

Symms aide says people back fair belt tightening

By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

Samuel J. Routson, administrative assistant to Sen. Steve Symms, said here Friday he finds most people accept governmental belt tightening if it is fair to everyone.

According to a survey, some of the people say, "sure let's tight our belts but not at the expense of our program. Majority of the people want the belt tightening for all programs, such as across the board."

Routson said the Reagan policies started out well in cutting back government programs.

"However," said Routson, "Congress would exempt some programs because of pressure groups. Now we have punched holes in many of the programs so that some got cutbacks while others did not."

Routson also said farmers are concerned over the way the Payment in Kind program is being administered.

"Many of the more productive farmers are hurt while those who were less productive get the most benefit, as I understand it," said Routson.

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The farmers are mostly concerned about the sluggish prices on virtually all crops, said Routson.

He said they don't have the answer but that perhaps some agricultural import and export programs can be tailored to meet their needs.

"There are many farmers who are irked that some nations, such as Japan, protect their agriculture industries at the expense of America," said Routson.

Farmers express hope that this nation, for example, can arrive at some longterm agreement with China for sale of wheat.

Routson, a native of Weiser, has been with Symms for two years.

He said without doubt Idahoans, as well as most Americans, are concerned about the economy.

"They have been uneasy about the economy the last couple of years but are now more hopeful as it shows signs of improvement," said Routson. "They are still fearful that unless the federal deficit is reduced, it will cause interest rates to rise and retard recovery."

Routson said it the Soviets have targeted Central America, Africa and the Middle East to spread its influence. The spotlight is now focused on Central America, but it also will switch to Zaire — not Chad — where there is a struggle for strategic minerals.

The timetable has been delayed in the Middle East, meaning mostly Iran, but the Soviets intend to spread their communism creed there, Routson added.

"They are supplying arms to both Iran and Iraq, hoping to bleed both of these nations in soldiers killed and money spent on armaments, and then a communism government country can take over," said Routson.