



FRUIT HEIGHTS: AS AMERICAN AS BASEBALL, APPLE PIE, AND THE PINECONE PARTY?

Every Two Years, Fruit Heights Residents Are Divided into the Non-partisan Pinecone and Sagebrush Parties

In a unique election system, lasting for one night every two years, Fruit Heights residents divide themselves into the Sagebrush and Pinecone parties to decide who will run for mayor and city council seats. The night is known as Caucus Night.

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUCUS SYSTEM

Simply put, anyone wishing to run for office in Fruit Heights must be nominated at a caucus meeting. City council seats and the office of mayor come up for election on alternating odd numbered years. In an election year, a caucus meeting is held months before the general election in order to nominate candidates.

Those interested in running for office, or those just wanting to be involved in shaping the city and its future, must be in attendance at the caucus meeting. Any resident eligible to vote is invited, welcome, and encouraged to attend the caucus meeting.

The two parties, Pinecone and Sagebrush, both meet at City Hall. One party meets upstairs in the Council Chambers, and the other meets downstairs in the Banquet Hall. Residents attending may decide which meeting they would like to attend.

To start the evening, each party elects a chairperson whose responsibility it is to find persons interested in running for office. Residents nominate individuals for office. An interested candidate does not nominate themselves. A vote is taken by those in attendance in that room, and each party/room nominates three candidates to run for office. This process creates six total candidates who will be listed on the November general election ballot. Bylaws are followed by each party to ensure a fair process.

Following the caucus meeting, the nominated candidates have a filing deadline in which they need to officially declare their candidacy to the City, pay the required fee, and pick up a candidate packet.

The packet covers details candidates need to know, including important dates, timelines and locations permitted when distributing campaign materials.

Historically, many cities ran elections this way, but most have dropped the nominating conventions, leaving Fruit Heights as one of the few remaining cities in Utah using this system.

HISTORY OF THE CAUCUS



Pinecone Party



Sagebrush Party

Shortly after Fruit Heights was incorporated as a city in 1939, the town council decided municipal elections should be non-partisan in nature.

The council decided to hold community gatherings, known as caucus meetings, to nominate candidates for each vacant office. Candidates would be chosen based on their thoughts regarding community issues, not national politics or parties.

The council needed to name the two non-partisan parties. Notes suggest Brig Harvey, a sheepherder, suggested "**Sagebrush Party**" based on the amount of sagebrush on his open land.

Similarly, documents state Forest Barker, whose property was surrounded by many pine trees, suggested the name "**Pinecone Party**".