

the political scene.

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Richard Casad, General Service regional administrator, confirmed to The Post-Register Thursday the agency will further study the proposed \$250,000 Idaho Falls Federal Building remodeling project.

Casad's statement parallels that of a week ago of Rep. George V. Hansen, R-Idaho, who said the GSA has backed off and will study the project further. GSA officials had earlier indicated determination to go ahead, despite the objections.

Casad said the GSA will make a review and will then announce a decision, likely within two weeks. He said the new GSA administrator, R. G. Freeman, was in Seattle early this week to visit the regional office, and advised him to review the Idaho Falls project.

He said Freeman will decide soon whether to go ahead or delay the project.

Casad said replacement cost of the federal building at Park Ave. and C St., is figured at \$1.6 million.

Hansen, Sen. James A. McClure and Idaho Falls Mayor Thomas Campbell have objected to the cost as economically unjustifiable, as a proposed elevator and a second exit would only serve four offices on the second floor, which generate little traffic. Two of the offices belong to McClure and Hansen.

percent and taxes— here are few answers

By BEN J. PLASTINO

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Those who solidly backed the 1 Percent Tax Initiative still find it hard to believe big corporations and business will reap most of the benefits, not the small property owner.

They must remember the budgets and taxes on the state and local level will be about the same or even more than in the last year. Most cities, counties, and yes, school districts, are charging increased service fees to make up deficits.

The 1 Percent primarily benefits those with big holdings who now will pay less taxes. As the revenue will be about the same or even more, it means the small property owner will make up the deficit.

For example, it has been pointed out one large Idaho Falls department store, with a valuation of about \$1 million paid \$24,000 taxes last year. Under the 1 Percent, it will now pay only \$10,000. That \$14,000 shortfall — and in other similar cases — will be made up by the small property owners, either in taxes or increased service fees, make no mistake about that.

A recent letter to the editor asked some legitimate questions on property taxes and the way governments are spending the tax money. This letter was written by Allen R. Eberle, 1844 Malibu Drive, who particularly took exception to a recent editorial "Tax Reduction or Tax Shift," objecting to the way he says state and local governments are not exactly thrifty.

He asks why Idaho Falls School District 91 held two elections only two weeks apart which on the face does appear financially unwise.

Dr. James Parsley, Idaho Falls school superintendent, explained state laws require this curious situation, the \$740,000 override election May 1 and the trustee election May 15.

Under state law, teachers must know by May 15 if their contracts will be renewed. The school district faced a \$1 million shortfall and if the bond election had not passed, 120 teachers

would not have been rehired. The election was held as early as possible, May 1, to settle this; to have waited until May 15 would have been too late. It would have invited countless lawsuits, which could have cost the district far more than the amount of the bond override, said Parsley.

The trustee elections in the state are set by law for the third Tuesday in May, which fell on May 15.

In other words, the school district was forced to call two elections, even though only two weeks apart because of state laws.

Also asked was why the city and county owned separate voter registration lists.

They don't. The city and county last year joined for a single voter registration list and the new system will be tried for the first time for the city election in November.

In fact, the city and county have joined for purchasing, law enforcement, fire protection and a few other public services to cut costs.

Regarding Eberle's criticisms of city employees driving their own city-owned vehicles, Mayor Thomas Campbell said this is not the case.

Campbell explained that since assuming the mayorship nearly three years ago, he decreed no city-owned vehicles could be kept overnight at any of the drivers' homes, except for four tool trucks. These four drivers are on 24-hour call, for the most part to answer emergency services.

The mayor explained the city does own 80 vehicles as Eberle observed but he pointed out this is not excessive because the city operates its own electrical system which few cities do, in addition to garbage collection, water, sewer, parks and recreation, and others.

The city electrical system is self-supporting, while virtually all of the property tax revenue goes for bare fire and police protection, the mayor noted.

Answering another Eberle criticism, the state has 13,900 public employees for an estimated 878,000 population, which compares favorably with most other states, noted the State Division of Administration.

California has some 135,000 state employees for its teeming 16 million, which is a ratio of about 8 per thousand, not the five the Eberle claimed. The Idaho state employment ratio is 15.8 per thousand but it must maintain about half as much highways with one-sixteenth of the California population.

Eberle then challenged this writer to tell how many taxpayer-financed social workers there are in Bonneville County and the State of Idaho, asking "are you afraid of the real facts?"

No, we always strive for facts to seek to correct wrongdoings. Well, here goes.

The Department of Health and Welfare employs 36 social workers in the nine East Idaho counties of Region 7, of which 25 are in Bonneville County. Eleven others are support staff members, including supervisors.

There are 10 social workers for 402 youth rehabilitation cases, five for 269 child protection cases, and 21 for 816 other cases, such as adoption, adult, health, family and children services, unmarried parents, sheltered workshop, supportive counseling, information and referral, child foster care and others, or a total of 1,487.

The regional social worker numbers are among the lowest of the seven in the state, said DHW officials.

The state DHW reports 365 social workers, including supervisors, to serve about 10,000 cases.

The number compares with some neighboring states of 302 in Montana, 440 in Utah, 115 in Nevada and 1,368 in Washington.

This writer has frequently criticized government at all levels, but the fact remains Idaho people pay among the lowest property tax in the nation, the latest figures showing it rated 36th of the 50 states. It was about the lowest except for Southern states.