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The political pulse

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The election eye

Republican vote tide surges in east Idaho

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The Republican tide which lapped over eastern Idaho in Tuesday's general election and almost toppled Gov. John V. Evans flooded out most Democrats seeking positions on the legislative and county level.

It was almost as powerful as the one of two years ago when President Ronald Reagan undoubtedly helped many Republican candidates sweep into office. This time, even though Vice President George Bush came to the Gem State in the closing days Gov. John V. Evans and Reagan made a nationwide television special appeal for Republican Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt's election to the governor's chair, it wasn't quite enough to break the Democrats' 12-year grip at the Statehouse.



The pre-election predictions by this writer for state races were 100 percent accurate. They were almost on the nose for legislative and county contests, but as usual, some races were either closer or wider than anticipated. No one is perfect, you know.

On the state level, the gubernatorial race between Evans and Batt and also between Democrat Auditor Joe Williams and Republican Nolan G. Young were closer than anticipated.

However, the victories and approximate margins of Republican U.S. Rep. George Hansen over Democrat Richard Stallings; Attorney General David H. Leroy, Republican nominee for lieutenant governor, over Democrat Mike P. Mitchell; and Democrat Treasurer Marjorie Ruth Moon over Republican Doyle Minor had been accurately forecast. The decisive victories of Miss Moon and the triumphs of Leroy and Jones also were predicted.

The tenet of how goes Bonneville County and the Upper Snake River Valley so goes the state did not hold true this time. There were enough Democratic votes in other sections of the state

to keep Evans in office by some 3,400 votes, even though he lost Bonneville by *some 2,000* and eastern Idaho by 9,000.

Results on the county and legislative level also turned out about as had been predicted, although here again the margins were smaller or wider than expected in some cases.

The Democrats, despite some highly qualified candidates, failed to gain a seat, although there were comparatively close legislative finishes in five races.

About the only miss was the prediction that former State Rep. Democrat C. Wendell Miller might reverse the results of two years ago and oust Republican State Rep. Martin Trillhaase in District 29. Trillhaase won this close race with about a 400-vote margin.

The other races forecast as close turned out that way with the Republican incumbents victorious. Republican State Sens. Dane Watkins and William L. Floyd, won over Democrats John X. Combo and W. A. Storer, respectively. State Sen. J. Marsden Williams, R-Idaho Falls, had an easier effort turning back Democrat Larry Reynolds, Moore, for the third time.

The victory of Republican J. F. "Chad" Chadband over Democrat Anne Voilleque for District 30 state representative, perhaps the most heated legislative race in eastern Idaho was more decisive than expected. A last minute liberal feminist attack against Mrs. Voilleque likely was a decisive factor.

Republican Assessor John J. Wasden won comfortably, as expected, against Democrat Aaron L. Robinson and independent write-in Sherman L. Norris.

In what was seen accurately as a tight race, Republican Kimball Mason nosed out Democrat William Combo by about 1,000 votes of some 23,000 cast.

Most had been inclined to give Combo the edge.

Expected was the victory of Republican County Commissioner A. Wylie Snarr over Democrat Jerry Scheid.

Also it was no surprise that Rigby Magistrate Grant L. Young won the 7th District judgeship over Blackfoot attorney Reid K. Larsen.

The election buttressed the traditional belief that incumbents are hard to dislodge, even when their performances are considered something less than spectacular.