

Spears files for city council seat

North Mankato resident's concern is city spending

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NORTH MANKATO—

Even before the start of the filing period today for city council candidates, North Mankato was assured it would have competition on the Nov. 2 ballot.

South Avenue resident Kim Spears, a regular at council meetings who often questions city spending, said he will file for the council today. First-term council members Diane Norland and Kenny DeWitte previously announced they would seek re- election.

Because all North Mankato council seats are atlarge, rather than divided by wards, the top two vote-getters on Nov. 2 will win the two open seats.

And there's no primary election for the dozens of cities in the region using the August filing period that kicks off today. So no matter

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how many candidates file for the two seats, they'll all be on the general election ballot. Mankato and a handful of other cities in south-central Minnesota have primary elections and conducted their candidate filing period in May. Multiple candidates for any seat in those cities will be reduced to two finalists in the primary election a week from today.

Spears, a 55-year- old computer programer, has had a near perfect attendance record at council meetings since he first became concerned about rising property taxes and local government spending more than 18 months ago.

"Since I've been attending, I still don't really see any change as far as fiscal consideration of the times we're in," Spears said Monday night.

He predicts that state aid to cities will continue to decline, and he said the city needs to recognize that property owners can't be asked to make up the difference.

Spears hasn't begun campaigning yet but said that will change once he's signed the filing papers.

The filing period continues until 5 p.m. Aug. 17.

Along with the two fouryear council terms, the twoyear term for mayor is on this year's ballot. Mayor Gary Zellmer, who has held the office since 2004, is planning to seek another term.