

# Cecil D. Andrus: He's happy

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Cecil D. Andrus, former Idaho governor and U.S. secretary of interior, genial as ever, is indeed happy these days.

He's a private figure, formerly a longtime lumberjack and insurance agent, but is now boss of his own Cecil D. Andrus, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in natural resources. He views the future with bright expectation.

Andrus is keeping a low public profile but in any mention on future political possibilities he is a key topic of conversation, particularly for governor, and just maybe, for U.S. senator.

Andrus, just back from a 10-day vacation trip to Canada, is relaxed and happy to be back in his beloved Idaho, a state which he fondly calls the "pristine state."

Right now, his political activities are limited to serving as treasurer and finance chairman to his longtime friend, Sen. Mike P. Mitchell, who is seeking the lieutenant governorship.

Mentioning Mitchell, Andrus waxes laudatory, indeed, praising him as an outstanding choice with maturity, having met payrolls in his business for more than 35 years and serving in the state Senate 14 years.

"He has chosen to give fulltime attention to a part-time position," said Andrus in a Post-Register telephone interview from his Boise office.

Andrus strongly feels the people of Idaho would be wise to elect Mitchell to the No. 2 state post to help Gov. John V. Evans.

About Evans, Andrus predicted he would win the election handily.

"Records show that unless an incumbent is a crook, evil or incompetent, people of Idaho re-elect him," said Andrus. "Governor Evans is none of these. There are economic problems, yes, but this is not the fault of state government but of the federal government under a Republican administration."

Still touching on politics, Andrus pointed out the Democrats have one of the strongest slates on the state ticket, with two formidable congressional challengers in Richard H. Stallings and Larry LaRocco, Evans, Mitchell, Auditor Joe Williams and Treasurer Marjorie Ruth Moon.

Andrus is happy in the private sector, after serving a four-year term as interior secretary, six years as governor, and eight years in the Idaho Senate.

Just turned 51 this month, Andrus shied away from any future political commitment but he didn't rule it out, either.

He noted that Evans has said this will be the last time he will seek re-election.

Andrus responded "it is too early for me to make any political plans now. I've had my personal enjoyment in every position I've ever had but I must say being Idaho governor was one of most rewarding. Of course, I'm looking at this (governorship) but I've have made no decision. I'm not ruling out anything."

Andrus said he likes his own business but he is not keen on frequent travel, such as going to New York twice a month, and other distant points in the nation. He is involved in natural gas and coal contracts, dealing mostly in the area of natural resources, also looking at environmental and other concerns.

Referring to his four-year stint as interior secretary, he said "It was an honor to have had an opportunity to being a member of the president's cabinet."

Andrus was rated as perhaps the most popular member of President Carter's cabinet but he always kept his love for Idaho.

"I enjoy the lifestyle in Idaho," he said. "I like the people in Idaho. This is where I want to live."

Voting records show Andrus was perhaps the most popular governor in Idaho. In the 1974 election in a strong Republican state, Democrat Andrus drew 72 percent majority against a formidable opponent, Republican Lt. Gov. Jack Murphy, winning every county except Lemhi.

Most political strategists and this writer strongly believe Andrus will seek the governorship in 1986.

All three of his daughters are now married, the last one just recently. He and his wife, Carol, are now without any of their children at home for the first time.