

Resigning IPEA director unhappy about support

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BOISE — Steve Swadley, who has submitted his resignation effective Nov. 30 as executive director of the Idaho Public Employees Association, lists the lack of support as one of his leading disappointments.

The organization's board of directors announced Friday the appointment of Gregory A. Marchbanks, a senior IPEA employee relatives representation three years, as interim manager for the organization, effective Dec. 1. The board also announced appointment of a committee to study the staff organizational structure prior to filling the position permanently.

Swadley said he is now looking for a new job, has a number of possibilities, but nothing firmed as yet.

He listed keep disappointments as the inability of the vast majority of members to contribute time and effort to the accomplishments of the association goals; inability of those who do contribute to sustain it over a period of time sufficient to get the job done; inability of members to hang with the association through bad times as well as good times; and inability of the IPEA to provide a funding structure sufficient to fill out a full complement of IPEA staff so that a complete organizing job of state employees could be really successful.

Swadley, 32, earned \$37,000 a year with the IPEA.

He said one of his frustrations has been a small staff and the criticism it has taken from members and other public employees in the wake of state government cutbacks the last few years.



Steve Swadley

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A poll, he said, showed 80 percent are satisfied with their jobs, 48 percent want to be career state employees, 63 percent feel they are paid less than workers in the private sector, 69 percent feel the state should be compelled to accept collective bargaining, 77 percent think they need some lobby organization while 66 percent think the IPEA is ineffective, particularly in lobbying and negotiating pay increases.

"I am too realistic to expect it to be otherwise," he said. "I feel we have made substantial progress as an organization. I am very optimistic that those gains will continue in the future if the organization can meet its challenge."

He noted there are some 12,500 state employees in the state but membership was never more than 4,500 and it had dwindled now to 2,700. There are about 1,400 retired employees, however, who yearly support the IPEA.

Although the vast majority don't pay their dues, he still has served as spokesman for all of them. Swadley said he found the last session especially frustrating in seeking to get substantial pay increases and fringe benefits for the public employees.

"It will be a trying time ahead for public employees," he said. "I have every faith that they will preserve and come forward with the energy and enthusiasm to make it go."

"I have enjoyed working with the IPEA. I have made friends and valuable acquaintances. I appreciate the support of my backers and acknowledge the right of my detractors to be critical."

In the past biennium, the IPEA endorsed candidates that were 65 successful in election; and killed legislation which would have removed seniority and longevity rights, recovered salary protection from the grievance process, which would have made collective bargaining illegal, and that would have abolished Monday holidays.