

Baker Study Commission

attends workshop

In a gathering reminiscent of the first 1974 workshop for newly elected voter review study commissioners, more than 200 persons met in Bozeman Dec. 14-15 to learn "how-to-do" it as they prepare to review their forms of local government. Bernie Heiser, Jim Stark and Cora Moser attended from Baker study commission, whose members were elected in November.

The 1972 State Constitution originally mandated local government reviews every ten years. An amendment adopted in 1978 made such reviews optional, depending on the outcome of the mandatory elections every ten years on the question whether or not the review should be conducted. Baker's community citizens voted for the review last spring and subsequently elected three to the study commission.

An ex-officio member representing the current local government has not yet been appointed to serve on the Baker study commission board.

Local government review has the potential to change the present form of a town or county government, study commissioners learned. However, study commissioners might recommend that no change is needed for a particular government.

Speakers briefed the study commissioners on subjects ranging from the various forms of local government allowed by Montana law; planning and budgeting for local study commissioner activities; conducting and reporting meetings; dealing with special interest groups; and the role and responsibilities of the ex-officio member.

Lt. Governor George Turman welcomed the study commissioners and outlined policy and political

framework that shaped the review process. Other speakers included Dr. Richard Roeder, Montana State University History and Philosophy Department, on the historical framework for local governance; Dr. Kenneth Weaver, MSU Political Science Department, on an overview of study commission procedures; and Dr. James Lopach, University of Montana Political Science Department, on forms of government and structural options.

Also appearing were some 30 persons representing the press, former study commissioners, local elected officials, staffs of the Montana Association of Counties and the Montana League of Cities and Towns, resource people from state agencies, the League of Women Voters, and political science faculties from four of the state's university units.

Study commissioners now will embark on a study which may continue up to two years, with recommendations to be made to the electorate no later than November, 1986. Study commissions are funded through the affected governments.