Mitchell pledges fulltime duties

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State Sen. Mike P. Mitchell, D-Lewiston, the Democratic lieutenant governor's nominee, said Tuesday that if elected he would devote all his time to the office.

"I would do this even if I were in Lewiston part of the time," said Mitchell in a Post-Register interview.

He said his Republican opponent, Attorney General David H. Leroy, plans to establish a private law practice and could give little time to the job.

Mitchell said he believes in the governor and lieutenant governor running as a team to avoid the present friction in which Republican lieutenant governors have been hampering the Democratic governors for political reasons the past few year.

He noted Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt has constantly taken adverse political stands against Evans the past four years, knowing that he would be running for governor this year. He observed Leroy would do likewise against Evans if he were elected.

Mitchell said he found Evans strong throughout Idaho and predicted he would be elected decisively this fall.

Mitchell, 57, pointed to his 30 years of business as compared with Leroy, only 34, who has served only two years as a private attorney, and then as prosecuting attorney and attorney general since leaving school.

"His statement that he is well acquainted with business while practicing as an attorney is hardly acceptable," said Mitchell. "I have had to meet weekly payrolls in my business; Leroy's salaries have been paid primarily from taxes."

Mitchell explained he is now a business consultant representing national sales firm in a wide variety of enterprises.

Mitchell said he campaigned in east Idaho intensively the past week, meeting party leaders and supporters, attending the Fishermen's Breakfast at St.Anthony Friday, guest at an open house at the home of Cliff Brady Sunday afternoon and attending the Idaho Falls Memorial Services at Rosehill Cemetery Monday morning.

He said he also met with Phil Warner, EG&G executive and past Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce president to discuss how he could help the INEL and east Idaho business community.

Mitchell noted he had visited the INEL on several occasions and has been impressed by what he has seen. He reiterated his support for nuclear power and vowed he would speak on this in his statewide campaign.

"I have been visiting a lots of business people throughout Idaho side," said Mitchell. "This includes many shop owners who are having problems in view of the slump in the economy."

Mitchell declared that Leroy's main effort for lieutenant governor is to use it as a stepping stone for governor in four years.

Mitchell observed that Evans has said this is the last time he will run for governor.

About himself, Mitchell acknowledged he also has not ruled out the possibility he may also seek the governorship in four years but that is not his primary political aim.

"When I was urged to run for lieutenant governor," said Mitchell, "it was pointed out it might be an eight-year commitment, not just four years. I am prepared for this, whether it be for another lieutenant governor term or trying for governor if I do a successful job as lieutenant governor."

Mitchell again stressed the fact the lieutenant governor's duties are primarily those of business issues, not legal issues.

Mitchell also said he would capitalize on a staff centering on research, using college students as intern and serving without pay.

"These college students can be invaluable in developing research of importance to the state," said Mitchell.

Mitchell pointed out that with his north Idaho background he would supplement the governor with south Idaho experience, in "Capitol for a Day" tours throught Idaho. This, he noted, is bringing state government to the people who can't makee trip to Boise.

Mitchell asserted his 14 years in the Idaho Legislature and presently serving in Senate leadership, plus a member of many state committees, has given hin a well rounded background in state goverment.