

Evans stands firm on council appointments

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BOISE — Gov. John Evans said Tuesday he would stand by his two appointments to the Northwest electric Power and Conservation Committee, rejecting the Legislature's efforts to have a major voice.

The governor said his appointments of Robert Saxon, his previous chief administrative assistant; and Chris Carlson, former press secretary and regional administrator to former Gov. Cecil D. Andrus and later U.S. secretary of interior, followed the law.

Evans said in a telephone interview from his office the governors from the three other Pacific Northwest states represented on the council—Washington, Oregon and Montana — are doing the same.

A bill requiring Idaho's delegates to the new council to be from both political parties was rejected by the governor. It passed the Senate 23-12 on a strict party-line vote and now goes to the House for certain approval there as the Republicans hold a top heavy 56-14 edge.

Evans reiterated the regional power legislation in-

tended to have delegates responsible to the governors, not the legislators.

"The governors have the flexibility within the law to make these appointments," said Evans. "If the matter is challenged and delayed then it would place Idaho as second class state."

By the last statement he meant if there is a hassle between the governor and legislative leadership the appointment controversy could end up in court, leaving the federal government and not the state to make the appointments responsible to the federal government.

The law requires the appointments be made by June 30, or it reverts to federal jurisdiction.

The bill faces certain veto by the governor who likely will be upheld by the Senate Democrats.

In other matters, the governor said he heartily backed the bill sponsored by Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, to increase homestead exemption from 10 percent and not more than \$20,000 to 15 percent and no more than \$30,000, and that it become automatic.

The governor said this is identical to the bill he proposed but which House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, "threw in the garbage can," meaning it

was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, a traditional burial ground for bills.

Evans said Olmstead bill is a continuance of the present program he advocated last year but which requires applications to the county assessors by the home owners.

Evans also said he is heartened by the upturn in the economy, insisting it will reach near his revenue projection figure of \$438 million. This is well above the \$422,500,000 set by the Legislative Revenue Projection Committee, but which the governor said is in error and will result in unnecessary elimination of essential programs and personnel.

"I look at Idaho and see bright signs for progress and growth of this state," said Evans. "The Legislature is pessimistic and that's the difference."

Evans said it would appear that instead of a \$3 million deficit the revenue projection committee has estimated for the current fiscal year, there may be a \$10-\$12 million surplus.

"If this is the case it will prove the cuts the Legislature are making are unwarranted for this year and even more so for the next fiscal year."