

The Post-Register

The political pulse

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Wednesday, August 12, 1981

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The election eye . . .

Election cannonading primed to begin soon

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The dog days of August are now here, but the summer lull will soon come to an end when potential candidates begin their preliminary quest for support.

Already there has been some activities, although it has been of comparatively low key compared to what will happen a year hence. The candidates are looking toward the May primary election, and after that, the November general election in 1982.

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The Idaho Legislature special session furnished some political activity in July but aside from the legislators and prospective candidates and their supporters it hardly caused a ripple among the voters. As it turned out, the gubernatorial veto requires the lawmakers to do the legislative reapportionment task all over again, although congressional redistricting was settled.

Perhaps the reapportionment summer session helped draw the campaign battle lines, and also sharpened the partisan differences for the 1982 Idaho Legislature next winter. The reapportionment scrap in the coming session will serve to aggravate political tempers even more.

As a result, legislative and other political leaders agree in almost one voice the coming Legislature will be about as unproductive as the one this year, which takes some doing.

Electioneering has been at low ebb the past summer, but that will soon come to an end. Lt. Gov. Philip E. Batt started the ball early by formally announcing last spring for the governor's race. House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, disclosed he will jump into the same race Sept. 8. Gov. John V. Evans has kept in the news spotlight with his almost continual and interesting Capitol for a Day Tours which have drawn unusually large crowds. Attorney General David H. Leroy has made frequent trips outside Boise to keep a high profile for a possible gubernatorial or lieutenant governor try. The latest politician, Sen. Mike P. Mitchell, D-Lewiston, was in Idaho Falls to survey his chances for a possible lieutenant governor attempt.

Perhaps the political highlight of this month will be the annual Region 7 Republican Barbecue Aug. 20 at Tautphaus Park which annually draws large crowds. Some 800 attended last year, mostly because of interest over the U.S. senatorial race, and about that many are anticipated this year. A headliner, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block, will be the speaker, and virtually all of the top party officials are expected to be on hand.

On a more local level, there will be some interest engendered in city elections with most candidates expected to announced next month for the Nov. 3 balloting. Mayors will be elected in most cities, including Idaho Falls and the larger ones.