



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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INCARCERATED LABOR

A measure to expand inmate farm labor programs to any agricultural operation has made its way back to the legislature. In recent years, legislation has been passed that allows inmate labor only in cases involving production, harvesting or processing of perishable agricultural products. **H373 seeks to provide for inmate trainee participation in work training programs offered through the Idaho Correctional Industries program.** H373 will offer training stipends for participants in the programs but specifies that inmate trainees are not employees of the Idaho Department of Corrections & are **not entitled to worker's compensation or unemployment compensation.** Included are conditions for rules regarding inmate trainee safety & changes to the language of the current law to make clear that the inmates are in job-training programs & not employees of either the state or any agricultural operation.

Two years ago, a similar bill was passed by the Senate, amended in the House & the Senate opted not to concur with the amendment. The bill sought to remove the word "perishable" from agricultural products that could be harvested by inmate labor allowing inmates to work for private employers in the production, harvesting & processing of all Idaho agricultural, horticultural, vinicultural, forestry & bee products. This would have allowed more opportunities for inmate labor. On the House floor, the bill was amended to entitle an inmate to worker's compensation. This would have forced agricultural producers to provide worker's compensation for inmates. The amended bill also mandated that the inmate be classified as an employee of the agricultural employer.

Senator Patti Anne Lodge was the prior sponsor, but this year agreed to let the House begin the process to find a suitable path forward. **Rep. Doug Ricks** is sponsoring H373 & has been working with agriculture to garner support. A new section of Idaho Code would also be added to allow the assignment of

conservation work. The Idaho Department of Corrections would be able to enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with any public agency for the performance of conservation projects that are appropriate. Inmates would be able to be assigned to perform public conservation projects including but not limited to forest fire prevention & control, forest watershed management, recreational area development, fish & game management, soil conservation & forest watershed revegetation.

H373 opens opportunities for inmate participation through multiple industries but also adds a significant focus to the **goal of reducing recidivism through job training.** With the current high recidivism rates in Idaho, the argument is that giving inmates an opportunity to get back into a work environment will both give them skills they'll need to succeed as law-abiding citizens, as well as allow them to earn some money toward restitution, court costs & re-entry into society.

ANNUAL ONION CONFERENCE

HALL OF FAME WINNER ANNOUNCED

Idaho Onion Growers' Assn. & Malheur County Onion Growers' Assn. held their **60th Jt. Conference** in Ontario, OR this week. Over 375 attended the conference. During the event, IOGA **President Dell Winegar** was inducted into the Onion Hall of Fame.

Dell was born in Ontario Oregon. Dell's family started farming in the 1950's & he remembers even as a young man how intrigued he was by growing onions. Dell was active in FFA & received both the State & American Farmer degrees. He also won the American Institute of Cooperatives contest in FFA speaking about cooperatives & attended a national meeting at Tulane University in New Orleans. When Dell graduated from Fruitland H.S. he started farming fulltime with his parents. Dell & his Dad incorporated into Winegar Farms, Inc. in 1979, farming together for almost 40 years. Dell lives in Fruitland with his wife Kris.

Dell's past service includes: Fruitland PTO President, Fruitland Middle School advisory committee, Fruitland School Board, & ID Alfalfa/Clover Seed Growers Assn. board member. He is currently a member of the Eastern Oregon-Idaho Onion Committee, Onion Research Committee, the Promotion & Executive Committee, & the Payette County Planning & Zoning Commission.

NEW LEGISLATOR APPOINTED - DISTRICT #2

Governor Little appointed Coeur d'Alene Pastor **Tim Remington** to the Idaho House to replace **Rep. John Green**. Green was expelled from the legislature after he was found guilty of defrauding the U.S. government in TX.

Remington is a familiar name to many Idahoans who remember when he was shot six times at the Altar Church, where he is a pastor, in March 2016. He is also the Director of Good Samaritan Rehabilitation, a faith-based addiction recovery program. *"I'm a preacher & will stay a preacher,"* Remington said in a press release. *"What an honor to serve this state."* Rep. Remington will assume the same committee assignments as Green.

COLUMBIA-SNAKE RIVER SYSTEM

Senate Joint Memorial (SJM) 109 states that the Idaho Legislature would recognize & support the international competitiveness, multi-modal transportation, & economic development benefits provided by the Port of Lewiston & the Columbia-Snake River System. The declaration is intended to clarify that the **Idaho Legislature opposes the removal or breaching of the dams on the Columbia-Snake River System & its tributaries.** Idaho has sovereignty of its water resources & benefits from the **multiuse system that provides transportation of commodities, fish & wildlife habitat, recreation, hydropower, flood control & irrigation.**

SJM 109 also provides some interesting facts that are not well known. The system is meeting or exceeding the 96% juvenile fish passage survival rate for spring migration & 93% summer migrating fish downstream through the lower Snake River dams. Also, up to **87,000-acre feet** of Idaho's water is used for flow augmentation for salmon & steelhead in the lower Snake & Columbia Rivers with water being released through a willing buyer, willing seller agreements. Approximately **10% of all United States wheat exports** are barged through the four dams on the Snake River & approximately **50% of all Idaho wheat** is barged from Lewiston to Portland & then on to export markets around the world. There are also the tremendous benefits hydropower & the efficient, renewable resource that does so much for the Northwest. The 2004 Snake River Water Rights Agreement provides protection's to Idaho water users

in the form of a 30-year biological opinion & provides economic benefits to water users participating in the flow augmentation program. This is due in most part to the agricultural & industrial users of water that have a legal priority within the state.

RETIREMENTS IN THE LEGISLATURE

Already rumors of retirements are beginning to fly about the capitol as current legislators consider whether they will run for the 2020 Primary Election in May. So far, our list includes the following who have indicated their plans to retire & not be a candidate in May: President Pro-Tem of the **Senate, Brent Hill**, District 34 having served 10 terms (a term is 2 years); **Senator Don Cheatham**, District 3 who served in the Idaho House & has served one term in the Idaho Senate; **Senator Bert Brackett**, District 23, having served 7 terms; **Rep. Elaine Smith**, District 29 having served 10 terms; **Senator Maryanne Jordan** District 17 having served 3 terms; & Senator **Dean Mortimer**, District 30 having served 6 terms.

So what are the requirements to run for the Idaho legislature? Here are the basics: someone wishing to file must be at least 21 years old at the time of the General Election. A citizen of the United States. An elector of the state at the time of the General Election. An elector of the Legislative District for at least 1 year at the time of the General Election. There is a **\$30 filing fee & you need to secure the signatures of 50 registered voters.** Additional dates & information can be found on the Secretary of State website.

FARM, RANCH & TIMBER CAUCUS

A new legislative caucus related to agriculture was birthed this week, it is a bipartisan, bicameral organization. The **Farmers, Ranchers & Loggers Caucus** will address issues & concerns of the agricultural industry & those citizens, communities & counties who rely on farmers, ranchers, loggers & affiliated industries. The caucus will explore ways to act together to ensure Idaho has a comprehensive policy strategy to ensure agricultural & natural resource-based communities grow & flourish. Topics could include health care, education, infrastructure, broad band value-added processing & economic development. The **caucus will be a point of contact for agriculture & natural-resource based citizens** to ensure their voices are heard on every level within the statehouse & across agencies.

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