

Legislative limelights . . .

Tibbitts backs 1 cent sales tax for cities

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A proposal suggested by one of East Idaho's veteran legislators carries considerable merit and may be the one that will turn the key to solve the cities' increasing financial dilemma.

State Rep. Wayne E. Tibbitts, R-Lorenzo, suggested during the last session that a 1 percent sales tax increase earmarked only for the cities be considered.

Tibbitts said he heartily agrees with Idaho Gov. John V. Evans that the 1 percent sales tax jump should be enacted to help the cities in their financial plight.

Tibbitts pointed out the 1 Percent Initiative passed by the voters in 1978 is pinching the cities, but more serious, is the two years' budget freeze the Legislature enacted in the last session.

Under his proposal the sales tax would be collected, as at present, by the state. The only difference would be the earmarking of the extra 1 cent for distribution back to the cities for their own use, based on population basis.

Tibbitts points out the sales tax raises about \$30 million per year for 1 cents, or \$90 million for the present 3 cents.

He said the cities have indicated they would be well pleased to get the extra \$30 million, or else many of them are faced with the prospects of bankruptcy or giving little service. Such city cutbacks already are taking place. It will get much worse as cities attempt to operate on budgets the next two years that won't be any higher than the current year, in the face of an inflation

hike that is clicking at 13 percent or more.

The proposal coming from Tibbitts merits more than casual consideration.

Tibbitts, one of the oldest legislators currently serving, is looked on as a staunch conservative, rurally oriented and one of the few who has served both as a senator and state representative and also both as a Democrat and Republican.

Tibbitts is a colorful individual who is found generally voting the hard conservative line but he also is independent in balloting for what many consider liberal legislation when he feels it is justified.

Tibbitts is often found debating issues and his dry but keen sense of humor often brings titters from his colleagues. He is one of the best liked lawmakers at Boise, although many of his more moderate state representatives disagree but respect his avid conservatism.

Tibbitts is especially emphatic in reducing property taxes which he sincerely feels are regressive and unfair. However, he often votes for other revenue increases, such as vehicle licenses, when he feels they are justified.

Tibbitts is serving his 16th year in the Legislature, ranking him near the top. This included the first four years in the Senate as a Democrat, then he later switched to the Republican Party and has served as a state representative 12 years.

Tibbitts has been engaged as a produce dealer and in diversified farming and cattle operations at Lorenzo. He is supposed to be mostly retired but admits

that he is about as busy as ever.

He presently is ranking majority member of the Agricultural Affairs, Revenue and Taxation, and Resource and Conservation Committees, preferring to forego chairmanships although he is entitled to that by his seniority.

He has served as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee which is of little importance as it is a committee which is the burial place of bills and is solely directed by the House speaker.

He represents District 20 made up of Jefferson, Lemhi, Custer and Clark counties, one of the largest geographically in the state.

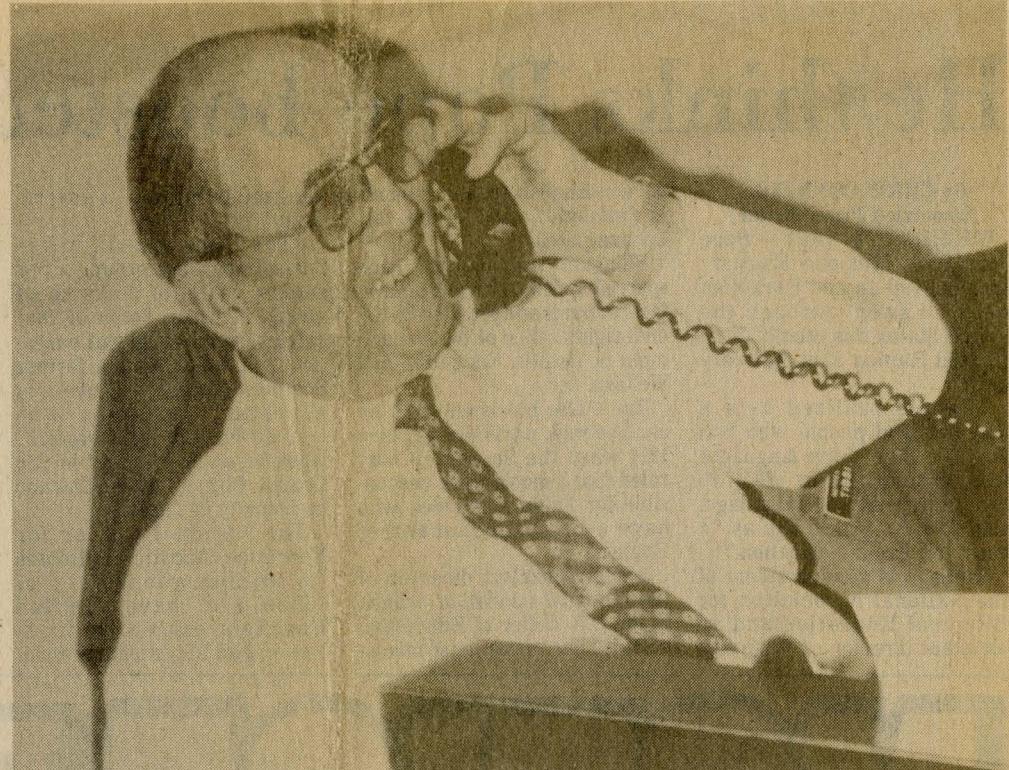
Tibbitts said he hoped his proposal which he plans to spearhead in the 1980 will receive wide-based support.

When he suggested this during the last session, Tibbitts said his fellow legislators, plagued by the ramifications of the 1 Percent Initiative, showed little interest.

Now that the city financial pinch is becoming more pronounced they may be more eager to look for an escape valve. Many are reluctant to vote for city local option laws, fearing the voters may blame them for an action that could bring tax increases.

Tibbitts is one of the foremost proponents for water development and he took a key hand last year in helping to hammer out a water plan.

He pointed out that cities are now saddled with the burden of providing many services for churches and other institutions. They should be helped, he asserts.



Post-Register photo

Friend of cities

BOISE — Rep. Wayne E. Tibbitts, R-Lorenzo, appears to be enjoying a telephone conversation during a recess at the 1979

Idaho Legislature. He has proposed a 1 cent sales tax increase to be earmarked for cities.