

Idaho Legislature did enact

By **BEN J. PLASTINO**

Post-Register political editor

The 1980 Idaho Legislature will go down as having one of the poorest records for leadership, juvenile performance and wasting time. But at the same time it did enact some worthy legislation.

The manner in which Senate Pro Tem Reed Budge, R-Soda Springs, and Senate Majority Leader James Risch, R-Boise, prolonged the sessions by their premature adjournment without concurrence of the House and bickering with the House leaders and Gov. John V. Evans is well known in political circles.

The 85-day session, which accomplished little, was the third longest in history, costing taxpayers some \$350,000 more than should have been necessary. This is figured on basis of the session running some 25 days longer than the 60 days that should have been enough for what it did.

The 1 percent was finally implemented on the extended final day Monday, which could save the local units of government some \$17 million. This was done because most of the legislators were in no mood to listen to these discredited leaders in the face of clamor from their county, school and city officials, many of whom were on the scene Monday to underscore their points.

House Bill 795 allows a 4 percent growth factor increase if any local unit of government is under 1 percent.

Alan Dornfest, research project coordinator with the State Tax Commission, said this is a complex situation to figure as there are some 2,000 "tax code units" in the state, just 50 alone in Boise. Property

owners living in the same county can pay different taxes because some pay for sewers, cemetery districts, etc., while others do not.

He notes that 14 counties of the 44, for example, are below the 1 percent, but that doesn't exactly mean they will get the 4

percent growth factor hike. The hike depends on how the assessor conducts the appraisal and other factors.

Of these 14 counties, those from East Idaho are Bonneville, Custer, Madison and Teton, Dornfest said.

Other beneficial significant

changes in the property tax was increasing income allowed under the circuit breaker from \$7,500 to \$8,750 a year and reducing the residence requirement from three years to one year for those over 65, widows or widowers, a



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Education friend

BOISE — Chairman of the Senate Health, Education and Welfare Committee is Sen. John Barker, R-Buhl, who was instrumental in enacting much education legislation the past session.

some worthy legislation

homeowners exemption of \$10,000 of market value or 20 percent value, whichever is less.

It also exempted that portion of agricultural land that is of speculative value from taxation. This would dictate that

farm land would be taxed only on value for farming, not on the price it might bring on the open market.

Among the bright spots were giving higher education 10.5 percent hike, two junior colleges 16.6 increase, public schools total of 12.8 percent which brings the state funding to a record 74 percent; and vocational education 11 percent.

It also approved minimum streamflow on trout-famous Silver Creek, and also Wolf Lodge Creek, Sullivan Springs and Granite Creek, the latter two which flow until Lake Pend d'Oreille.

One of the highlights was enacting a new education distribution formula that is intended to equalize state school funding.

In the important nuclear field for East Idaho, the Legislature enacted memorials to Congress that Idaho officially will accept nuclear radioactive waste for processing and encourages breeder reactor development. It also overwhelmingly rejected a memorial asking halt of such radioactive waste shipments to Idaho.

One of the most outstanding actions was enactment of a bill that would increase the Idaho Housing Agency to loan \$200 million more in low interest housing financing, although subsequent bill cut this to \$100 million. This is added to the initial \$200 million which has been virtually exhausted.

Rejected was a proposed constitutional amendment to reverse Idaho's long-standing disavowal of seeking additional federal land — the so-called

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Idaho Falls, Idaho, Thursday, April 3, 1980

Sagebrush Rebellion.

Enacted into law was a long-sought compromise Mobile Home Landlord-Tenant Law and two bills which provide better funding to financially-strapped Alcohol Treatment Units.

A compromise also was reached to increase fish and game license fees from \$10.50 to \$12.50 for combination license, \$6.50 to \$8.50 for resident fishing, \$8.50 to \$10.50 for elk tags, \$4.50 to \$5.50 for deer tags and considerably more for nonresidents.

Among other significant legislation was the long-sought certificate of need that will likely remove jeopardy of getting the \$12 million annually in federal health care matching funds, and a new court of appeals which is limited to certain non-precedent setting cases authorized by the Supreme Court.

Also going on the books was locating a new women's prison at the former Idaho State Hospital North at Orofino, placing a limit of 5½ percent of total personal income in the state, and calling on Congress for an anti-abortion constitutional convention.

What it didn't do will be treated in another column.

District 30 slates caucus

The Democratic Party caucus for Legislative District 30 will be held Thursday at 8 p.m. at the Longfellow Elementary School, Legislative Chairman James McFadden announced Thursday.

The district includes Shelley, central section of Idaho Falls and York precinct.

McFadden said that while the primary purpose of the caucus is to select delegates to the state convention to be held in Pocatello on June 13-14, the distribution of delegates for presidential candidates is also determined at the legislative district caucuses.

Eight delegates and eight alternate delegates to the state convention will be selected for District 30. The state convention delegates will write the party platform as well as select delegates for the national convention. McFadden urged all Democrats in District 30 to attend the caucus.

For additional information, contact McFadden, 2255 Baltic, phone 522-2180 or Robert Wallin, 645 Lincoln, phone 523-1039.