

Recall results certified

By Wayne Peal
staff writer

As of 3:05 p.m. Tuesday, the 8th State Senate District officially became vacant.

That is when the Board of State Canvassers verified the ouster of Pontiac Democrat Philip Mastin, targeted for recall because he voted to raise the state income rate by 1.75 percent.

But by then, the scramble to fill the \$31,000-a-year post was already under way in earnest.

Oakland County Republicans will caucus Sunday night in the county Board of Commissioners Auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, to select their nominee.

The front-runners are state representatives Mat Dunaskis, a two-term lawmaker from Lake Orion, and Rudy Nichols, a freshman legislator from Waterford Township. No other candidates have announced.

Prominent Republican district residents Mel Larsen of Oxford Township and Douglas Bishop of Avon Township have removed their names from consideration — and are lining up on opposite sides.

LARSEN, FORMER state GOP party chairman, is Dunaskis' campaign chairman. Bishop, who represented the 11th State Senate District for 12 years before losing to Mastin last November following redistricting, has endorsed Nichols.

Another prominent Republican, county director of federal and state aid Jean Willoughby, is also out of the race.

"I've heard the rumors but I think they started because we're building a home in Avon Township," Willoughby, a Bloomfield Hills resident, said. "But we're not moving there for any reason other than Avon's being the place we want to live."

GOP caucusing will begin at 7 p.m. Sunday, Oakland County Republican Committee chairman Robert Anderson said. A specially designated visitors' area from which to view the nominating process is planned.

Nominations will begin at 7:30 p.m. Nominating speeches will be limited to three minutes. Second speeches will be limited to two minutes.

To gain the nomination, a candidate must receive one vote more than 50 percent of the votes cast by delegates present. There are 72 GOP committee members who are registered to vote in the 8th State Senate District and only they are eligible to vote during the caucusing.

"The only surprise to us is the Democrats' apparent abandonment of the district," Anderson said. He added: "The sentiment, from top to bottom, seems to be that they will lose the seat. We expected an all-out fight by them to retain the seat."

THE COMMITTEE to Maintain a Senate Democratic Majority contributed at least \$10,000 to Mastin's unsuccessful campaign to stay in office. But chairman Mary Ryan Taras said the Oakland County Democratic Committee will fight to retain the seat.

"We never write off any district though I'm sure the Republicans would like us to," she said. "There will be a Democratic candidate and a race."

Who that candidate will be is still open to speculation.

"I've talked to some people but no one is willing to announce yet," Taras said. "I'm sure by next week we'll have an announcement."

Taras discussed some of those mentioned as prospective candidates.

On former state senators Doug Ross and Kerry Kammer: "They still don't live in the district." Ross lives in Southfield and Kammer in Springfield Township.

On Dana Wilson, a new Avon resident who represented the Troy area in the state Senate briefly in 1982: "He hasn't called me."

On Dennis Ritter, Waterford treasurer and his wife, Sandra, an Oakland Community College trustee: "There's no indication either is interested in running."

On Charlie Harrison Jr., a five-term state representative from Pontiac: "I like him a lot and I think he'd be a strong candidate. But as far as I know, he hasn't expressed an interest."

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ate seat when the state Board of Canvassers confirms election results. Confirmation could come by Wednesday, ironically the date of the special recall election against David Serotkin, D-Mount Clemens.

Following Mastin's defeat, CAUSE officials announced their group would assist in the recall drive against Serotkin, who, like Mastin, is a first-term state senator. Control of the Senate hinges on the outcome of the Serotkin's recall election.

The 55-year-old Mastin has spent much of his adult life in politics.

Starting out as a Hazel Park city councilman (1962-68), he served an overlapping three years as an Oakland County supervisor.

Mastin was an Oakland County commissioner from 1969-70, when he was elected to the state House, each time representing the Hazel Park area.

In 1976, he left a relatively safe state House seat to run unsuccessfully for Oakland County executive against incumbent Daniel Murphy.

A year later, he was appointed Pontiac city manager. In 1979, he quit to head the Pontiac Downtown Development Authority. In 1982, he finished runnerup in the Pontiac mayoral race to Wallace Holland.

Mastin holds a real estate associate broker's license. He said there was a possibility he would return to real estate sales. He and his wife Donna have three children and nine grandchildren.

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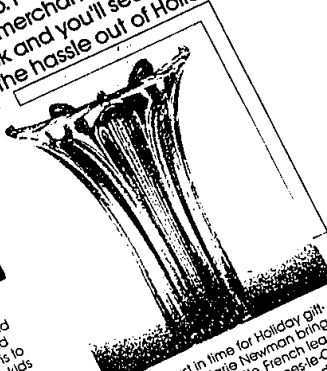
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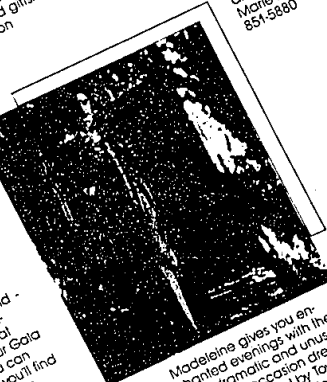
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