

Legislative limelights

East Idaho solons do well in panel seats

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Eastern Idaho legislators, besides increasing their leadership strength five times in the two-day reorganization session last weekend, also did well in seating in important committees.

They are in especially strong position in the Senate where they hold chairmanships in three of the nine standing committees but in the House their chairmanships declined by one, or to two of the 13 standing committees.

The committee chairmen in the Senate are Sens. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, Local Government and Taxation; Vearl Crystal, R-Rigby, Agricultural Affairs; and a new one, Sen. William L. Floyd, R-Idaho Falls, Commerce and Labor.

The only committee chairmen in the House from eastern Idaho are Reps. Kurt L. Johnson, R-Idaho Falls, Education, and John O. Sessions, R-Driggs, Transportation.

Rep. Elaine Kearnes, R-Idaho Falls, chairman of the House Health and Welfare Committee, did not seek re-election, and she was replaced as the committee leader by Rep. Chris Cooper, R-Boise.

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Five of the 14 leadership posts are now held by eastern Idahoans — Sen. Mark G. Ricks, R-Rexburg, Senate majority leader, the No. 2 spot; and Sen. J. Marsden Williams, Senate Majority caucus chairman in the Senate; and in the House, Reps. Melvin Hammond, R-Rexburg, minority chairman; Dwight Horsch, D-Aberdeen, minority caucus chairman; and Rep. Linden B. Bateman, R-Idaho Falls, majority caucus chairman. In the last two bienniums only Hammond was in leadership from eastern Idaho.

In the shuffle, Williams needed to surrender his Senate Natural Resource Committee chairmanship and Ricks yielded his Commerce and Labor Committee chairmanship to take the more important leadership slots.

Williams was replaced by Sen. Laird Noh, R-Kimberly; and Ricks by Floyd.

The other Senate committee chairmanship changes saw Sen. Roger Fairchild, R-Fruitland, succeed Sen. Edith Klein, R-Boise, who was defeated in the primary, for Judiciary Committee; Sen. Reed Budge, R-Soda Springs, who was ousted as Senate president pro tem, relegated to chairman of the Transportation Committee, replacing Sen. Dean Abrahams, R-Nampa, who did not seek re-election; and Sen. Wylter Yarbrough, R-Grand View, who declined the majority caucus post, to chairman of the powerful Senate State Affairs Committee.

Another bit of strength saw Watkins designated chairman of the Senate Finance Committee to replace Yarbrough.

Inasmuch as Senate chairman, David Little, R-

means Watkins will have a greater voice in approval of appropriations.

The Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriation Committee, made up of 10 members each, usually join for most of the session and are known as the Joint Finance-Appropriation Committee.

Promoting Floyd to a chairmanship is an obvious reward by the new Senate President Pro Tem, Sen. James Risch, R-Boise, for Floyd serving as a catalyst to remove Budge. It is all the more remarkable because Floyd wasn't even a member of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. Floyd gave up the transportation committee membership.

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The House delegation also did well in retaining the two chairmanships Reps. John O. Sessions, R-Driggs, Transportation, and Kurt L. Johnson, R-Idaho Falls, Education, and placing members on important committees.

Rep. Raymond Parks, R-Blackfoot, was named to the powerful House Appropriation Committee. This gives eastern Idaho six members on the committee, or nearly a third of the 20 members.

A new legislator, J.F. Chadband, R-Idaho Falls, won a spot on the major House Revenue and Taxation Committee; and also was given assignments to the Business and Printing committees. The other newcomer, Rep. Joan Wood, R-Rigby, was assigned to the major Education Committee, and also to Resources, and Health and Welfare committees. It was what she had preferred.

Thus, the two freshmen got major committee assignments, a favor that was not handed out to most of the 19 other new House legislators.

Gary L. Paxman, R-Idaho Falls, was named vice chairmen of both the Judiciary and Local Government committees to give him added influence.

Bateman is on four committees, State Affairs, Resources, Local Government and Ways and Means.

Other incumbents retained their committee assignments for the most part and other committee chairmen in both chambers remained the same.

In other major changes, Rep. Larry W. Harris, R-Boise, became chairman of the Judiciary Committee to replace Rep. Tom W. Stiver, R-Twin Falls, who was elevated to House speaker; and Rep. Walter E. Little, R-New Plymouth, who was the House majority leader and lost in his bid for the speakership, was named to lead State Affairs, succeeding Rep. George Danielson, R-Cambridge, who chose not to return.

East Idahoans thus have representation in the leadership in both parties in both the Senate and House except the Democrats. The only eastern Idaho Democratic senator, Israel Merrill, Blackfoot failed in his wish to get minority caucus chairman.