options will appear on the ballot. The options submitted are the result of a committee process. That process derives much of its decision making ability from compromise. Compromise is a situation where no one gets what they want.

My name also appears on the majority report because the recommended changes are the result of a majority vote. Some I agree with and others I feel are short of the desired change. Either way, the committee voted, I had the opportunity to voice my opinion and I sign as a member of the committee that adopted the recommended changes.

I would like to begin by saying that I am a strong advocate of the process. Voter review of local government is far from a smooth and flawless exercise. Even with its weak points, it should be done every ten years. But I would suggest some points to consider the next time you have the opportunity to vote for Government Review. First, support and work for the review. Second, know who you are voting for. Encourage open minded, interested people to run for Roosevelt County Study Commission. I don't feel its necessary that their views coincide with yours but they need to come with an open mind. They have to be willing to participate. Be sure they are capable of following the process and the discussions. Avoid individuals with a specific axe to grind, they cannot be objective. Try to select a varied group with the necessary qualities to function in all the committee roles.

Roosevelt County is probably not much different than other similar size counties. As I write this, there is not a current crises that is unique to this county. The citizens are governed by a form of government that has been in existance, relatively unchanged for a long time. It generally fills the tenet of doing no harm to its citizens.

The present form of government has some faults that need attention. The present form of government was not established to function in a day of rapid technological and sociological changes. It appears to have been created with the intention of distributing powers and responsibility. Our commission form of government does not have a clear path of responsibility. If you ask "Who Is In Charge Here?", I do not see an obvious answer. The buck doesn't stop and that isn't just a figure of speech. In this age of accountability, we are left out.

The commissioners primary authority is in the control of the

problem is a lack of a serious planned approach to training that is current with expected levels of expertise. Most of these volunteers work as employees of the county (under volunteer status) yet training is a hodgepodge system that is not up to date. Who then bears the legal responsibility for them. Are "volunteers" expected to donate time, and clothing and also pay for training (much not available in their town). Or should the county encourage volunteerism, provide the needed access to training and make sure they are protected in cases of lawsuits. Where is the written policy and the commitment to that policy. Just whose responsibility is it?

My fears are that the present form of government is not responsive to everchanging needs. I am also concerned that a lack of affirmative policies on many things leaves the county very vulnerable to lawsuits. I see the failures as the result of of a government that is unable to respond or is unable to fix responsibility for some needed functions.

The report of the majority does not go far enough in changing the form of government, but hopefully the changes proposed and the list of recommended policy changes submitted to the commissioners will make some improvements.

I feel that a shortened term of office will increase the accountability of the officeholder. It will open the office to people who can make a shortened commitment to public office. And it will allow the voters a chance to review the directions of county government on a more regular basis.

I support district elections for several reasons. This option will only bring the system into alignment with the system used in state and federal election systems. District elections bring the voters in closer contact with the candidate. The candidate will have to campaign closer to home and be able to communicate directly with individuals. Local accountability is enhanced too.

I do not buy the argument that district elections eliminate the officeholder from representing all the people. One of the officeholders obligations is to do the best job for the county, state or nation. If the officeholder can't separate the provincial actions from those that represent the county, then maybe he shouldn't run for office. And certainly the voters should not elect anyone who is close minded about all but local projects. We live in a community that is much larger than the boundaries of an election district. There is another check too, it still takes a majority vote to pass motions. We have provincialism in county government now, even if it is minimal, it will not increase unless we, the voters encourage and condone it.

The Roosevelt County Study Commission is offering some options on other issues as well. Briefly here are my thoughts.

budget. They also have some control in the ordinance powers but to say that the commissioners are the governing force in the county is not true. The other independantly elected officials are the sole reigning power of their department. When all cooperate to do what is best for the citizens of Roosevelt County, that is ideal, but if that cooperation is not present, the situation is changed considerably. I believe the present system is not suited to the rapid change needed to keep up with the changeing forces that act upon this county. There are internal needs of the county, external mandates forced upon us by the state and federal systems and there is not a single responsive authority that has the power to make the decisions to meet these needs.

My next point is that Roosevelt County does not plan for the future, not next year or the next five years. That should be a responsibility of a unitary authority. If you think we have someone in charge, where are we going? Is there a plan, maybe some objectives that this county is trying to reach this year or next. Where are we headed five or ten years down the road. I couldn't find any evidence of planning in this county. Who would do it. The commissioners who do not have authority to see that the goals are achieved, nor do the independantly elected officials who need the budget to get there. It is possible to work together to do the planning, but there is no single authority to see that the plan is acted upon.

I see many other areas that need to be addressed but they do not seem to fall in any particular catchment area of responsibility. I was unable to find any policy regarding personnel practices. No hiring and firing guidelines. Job descriptions were requested and were not produced. The only written mention of any practice that I am aware of is in the labor contract with the road department employees.

A lack of sound written personnel policy and written job descriptions are a very important process in todays lawsuit happy world. This county cannot afford to continue to take the risk of losing a lawsuit because they didn't do what is expected of all employers.

Further, I have not found any evidence of any program to try to prevent or reduce employee absenteeism, to improve or instill good work habits or listen to employee suggestions for improved working conditions or to improve productivity. Employee safety is not a visible concern as a county wide affirmative policy.

There is a fringe area of county government that is very important to all of us, yet it is a sometimes neglected fringe. That is the status of the volunteer services. I am referring specifically about ambulance and fire services but do not intend to exclude others. Roosevelt County has somewhere in the neighborhood of 300 volunteer firefighters and probably more than 40 ambulance people. They operate under different authority, and jurisdictions but a common

Partisan versus non partisan elections. I feel that tying candidates to national party lines in local elections is not in the best interest of either the candidates or the electorate. Local issues do not reflect state or national views of the parties. Furthermore, there are more differences in parties than among parties. The other view is that partisan politics begin at the local level and political parties want to control the direction of candidates and to influence voter decisions. Most voters make decisions on factors other than party, particularly at lower level elections anyway.

The commission felt that if the state is going to require the county to pay for some of the salary of the state employee, the Assessor, then the commissioners should have the flexibility to eliminate the office if they deem it to be in the best interests of the county. I recommend a vote for the option that allows the commission to set the assessors office by ordinance. They need the flexibility to deal with changes made by the state. This option need not change anything!

The option provided for the office of surveyor is another option to give the commissioners an opportunity to determine the fate of the office of county surveyor or to eliminate the office entirely. My choice is to eliminate the office. It is an unneeded position and the best policy is to hire surveying on an as needed basis.

One last comment. I ask that when local government review time returns, that you support it. Elect interested open minded people. And support their work. Consider a wide ranging study of streamlining the list of independantly elected offices.

Give the proposals your attention and consider them seriously. We have nothing to gain from putting these issues forth but better, more responsive government. Those who will disagree with these proposals may have a particular reason to oppose them.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert R. Bell
September 5, 1986

copy

ROOSEVELT COUNTY STUDY COMMISSION MINORITY REPORT

I, CALMER A. ERSNESS, the undersigned member of the ROOSEVELT COUNTY STUDY COMMISSION, together with the other members of the said study commission, met to study the existing form and powers of the county government and the procedures for delivery of local government services and compared them with other forms available under the laws of the State of Montana. Though the said study commissioners, OTHER THEN MYSELF, agreed to some changes in the existing form of county government, I am unable to agree with those changes with the exception of that change recommended to the election of a county surveyor. For that reason, I am submitting this Minority Report as set forth below:

REGARDING THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY SURVEYOR:

Inasmuch as the County of Roosevelt has not for several decades, elected a County Surveyor, and have instead appointed a surveyor when the need arose from private industry or elsewhere, I am not opposed to this recommended change in our county government, and in that regard, I DO RECOMMEND the abolishment of that elected office.

REGARDING THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ASSESSOR:

I am opposed to this change for the following reasons:

(1) The office of Assessor is one of the most important offices in the county due to the fact it pertains to the values of personal and real property of the citizens of this county, and from those values, taxes are levied for the proper function of schools, roads, administration and all other services provided by the county for the benefit of all the residents of this county.

(2) The abolishment of this elected office could well mean that the Montana State Department of Revenue would send to the County of Roosevelt one of its own agents to act in the capacity of County Assessor, and by doing so, this would eliminate for the people of Roosevelt County one of the last avenues of communication between the residents of Roosevelt County and that of the assessor. I feel that it would be better for our taxpayers to have in that office, someone that is elected by us as taxpayers, instead of someone sent in by the Dept. of Revenue of the State of Montana.

(3) I further believe that this change would not be an authorized change for this study commission to recommend in the proposed plan of government.

REGARDING THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE OFFICE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER(S):

I agree in part and disagree in part to the proposed changes in the office of County Commissioner, as follows:

I.

I AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. I agree that the Chairman of the Commission shall be elected by the members of the commission from their own number for a term established by ordinance;
2. I agree that the commission may appoint one or more administrative assistants to assist them in the supervision and operation of the local government; and
3. That the size of the commission, which shall be a number not less than three, shall be established when the form is adopted by the voters, I agree.

I DISAGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. I disagree that the type of election of the local government elections shall be conducted on a NONPARTISAN BASIS.

REASON OF DISAGREEMENT: I feel that any person seeking any county elected office should have the right to "hang his hat" in the campaign office of his choice. This change for him or her, would eliminate what I feel is an avenue of communication that presently exists between the candidate and the voter. The candidate is presumably from some political party, known to the voters, and the candidate has a right to retain this identity in seeking this office.

2. I disagree that the terms of commission members shall be elected for a set number of terms.

REASON FOR DISAGREEMENT: I am not fully certain that the report as submitted by the other members of this study commission was correctly done on this point. If they intended, as discussed to have a certain number of terms only, such as 2 or 3, then I would disagree. If they truly intended not to make this proposed change and leave it as it presently exists, then I would agree.

3. I disagree that the term of office of the County Commissioner shall be limited to only three years.

REASON FOR DISAGREEMENT: I feel that this is not fair to recommend that in county government, only the office of county commissioner is limited to three years, whereas all other elected county officers are elected for a four year term. I feel this is totally and completely unfair for the person running for this office. SECONDLY, this would result in the necessity of having a general election each and every year whereby on the even years, other elected officials would be on the ballot, and on the uneven years, ONLY THE OFFICE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER would be on the ballot.

LASTLY, insofar as the proposed change to have a county commissioner elected BY DISTRICT instead of by AT LARGE, seems to have many pros and cons. I feel that the federal court will eventually force counties to have the office of county commissioner elected by district. I realize that to be elected BY DISTRICT results in the candidate or elected commissioner would perhaps be more attentive to the problems of that district, and on the other hand, I am leaning towards the election AT LARGE, because each of the commissioners have a lot of responsibilities not only to their own respective district but to the county as a whole. Therefore, to this proposed change, I neither fully agree nor do I fully disagree.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, August 8, 1986



Calmer A. Ersness
Member of the Roosevelt County Study
Commission.

SEAL

ATTEST:



CLERK AND RECORDER OF
ROOSEVELT COUNTY, MONTANA

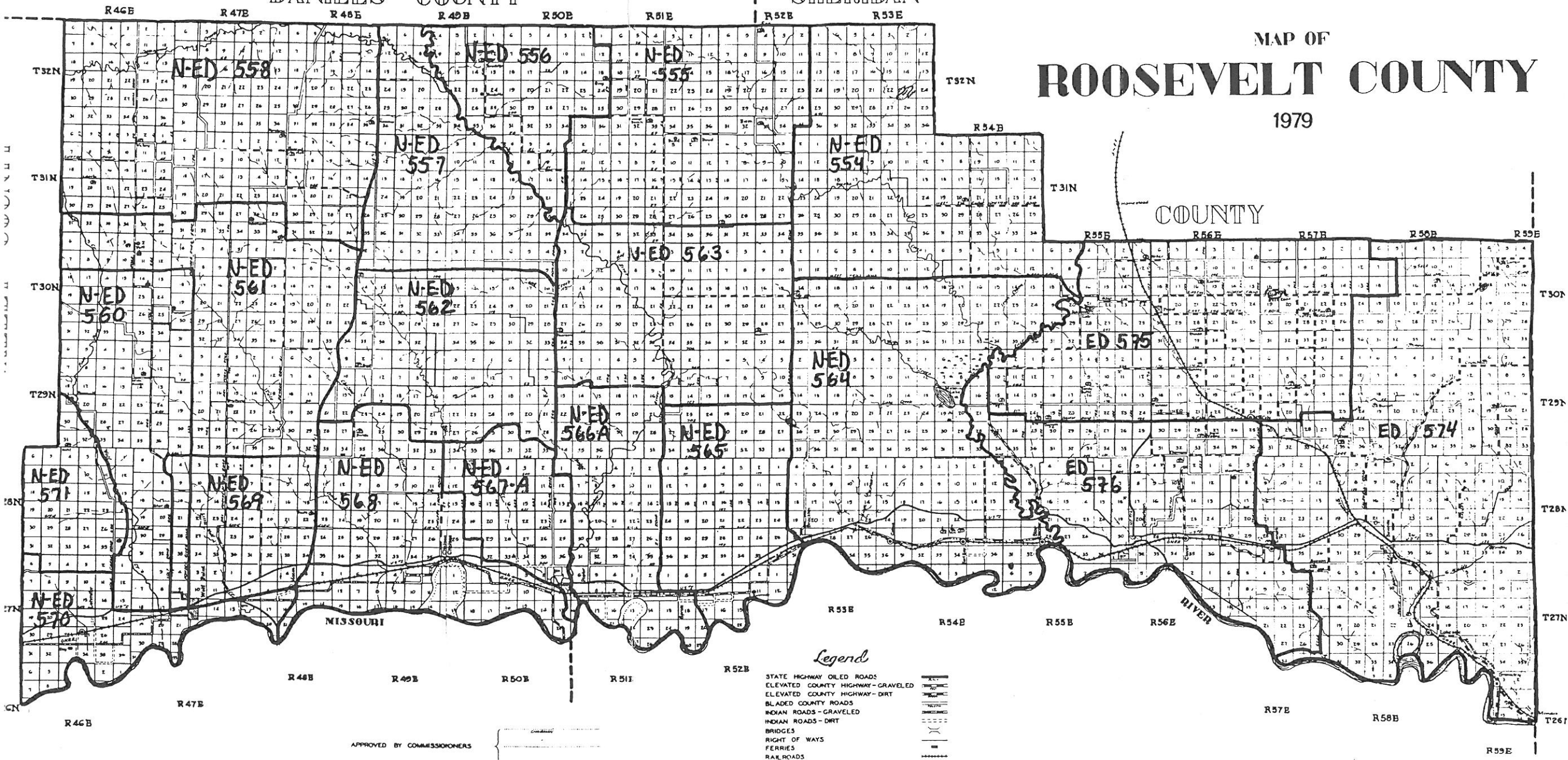
DANIELS COUNTY

SHERIDAN

1980 CENSUS ENUMERATION DISTRICTS

MAP OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY

1979



APPROVED BY COMMISSIONERS

Legend

- STATE HIGHWAY OILED ROADS
- ELEVATED COUNTY HIGHWAY-GRAVELED
- ELEVATED COUNTY HIGHWAY-DIRT
- BLADED COUNTY ROADS
- INDIAN ROADS-GRAVELED
- INDIAN ROADS-DIRT
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAYS
- FERRIES
- RAILROADS