

# Evans' candidacy all but formalized

By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register columnist

Gov. John V. Evan has virtually confirmed his entrance into the 1986 senatorial race by sending letters for campaign contributions this week to Idaho Democrats.

Of course, it has been no great secret that Evans has been eyeing the position for some time. This latest action virtually confirms his candidacy, except for the formal announcement expected this fall.



Gov. John V. Evans

The governor feels he has the edge against his probable Republican opponent, Sen. Steve Symms, in a number of key issues, making his chances for victory plausible.

One of the key issues is farming. On Tuesday he released results of a survey which showed more than 35 percent of Idaho farmers are in financial troubles. In addition, more than half expect to be out of farming in five years or less, according to the survey.

Evans noted that Symms in 1980 defeated Democrat Frank Church in one of the closet Senate races in

Idaho history, aided by a Ronald Reagan landslide.

Evans deplores the Symms voting record. He cites Symms' record as:

- Votes against Idaho farmers and struggling small business.
- Votes against senior citizens and work to gut social security, meals on wheels and emergency medical services.

- Votes against education.

- Votes for programs that have created the largest budget deficits in history of the country.

Symms' vote against a bill to help farmers will also become a prime issue.

The other Republican members of the Idaho congressional delegation voted likewise - Sen. James A. McClure and 1st District Congressman Larry Craig, in following a Reagan program that is not intended to materially help farmers. Only Democratic 2nd District Congressman Richard H. Stallings voted for the farm aid bill.

The governor said he would support a conservation-reserve program that would take farm land out of production in exchange for dropping other government farm subsidy programs. This would take 30 million acres out of use and cut production by up to 9 percent.

"I am truly convinced that the people of Idaho are no longer willing

to put up with representation that ignores the needs of the people," said Evans. "Steve Symms not only votes against Idaho's interests but he has failed to provide the leadership Idaho deserves to have in the United States Senate. We have only four voices out of 535 to speak for us in Congress. It is essential that those representatives and senators provide leadership that is respected."

Evans noted he has served as governor of Idaho for the past eight and one half years, adding "I have always put the needs of the people first.

He said that during this time he and Church, along with Cecil D. Andrus, former governor and U.S. secretary of interior, have "worked together to provide the kind of leadership Idahoans deserve to have. I believe we have accomplished much for our state — for farmers, for seniors, for young people and for our Idaho businesses."

He then says about his candidacy, "As you know I have been considering for several months the possibility of running for the U.S. Senate against Symms. Although I have not yet formally announced I want to let you know early of my plans."

"This will not be an easy race," he said. "Symms is raising unprecedented amounts of money from outside Idaho. Estimates are that he plans to spend up to \$4 million.

That's \$10 for every vote.

"I know that I won't have to match him dollar for dollar to win, but I will have to raise a large amount here in Idaho. I have to count on people like you to contribute as generously as you can — to provide the support that can win this race. If I get your support — volunteer work, putting up yard-signs and the funds necessary — Symms will be defeated in 1986.

The governor asks for contributions of whatever Idahoans can afford.

Evans, of course, is hoping that the strong conservative tide of the last dozen years in Idaho will have abated and even ebbed in 1986.

He is banking on the decline of the Reagan popularity as result of his failure to reduce the deficit, failure to materially help farmers and cutbacks for the needy under abbreviated social service programs.

Evans is also hopeful that a strong Democratic tickets at the top will help. This include Andrus to run as governor and Stallings to seek reelection, plus a number of formidable candidates for lesser state offices and on the legislative and county level.

It looks like the best chances in years for the Democrats to win, but it also looks like tough campaigns ahead.