

The election eye . . .

Reagan arouses GOP Idaho victory spirit

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If Idaho Republicans don't mark up sweeping general election victories, it won't be Ronald Reagan's fault.

The debonair Republican presidential contender fed the enthusiastic 5,000 spectators at the Bonneville High School Gym Tuesday afternoon what they wanted to hear, and they loved every minute.

A festive and victorious air prevailed in the cavernous gym and even Reagan became motivated; so much so, that he departed from his scheduled 15-minute talk and hammered on for 40 minutes.

He was nearly an hour late in speaking but that didn't deter him from taking full advantage of a highly partisan and cheering crowd.

Only a demonstrating handful of Equal Rights Amendment women lent a sour note but the women were peaceful in their determined effort to let Reagan know they were not especially pleased with the Republican platform which for the first time in years ignored ERA.

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Everybody who was anybody in the Idaho Republican Party was on hand to taste what they felt is the fruit of victory. They all keyed in for Congressman Steve Symms and against Democratic Sen. Frank Church, but they also sounded calls for Republican victories on the presidential, congressional, legislative and local levels.

It was a Republican show of strength that bodes ill Nov. 4 for the Democrats, who already are fighting uphill battles.

All the Republican leaders were on hand, led by Sen. James A. McClure, and U.S. Reps. Symms and George Hansen.

On the state level were the feisty Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt, a self-acknowledged 1982 gubernatorial contender; Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa, Attorney General David Leroy, also looking at the governor's chair; and State School Supt. Jerry Evans. They are known in party circles affectionately as the "fearsome foursome" and give Democrat Gov. John V. Evans no end of political trouble.

Then, of course, there was the state chairman, Dennis M. Olsen, Idaho Falls attorney, who kept tight reins on a well run show, and the two top legislative leaders, Senate President Pro Tem Reed Budge, Soda Springs, and House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, Twin Falls.

Added to this imposing array were many East Idaho legislators and former legislators, such as former House Speaker Allan F. Larsen, Blackfoot, the 1978 gubernatorial nominee.

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The state leaders, particularly Batt, cautioned against overlooking the important legislative races. There are no statewide contests this year, but he is aware the Democrats are a threat to wrest control of the

State Senate and closing the gap in the House. Batt pointed out the importance of Republican majorities in the reapportionment proposal based on the 1980 census to be considered in this session, likely a special session following the regular one.

Much credit for managing a well run event goes to Olsen and Ann Rydalch, the general chairman, but there were scores of others who helped. Only the rainy weather and the nearly hour delay by Reagan's arrival marred the event but they were minor compared to the accrued benefits.

The Democrats, of course, have no big gun to counter Reagan. They know full well appearance of President Jimmy Carter would not help, but rather would hinder, if the polls are any criterion.

The Reagan appearance, of course, was primarily to boost Symms, because Reagan's victory in Idaho, seems well assured. Also heavy favorites are the two congressional nominees, Rep. George V. Hansen, in the 2nd District, and State Sen. Larry Craig, Midvale, in the 1st District, although Craig's advantage is far more tenuous. But anyone at the giant rally would have been impressed by the smell of Republican victories.