

Olmstead sees conservative Legislature for next year

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House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, said he looks for an extremely conservative 1980 Idaho Legislature, holding all costs to a minimum.

He said he favored extension of the freeze and growth, along with implementation on the 1 Percent Tax Initiative.

"Whichever is the less language would be the easiest and best," he said in answering a questionnaire submitted by The Post-Register.

The House speaker said he expects bulk of the growth in the state budget to go to public education, adding there will be no general fund tax increase.

"Any increases in public education," he said, "Will have to fit within the revenue coming from present sources."

INEL wastes

Regarding the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, he viewed the so-called contamination of radioactive waste in the Snake River aquifer, as of no immediate danger. He said there may need to be restrictions on certain kinds of radioactive shipments into Idaho.

Olmstead said he favors some increased highway funding but what direction this will take remains to be settled later, whether an increase in the state gas tax above the present 9.5 cents per gallon, in vehicle registration, or others.

"Feel there will be probable support for increased funding for local roads and streets," he said.

If there is any increased for state employees, salaries, such as the 13 percent asked by the Idaho Public Employee Association, it can come only with reduction in force, he predicted.

He said Idaho's position on rejecting the Certificate of Need during the last session was commendable, indicating he feels the same way for this year. He said, however a catastrophe funding to help counties which pay high medical and hospital costs, such as for migrants and Mexican aliens, needs to be studied.

Regarding health care containment costs, he said "I don't believe you can legislate health care any easier than you can legislate cheaper food and energy."

Local zoning

Olmstead said that on city oriented legislation, he feels planning and zoning authority should be local, not state, but expressed firm opposition to any new taxes this year, including local option for cities.

On usury rates, he said "the price of money should be set at the market place," indicating removal of the present 13 percent interest ceiling.

He also said he favored the

so-called "sagebrush rebellion" which would call for the state to take over management of federal lands but posed a reservation that the state bureaucrats may not be any more capable than the federal."

Olmstead said he felt the Idaho Water Resources Board did well when it lowered the oxygen requirement to 5 PPM, and also expressed opposition to minimum streamflow.

He strongly opposes any constitutional amendment to take away the Legislature's power such as for the 1 Percent Tax Initiative, and subject it to a vote of the people at a general election.



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Rules Idaho House

BOISE — House Speaker Ralph Olmstead, R-Twin Falls, predicts an extremely conservative Idaho Legislative session in

1980. The 105 lawmakers will convene Jan. 7 for the session, which generally runs between 70 and 80 days.