

During 1985

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Conservative legislators in spotlight

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The 1985 political year was highlighted by what most considered a conservative legislative session and the early start by candidates for U.S. Senate and House seats.

Democratic Gov. John V. Evans gave the Republican-controlled Legislature a "B" average, one mark better than the "C" of the preceding year.

The governor was particularly disappointed the legislators enacted the right-to-work law, now tied up in courts, and the repeal of the Little Davis-Bacon Act, which provides for pre-established wage levels on all public works projects.

In the overall, a coalition of Democrats and moderate Republicans did enact some noteworthy legislation.

The 48th Legislature of this year was not outstanding, comparatively. But, despite its dismal record on funding, particularly education, it enacted some noteworthy legislation. The majority of the legislators contended the revenue was not available and they refused to enact a tax increase.

Among the major measures enacted were a package of six water rights bills, creation of a Department of Commerce, the Indoor Clear Air Act, which prohibits indoor smoking in public places, and required reporting of child abuse.

It also gave a \$1,000-a-year increase in compensation for legislators as recommended by the Idaho Legislative Compensation Commission, allowed cities to hold runoff elections if no candidate for mayor receives a majority of the vote, and provided for state money for vote recount in close statewide races.

The lawmakers also required a permit for hazardous waste sites, increased bonding for reclamation projects, created a \$2.5 million Children Trust Fund to help control child abuse, increased judicial salaries so that Idaho is not last in the nation in that category, and appropriated \$1.5 million to the Department of Corrections to bring greater security to the Idaho Penitentiary.

Among the biggest disappointments were appropriating only \$304 million to public education and \$88 million for higher education. These were each \$2 million lower than the rock-bottom amount the governor recommended and several millions below what education groups sought.

The legislators also froze state public employees' salaries in the face of the governor's conservative recommendation for a 3 percent hike.

Approved was a \$587 a million budget, which was \$2.5 million more than anticipated revenues. It also was substantially below the \$600 million recommended by Evans, who had sought to pick up the added income by corporate tax collections on a quarterly basis for one time only. This would have raised \$40 million.

The Legislature considered 1,038 measures and passed 323, slightly below the 334 passed in 1984.

The governor, many veteran legislators, members of the news media, lobbyists and political observers believe some east Idaho legislators were among the leading lawmakers.

In this select list, because of their accomplishments or the influential leadership positions they hold, are: Rep. John Sessions, R-Driggs, chairman of the House Transportation Committee; Rep. Linden Bateman,

R-Idaho Falls, House majority caucus chairman; Senate Majority Leader Mark Ricks, R-Rexburg; Assistant Majority Leader Vearl Crystal, R-Rigby, and Sen. Dane Watkins, chairman of the Senate Local Government and Taxation Committee, R-Idaho Falls.

Also considered highly effective were two Idaho Falls freshmen, Sen. Mike Crapo and Rep. Reed Hansen. Also top level was Sen. Dwight Horsch, D-Aberdeen, who switched to the Senate after several years in the House where he held a leadership spot.

The 1986 2nd District Congressional race got off to an early start with four already announced as candidates for the Republican nomination. They include Watkins, Rep. Chad Chadbond and Melvin Richardson, both of Idaho Falls. Two others, who have not officially announced, are considered as probable contenders: Dan Adamson, Jerome attorney, and Sen. Ann Rydalch, Idaho Falls. Mrs. Rydalch as yet has mounted no active movement for a campaign organization or contributions and likely is not a serious contender.

Then there is, of course, George Hansen, former seven-term congressman who was defeated by a narrow margin last year, who says there is a 50-50 chance he will enter.

The incumbent, Democrat Richard Stallings, has left little doubt he will seek re-election.

Also noteworthy was the refusal of Congress and courts of Hansen's challenge to Stallings victory by 170 votes.

The two probable U.S. senatorial aspirants, Republican Steve Symms

and Democrat Governor Evans, already have launched campaign contribution campaigns although they have not announced their candidacy. Symms even started a television campaign commercial on Thanksgiving Day, showing television clips of President Reagan's visit here in his behalf Oct. 15.

Also figuring in the early campaign activities were two gubernatorial contenders, Republican Lt. Gov. David Leroy who has announced, and Democrat Cecil Andrus, former governor and U.S. secretary of interior, who is expected to announce early in the year.

The Idaho Falls municipal election showed city voters apparently are satisfied with the way the city's ship of state is being handled. They re-elected Mayor Tom Campbell and City Councilmen Melvin Erickson, Ralph Wood and Paul Hovey without opposition.

The city voters also approved a \$1.65 million indoor swimming pool with a 72 percent majority and chose the former school property at Boulevard and Seventh Street as the site over two west side locations.

Bonneville County voters also overwhelmingly rejected a proposal to build a county hospital.

Most school district patrons voted for override levies and bonds for school construction projects.

Ammon voters rejected a proposal for a police force but a majority of the Ammon councilmen voted to go ahead with one anyway. As a result, they are now subject to a recall election and the police proposal, for all practical reasons, is on hold until the present contract with the Bonneville County sheriff's department terminates in January.