

## The political pulse

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*Legislative limelights*

# Solons to face rough reorganization task

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Idaho legislators face perhaps the toughest reorganization session in its history when they gather at Boise the coming weekend.

Not only must they pick new leaders for the 47th Legislature but they must decide whether there should be a special session immediately following to cope with the increasing state financial crisis.

Another factor is the unusually large number of newcomers coming to the Legislature this year — seven in the Senate and a crop of 20 freshmen in the House. That's a fourth of the 105 legislators who represent the state from the 35 districts.

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**Adding to the strife are wide open fights for most of the leadership positions because regardless of who wins it will leave ruffled feelings among the losers.**

There is also certain to be bitterness on committee chairmanships, committee assignments and even seat selections. These are generally, but not always, based on seniority. For example, two years ago, Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, refused to give chairmanships to two state representatives, Ray E. Infanger, R-Salmon, and Carroll Dean, R-Notus, who had seniority because they failed to support him in his election for speaker. This was perhaps the most flagrant case but there have been others.

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Reports from legislators indicate bitter fights looming for three of the four top legislative leaderships — Senate president pro tem, House speaker and House minority leader.

Only the Senate minority leadership appears devoid of contest with Senate Assistant Minority Leader Kermit V. Kiebert, D-Hope, to be elevated to minority leader to replace Sen. Ron J. Twilegar, Boise, who did not seek re-election.

The most explosive is for Senate president pro tem where serious efforts are considered to oust the unbudging Sen. Reed Budge, R-Soda Springs, and replace him with Majority Leader James Risch.

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The situation is less bitter in the House where four are seeking the wide open contest for speakership to replace Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, who gave up the job when he unsuccessfully sought the gubernatorial nomination.

Majority Leader Walter E. Little, R-New Plymouth; and Reps. Tom W. Stivers, R-Twin Falls; Steve Antone, R-Rupert; and Robert Geddes, R-Preston, have announced for top House post.

Little has tried twice and failed to advance to speakership and a third defeat wouldn't exactly call for celebration in his camp. He is looked on as a favorite but Antone looks formidable.