

THE SUN

YUMA, ARIZONA

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001

50 CENTS

GOOD MORNING

Today's weather: High expected to hit 108
DETAILS/A7

➤ IN QUOTES

"When you're an adult and a kid takes the ball away from you and goes down the field and scores, that's where the respect comes. That's the equalizer."

Lezlie Hiner on teaching inner-city kids how to play polo/A4

➤ YUMA

Broken sewage pump causes smelly problems for Desert Ridge residents/ B1



➤ SPORTS

Bullfrogs No. 3 hitter Tim Howard has battled his share of injuries this season, but still ranks third in batting averages in the Western Baseball League/ C1



➤ DESERT LIFE

Bullying is the major cause of school violence, teen suicide, official says/ D1

➤ NATION

Battle for Congress quietly rages state by state as politicians launch strategies for redistricting wars/ A2

➤ WORLD

China hopes artificial insemination will save giant panda from extinction as bamboo forest habitats continue to shrink/ A3

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Yuma deputy killed in single-car accident

➤ Man was pronounced dead at the scene after rolling vehicle

BY KERRY POHLMAN
SUN STAFF WRITER

A Yuma County Sheriff's deputy was killed Monday when the patrol car he was driving veered off the road and rolled, according to sheriff's office officials.

Senior Deputy Michael Meyer, 40, was pronounced dead at the scene. The single-car accident occurred at about 2 p.m. on Highway 95 and mile marker 54, just north of the inspection station. Meyer was the only passenger.

Meyer had worked for the

sheriff's department for four years and was in charge of the Water Safety Division, which patrols the area's lakes and rivers. He was on routine patrol and was northbound at the time of the accident, Sheriff Ralph Ogden said.

"He was a good friend," Ogden said.

Someone called 911 and reported the accident. Emergency crews from Yuma Proving Ground responded, along with Rural Metro. The Arizona Department of Public Safety is

SEE DEPUTY/A7



PHOTO BY CHARLES WHITEHOUSE/THE SUN

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of Public Safety officers look over the scene of a rollover accident that killed a Yuma County sheriff's deputy Monday afternoon. Ryan Oglesby (top), a DPS officer, uses a tread depth meter to check the tread on the vehicle that a Yuma County sheriff's deputy was driving when it rolled over. The deputy was killed in the crash.

Bush signs \$5.5 billion farm aid bill

➤ President plays a round of vacation golf in Texas

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRAWFORD, Texas — President Bush signed a \$5.5 billion emergency farm aid bill on Monday, intended as compensation for low prices.

The measure, the fourth farm bailout by Congress in as many years, "is necessary for our farmers and ranchers," Bush said.

"This is I guess the first bill signing in Crawford, Texas," Bush said as he spoke to an invited audience of several dozen farmers and friends at his ranch near here.

"It's a meaningful piece of legislation for this part of the country because a lot of people make their living on the farm and on the ranch," Bush said. "Farm families represent the best of America."

The Senate gave final congressional approval to the bill last week after Democrats failed to break a Republican filibuster over a larger, \$7.5 billion aid bill. Bush threatened to veto the fatter bill.

The measure Bush signed should boost net farm income to \$47.9 billion, the highest level since 1997.

Grain and cotton farmers, who receive the bulk of the special assistance, will get smaller



ASSOCIATED PRESS

PRESIDENT BUSH talks to reporters about the situation in the Middle East at Bosque Valley Golf Club Monday in Meridian, Texas.

government checks than they saw under last year's bailout. A farmer who got \$40,000 in 2000 should receive less than \$34,000 this year.

Witnesses to the signing sat outside on hay bales arranged in rows.

Some of the farmers invited weren't sure what impact the aid bill would have. But they didn't seem discouraged that Bush had sought the smaller figure.

"This will most definitely help," said Tommy Garcia, who mostly grows citrus. "It's better than zero," said Joe Aguilar, who grows vegetables, cotton and grain.

Bush began his day by heading to the golf course.

His motorcade rolled before dawn, bumping along remote roads for an hour en route to the Bosque Valley Golf Club at Meridian.

After a sunrise rain shower, a

rainbow trailed him in the western sky. The president posed for photos with area golfers, and took a few practice cuts.

"Anybody see a flaw in my swing?" he asked aides and journalists. "Or is there a swing in my flaw?"

White House aide Gordon Johndroe broke the answering silence, quipping, "Funny one, sir."

"I know you're grumpy that you were up a little early," Bush replied. "I'm sure everybody wishes they were still asleep right now."

Bush drove his 10th hole tee shot into tall grass. "Oh, no," he grumbled. "If I hit every shot good, people would say I wasn't working."

On the Net:
House Agriculture Committee: <http://www.agriculture.house.gov>
Senate committee: <http://agriculture.senate.gov>

Council candidates call for more open government

➤ Mayor says council meets in twos and threes

BY T.M. SHULTZ
SUN STAFF WRITER

While most Yuma City Council candidates are beating the drum for more government openness, Mayor Marilyn Young — who is running for re-election — has revealed that she and the rest of the current council members meet privately each week in groups of two and three with City Administrator Joyce Wilson to discuss issues that are either already before the council or will be shortly.

The council also holds closed-door discussions on who to select for the city's numerous volunteer boards and commissions. Once a name has been arrived at, the council makes the actual appointment — usually without discussion — during a regularly scheduled open meeting.

"It's one of those things that's always been done that way," Young said.

She said some of the information discussed during appointments is of a personal nature. And, she said, sometimes people who want to serve on volunteer boards don't want their name mentioned in public.

Young said the city attorney says such discussions are allowed in closed-door sessions because they come under the category of personnel issues even though volunteer workers receive no pay from the city.

Personnel issues, real estate

Judge halts trial in Ford ignition case

➤ Proposed settlement may cost company \$1 billion

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HAYWARD, Calif. — A proposed settlement that could cost Ford Motor Co. as much as \$1 billion prompted a judge to postpone a class-action trial Monday on claims that faulty ignition switches caused millions of cars and trucks to stall.

Superior Court Judge Michael Ballachey met privately with attorneys before confirming that settlement talks are ongoing. He sealed the transcript of the meeting and slapped a gag order on attorneys.

Four months ago, the judge ordered Ford to recall as many as 2 million vehicles in California. Under the settlement deal described by attorneys Sunday, Ford would offer not a recall but a warranty extension that could cover as many as 5 million vehicles nationwide; owners would be reimbursed for replacing ignition switches.

"I think this is basically a win for consumers," said Jeff Fazio, a lead attorney in the class-action case against Ford. "It could have been years before the cars were fixed, but with this it could come soon."

Ballachey has said Ford misled government inspectors and was living in an "Alice and Wonderland" dreamland by denying that defective ignition switches were installed on some 23 million vehicles.

A settlement would limit the financial exposure to Ford, which is already involved in a recall of tires on its Ford Explorers. The tires and vehicles are being investigated in connection with more than 100 highway deaths.

The Detroit automaker denies

SEE FORD/A7

transactions and getting legal advice from the city attorney are the three closed-door topics allowed under the state's open meetings law, Young said.

As for meeting in groups of less than four to avoid having a quorum, Young defended those meetings saying, "There's never any decisions made."

Arizona's open meetings law prohibits council members from meeting in a quorum without notifying the public of the time and place of the meeting so that the public can attend if they wish.

Young said she and Deputy Mayor Bobby Brooks — who is also running for re-election — and sometimes one other council member meet with Wilson to discuss things. For example, Young said, Wilson sometimes lets them know what the "hot issues" are and "we give her input."

Then later, Wilson usually meets again with Councilwomen Karen Hill and Ema Lea Shoop "and goes over the things with them that she goes over with us," Young explained.

When asked if these meetings rob the public of its right to listen to the council's thought processes, Young paused and then said maybe the council needed to rethink the issue.

The two other incumbent council members, Shoop and Brooks, said they would have no problem opening up more of the council's decision-making processes to public scrutiny.

Shoop said examining candidates for the city's boards and commissions in closed session is a long-standing tradition.

"A lot of people don't want to

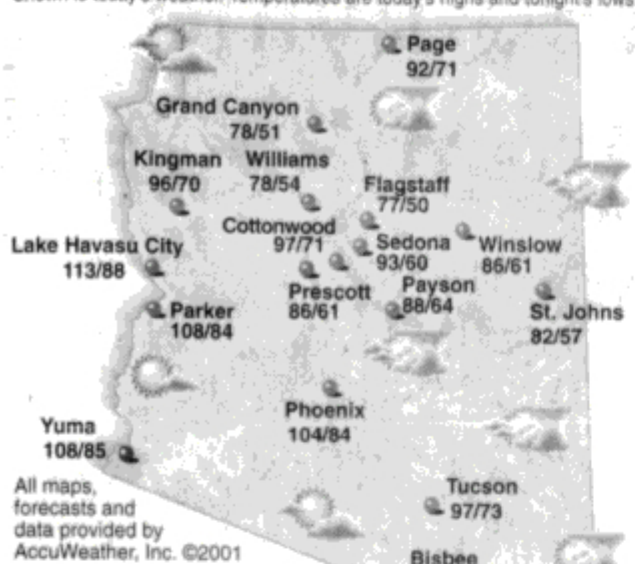
SEE COUNCIL/A7

ACCU WEATHER® FORECAST FOR YUMA

AccuWeather.com

Arizona Weather

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



Almanac

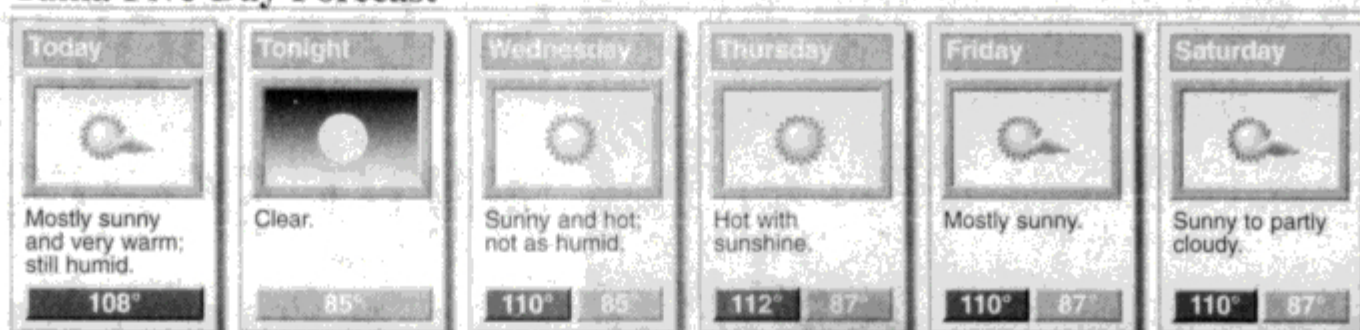
Yuma through 4 p.m. Monday	Precipitation	24 hours ending 4 p.m.	0.00"
Temperature	Month to date	Normal month to date	0.15"
High	101°	Year to date	2.89"
Low	82°	Last year to date	0.36"
Normal high	105°	Normal year to date	1.33"
Normal low	80°		

National Cities

City	Today	Wed.	City	Today	Wed.	City	Today	Wed.
Atlanta	88-68 pc	90-70 s	Helena	82-54 s	86-54 s	Omaha	86-62 pc	77-57 t
Baltimore	82-64 pc	86-64 s	Honolulu	88-74 t	89-76 s	Palm Springs	108-85 s	110-85 s
Birmingham	91-69 s	93-73 s	Houston	94-74 t	97-77 pc	Philadelphia	82-64 pc	84-66 s
Boise	94-62 s	96-62 s	Jacksonville	90-71 t	89-71 t	Portland, OR	84-60 s	86-60 s
Boston	76-65 c	76-64 pc	Kansas City	86-66 pc	81-61 t	Raleigh	86-65 sh	90-65 s
Charleston, SC	88-71 t	89-71 s	Las Vegas	106-79 s	108-81 s	Rapid City	81-58 pc	81-53 pc
Cleveland, OH	74-52 s	78-60 s	Little Rock	92-69 s	94-73 pc	Reno	96-56 s	98-58 s
Dallas	96-75 s	92-74 t	Los Angeles	85-66 s	87-66 s	St. Louis	82-64 s	83-69 c
Daytona Beach	92-72 t	90-73 t	Louisville	84-59 s	87-70 s	Salt Lake City	90-63 pc	90-63 s
Denver	85-58 t	71-55 sh	Miami	90-69 s	91-75 s	San Antonio	96-74 pc	98-77 s
Des Moines	83-62 pc	78-57 t	Memphis	90-69 s	91-75 s	San Diego	76-67 s	78-67 s
El Paso	94-68 t	94-70 pc	Milwaukee	76-62 s	76-60 t	San Francisco	70-56 pc	72-56 pc
Fairbanks	59-49 sh	67-51 sh	Minneapolis	84-62 pc	76-56 t	San Jose	76-52 s	75-57 sh
Grand Rapids	79-58 s	76-59 s	Nashville	87-64 s	89-69 s	Seattle	80-56 s	80-56 s
			New Orleans	89-76 t	91-77 t	Tampa	90-78 pc	92-77 t
			New York	80-65 pc	82-68 s	Topeka	84-65 pc	82-62 t
			Oklahoma City	93-69 pc	94-70 t	Washington, DC	82-66 pc	85-66 s

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.

Yuma Five-Day Forecast



Regional Weather

Arizona Deserts: Mostly sunny in the west today; partly sunny in the east with a stray late-day thunder shower. Highs 96-107. Cloud to partly cloudy tonight.

Arizona Mountains: Clouds and sunshine today; a shower in spots early, then a few afternoon and evening showers and thunderstorms. Highs 67-85.

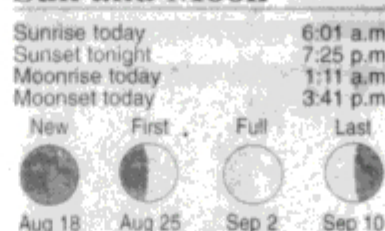
Colorado Plateau of Arizona: Clouds and sunshine today with a few showers and thunderstorms, mainly later today and into the evening. Highs 79-94.

Inland Southern California: Plenty of sunshine today; very warm, but not as humid in western sections. Highs 104-112.

Coastal Southern California: Low clouds to start today, then sunny. Highs 70-92. Clear tonight with patchy beach low clouds and fog late. Lows 61-67.

Nevada: Mostly sunny and very warm today. Highs 85-112. Clear tonight with lows of 46-87.

Sun and Moon



National Summary

Today, more thunderstorms will develop over the Rockies and high country of the Southwest. Elsewhere across the country, a pleasant day is in store from New England westward into the Midwest. Farther to the south, drenching storms will stretch from the Carolinas southwestward into the Gulf Coast states.

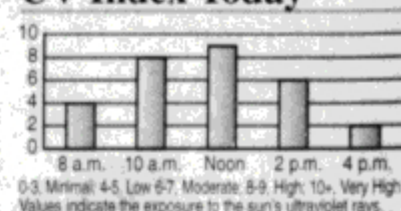
National Weather Today



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are high for the day. Forecast high/low temperatures are given for selected cities.

Yesterday's National High/Low: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 106° in Laughlin AFB, TX Low 34° in Hibbing, MN

UV Index Today



Regional Cities

City	Today	Wed.
Alpine	81-54 t	83-56 pc
Bisbee	83-59 t	88-63 c
Bullhead City	111-85 s	101-75 s
Coolidge	103-78 pc	101-77 s
Cottonwood	97-71 pc	90-61 s
El Centro	109-84 s	113-86 s
Flagstaff	77-50 t	78-50 pc
Gila Bend	106-85 pc	108-85 s
Grand Canyon	78-51 t	79-48 pc
Kingman	96-70 s	96-69 s
Lake Havasu City	113-88 s	116-90 s
Needles	110-81 s	113-89 c
Page	92-71 t	90-67 s
Parker	108-84 t	110-78 s
Phoenix	104-84 pc	104-83 s
Prescott	86-61 pc	86-60 s
Sedona	93-60 pc	89-61 s
Tucson	97-73 pc	96-72 c
Williams	78-54 t	77-49 pc
Window Rock	80-58 t	82-51 pc
Winslow	86-61 t	89-61 s

Mexico Cities

City	Today	Wed.
Acapulco	89-77 t	90-77 sh
Ciudad Juarez	94-69 t	92-71 c
Ensenada	78-63 s	79-62 s
Guadalajara	81-59 sh	79-59 sh
Hermosillo	100-79 pc	102-79 pc
Mexicali	109-81 s	111-79 s
Mexico City	75-54 sh	76-54 c
Monterrey	99-73 t	100-74 pc
Puerto Penasco	98-81 pc	102-79 s
Tijuana	79-64 s	78-64 s

Canada Cities

City	Today	Wed.
Calgary	77-55 pc	80-52 pc
Edmonton	77-54 pc	82-57 pc
Kamloops	96-62 s	99-59 s
Montreal	75-55 pc	74-58 pc
Prince George	78-50 pc	93-51 s
Regina	83-58 pc	76-45 pc
Toronto	75-55 pc	78-55 s
Vancouver	76-58 s	76-58 s
Winnipeg	83-60 pc	71-42 pc

Putin says no to scrapping ABM treaty, expresses hope on cutting nuclear forces

► Russia wants detailed negotiations, which Bush wants to avoid

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin stood firm Monday against American determination to abandon the landmark 1972 treaty banning national missile defenses.

And while Putin expressed hope for a new deal on nuclear arms cuts, his government made clear that it expects detailed, potentially lengthy negotiations, which President Bush is determined to avoid.

In remarks to reporters before meeting with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Putin said Russia has not changed its view that the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty should be preserved, even if amended.

"You know our attitude toward the ABM treaty of 1972," he said, speaking in Russian. "For us, it's unconditionally linked with both the START I and START II treaties. I would like to underline that."

He was referring to strategic arms reduction agreements of the 1990s, the second of which has yet to be implemented.

In Russia's view, abandoning the ABM treaty would mean the

end of the nuclear arms treaties, and that in turn would undermine international security. Bush's view is that the treaty is no longer relevant and that, while it is linked to the issue of offensive nuclear weapons, setting it aside to give Washington a free hand on missile defense would not lessen the value of Russia's nuclear force.

At their meeting last month in Italy, Bush and Putin agreed to pursue the issues of both offensive and defensive weaponry, and they ordered aides to work out the details.

Rumsfeld held a daylong series of meetings here with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Ivanov, starting with a one-on-one session that lasted two hours and ending with a dinner at Rumsfeld's hotel. In between, the Pentagon chief met with Putin for more than an hour and later fielded questions from Russian academics at the office of the ITAR-Tass news agency.

The officials' talks illuminated differences in fashioning a new U.S.-Russian security relationship.

Rumsfeld said the chief challenge for both sides is to "shed

that baggage" of Cold War thinking.

"I think I have a much better understanding," after Monday's talks, "of how difficult it is to go from a hostile relationship for 40 or 50 years to a totally different circumstance" in which neither Russia nor the United States needs to fear the other or believe that treaties must govern their relationship.

"To the extent that suspicion — even misplaced — persists, then we ought to be able to find ways to demystify that and reduce those suspicions," he said, implying that the Russians would not oppose Bush's missile defense plan if they accepted the U.S. assertion that it is not designed to harm Russia.

Putin urged the Bush administration to provide more details.

"We would like to get military and technical parameters of the proposals which have been formulated by your department," he said to Rumsfeld. Rumsfeld reiterated that he cannot be more specific about the plan because its precise features are yet to be determined by research and testing.

The Russians also seemed bothered by Rumsfeld's refusal to say exactly what level of nuclear weapons Bush wants to keep.

FORD

FROM PAGE A1

the ignition devices are defective, but has already settled hundreds of wrongful death, injury and other lawsuits in connection to allegations of Ford vehicles stalling.

"All government data — 18 years' worth — prove that our vehicles are as safe or safer than other vehicles," the company said Monday, adding that investigations by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration found no safety

defect.

Ballachey, however, said Ford concealed information from federal safety regulators, who were studying hundreds of complaints about Ford vehicles stalling, and an NHTSA official said the government would not have closed the case if Ford had given the agency key documents unveiled in the class-action case.

The suit challenged Ford's placement of the thick film ignition (TFI) module, which regulates electric current to the spark plugs. In 300 models sold between 1983 and 1995, the module was mounted on the distributor near the engine block, where

it was exposed to high temperatures.

Ballachey, the nation's only judge to order a vehicle recall, found last year that Ford was warned by an engineer that high temperatures would cause the device to fail and stall the engine. Ford's own documents show the company confirmed the problem in internal studies and could have moved the module to a cooler spot for an extra \$4 per vehicle.

The automaker had argued that said judges do not have the same power as does the NHTSA to order a vehicle recall.

Under the proposal described

Sunday, Ford said it would replace ignition devices on all Ford vehicles nationwide that have stalled and have no more than 100,000 miles — which is an estimated 500,000 to 650,000 vehicles in California and an estimated 5 million nationwide.

The agreement also says Ford will extend all warranties to 100,000 miles for affected vehicles and pay to replace the ignition if it stalls and needs replacement before the new 100,000-mile warranty is up.

Under the deal, the vehicles could be fixed or the cost of previous replacements could come as early as next year, Fazio said.

Fazio based the \$1 billion figure on court records in which Ford has said it would cost \$150 or more to replace each switch.

However, Ford issued a statement saying "the cost of \$750 million to \$1 billion currently being speculated about in the media are substantially overstated."

The judge scheduled the next meeting with attorneys for Aug. 20 and delayed jury selection to Aug. 27.

On the Net
Ford: <http://www.ford.com>
NHTSA: <http://www.nhtsa.gov>

illegal.

"The only thing they're doing is hiding who it is who wants to be appointed," Kretzer said.

Candidate Paul Johnson said the city should comply with not just the letter, but the spirit of the public meeting laws.

"As much of the city's business as possible should be conducted in public," Johnson said. "When in doubt, the city should err on the side of more public disclosure rather than less."

Meeting in groups of two and three is a bad idea, Johnson said.

"If it's not a violation of the law, it's a violation of the spirit of the law, and I'm not gonna do something like that," he said.

"You can't make effective decisions without having free and open discussions."

Candidate Troy Forbus said he wants to see more public discussion about all matters on the council.

"The process of executive sessions and other non-communicative meetings should

be eliminated," Forbus said. He said if an executive session is absolutely necessary then — except for legal meetings — a condensed transcript of the meeting should be released afterwards.

"That's one of the biggest reasons I'm running," Forbus said. "The city needs to release more details about what it's doing."

Candidate Emma Torres was the lone voice defending the current volunteer appointment system. She said she thinks the council is following the open meetings law in making the actual board and commission appointments during a public meeting. She said nominations are forwarded to the council from city staff or are prior council recommendations.

"The entire process, with the exception of the final discussion, is fairly open," Torres said.

T.M. Shultz can be reached at tshultz@yumasun.com or 539-6852.

3 drown in flash floods while hiking

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KINGMAN — Flash floods swept a 2-year-old boy and his parents to their deaths while they were hiking into the northern Arizona tribal village of Supai.

The names of the Dulce, N.M., residents were not immediately released, said the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The bodies of the victims were found Saturday afternoon near Cataract Canyon.

Supai is accessible only by helicopter or by the eight-mile hiking trail from the canyon rim 2,000 feet above.

DEPUTY

FROM PAGE A1

investigating the accident.

Arrangements for funeral services are pending at Johnson's Mortuary.

More than 40 officers from law enforcement agencies in Yuma County have been killed in the line of duty. In 1995, Yuma police Lt. Dan Elkins and Sgt. Michael Crowe were slain by a sheriff's deputy.

Several years ago, San Luis patrolman Joe Orduno was killed when his patrol car collided with a northbound car on Highway 95 near San Luis. And in 1996, a Yuma County sergeant was injured when the tires on his car separated during a chase. The sheriff's department won a lawsuit against the tire company.

Kerry Pohlan can be reached at kpholan@yumasun.com or 539-6872.

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COUNCIL

FROM PAGE A1

be discussed publicly," Shoop said. She said she could see the irony in people wanting to be on a public board and yet not wanting their name mentioned in public.

Nevertheless, Shoop said, "I would have no problem holding these meetings in public. I would just as soon reduce the need for executive session."

Shoop said communicating with the public is "extremely important right now. The public is more comfortable if elected officials tell them what's going on."

Brooks was careful to point out that the council doesn't actually vote on a candidate during closed session and isn't violating the law. Nevertheless, he said, the discussions on potential board and commission members could take place in open session.

"I would like to open it up,"

Brooks said. "I don't have a problem if it's all out in the open. I would like everybody to see what we do at City Hall."

As for the other five candidates running for the three open council seats and the mayor's seat, all but one said the city should open up its deliberations to the public as much as possible.

Mayoral candidate Larry Nelson said he thinks the majority of the city's volunteer appointments should be discussed in public, "unless it would cause harm or defamation to an individual. These should be the exception and not the rule."

Nelson said he thinks the common sense definition of personnel only applies to those receiving a paycheck from the city.

"It's what I refer to as openness and accountability," Nelson said. "If people see how the decisions are made, they'll have more faith in the people making the decisions or they'll have less faith and vote 'em out."

Nelson said he thinks part of the reason the present city council meets in groups of two and three is to work out any disagreements privately so the council can publicly present a united front.

"I don't think that's necessarily healthy," Nelson said. "We ought to have the ability to disagree with each other. That's how we learn. Once a decision is made, yes, then all of you go down the same track."

Write-in mayoral candidate Jack Kretzer said the council practice of meeting in groups of two and three to discuss city issues is "absolutely not" acceptable.

"That's subverting the intent of the state statute for the open meetings law," Kretzer said.

If he's elected, he said, "We'll meet in public meetings where the public will know what we're talking about."

As for discussing prospective appointments to volunteer boards in closed door sessions, Kretzer said he thinks that's