

# Watkins sees extensive reforms in property tax

*Ad. June 22, 1983*  
By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

State Sen. Dane Watkins, R-Idaho Falls, co-chairman of the Interim Legislative Tax Structure Committee, said recently he looks for extensive reforms in the state's property tax system.

He said the Division of Financial Management handed out a 85-page study on sales tax exemption that it made last year.

"I am hopeful our committee



can bring back Sen. Dane Watkins some concrete proposals that will be beneficial to the state," he said.

Watkins said keen interest has been shown for the committee and about half of the legislators have asked to be named to subcommittees to study the different phases of taxation.

Watkins said the committee is planning to form subcommittees to help in the study.

He said the next meeting is scheduled for late July and it likely will meet at least once a month the remainder of this year so it can present a report to the 1984 Legislature.

"I'm excited over this committee," said Watkins. "I wish it had been formed earlier so that a more equitable tax system could have been inaugurated. It may have headed off the 1 Percent Tax Initiative and the Home Residential Initiative."

He said these two initiatives have each seriously restricted Idaho's property tax system.

"We have 26 major sales tax exemptions that lose about \$200 million to the state each year," said Watkins. "If the state loses this money then an entirely new taxing system will be needed."

Watkins said he viewed this new tax structure committee as perhaps the most important in legislative history to bring about comprehensive tax reform.

He said the committee is looking at everything from tax exemptions to a state lottery.

Watkins said the committee will look at tax reform studies made in 1955 and in 1966 but it will probably use Legislative Council staff members and others to help compile results of this latest study.