

# Watsonville council will include Hispanic

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WATSONVILLE — When voters go to the polls this May they will be casting a historic vote, because at least one of the three candidates elected to the city council will be Hispanic.

Three of the five contestants qualifying for the council race at the close of the filing deadline Tuesday are Hispanic — Juan Morales, Tony Campos and Leo Estrada.

One of them is assured a seat on the seven-member council, and all three of them could win election. But no matter who wins, it will be the first time in this city's history that a Hispanic has been elected, despite the fact that half of the city's population is Latino.

The other two candidates in the council

contest are incumbent Vido Deretich and challenger Dennis Osmer.

In the mayoral race, there were no surprises on the final day of filing. Council members Betty Murphy and Rex Clark, and challenger Robert Chacanaca, all qualified for the ballot.

One of them will assume the seat being vacated by the departure of Mayor Ann Soldo.

Two people who had taken out nomination papers decided not to file them. Glen Cluster, who had intended to run for a council seat, said he would instead support Campos in the race.

"When I took out my nomination papers, there was not very much interest in the race," said Cluster. "It was right during the suit and I was afraid there wouldn't be anyone there."

The lawsuit he was referring to was

brought by the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund on behalf of local Hispanics. The suit attempted, but failed, to institute district elections in the hope of getting two Hispanics elected to the council from electoral districts heavily populated with Hispanics.

Cluster said he was glad to see Hispanics in the race.

Another would-be candidate was Melvin Ott, who did not file for the mayoral race.

Morales, Campos and Estrada represent different segments of the community, and their campaigns will probably be defined as much by growth and development issues as social and ethnic ones.

Morales, 37, is the former head of Watsonville's Youth Services and now a salesman with Ford's Department store. He favors orderly growth balanced with the needs of agriculture.

Campos is a Realtor and planning commissioner who wants to see the city expand its boundaries to accommodate new growth.

Estrada, 57, is an architect and former planning commissioner who has also taught at Cabrillo College. Estrada said the central business district is "deteriorating" and that every effort should be made at enhancing it as a center for all segments of the community. He also favors a wider economic base to help blunt the effects of food-processing plant closings.

Deretich is a two-term councilman and owner of Pajaro Valley Cold Storage. He's been a supporter of new development and often complains of too much government interference in the lives of city residents.

Osmer, 30, is the chief mechanic of the vehicle fleet at Premium Beverage Co. in Gilroy. His two main campaign issues are drug enforcement and supporting the city's

continuing efforts to obtain a waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency for secondary sewage treatment.

The race for mayor will be close between Murphy and Clark, with Chacanaca considered a long shot.

The two council members represent opposing factions on the present council. Murphy, whose husband, Bill, was mayor from 1967-71 and is now the county tax collector, favors downtown redevelopment and supports a central business district.

Clark has supported development of shopping malls on the outskirts of town, but he, too, would like to see redevelopment of downtown completed.

Chacanaca would vote to replace City Manager John Radin and City Attorney Don Haile. He would put to voter approval any new land annexations and would encourage more low-income housing.