



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Jon Hanian
(208) 334-2100

GOVERNOR CITES SUCCESSES, PATHS FORWARD FROM 2013 LEGISLATURE

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter thanked members of the Idaho Legislature today for addressing most of his legislative agenda and – more importantly – working through sometimes difficult debate to achieve real results for Idaho citizens.

"The issues were thoroughly discussed and legislators did their level best to represent their constituents and craft reasonable public policy. What they produced was impressive and consistent with my priorities and our shared commitment to responsible, accountable and limited government," Governor Otter said. "We also have a path forward on several key issues and a firm foundation for more improvements in 2014 and beyond."

Among the key successes, the Governor counted:

- **Creating a state-based health insurance exchange** to give Idaho a voice and at least some degree of local control over how one Obamacare requirement is met for our citizens.
- **Eliminating the burden of the personal property tax** for the majority of Idaho businesses while ensuring local units of government have the means to meet their responsibilities. It's an important first step toward total elimination of this onerous and burdensome tax.
- **Approving a balanced, structurally sound State budget** that includes cautious, prudent 3-percent spending growth.
- **Improving Idaho's public schools** by increasing K-12 funding and restoring \$30 million to keep districts whole following the mid-year removal of financial support for technology and teachers' professional development. Consensus improvements also were approved, including an open meeting law for contract negotiations, criteria for reductions in force, online posting of budgets and master agreements, and reinstatement of the dual-credit program for our most ambitious students.
- **Funding five additional seats in the WWAMI collaborative medical school program** at the University of Washington, providing support for students in the Targeted Rural and Under-Served Track (TRUST) program that's designed to turn more Idaho students into Idaho physicians.

- **Funding rural rotation training for 24 participants in the Internal Medicine Residency program at the Boise VA Medical Center** – providing direct care to more than 25,000 citizens of rural Idaho.
- **Rebranding and providing \$3 million for the Opportunity Fund at the Department of Commerce.** The expanded and codified fund will enable Commerce to enter into performance-based grant funding agreements with local communities who in turn can enter into agreements with employers for infrastructure support.
- **The Leadership in Nuclear Energy (LINE) Commission** received a public hearing on its final report and won a vote of confidence from the Legislature for its continuing work to explore and secure economic opportunities associated with the mission and potential of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES).
- **Adopting a new State Water Plan, updated for the first time since 1996.** It reflects use of the latest technology for better evaluating our needs and the status of our water supplies as well as establishing strategies and milestones for implementing our management policies and evaluating their effectiveness.
- **Establishing a process for starting and operating nonprofit rangeland fire protection associations** and appropriating \$400,000 to help establish at least four more like the one that was formed last summer in Mountain Home. Besides wildfire suppression and property protection, these voluntary groups can preserve habitat to help keep species like sage grouse off the endangered species list.
- **Making human trafficking a felony.** Conviction of the new felony crime of inducing a minor into prostitution or procuring a minor for prostitution will require violators to register as sex offenders and to forfeit any proceeds gained from or property used to commit the crime.
- **Investing in technology,** with funding for a new Idaho State Tax Commission computer system that will create greater efficiency and more robust security, and replacement of network and security systems at the Department of Administration to enhance security for State agency data and communications.
- **Investing in at-risk youth,** with approval of both supplemental and fiscal 2014 funding for the Idaho National Guard’s Youth Challenge program. Legislation allowing public school support to follow the students also was adopted for the program, which now has a director and is preparing to open in the northern Idaho community of Pierce.
- **Resolving a dilemma for Idaho’s technology industry** by taking a leadership position on the tax treatment of cloud computing. Legislation was approved defining “software” as a service and creating an open playing field for Idaho’s growing software development industry and businesses that invest in new, custom and cutting-edge technologies.
- **Approving legislation honoring Idaho veterans** by identifying them on their driver’s license, and allowing the DMV to share information with the Division of Veterans Services that will help improve outreach, services and delivery of benefits to qualified veterans.
- **Approving “surplus eliminator” legislation** allocating any remaining General Fund cash balance at the end of the current fiscal year to the Budget Stabilization Fund.

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