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REFERENDUM 65 AMONG ELECTION'S CRITICAL DECISIONS

MISSOULA---

A brochure released by alumni and friends of the six units of the Montana University System emphasizes one of the many critical decisions facing Montana voters in the Nov. 5 general election.

The brochure--entitled "Six Reasons for Renewing the Six-Mill Levy"--refers to Referendum 65, a measure which seeks renewal of the six-mill tax levy for a 10-year period for maintenance, support and improvement of the University System's six higher education units.

The six education units to be affected by voter passage or rejection of Referendum 65 are the University of Montana, Missoula; Montana State University, Bozeman; Montana Tech, Butte; Eastern Montana College, Billings; Western Montana College, Dillon, and Northern Montana College, Havre.

According to material in the brochure, 25,200 students are expected to enroll in the six educational units by 1975, indicating the urgency for passage of the referendum. Now there are approximately 19,100 students enrolled in the six units, an increase of 7,000 in the past five years.

The six-mill levy has been used in Montana, at varying rates, since 1920. The levy was approved by voters in 1948 and 1958 for 10-year periods.

The tax measure is permissive, meaning the state legislature can levy from zero to six mills on property for the Montana University System. The brochure states that, "If, within the next 10 years, other tax revenues can be channeled to support higher education, the mill levy could be reduced or dropped completely."

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Brochure information also relates that 16.5 per cent of the University System budget is realized through the six-mill levy. And, while University System enrollment has doubled in the state in the past 10 years, the mill levy has remained the same.

Sources of other University System funds include general fund, 56.3 per cent; student fees, 15.9 per cent; federal funds, 8.8 per cent, and other sources, 2.5 per cent.

Charles Stauffer, Dillon, is statewide coordinator for Referendum 65.

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