

House leader sees lean financing for state

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Rep. Darwin Young, R-Blackfoot, who was elected House majority leader in the recent reorganizational session and who is best known as the key architect in the writing of the 1 Percent Tax Initiative implementation, generally feels the state will survive on a lean budget without doing great harm to essential services.

Criticism has been widespread against implementation of the 1 percent, but it must be remembered the legislators had to write a law that complied with the intent, yet come within the Idaho Constitution guidelines. Most attorneys agree the 1 Percent Initiative voted on by the people violated the constitution, leaving the legislators to draft restricted bills that were acceptable.

Although Young and his special committee may be criticized with the legislation drafted, most legislators and others informed on the subject feel they did the best they could under the circumstances.

Young thinks the Legislature can continue the present 1 percent law, with a few modification, and frankly, he has no ideas for a property tax reform in view of the present restrictions.

Young, a well known Blackfoot farmer, has served as Bingham County commissioner and has been active in community affairs.

The fact he won a coveted

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House leadership position after serving only two terms with many lawmakers ahead of him in seniority is a glowing compliment to his abilities. He is a member of the Business, Health and Welfare, and Revenue

Taxation committees. It is this latter committee that he has been the main helper for the chairman, Rep. Steve Antone, R-Rupert.

Like most others, Young said a tax increase should be a last



Rep. Darwin Young
D-Blackfoot
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majority leader

resort but if one were deemed necessary he would favor a sales tax. He also sees no hope for new tax relief but likely the senior citizen circuit breaker and perhaps the homeowner exemption can be extended.

Young also said it will be necessary to hold the line on the present program and that he certainly doesn't favor any new ones.

He also took a swipe at the Department of Health and Welfare, saying "After the deception by DHW as to their needs during the last special session, I'm not sure that 'millions' will be needed."

Regarding highway funding he said if the increase is needed the trucking industry must pay for its fair share. He added the Department of Transportation and Law Enforcement receive a great deal of criticisms for what he called "perceived inefficiencies."

On other issues, he said he feels there should be an increase in college student fees so that Idaho will be in line with neighboring states on higher education; and no changes in the matter of public school formula and local school district consolidation unless they want it and this can be done under present law.

One of his most significant announcements is his plans for introducing a bill to separate the public health districts from the DHW, meaning primarily the public health districts would

handle their money directly, rather than it going through DHW.

He said he believed that service fees that are directly related to services will reduce the need for local option taxes, adding "I generally favor more local control in most areas."

Young said that just as he favors local control for cities and counties, he also favors local control of land because he trusts local legislators more than some bureaucrat in Washington, in referring to the Sagebrush Rebellion. He said he thought the state could preserve the hunting and recreational rights, and other such activities on these lands, just as much as the federal government.

On other matters, he said he must study plans for increasing Fish and Game Dept. licenses and expanded programs; that there are enough regulations, and maybe too many, regarding day care centers, shelters home and other such institutions; favors right to work law and is against compulsory arbitration for public employees; and would eliminate the presidential primary, changing it back to August or September.

"I think the election process is far too long, especially on the national level," said Young. "If we move the primary to September then conventions must approve delegates to national conventions but I'm not sure I favor changes in nomination laws."