

Idaho politicians *Undated* predict surprises

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Democrat Gov. John V. Evans and three members of Idaho's Republican congressional delegation see a rollicking election campaign this year that could bring surprises.

The four were in Idaho Falls this week for a banquet honoring Con Mahoney, Idaho Falls contractor, as Idaho's Small Business Person of the Year.

Evans expressed confidence the Democrats will increase their standing in the Legislature this year, regardless of what reapportionment plan is finally adopted. At present, Republicans control the Senate 21-14 and the House 51-19.

"I think we have a good chance of getting control of the Senate and closing the gap in the House," said the governor.

Evans predicted many Idaho voters will turn against Republicans who voted against what he believes was adequate funding for education.

He pointed out it took a coalition of Democrats and moderate Republicans, mostly from the Boise area, to pass a one-cent sales tax increase that enabled more funding of \$226 million for public schools and other education programs. That was below the minimum \$233 million he recommended.

The governor said he will call for a special session if a satisfactory reapportionment proposal can be hammered out by the Legislature.

"I will not call a special session just for the purpose of delaying the May 22 primary election," he said.

Sen. James A. McClure, who's unopposed in the primary, said "I will stress a campaign discussing current issues" for the November general election.

Pete Busch, Lewiston, and Louis Hathaway, Grangeville, are seeking the Democrat Senate nomination.

"You know," McClure said with a smile, "that kind of worries me when so many want the job."

McClure expects such issues as reducing budget deficits, balancing the budget, military spending and foreign policy will be main issues in the campaign.

Also of interest to Idahoans will be

the wilderness issue which he acknowledged has sparked considerable controversy.

McClure expects his bill for about 526,000 acres of additional wilderness in Idaho to pass.

He said he's received considerable opposition from environmental groups but added that Idaho has more wilderness designation than any state other than Alaska.

"In fact," said McClure, "Idaho has 37 percent of its entire area in wilderness. I believe a majority of Idahoans favor my bill."

U.S. Sen. Steve Symms, who does not face election this year, said he's a member of the Senate Republican Campaign Committee designed to help elect Republican senators.

He expects to help McClure but also will be assigned to other states where his conservative image may help candidates.

Both McClure and Symms expressed confidence that President Reagan will be re-elected but that it could be a tough campaign. They also predicted Republicans will retain control of the Senate. They said Reagan will win easily in Idaho.

How some of the large states, including Texas, vote could have a bearing on the presidential election, Symms said.

Evans and Symms, who may oppose one another for the Senate in 1986, exchanged pleasantries at a reception preceding the banquet.

U.S. Rep. George Hansen exuded confidence in his re-election venture, despite conviction on four felony counts of failure to file proper financial statements.

Hansen said he feels a Reagan and Republican tide in the fall election will help him be elected to an eighth term.

Claiming that federal agencies have picked on him, he said his present troubles have won him new friends.

Hansen also expressed confidence he will not get a prison term, adding "all records shows that will not be done."

McClure and Symms expressed sympathy for Hansen's plight. "Mr. Hansen is no doubt obviously embarrassed over his court troubles," said McClure.