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Legislative limelights

Question of special session hangs heavy

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Both Gov. John V. Evans and the Idaho Legislative leadership understandably want to avoid a special session in December, but by doing so they miss chances to enact before the end of the year vital legislation that could close many tax loopholes.

The governor is urging a short special session, pointing out many of the alternatives he has suggested would not be possible after this year without mandatory legislation.

The reports following the meeting Monday between the governor and legislative leadership indicate that while Evans still hopes to call for a session, the Republican leadership appears to be cool.

Majority Leader James Risch, R-Boise, is quoted as placing chances for a special session at only 25 percent.

Risch, by reason of his ability, the high respect of his fellow legislators, and his keen insight into legislative affairs likely will be the key voice in determining whether there will be a special session in December.

House Minority Leader Melvin Hammond, D-Rexburg, agrees hopes for such a special session "are pretty slim."

This is not a political issue, but it is in the interest of both the Democratic governor and the Republican-controlled Legislature to solve a deepening state financial crisis.

Fortunately, 1983 is a nonelection year and records show it is in such off years the Legislature turns in its best performances because it is not under political pressure.

Reports from the legislative leadership and



State Sen.
James Risch

the governor indicated their meeting was conducted in a spirit of cooperation since they recognize they need to work together to solve financial problems. With the slumping economy, Idaho faces at least a \$30 million shortfall in the current 1983 fiscal year ending next June 30. It could be even worse for the following year unless the economy takes a drastic upturn.

The governor had previously ordered a 10.5 percent holdback, trimming the budget from an approved \$465 million to about \$419 million.

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In a Post-Register telephone interview, the governor said he proposes a tentative budget of \$479 million. This, however, is \$61 million more than is anticipated in revenue under current sources.

He has suggested as a major step raising state sales tax from 3 to 4 percent, which would raise about \$19 million more.

Other alternatives include delaying and amending the job credit bill to generate \$5.4 million; stopping the carryback in the income tax for corporations and individuals to garner another \$5 million; speeding up quarterly collections for corporate tax to glean \$9 million; delaying for a year the accelerated cost recovery system to bring in \$11 million; initiating a quarterly payment system similar to the IRS to raise \$9 million; and delaying Individual Retirement Act provisions to save \$7 million.

The Republican leadership expressed that it is especially unenthusiastic about the proposal for speeding up quarterly collection of corporate taxes, less, in fact, than over other Evans' suggestions.

Although the governor and Republican leadership said there was a spirit of cooperation at the meeting, the fact the Republican brass reject most of the suggestions does not bode well. Both are caught in the same vise and they will need to come up with solutions, like it or not. If the Republicans have other alternatives besides deep cuts that could cripple state government, they had better advance them.