

# Driggs man is veteran attache

BY BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

BOISE — Reed Christensen, a Driggs farmer in the spring, summer and fall, switches to become the influential sergeant-at-arm for the Idaho Senate during the winter months.

He must be excellent because he has served in that capacity each winter for 15 years and is the dean of the temporary Senate attaches.

He first came to the Senate as mail clerk in 1965, then after two years of this, was named as sergeant-at-arms, a job he has held every winter when the Idaho legislators came to Boise to grind out laws that bedevil or benefit Idahoans, whatever way you look at it.

The stocky, cheerful Christensen recalls he came the same year as Sen. Walter Yarbrough, R-Grand View, the tough Republican caucus chairman, who is dean of the Senate now that Sen. Richard A. Egbert, R-Tetonia, did not return this session.

"I enjoy my work very much," said Christensen, who takes his job seriously, especially when it comes to clearing the floor when the lieutenant governor bangs his gavel to signal start of the Senate session.

He has the full authority to make certain every senator is on the floor when the sessions are called to order but he said in the many years he has served he has found no difficult in dragging any recalcitrant members to the floor.

Christensen remembers a fellow townsman, the late O.J. (Jack) Buxton, a fervid Democrat, who was the Senate minority leader at the time he came to herd the senators around the Senate floor, and also Lt. Gov. Jack Murphy, who also as the Senate leader many years.

Besides the all important job of keeping the Senate floor cleared during a session, he has many others.

He also has the responsibilities that all facilities, such as loudspeakers and other equipment, are working properly, supervises the pages, and most important of all, keeping tight security.

He also dispenses supplies and handles the mail directly to the senators.

He said he visited the sergeant-of-arms at the California Assembly when he was on a visit recently to Sacramento, who has a fulltime job with 15 staff people under him.

The Driggs man, who is more knowledgeable than many senators on the lawmaking process, said he can't recall a single incident when security that would endanger senators or others occurred. He doesn't carry firearms and if there are any around, they are well hidden.

Christensen is paid \$40 a day while the Legislature is in session, hardly enough to make ends meet, and he works seven days a week, although he does get some time off during the lulls. These rest periods get shorter and are almost non-existent as the floor gatherings lengthen near the end of session.

He wife has worked in the Teton school system.

Christensen has leased his farmland and is looking towards more leisure time but the way he is seen scurrying around the Statehouse it is doubtful if he will slow down his pace much.

For this first six weeks session, he has no pages serving from East Idaho but the pages changes for the second six weeks so as to give those interested students a chance.

One of his more pleasant duties, however, is to read The Post-Register which is sent daily to the Legislature when it is in session. He takes delight in distributing the papers to the East Idaho legislators who are interested.

The newspaper is sent primarily for the East Idaho lawmakers and he tries to make certain they get their copies, or otherwise they are grabbed by other legislators, lobbyists and others handing around the Capitol.

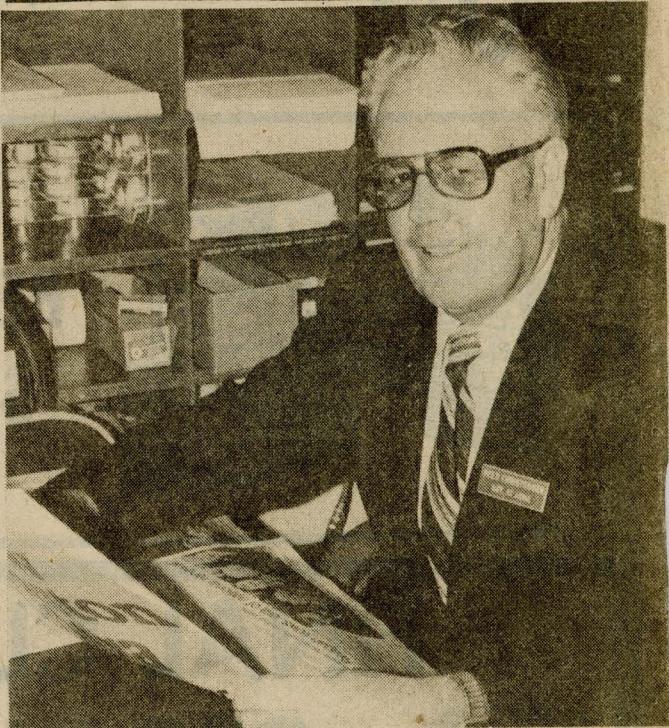
Christensen has almost become an institution around the Statehouse during the Legislature. Many admit he will be sorely missed when the time comes when the Senate gavel will pound and Christensen is no longer at the Senate doors clearing the way.

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## The political pulse

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### Top sergeant

BOISE — VETERANS SERGEANT-AT-ARMS at the Idaho Senate, shown reposing at his desk is Reed Christensen, Driggs farmer, who had held the job 13 years, plus two years as mail clerk.