

Evans expects responsive Legislature

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A confident Gov. John V. Evans says he has proposed the financial outlay for state government the coming fiscal year and it now will be up to the Idaho Legislature to act on it.

Referring to his controversial quarterly tax collection proposal, Evans said the plan seeks to close legal loopholes.

While not saying it in so many words, Evans made it clear that it will be up to the Republican-controlled Legislature to devise a new revenue plan if it doesn't like the quarterly collection proposal.

Many legislative leaders already have indicated that is so.

"It was my effort to recognize that it would have necessitated a tax increase if we had attempted to finance a \$665 million state budget that the state department heads have requested," he said.

Evans said he took a sharp paring knife and whittled the budget to \$599.9 million. This is about \$50 million more than the \$550 million budget for the current fiscal year ending June 30.



Gov. John Evans

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Evans' spending plan calls for no tax increases to finance spending above the \$577.3 million in receipts anticipated from current tax programs.

The additional \$23 million will be raised by requiring corporations and self-employed businessmen other than farmers to pay their state income taxes each quarter instead of just once a year. It also provides for intensifying tax auditing to collect unpaid taxes.

"This is a good plan," Evans said, "because I believe most of the people are being treated fairly. Fairness in taxation is my goal."

The governor said he visualizes an economic upturn in Idaho of only about 5 percent. This might produce a few million dollars more in revenue but not enough to take care of the full budget demands.

He said the forest and mining industries, cattle, and other agriculture are in the doldrums. Only potatoes reflect market strength.

More and more farmers, he said, are going into debt as result of these low agriculture prices.

"The farmers are in difficulty," he said. "The lumbering industry picture especially looks bleak."

There are some bright spots, however, he added. One is the electronics industry, which has established new plants in Boise, Pocatello, Idaho Falls and other cities.

The work picture at the Idaho

National Engineering Laboratory also looks stable for the immediate future.

"An area of high optimism," he said, "is in tourism. It has shown growth each year in recent years."

He vowed to press vigorously for a new Department of Commerce to give tourism an added boost.

He said the budget recognizes realities.

"It addresses our most critical needs, including commitments made to education, court-ordered improvements in the state prison and adjudication of water rights on the Snake River," he said.

Evans said he knows most of the legislators and believes he will have no problems in working with them, despite the Senate is veto-proof for the first time since he took office.

Asked what he would do if the Legislature attempted to enact a right-to-work law and repeal the Little Davis-Bacon Act, which requires federal salary scales on public projects, Evans said he is optimistic and foresees no problems.

He said he hopes there are enough moderate Republicans to thwart such moves. It would need only one Republican in the Senate to stymie such legislation.

However, in recent past years, the governor has had to veto right-to-work and Davis-Bacon repeal laws passed by the Legislature.

"I think the Legislature will

become more conservative in trying to enact legislation," he said. "I look for them to be more responsive and responsible."

It would appear that Republicans will need to fear a voter backlash if they do enact drastic legislation, such as right-to-work and inadequately funded education and human service programs.

The Republicans control the Senate 28-14 and the House 67-17.

Evans said he hopes his conservative budget will attract wide voter and legislative support.

He said he will not announce until next spring, but he left little doubt he intends to enter the Senate race against Republican U.S. Sen. Steve Symms in 1986.

He said, "I will have to see when the time comes," about the possibility that Bethine Church, widow of former U.S. Sen. Frank Church, may enter the race.

However, it is known that Evans has formed a nucleus of a campaign committee for the 1986 race as indicated by his Pocatello and Moscow field offices.

At the same time, a popular former Democratic governor, Cecil D. Andrus, now a Boise business consultant, is sending out increasing signals that he intends to run for the governorship in 1986 to succeed Evans.