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Cow theme is heads above rest in poll; will it roll?

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Madison — The cow, cheese and corn won the online vote. But a state council may ask today that a trapper and American Indian instead be stamped on Wisconsin's commemorative quarter.

State Treasurer Jack Voight, who tried to poll as many of the 22 other members of the Commemorative Coin Council as he could Monday, said he expected a majority vote for the explorer theme — even though it finished second in

THE WISCONSIN QUARTER TWO BITS, ONE CHOICE

The public cast more than 340,000 online votes for its favorite designs for the new Wisconsin quarter. Here are the final results.

AGRICULTURE	VOTES	EXPLORER	VOTES	SCENIC	VOTES
39.6%	137,745	32.5%	112,907	27.9%	97,010

TOTAL VOTES

Source: State Treasurer Jack Voight

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online voting that ended Sunday.

"It appears right now, early explorer is going to win," Voight said Monday. "But votes could change."

Voight said his personal choice is the trapper and American Indian design, and that he didn't try to lobby anyone Monday.

One thing was clear: the scenic design, which depicts a deer walking by a lake, was a loser. Out of 347,662 online votes cast, it got only 97,010 votes, compared with 137,745 for agriculture and 112,907 for the explorer theme.

Other council members contacted Monday mentioned sup-

Please see **QUARTER, 8A**

QUARTER, From 1A

port for both leading designs.

Justin J. Perrault said he voted for the exploration coin in an e-mail vote Monday, but said his mind could change before the final selection. While the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse senior appreciates agriculture's role in the state, the cow, cheese and corn "design definitely does not do justice for our state, from an artistic

standpoint."

He considered the online poll, but won't let it dictate his choice.

"The only problem I had with the poll is that it's not statistically accurate," Perrault said. "People could have voted 30 times. I know people who did that."

Reuben Harpole, program officer with the Helen Bader Foundation, said he has not decided but that he didn't really like any of the three coins. "Wisconsin's urban area is not represented," he said.

"From a numismatic standpoint, which design looks best, clearly the choice is between the cow and the explorer," said council member Leon A. Sarayan of Greenfield, who added that he is "leaning" toward the agricultural design. Others said they would wake

up today and make a final decision.

"I haven't decided yet," said Milwaukee-area lawyer Frank DeGuire. "The kids are looking at it."

"I'm still making up my mind," said Connie Loden of Hurley.

Loden acknowledged that the online voting public had its favorite, but said she will vote for the design that incorporates the historical "criteria" developed by officials of the U.S. Mint.

"It's not an easy decision to make," sighed John "Jack" Kundert, a former secretary of the state Department of Financial Institutions, the agency overseeing the process.

But Kundert, from the Monroe area, which argues that it's the state's cheese capital, likes the cow, cheese and corn mo-

tif.

"I'll wait until tomorrow," said Larry Barish, who edits the official Blue Book guide to state government.

"If I had to vote right now, I'd probably stick with agriculture because the majority of the people have voted for it," he said. "It is distinctively Wisconsin."

Don't bet against that trapper and American Indian Roger Hillebrand, Belleville police chief, will vote for the early exploration coin.

"I like the design. I think it tells a story," Dean Amhaus, who ran Wisconsin's 150th birthday party in 1998, thinks the explorer design represents all Wisconsinites.

"Agriculture represents a portion of who we are and what are and what our history is — but part of this history is manufacturing, lumber, fishing. This is nothing to diminish (agriculture's) role, but it doesn't speak of us as whole, as a total state."

Two other council members said it was important to them that the American Indian coin be included.

Wisconsin has the largest number of American Indians "east of the Mississippi River," noted Michael Stevens, a state Historical Society designee.

He said Wisconsin should be the first state to put an American Indian on its commemorative quarter. "I think that's important," he said.

Gloria Cobb, a member of the Lac du Flambeau band of the Chipewewa tribe, agreed that Wisconsin's more than a farming state.

"In 1634, when your Ho

Chunk and Potawatomi men in what we now know as Green Bay or close to it, when they woke up one summer morning they came upon a light skinned visitor named Jean Nicolet, bearing gifts," she said.

"To me this quarter is a reflection of a history," she said. "The early exploration coin best fits in my own belief."

Lee Ellis of River Falls hadn't decided Monday but was leaning toward the explorer. "It's just a better looking design, in my opinion," he said.

Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle will be watching the council's vote with interest.

Doyle let the council, named by former Gov. Scott McCallum, do its work without saying which design he favors.

Asked if the governor would accept a council decision to back the explorer theme over the agriculture design endorsed online, aide Dan Leistikow called the question "premature."

"We'll have to see what the council does tomorrow," Leistikow added.

But Doyle can send the U.S. Mint whatever final design he personally favors, the aide noted.