

Few upsets foreseen in Penna. races

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appearing Saturday. Ertel, who already has been using radio ads, is scheduled to start his television ads tomorrow.

Thornburgh figures to concentrate on his own record — balanced budgets, no tax increases, no scandals, his handling of the Three Mile Island crisis — while Ertel plans to focus on the state's high unemployment and link it to Thornburgh, both directly (through criticism of his economic development efforts) and indirectly (through Thornburgh's support for Reaganomics).

The Philadelphia vote could be crucial in the race. Thornburgh did extremely well here in 1978, losing by only 35,000 votes, a minuscule amount for a Republican in this heavily Democratic territory. Ertel talks of carrying the city by 175,000 votes, and, unlike 1978 Democratic standard-bearer Pete Flaherty of Pittsburgh, he has been courting the party regulars in his effort to produce that margin.

U.S. Sen. John Heinz, also up for reelection, looks even more secure, blessed as he is with an untarnished image and a hefty campaign treasury. His opponent, Allegheny County Commissioner Cyril H. Wecht, may be the most stirring stump speaker in Pennsylvania politics. But he is little known outside the Pittsburgh area, and he has problems back home, where his past political and legal battles have left very real scars.

Wecht, like Ertel, will try to tie his opponent to Reaganomics, but Heinz, unlike Thornburgh, has been careful to distance himself from the President this year. Heinz is a prohibitive favorite.

Some of the congressional races appear much more competitive. The most competitive, and certainly the most expensive, may be the donnybrook in Bucks County's Eighth District between James K. Coyne, the Republican incumbent, and Democrat Peter H. Kostmayer, who used to be the incumbent. In 1980, Coyne benefited from the Reagan landslide and squeaked to a 4,000-vote victory.

Every national business group, labor group and political action committee that contributes to congressional campaigns lists has targeted this one as "marginal," meaning very, very close.

"Sometimes," said a Coyne aide, "I feel like we have a bull's-eye painted on the outside of our headquarters."

Most observers consider the Coyne-Kostmayer race the region's clearest referendum on Reaganomics, because the candidates are equally well-known and Coyne, although he has opposed Reagan on several key issues, has been a staunch proponent of the supply-side economic approach. Both men are campaigning furiously, and Kostmayer already has campaign spots on television. They depict him as a "tough cookie" while Coyne's cookie crumbles. And it is Kostmayer who is bringing Mondale to town tomorrow.

The other big suburban match pits Democrat Robert W. Edgar, a four-term incumbent, against Springfield Township Commissioner and former Temple University football star Steve Joachim in the Seventh District, most of which is in Delaware County. Since Republicans outnumber Democrats in the district nearly 3-1, Edgar always looks vulnerable. This year is no exception.

In the wake of reapportionment, Philadelphia is down to three congressional districts, and the race in each one has its own distinct character.

The First District features an impressive political newcomer, Michael Marino, a 25-year-old Republican who may have established a record for most press conferences held by a candidate during a summer.

If this were 1980, some politicians say, Marino might have a decent chance of upsetting incumbent Democrat Thomas M. Foglietta, who coasted through the summer months after a tough primary battle with U.S. Rep. Joseph F. Smith. But the year is 1982, and this is a Democratic district where anti-Reagan sentiment is strong. The district includes South Philadelphia, University City, part of North Philadelphia and the river wards.

In the Second District, the long-erupting feud between Democratic incumbent William H. Gray 3d and state Sen. Milton Street, two of the city's most prominent black politicians, has finally resulted in a head-to-head battle at the ballot box. The confrontation promises two months of political infighting and head-knocking within the black community.

To win, Street, who is running as an independent and may have the Republican line as well, must overcome a huge party-registration disad-

vantage. A long and nasty teachers' strike might have helped him; the efforts he had been planning to try to keep the schools open would have helped him politically. But that is academic now.

The district includes most of West Philadelphia and parts of North Philadelphia, Center City and the northwest.

In the Third District, Republican Charles F. Dougherty would appear relatively secure. But for the first time in three races, he has a Democratic opponent with no huge personal liabilities of his own. That man is state Rep. Robert A. Borski. So Dougherty is taking nothing for granted.

If anti-Reagan sentiment is strong enough, he could be in trouble, despite his own disagreements with the President. He is kicking off his fall efforts by bringing Vice President Bush to town for a fund-raiser Sept. 12. Bush will be back later in the month to campaign for Coyne and Joachim.

All 203 state representatives' seats and half the 50 state senators' seats are to be filled, because the Republican majorities in the House and the Senate are only 102-98 and 26-24, either or both could change hands.

The single most fascinating race — in terms of determining both who runs Harrisburg and who runs Philadelphia — is in the Fourth Senatorial District, which includes part of Northwest and Northeast Philadelphia. The candidates there are state Sen. Philip Price Jr., a Republican; state Rep. M. Joseph Rocks, a former Republican running as a Democrat; and former Commonwealth Secretary C. DeLores Tucker, a current Democrat running on the Consumer ticket.

There may also be a race for city council at large to fill the seat vacated by Al Pearlman when he resigned to run, unsuccessfully it turned out, for state Senate last spring. The election will happen only if Mayor Green and City Democratic Chairman David Glancey can decide on a candidate and then get City Council President Joseph E. Coleman to agree to put the race on the ballot.

This varied menu does not exactly thrill local politicians. But they have to clean their plates before they can get around to the serious business of a mayor's race. One election at a time.