

West governors have chances for influence

Added
By BEN J. PLASTINO

Post-Register political editor

The meeting of the Western Governor's Conference at Elkhorn Village this coming week couldn't come at a more propitious time to help solve the energy crunch.

The host governor and also chairman of the conference is John V. Evans, who also is chairman of the National Governor's Association nuclear committee.

Virtually every Western governor, including those of the 13 states and four territories, is expected to attend, with the exception of California Gov. Jerry Brown.

President Carter lends sympathetic ears to governors, as he was one in Georgia, the first since President Roosevelt some 40 years ago.

It thus will give the Western governors an excellent forum to express their views and possibly hammer out a resolution to send to the president and governor that may mean something more than words on paper.

Besides the Western governors, who have a certain amount of power in their own rights, there will be a number of influential leaders on hand.

Foremost of these are Joe Nagel, Secretary of Interior Cecil D. Andrus assistant on natural resources, and Jack Watson, Carter's special representative on inter governmental affairs and who has Carter's ear on state affairs. Andrus, who was scheduled to appear, cancelled because of death in his family.

There will be two high-ranking members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rupert Cutler on RARE II management, and Alex Mercure, on rural development; John L. Watson, of the Western Energy Board; and others with expertise in the energy field.

All the Western States have a common problem in seeking to moderate the energy pinch. If they can agree on a common plan it could go a long ways on the national level.

It's true that none of the Western States except Hawaii gave Carter a majority in 1976, although the votes were close in a number of states, such as California and Oregon. Perhaps some Carter concession to the West could reverse this situation in 1980, some of his supporters feel.

Most of Carter's energy plans, including gasoline ra-



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Western governors

TWO PACIFIC Northwest governors who are expected to play a prominent role in the Western Governor's Conference this week at Elkhorn Village near Sun Valley are Idaho Gov. John V. Evans, host governor and conference chairman, and Washington State Gov. Dixy Lee Ray.

tioning and conservation measures have met with less than enthusiastic reception in a Congress dominated by his own Democrats.

The Western governors have an excellent opportunity to crack this deadlock with plans of their own.

Over the years the Western governors have done well in joining for western interests in the way of public lands, water, natural resources, wilderness and other fields that are peculiar to their states.

In years past, the Western governors actions were little

more than window dressing. Most resolutions were soon forgotten.

In these austere times when the energy shortage is becoming increasingly serious, the deliberations are certain to bring on a more serious mien. They could come up with plans that would go a long ways to help get this nation started on the right energy track.

In this connection, Evans and most Western governors who are proven friends of nuclear power can be expected to come up with a voice for nuclear power development.