

opposed petition guidelines

tion. As a tax payer, then, she feels petitioners would have to pay twice for the same job.

STATE PRECEDENCE

The topic of state precedence regarding CIZ districts was also discussed.

Nye resident Bill Hand accused the commis-

sioners of attempting to subvert a long-estab-

lished process regarding CIZ petitions used

state-wide. In over 100 CIZ districts, mineral

rights were never required when determining

whether the necessary 60 percent of affected

real property owners signed the petition.

"What is presented is a definite attempt to re-

write state law, statutes, in with burdensome,

very expensive rules and regulations," Hand

declared.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE?

Several opponents claimed the guidelines

negatively impact the democratic process by

hindering a procedure through which the public

can interact with the government.

By viewing the guidelines as creating road-

blocks to the petition process, opponents

believe future petitions would be next to impos-

sible.

Nye's Charles Sangmeister accused the com-

missioners of trying to silence the people's

voice by limiting interaction with the govern-

ment.

"Your proposed policy does not enable 'We

the People' in this room, but instead insures

that we will never have a voice in your govern-

ment," Sangmeister accused.

POSSIBILITY OF TEAMWORK

Much of the opponents' frustration came

from the fact that the people working for the

past three years on a CIZ petition were not

involved in the guideline creation process.

They feel as if their recent experiences could

positively impact the guidelines and make them

realistic for those who come in the future.

No opponents were directly opposed to the

creation of a set of petition guidelines, but rath-

“Your proposed policy does not enable 'We the People' in this room, but instead insures that we will never have a voice in your government.”

-Charles Sangmeister

er they objected to the content in the currently proposed guidelines.

Despite the discontent between the petition-

ers and the county, the two groups working

together in the future to revise the guidelines is

not completely out of the question.

"I'd urge the commissioners to rescind this

and to sit down with a group of the public and

work cooperatively to try to figure out some-

thing that would help us control our own fate

along the Beartooth Front," Williams said.

As this was a public hearing, the commission-

ers and county attorney simply listened to the

public's comments and did not comment them-

selves.

THE LAWSUIT

The Beartooth Front Coalition filed a lawsuit

against Stillwater County on Feb. 26.

The lawsuit pushes back against the pro-

posed guidelines and calls for a reversal of the

county's decision to deem the Beartooth Front

petition invalid due to an insufficient number of

signatures (60 percent of affected real property

owners is required by Montana law). The coun-

ty's decision was based on the fact that mineral

rights owners were not included in the petition.

No response to the lawsuit has yet been filed

in 22nd Judicial District Court by the county.

National congressional candidates in Columbus Monday to meet voters

By Mario Promovost

SCN Editor

Two national congressional candidates will be in Columbus Monday to meet voters.

Retired Montana District Judge Russell Fagg will be at the 307 Bar and Restaurant at 11 a.m.

Fagg is looking to unseat incumbent 2-term Democratic Sen. John Tester. Fagg brings with him a 22-year judicial career and is considered

to be the Republican front-runner.

At 6 p.m., Montana congressional representa-

tive candidate Elinor Swanson will be at the Columbus City Hall, courtesy of Stillwater Ris-

ing to replace Republican Rep. Greg Gianforte.

Swanson is a Billings attorney who is look-

