*The election eye*

# Incumbents get favorite nod

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Primarily because of their incumbency, the top Democrats must be favored in the contested positions on the state level.

Past election records show that if elected officials are doing even a fairly satisfactory job, Idaho voters will return them to office. For example, State Auditor Joe Williams has served the longest of any elected state official on record with six terms, or 24 years, and Treasurer Marjorie Ruth Moon is not far behind with five terms, or 20 years.

Only two governors have been defeated for re-election in the past 25 years and that was because of performances, or lack of it. They were Republican Govs. Robert E. Smylie in 1966 and Don Samuelson in 1970.

Two Republican incumbents, Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa and State School Supt. Jerry Evans, are unopposed.

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**Sharing the election spotlight will be the 2nd District Congressional race between Republican incumbent, George V. Hansen, and his formidable Democrat challenger, Richard Stallings.**

As Hansen has between 42 and 45 percent of the voters in opposition before he even starts, this is certain to be close. On the other hand he has about 45 percent solidly in his corner, leaving a swing vote of between 10 and 13 percent.He only needs to evenly split this for election to a seventh term.

It appeared for a time that Stallings' aggressiveness and what appeared to be a decided Democrat trend due to the sluggish economy could carry him to victory. It still could but unless there should be a last minute drastic shift, Hansen likely will gain another win by something like 3 percent and it could be closer.

In the 1st District, Republican Congresman Larry Craig is seen as a decisive victor over Democratic challenger, Larry LaRocco.

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**Democrat Gov. John V. Evans has come across to most voters as a sincere capable administrator. His Republican opponent, Lt. Gov. Phil E. Batt, although extremely knowledgable, has portrayed a terse unsmiling image that is foreign to his usual amiable and humorous vein. As a result, it has not swung the critical independent voters his way. Evans must be favored and the race may not be a close as most believe.**

For lieutenant governor, Republican Attorney General David H. Leroy holds a decided edge over scrappy Democrat State Sen. Mike P. Mitchell, Lewiston, by virtue of his high profile and taking advantage of the publicity generated out of his office. Mitchell has waged a heroic campaign and closed the wide gap but time has run out.

A third entry is an independent, James A.Miller, Coeur d'Alene retired engineer, who likely will draw few votes.

Auditor Williams, who has consistently led the ticket in most past elections, should win handily, although Republican Nolan G. Young has done well in narrowing the margin. Despite this, the veteran Williams whose name is almost a household word holds a heavy advantage.

Treasurer Moon, another well known name, likely will roll up a margin of something like 2-1 in her race with Republican Doyle Miner, Boise, and former St. Anthony druggist. Miner has done some campaigning but faces overwhelming odds in his quest to upset a well entrenched state official.

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**Without doubt, the closest state race will be for attorney general which was left wide open when Leroy decided to seek the lieutenant governorship.**

Republican Jim Jones, Jerome attorney, has had more exposure by running for U.S. Congress twice in the futile efforts to oust Hansen and is spending about twice as much.

Democrat J. D. Williams, Preston attorney, with an excellent background as county prosecutor, an extensive private law practice and former deputy attorney general, has the excellent Williams political name and appears to come over much better professionally in his public appearances. He is a cousin of Auditor Williams.

**Balancing these factors against each leaves them at about a dead heat. With this in mind, there is another axiom that everything being about equal, the Republican will win because Idaho is a Republican state. Thus, Jones may step into the victor's circle but a Williams triumph would not be a startling surprise, either.**

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