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ADLC study commission plans telephone survey

Telephones will be ringing across Anaconda-Deer Lodge County as the ADLC Study Commission begins a community-wide survey to assess the public's opinion of local government and county officials.

The study commission, elected in November 1994 to study the current form of government and decide whether any changes are recommended, will be asking residents their impressions and opinions about several aspects of local government, commission member Michael Grayson said Wednesday. The study also will try to assess the public's satisfaction with government services.

Volunteers from the county's roster of election judges will conduct the surveys, which will take approximately 10 to 12 minutes to complete, Grayson said. After an estimated 400 telephone surveys are taken, results will be compiled and published. Study questions were prepared with the assistance of Professor Ken Weaver of the Montana State University Local Government Center.

The study commission recently completed discussions with county employees and members of volunteer boards and organizations to get an "insider's view" of how well the county's current form of government is working.

After two public hearings this spring, the study commission decided to suggest no changes in the county's charter form of government and its self-governing powers.

A charter is essentially a local constitution that spells out the structure, powers, and duties of local government and is very flexible, as different ideas and structure from other forms of government may be used

within the charter. The establishment of self-governing powers means that local government has any powers not specifically denied by federal and state constitutions and laws.

Following the survey, the study commission will focus on one form of local government for further study and will probably conduct several public hearings on how that governmental form can best serve the community.

If changes are recommended in the study commission's final report, those recommendations will be placed before the voters on the November 1996 ballot.