

# Political warriors begin to warm up for campaign

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It's still more than a year away for the 1984 general elections but already the potential candidates are beginning to stir.

The appearances of three members of the all-Republican Idaho congressional delegation and most of the high Idaho Republican officials and leaders bring attention to the fact the political campaign is not far away.

Even this early in the campaign, however, it appears the field for the top positions already is about settled. It also indicates few if any primary contests for the top offices.

There are no elections for state offices but voters will be asked to elect all of the legislators, sheriff, prosecuting attorney, coroner and to fill vacancies that have occurred the last two years. All other county officers hold over for two years, plus judges and magistrates.

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Presidential elections always attract a record turnout and 1984 is expected to be no different. President Reagan is expected to again carry the Republican banner while there are at least six contenders for the Democratic nomination, and there could be more.

On the congressional level, the terms of Sen. James A. McClure and Reps. George Hansen and Larry Craig expire. They have left no doubt they will seek re-election. Sen. Steve Symms' does not face voters until 1986.

McClure and Hansen acted very

## Politics

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much as political contenders while here Thursday and Friday while Symms and other state Republican officers appeared to be testing the water for two more years down the road.

Lt. Gov. David H. Leroy has indicated strongly he will seek the gubernatorial seat while Attorney General Jim Jones, State School Supt. Jerry Evans and Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa are expected to seek re-election in 1986.

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McClure, on basis of present conjectures, faces little more than token opposition in Democrat Pete Busch, Lewiston realtor, retired Marine pilot and a newcomer on the political scene. If there are any other Democrats eying the post they are keeping their own counsel.

The congressional congress contests are expected to be a replay of 1982 with Hansen to be opposed by Democrat Richard Stallings, Ricks College professor, and Craig to face Larry LaRocco, now a state employee.

If this is the case, there will be no primary contests in May for

these top positions.

Based on past voting records, McClure must be viewed as a top-heavy favorite for re-election while Craig is generally seen as holding a decisive edge. He won in 1982, 86,277 to 74,388, a 11,880 margin.

However, the race between the Hansen, who is battling court indictments for alleged failure to file financial disclosures and accused of heavy debts, and Stallings could be tight. Hansen won 83,873 to 76,608, or a 7,265 advantage, in 1982.

McClure scored heavy in his appearances here Thursday when he attended the Eastern Idaho Republican Barbecue and Rally. He dramatically announced that the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory has been given top priority for the multibillion New Production Reactor. This is a reversal from the first announcement last spring when Idaho was rated below Savannah River in South Carolina and Hanford in Washington State. In political terms, it undoubtedly means McClure's strength is further beefed up from his already strong support.