Statehouse sidelights . . .

State board supports vocational education

Post-Register Sept 12 1979

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Post-Register political editor

The State Board of Education in one of its rare appearances in Idaho Falls last weekend left little doubt it is now sold on vocational education in Idaho.

Meeting in the spanking new $2.6 million mechanical technology building which was dedicated, the board members had an excellent opportunity to view the facilities and watch the faculty and students in action.

It left most board members impressed in what they saw and it indicates the state vocational education program will get hearty support from the board.

The board members noted that 1 percent tax limit will restrict funds but the vocational education schools offer advantages the traditional liberal arts colleges don't match. These Vo Tech students receive one or two years of classroom work and more than 90 percent are promptly placed on jobs. They are then absorbed in the work force and pay taxes. The liberal arts students must attend four years or more of school and there is no assurance they get immediate employment.

As speaker after speaker said at the dedication and the luncheon which followed, there is room for both the vocational education and liberal arts programs.

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The state education board was not always that friendly.

Little more than a year ago, this board rejected a recommended EIVTS state appropriation to match federal funds for the new technology building. The Permanent Building Council, with Vincent Mullin, Idaho Falls, in the vanguard, hurdled the education board's recommendation and approved the EIVTS funding. It was a recommendation that was then followed by Idaho Legislature approval.

Last week's dedication of the urgently-needed facility is the result.

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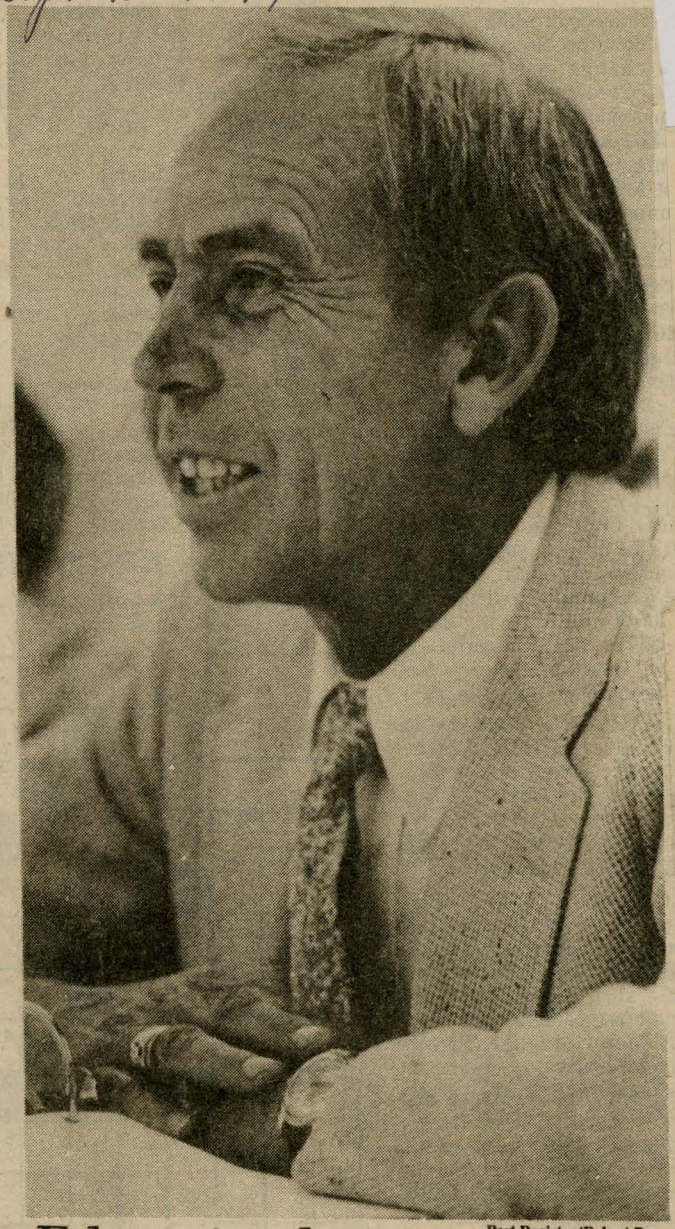

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Education boss

J. CLINT HOOPES, Tetonia rancher, is the new president of the Idaho Board of Education which held its monthly meeting in Idaho Falls last weekend and indicates strong support for the fast-growing Eastern Idaho Vocational Technical School.

Then in the 1979 Legislature, Idaho State University cast a coveted eye at the school and suggested it would like to administer the school under its own program.

This met violent opposition by the Idaho Falls and East Idaho community but legislation was passed to study the proposal.

This was done and the report of the Eastern Idaho Vocational Technical School Study Committee was submitted to the board.

It was the best news possible for the school.

The report stated bluntly the EIVTS should retain its identity as a separate institution within the state's post-secondary vocational education system.

The chairman, Camden Meyer, retired Twin Falls school superintendent, commented "the community of Idaho Falls identifies very well with EIVTS and the institution identifies with Idaho Falls."

He also noted there was an advantage under ISU consolidation that students attending the Idaho Falls school would receive the prestige of university credits but added there would be no savings in money.

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Janet Hay, Nampa, state board member who gave the key talk at a luncheon, highly lauded the foresight of Idaho Falls leaders in inaugurating the school in the early 70s. She noted it now fills an urgent need.

The school has grown to 4,000 students now from 300 in 1974, including 700 fulltime day students.

She lamented that her own Canyon County had not done so and now it's too late in view of the 1 percent limitations.