

Idaho Legislative Update - August 2014

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Insight — 8/13/2014

The summer months for Idaho's elected officials have been mostly focused on campaigning, since every state legislator is on the ballot this year, and Idaho's constitutional officials, along with a U.S. Senate seat and both congressional seats are also up for reelection. Before adjourning in the spring, the Idaho Legislature established a handful of interim committees that will sporadically meet throughout the remainder of summer and fall, but the bulk of the summer months have been focused on the state agencies and departments that have been hard at work at the negotiated rulemaking process.

- **Negotiated Rulemaking:** Idaho's agencies and departments have been holding public hearings on administrative rules throughout the summer. The negotiated rulemaking meetings will continue through the fall. Once complete, the proposed rules are subject to a comprehensive process that includes review and approval by the Idaho Legislature in order to become law. Idaho's Legislative and Regulatory Affairs team has been following the rulemaking process closely, particularly in relation to the Idaho Tax Commission's hearings on House Bill 598, legislation that we were instrumental in passing through the Legislature that clarifies that computer software that is delivered electronically and remotely is not subject to Idaho sales tax. Despite the low level of attention that the rulemaking process receives, the effects can have a dramatic and lasting impact and therefore must be carefully monitored and examined.
- **Legislative Interim Committees:** The Idaho Legislature approved the creation of a handful of interim committees that will meet throughout the year, many which could have legislative implications for the 2014 legislative session. The interim committees that have received the most attention in the press and in the political community include: the Federal Lands Transfer Interim Committee, the Natural Resources Interim Committee, the Energy, Environment and Technology Interim Committee, and the Health Care Task Force. A full listing of all of the Interim Committees, along with scheduled meetings, agendas, legislator information, and much more, can be found on the Idaho Legislature's website at www.legislature.idaho.gov.
- **Politics:** The two biggest political news stories of the summer include *Idaho Statesman* reporter Dan Popkey going to work for conservative Congressman Idaho Labrador, and the Idaho Republican Party's infighting over the Party's leadership positions.
 - Popkey: Dan Popkey shocked many in Idaho when he

resigned from the job he had held for three decades as the *Idaho Statesman*'s political reporter to go to work as Congressman Labrador's press secretary. Popkey recently explained his decision to work for Labrador in a Boise State Public Radio interview in which he stated, "people think I'm a left-winger and think that he's a Tea Party guy. And we're both far more complex than that." To read Dan Popkey's full interview with Boise State Radio, click [here](#).

- **Idaho Republican Party:** The contest for a new Idaho GOP chairman has been in the works since the June Idaho GOP convention fiasco in Moscow that resulted in the delegates leaving town without finishing any Party business, including adopting a platform and electing new Party officers. After a month and a half of uncertainty, including a lawsuit over who controls the Party, the Idaho Republican Party's governing body met on August 2 in Boise and elected Steve Yates as its new chairman. Yates is an Idaho Falls businessman with a federal public policy background, including serving as a national security assistant to former Vice President Dick Cheney. (On a personal note, I had a very nice dinner with the new Chairman on Tuesday night where we discussed his vision for the Party and the future of our State).
- **In the News:** Exciting news for the Treasure Valley includes new plans at the Boise Airport to bring local restaurants such as Bardenay, Parilla Grill, Big City Coffee, and others to showcase local companies as a great way to sell Boise and start travelers off on the right foot when they visit our community. Boise Mayor Dave Bieter and the Boise Airport Commission held a press conference earlier this summer to unveil this multi-million dollar facility upgrade. A link to the story can be found by [clicking here](#).

The next Idaho Legislative Update will primarily focus on the 2014 Idaho elections and how things are shaping up and what can be expected in November. Also, if there is an issue that you have an interest in that I didn't include in my legislative report, please let me know and I will be happy to respond to your questions or comments.

Jonathan

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