

Idaho Legislative Highlights

District 27

March 6, 2015



District 27

Cassia & Minidoka
Counties



Senator
Dean Cameron



Speaker
Scott Bedke



Representative
Fred Wood

“IDAHO DAY” AT THE STATE CAPITOL

March 4, 2015 marked the first official celebration of Idaho Day, commemorating the creation of Idaho by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Governor Otter kicked off the celebration by reading a proclamation and hosting an Idaho Day program. Included in this event were student performances, art and cultural presentations. Idaho Day festivities were commemorated in both the House and Senate chambers. The Idaho Historical Society, along with a number of State agencies, counties, cities and community organizations participated in this year's Idaho Day Celebration.

Senator Dean Cameron

Phone: (208) 334-4735

Email: dcameron@senate.idaho.gov

JFAC is in full swing, pushing hard to set a balanced budget. We hope to finish setting the budget by March 13th in order to adjourn by March 27th. A critical budget, **public schools**, is scheduled to be set on March 12th, provided we have passage of legislation addressing our teacher pay. If the current proposal in the House should fail, it could prevent us from setting the public schools' budget and then the session would be delayed. **But it is important an acceptable, effective solution is found no matter how long it takes.**

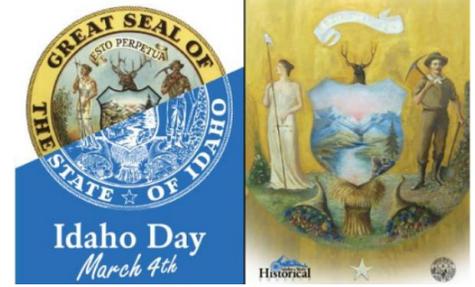
We set a number of other important budgets this last week. Here are a few budgets important to our area. JFAC voted to approve the FY 2016 **Medicaid** budget with a 2.1% increase in state general funds, and a 3.4% increase overall. This is slightly less than Governor Otter's recommendation and comprises \$502,684,900 in General Funds, \$269,519,100 in Dedicated Funds, and \$1,331,297,600 in Federal Funds for a total of **\$2,103,501,600. Medicaid is our largest budget because of the 70% federal match.**

Another very important budget addressed this week was the **Agricultural Research and Extension Service** through the University of Idaho. This program will now see a \$2.3 million increase in state support next year. We unanimously approved a **\$28.7 million** budget, and that finally **gets the funding back to the 2009 level.**

JFAC also appropriated the **Professional-Technical Education's** FY 2016 budget which provides funding for PT education in our schools, facilities like the Cassia Regional Technical Center and community colleges like CSI. These programs are critical for our youth and adults furthering their education and training. They provide tremendous opportunities for employment and are important to our economy. The total Professional-Technical budget is set at **\$66,928,800.**

As always I welcome your thoughts, ideas and questions.

Idaho Day Celebration March 4, 2015



Idaho State Historical Society



Idaho House of Representatives



Eye On Boise - March 6, 2015

By Betsy Russell

'Comprehensive rewrite' of Idaho's Concealed-carry laws in the works

House and Senate Republicans who are working on gun legislation this year said at a press conference today that a comprehensive bill rewriting Idaho's concealed-gun permit laws is in the works and likely will be introduced in a House committee next week...Read more by clicking:

<http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/2015/mar/06/comprehensive-rewrite-idahos-concealed-carry-laws-works/>

Speaker Scott Bedke
Phone: (208) 332-1111
Email: sbedke@house.idaho.gov

This week I visited with the Idaho Press Club. Here is my update on some of the topics they raised:

Education – I think it is going to be a good year for teachers. The teacher career ladder bill has been introduced in the House Education Committee and it will be coming up for debate soon. This legislation creates two salary rungs - a residency rung for beginning teachers which will pay \$37,000 - \$39,000 a year and a professional rung for teachers with three or more years of experience which will pay \$42,500 - \$50,000 a year. The career ladder does not change a teacher's license or certificate. [Click here](#) to access the bill.

Possible Compromise Civil Rights Protections – Legislation on this issue is going to touch both bases that were in attendance at our House "Add the Words" hearing. It must touch both those that are concerned about losing their religious freedom, and at the same time it's going to address the concerns about being mistreated in society, on either end of the spectrum. I'm optimistic that we'll be able to thread that needle. But it's like trying to thread a needle as you're jumping on a trampoline that's in the back of a truck that's going down a dirt road. It's touchy. But I think that there are people working on this in good faith at this point." (For a complete article on the Idaho Press Club event [click here.](#))

Representative Fred Wood
Phone: (208) 332-1138
Email: fwood@house.idaho.gov

This week [HB 166](#) passed the House. This legislation puts irrigation districts on equal footing with ground water districts with regard to incurring indebtedness in a timely manner.

Irrigation districts have been around for a very long time. For the first half of the 20th century essentially all irrigation was surface irrigation. Everyone was recharging, water calls were often localized and much smaller in scope. They were often settled in a more personal manner. Ground water districts are a more recent development, coming after the technology to lift water out of the ground several hundred feet was developed. Recharge was being diminished and water calls became far more complex, much larger in scope, and the mitigation for such calls became very expensive. Time also entered the equation. Simply put, mitigation must be accomplished in a timely manner.

When the ground water district laws were written they enabled ground water districts the ability to secure long-term financing (to incur long-term debt) in a timely manner. Irrigation districts do not have the same ability which has made it very difficult for irrigation districts to respond to the latest water calls. In a water call a few years ago, the Southwest Irrigation District (SWID) was unable to initially participate in a mitigation plan to purchase a fish farm in the Hagerman Valley and had to come to the table later and buy their way in after the fact. This puts SWID at a disadvantage. In the Rangen call, SWID again was not able to obtain financing in a timely manner. They had to rely on the ground water districts for the initial financing and will be responsible for their share at a future date.

HB 166 allows irrigation districts to incur indebtedness in a timely manner - the same process ground water districts have used with regard to incurring indebtedness. This legislation is now in the Senate for a hearing and debate.

Idaho State Police Ceremony



March 6, 2015

The 42nd Advance Training Class of Idaho State Patrol troopers received hats and badges in a ceremony at the Capitol. Family members and friends came to witness the occasion.