

bituaries

Local, national and international

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Rep. Moellenberg, longtime county official

By Mike Patty

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

Colorado legislator, farmer, rancher, and longtime Yuma County Commissioner Roland Dean "Bud" Moellenberg died of an apparent heart attack Saturday at his home in Kirk. He was 59.

Services will be at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in Liberty School, on U.S. 36 about 3 miles east of Joe's.

Rep. Moellenberg had represented the plains counties of Yuma, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Elbert, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln and Powers in the House since 1991. He had a history of heart trouble, having had one heart attack in 1984 and another last June.

Rep. Moellenberg's death comes during a week in which one of the state's most influential Republican lawmakers is recovering from brain surgery. Rep. Tony Grampas, R-Evergreen, returned home Saturday after removal of a tumor.

Sen. Don Ament, R-Iliff, a colleague and close friend of Rep. Moellenberg's, said his death took him by surprise.

"It was a real shock," Ament said. "I just talked to Bud last



Moellenberg

week during a joint transportation committee meeting and I thought he was getting along quite well."

Ament said, however, that Rep. Moellenberg had undergone heart bypass surgery and was considering a heart transplant.

"I talked to his wife this morning and she said they had been concerned enough to talk to a transplant surgeon on Thursday, so things were worse than we were aware of," Ament said. "She said he was just sitting in his chair at home when he took a couple of quick breaths and passed away."

Rep. Moellenberg was born July 5, 1936, in Idalia. He graduated from Kirk High School in 1954 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in animal production.

He was a farmer and rancher who entered political life in 1966 when then-Gov. John Love appointed him to fill a vacancy on the Yuma County Board of Commissioners. He went on to win elec-

tion to the position, serving as county commissioner from 1966 to 1973 and from 1981 to 1990.

In the legislature, Rep. Moellenberg served on the Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources, and Education committees. He sponsored bills on private-property rights and grain handling and on an amendment to the Sunshine Law for county commissioners.

"His death is a personal loss for me," Ament said. "We were friends and did a lot of things together."

A 1991 Associated Press story about legislative freshmen described Rep. Moellenberg as "the kind of guy who'll fix your fence when it's down, and won't tell you about it."

Rep. Moellenberg also served as president of the Yuma County Farm Bureau, chairman of the Yuma County Republican Party and board member of United Church of Christ.

Survivors include his wife, Cherlyn; and four children, Dalva, Sonya, Gayle and Jon.

Contributions: R.D. "Bud" Moellenberg Memorial Scholarship Fund, Kirk State Bank, Kirk 80824.