

Sever, Marks eye Senate

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toward giving local governments "more control over dishing out penalties to licensees."

"There's always a chance I may not win, but regardless, I feel strongly I can make an impact on the state level on that particular issue in terms of drawing attention to it and changing the law."

Sever has been an active supporter of Farmington Hills' crackdown on liquor law violators, especially those who sell alcohol to minors. He also played a key role in the city's Year 2000 study project.

No matter who runs in the primary or general election, "it's going to be a tough race," said Sever, a Farmington Hills printer, a 24-year resident and five-year councilman.

Sever will budget about \$20,000 for the primary. "I'll try to run a smart campaign, not an expensive campaign," he said.

"I'll put my money primarily in getting my message to the voters. I'm not going to worry about being flashy."

IF THE Republican Party of



Terry Sever

Michigan targets Faxon's seat. Sever thinks the GOP nominee will spend at least \$100,000 by the time the final vote is counted.

"But I do not expect the seat to be targeted and I am running on that assumption," he said. "I feel I'll need to spend around \$100,000 in the general election."

To win, Marks figures he'll have to spend \$80,000 in the primary and \$350,000 overall.

Before becoming a councilman,



Ben Marks

Marks served on the planning commission for five years.

The "High Marks" initiative last year, the city secured a \$370,000 federal grant to improve streets and storm drains in Regal Orchards subdivision, near Nine Mile and Grand River.

The 15th State Senate District includes Wilkom, Novi, Farmington Hills, Farmington, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Huntington Woods and Ferndale.

GOP considers effort to take Faxon's seat

By Sandra Armbruster
staff writer

Republicans may target the 15th State Senate District with "a lot of time, money and energy" in an effort to unseat Farmington Hills Democrat Jack Faxon, according to James Alexander, Oakland County Republican Party chairman.

"We're taking a look at it very, very closely, yeah," Alexander said. "We're having more primaries than we've ever had countywide and that bodes well for the party in November."

But first, one of the three expected to file by the May 15 deadline must survive the Aug. 7 primary.

In a surprise announcement, Southfield city councilwoman Denise Alexander, who was just elected in November 1989 to the council, said she is considering running in the primary.

Also having announced that they will bid for the seat are Farmington Hills councilmen Ben Marks and Terry Sever. (See related story.)



Denise Alexander

ALEXANDER, WHO has lived in Southfield 12 1/2 of the last 16 years, said she is "strongly considering" making a try for the right to face off against Faxon in the general election Nov. 6.

"I was approached by the Republican Party leadership," she said, noting that her constituents in Southfield would also be hers in the 15th district.

Southfield generally is considered to be the Democratic stronghold in the growing Republican district. She said that polling data and demographic reports favored her success if she chose to try.

That includes voter approval rating and name identification.

Any of the three possible Republican primary candidates would be strong and viable, according to Larry Dickerson, former Oakland County Republican Party chairman. Demographics favor a Republican, and "Faxon is out of touch with" his district, Dickerson said.

Asked if he would personally get involved in the elec-

tion, Dickerson indicated he would. "An activist makes decisions and gets involved," he said. A heightened awareness of the race could mean there will be a large voter turnout, he added.

FAXON, WHO has served three terms in the state House and is concluding his fifth term in the state Senate, said he thinks the competition is "wonderful" and will campaign on his record.

"The democratic process is alive and well," Faxon said.

The last time he had competition, when Lathrup Village city councilman Frank Brock tried to oust Faxon, the Republicans went back to voting records in the '70s, Faxon said.

Faxon said he doesn't feel threatened by a successful Republican coming out of a Democratic stronghold to unseat him.

"The people in Southfield have a record of independence and my family is in Southfield. I don't see any great defection just because I bought a house the other side of Inkster Road."

For Alexander, work as a legislator would be "consistent with what I'm doing in Southfield. There are projects I'm committed to doing. This would just be a different form with the same end," she said. Issues include Southfield's viability, maintaining a dialogue with the school and the community, education funding and property tax reform. Other issues include transportation, crime, I-696 traffic, an I-696 interchange at Inkster Road, funding for drug programs and environmental issues.

ALEXANDER DESCRIBES herself as moderate Republican. If she makes it through the primary, abortion will not be an issue since she and Faxon are both pro-choice. But she would like to make changes.

"Southfield is not getting good representation from the state Senate in Lansing. (The city) shouldn't have to have a lobbyist," Alexander said, adding that she was "committed to making a difference."

The 15th district in the last 10 years has become more Republican, but Alexander said that issues are becoming more important and cross over party lines. Examples she gave were abortion and taxes.

Concentrating on an analysis of the issues, Alexander said she hasn't prepared any plan on spending. She spent \$19,594 in her recent successful council bid.

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