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### County supervisor had doubted cityhood would happen

By: BRIAN ECKHOUSE - Staff Writer  
Residents to decide fate of incorporation question Feb. 5

WILDOMAR -- County Supervisor Bob Buster, who has supported cityhood efforts here, acknowledged Wednesday that he once doubted incorporation would succeed.

Now, the question of turning Wildomar into a city is in the hands of voters Feb. 5 after the campaign overcame several obstacles.

In a town hall meeting at David A. Brown Middle School on Wednesday, Buster told more than 200 residents the challenges before cityhood proponents were once so significant that he "didn't want these people to invest a huge commitment on the effort."

The biggest hurdle was the revocation of vehicle-license fees by state leaders earlier this decade that once had been available for new communities to use as a start-up revenue base.

That money has once again been made available to communities that incorporate by

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2009, but other obstacles soon arose in Wildomar's cityhood effort, including how to fund one or two new fire stations that will be needed in this semi-rural 22-square-mile community. County leaders, who now govern Wildomar, solved that problem by agreeing to a cost-sharing plan.

With Buster's encouragement, the Board of Supervisors later agreed to turn over the savings the county would reap if Wildomar became its own municipality -- a decision critics, including resident Joe McCabe, have likened to welfare. County leaders have promised to subsidize the community for its first 10 years as a city.

In an interview before Wednesday's meeting, McCabe said Wildomar would become an "orphan child" if residents approve cityhood. McCabe is a member of the Wildomar Municipal Advisory Council, which acts as a liaison between residents and Buster.

State Assemblyman Kevin Jeffries, R-Lake Elsinore, is one of many area elected officials who supports incorporation.

"I believe in the process where you control your own destiny: where you're going to grow, how you're going to grow," he said at the meeting.

The ballot will ask voters multiple questions, not just if they support cityhood.

Fourteen residents have filed for a five-person city council that would be established if cityhood is approved. Also, voters will be asked whether they want their elected officials chosen in five to-be-determined districts within Wildomar or at large, said George Spiliotis, the executive director of the Local Agency Formation Commission.

In August, that commission decided a city of Wildomar would be financially feasible, which allowed the question of cityhood to come before voters.

If incorporation is approved, Wildomar would become a city July 1, 2008. For a full year from that date, the county would continue to provide community and other services per state law, Spiliotis said.

The proposed city, Buster predicted, would ultimately offer residents "equal or better services."

-- Contact staff writer Brian Eckhouse at (951) 676-4315, Ext. 2626, or [beckhouse@californian.com](mailto:beckhouse@californian.com).

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**Smarter Than They Think wrote on Nov 15, 2007 7:28 AM:**

" One more time Bob Buster and other Riverside County officials have tried to sandbag Wildomar residents! They descended on our community on the pretence of presenting status and information at a so-called Town Hall meeting, and promptly turned the affair into a poorly disguised political rally for cityhood. Buster trotted out a supporting cast of department heads, all carefully groomed to push the incorporation agenda with inflated assessments of cityhood viability. Don't believe it. Vote NO and Measure "C". "

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