Evans vows warm support for INEL

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Gov. John V. Evans in a statement Friday vowed his warm support for the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

The governor released the statement in response to a recent attack aimed against him by J.F. Chadband, Idaho Falls, Republican state representative candidate, and some other area Republicans that he has hurt the INEL.

Gov. John V. Evans

"I doubt any previous governor had done more to make the case for INEL projects with presidents, cabinet secretaries and Congress than myself," said the governor in his statement. "It would be my intention to continue the close relationship the state now enjoys with the Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office, when appropriate to advocate the maintenance or expansion of projects at INEL by direct contact with federal decision-makers.

"I informed Secretary James Edwards (Department of Energy) of my support for the New Production Reactor at INEL in a personal meeting early this year, and reiterated that support in a letter to Assistant Secretary Roser this July," Evans said.

"Both the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Underground Injection Control policy discourage mainline injection of wastes directly into any underground source of drinking water. State law and regulations allow such mainline injection only if the waste water being injected itself meets safe drinking water standards.

"The primary alternatives to mainline injection are (a) surface disposal (evaporation and incineration), (b) injection through a shallow or deep well, above or below underground sources of drinking water, and (c) closed recycling.

"INEL's own study of this current practice of this issue concluded any of these operations are preferable to current practice, and they are moving toward implementing those recommendations," Evans said.

"Therefore it does not appear that there are any major points of disagreement between the state and federal govenments on this issue.

"As for public preception of the hazards of this practice, I believe more people understand there is no anticipated public health danger. But, at the same time, they support federal and state policy to prevent any degradation of important underground water resource," Evans said.

"The board's plan identifies coal and nuclear power as viable options in Idaho's future, after we have exploited energy conservation and renewable resources. This approach is similar to the priorities set in the Nothwest Power Planning Act," he said.