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## Bay County Apportionment Commission draws district boundaries

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By **Shannon Murphy | The Bay City Times**

BAY COUNTY — New Bay County district lines are expected to be drawn Monday — and it could mean fewer county commissioners.

The Bay County Apportionment Commission meets at 9 a.m. Monday to choose one of five plans that will change the district boundaries to reflect shifts in population reported in the recently released 2010 Census.

### Check out the proposed maps here.

From 2000 to 2010, Bay County's population decreased 2.3 percent — from 110,271 to 107,771 — according to census figures.

The meeting takes place in Commission Chambers at the Bay County Building, 515 Center Ave. in downtown Bay City.

Earlier this week, members of the Apportionment Commission submitted re-districting plans. Three of those plans eliminate two districts, taking the total number from nine to seven.

If any of those is adopted, the Bay County Board of Commissioners also would be reduced from nine to seven members.

The two other plans simply redraw the boundaries of the existing nine districts.

Apportionment Commission member Richard Brzezinski, the county's treasurer, submitted both a seven-district and nine-district plan.

In his seven-district plan, what is now Districts 8 and 9 would be absorbed by Districts 3 and 7.

Brzezinski said even though he submitted a seven-district plan, he still thinks the county should stay with nine districts.

"I think Bay County's financial condition is strong, compared to other governmental units," he said in

response to some board members saying a district decrease is needed to save money. "I think Bay County has proven it does well with nine. It's not broken, so nothing needs to be fixed."

Republican Vaughn Begick, who represents District 3 and could end up running against another incumbent if Brzezinski's seven-district plan is chosen, said while that plan is not his first choice, he supports reducing commission districts.

"I'd definitely like to get to seven to save some money for the county," he said, adding that although only four votes would be needed for a majority, it still would work in Bay County.

"We've got a strong county executive government, who is elected, so that's a check and balance we have on the board," Begick said.

Other seven-district plans were submitted by Republican Party Chairman Aaron Baylis and Democratic Party Chairman Tony Pawelski. Those plans propose changes to districts in the southern and eastern parts of the county, including the cities of Bay City and Essexville, as well as Hampton, Portsmouth and Merritt townships.

Tom Ryder, D-7th District, also could find himself up against another incumbent after Monday's vote. He said, however, he's not concerned about redistricting.

"I have no control over it," he said. "However that group votes, to go with a seven or a nine district, that's where they go."

He said, though, that with incumbents potentially running against each other for seats, the county loses some of the institutionalized knowledge that the losing incumbent would bring back to the board.

The Apportionment Commission also includes Bay County Clerk Cynthia Luczak, who is chairwoman of the board and submitted a nine-district plan, and Prosecutor Kurt Asbury.

The board has until June 6 to approve a plan with a majority vote.

If the plan is not appealed by a registered voter, it would go into effect for the 2012 elections. Any commissioner whose district changes would have to seek election in their new district.

Bay County commissioners run for two-year terms, and all will be up for re-election in 2012.

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