



IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION
GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

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KAID BOISE • KCDT COEUR D'ALENE • KIPT TWIN FALLS • KISU POCATELLO • KUID MOSCOW

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Quotes



"I just thought I would let you know how much we enjoy your Outdoor Idaho program that we faithfully watch on Sunday. It was very enjoyable to observe the "A Trip to the Moon" program and see others interested in herb location, identification, and health uses as much as we are. D & L Herbs is located here in Council, ID and we enjoy our hobby and the healthy tinctures, salves and ointments we create from only Idaho herbs - it's fun."

Danna Barnhart, January 17, 2011

"I used to watch Bruce on TV when I lived in Salmon, Idaho! Small world! I actually use a phrase you said one time on air when you described the old 1929 Travel Air that Mike Dorris & his cronies owned out of Salmon/McCall. You used "A certain "wistfulness" which was one of the greatest comments I've ever heard on TV being said by someone. Bruce, you have a certain way of presenting something that is very strong...I just wanted to let you know that for quite sometime, you empowered me to forge ahead and to do what I do. Yes, dreams come true! Thanks for the vision."



Thanks, Jim Oltersdorf

Executive Producer, Oltersdorf Film Productions, The Discovery Channel
 Soldotna, Alaska

FESTIVAL 2011 Opens Saturday, March 5, on IdahoPTV

Idaho Public Television's largest fund raiser, FESTIVAL 2011, begins on March 5. This year's Festival is especially critical toward raising the funds that will enable services for the next year. More than 61% of IdahoPTV's operational budget comes from voluntary financial contributions from viewers across Idaho and six surrounding states. With corporate and foundation giving to IdahoPTV down this year, as well as support from the state of Idaho down dramatically, Festival 2011 is an especially critical time.



To achieve progress to our fiscal year end goal of \$3.1 million, we'll showcase a wide array of outstanding programs for 16 days. A full listing of FESTIVAL 2011 programs and links to pledge your support are available on the IdahoPTV Web site at: <http://idahoptv.org>.

the buzz



—On Monday, January 10, Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter announced his fiscal year 2012 General Fund budget recommendation for state government agencies including IdahoPTV. There are three key pieces to his IdahoPTV budget recommendation. The first is a 3.45% “omnibus” base General Fund budget reduction. This represents a permanent elimination of \$47,300. The second is a continuation of a one-time \$97,200 General Fund reduction from fiscal year 2010. This was implemented because IdahoPTV received one-time funds totaling \$97,200 in January 2010 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In reaction to this, the Legislature reduced our General Fund appropriation at the same rate on a one-time basis. The final recommendation was for no equipment replacement funds.

The loss of operating funds totals \$144,800. If this recommendation is implemented by the Legislature, we anticipate the need to eliminate at least three full-time positions effective July 1, 2011.

On January 25, I presented the Governor’s budget recommendation to the Joint Finance – Appropriations Committee (JFAC). During that presentation, I also outlined Areas of Risk within IdahoPTV including a backlog of capital replacement, mandated/high priority items (outlined in the January 2011 GM Report) and a delayed project involving the removal of analog equipment.

JFAC will consider the Governor’s recommendation in late February or early March. We’ll keep you posted as events warrant.

—I’m pleased to let you know on January 25, 2011, the Federal Communications Commission granted IdahoPTV a new channel for our Cascade translator. This is a significant step forward in ensuring our IdahoPTV signal continues to be available to people in the Cascade, Idaho area. As I outlined last month, for fiscal year 2012 beginning in July, we have several high priority/mandated items that currently do not have funding, including this project. In the spring of 2010, we learned that KBOI-TV, Boise had applied for and received a change of broadcast channel for their Boise transmitter, which happened to be the same channel that we have provided translator service on for more than 20 years to the “metro” Cascade area. Under the rules of the FCC, transmitters take priority over translators. Operators of translators must apply for a new channel and the transmitter operator (KBOI) has no obligation for assisting with displacement issues. In this case however, KBOI has stated verbally they are willing to assist IdahoPTV in the re-equipping of the Cascade translator valued at approximately \$20,000 after they have completed their Boise transmitter channel change, now scheduled for the summer/fall of 2011. We are hoping this scenario proceeds as described. In the event it does not, new equipment will cost IdahoPTV \$22,000 and will need to be implemented in the summer/fall of 2011.



IdahoStatesman.com

IDAHO'S #1 WEBSITE FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION

—On January 13, the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) honored 24 public broadcasters including IdahoPTV with distinctions for programming excellence. We were awarded for a 30-second video spot profiling Mi-Ai Parrish, Publisher, *Idaho Statesman* in the Corporate/Institutional Category.



—In January, the Association of Public Television Stations (APTS) profiled Idaho Public Television's *Idaho Reports* and *Idaho Legislature Live* programming services on their national Web site. APTS is the organization that represents most public television stations' interests before Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.

The screenshot shows the APTS website header with the logo and navigation menu (HOME, ABOUT, LEGISLATIVE, LEGAL/REGULATORY, LOCAL STATIONS, NEWS, EVENTS). The main content area is titled 'LOCAL STATIONS' and features a breadcrumb trail: 'HOME > LOCAL STATIONS > LOCAL STATION STORIES > IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISIONS IDAHO REPORTS BEGINS NEW SEASON'. A red banner reads 'IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION'S "IDAHO REPORTS" BEGINS NEW...'. The article title is 'Idaho Public Television's "Idaho Reports" Begins New Season'. The text describes the show's start on January 14, hosted by Thanh Tan, and its focus on legislative action. A photo of Thanh Tan is included. The article concludes with a profile of the Public Servant of the Week. A footer mentions sponsorship by The Larry W. Cunningham Foundation.

APTS
Association of Public Television Stations
LOCAL SERVICE NATIONAL VOICE

HOME ABOUT LEGISLATIVE LEGAL/REGULATORY LOCAL STATIONS NEWS EVENTS

LOCAL STATIONS

You are here: [HOME](#) > [LOCAL STATIONS](#) > [LOCAL STATION STORIES](#) > IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISIONS IDAHO REPORTS BEGINS NEW SEASON

IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION'S "IDAHO REPORTS" BEGINS NEW...

Idaho Public Television's "Idaho Reports" Begins New Season

 IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION idahoptv.org

Idaho Public Television's *Idaho Reports*, the longest-running legislative-coverage show in the West, begins regular half hour-long weekly updates and analysis, Friday, January 14. With host Thanh Tan, the show chronicles the week's legislative action and adds perspective from state officials, legislators, Statehouse reporters and others. "This year, *Idaho Reports* will closely track budget issues, especially since the state is facing a potential \$340 million shortfall," Tan says.

"Unlike previous years, the state no longer has rainy day funds or federal stimulus dollars to fall back on. We'll explain where changes will be felt in government services. It will be fascinating to see whether the Idaho Legislature cuts spending, raises taxes, cuts taxes, or attempts to do a combination of all those things."

Idaho Reports 2011 has additional repeats on the Idaho Public Television HD Channel and World Channel; see the online schedule at idahoptv.org/schedules/. Each week's episode also is archived online at idahoptv.org/idareports/. Tan talks each week with a panel of lawmakers about legislative activities, as well as a panel of reporters and experts.

This season, the show features two new segments. Perspectives goes outside the studio to highlight two political insiders who are on opposite sides of an issue. Ask Idaho Reports takes requests from viewers to answer questions about the Legislature or to check on a myth or fact.

"Ask Idaho Reports is sort of a cross between Ask Jeeves and Mythbusters," Tan says. "It's just 90 seconds or so but we want viewers to engage with us through Facebook and submit any question they may have about state government. For instance, people wonder how much money is really spent on keeping up the Stimplot House or how much the state spends per prisoner. We want to find the facts and, if necessary, debunk the myths people believe about government."

Each episode concludes with a profile of the Public Servant of the Week, a lighthearted introduction to the men and women who come from throughout the state to represent the people of their district and Idaho in the Legislature.

 IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION idahoptv.org
Sponsorship provided by The Larry W. Cunningham Foundation

IDAHO REPORTS

<http://www.aps.org/local-stations/local-station-stories/idaho-public-television-idaho-reports-begins-new-season>



APTS
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LOCAL SERVICE NATIONAL VOICE

HOME ABOUT LEGISLATIVE LEGAL/REGULATORY LOCAL STATIONS NEWS EVENTS

LOCAL STATIONS

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IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION KEEPS IDAHO RESIDENTS ENGAGED THROUGH IDAHO...

Idaho Public Television Keeps Idaho Residents Engaged through Idaho Legislature Live

IDAHO PUBLIC TELEVISION
idahoptv.org

Idaho Public Television is committed to ensuring that residents of Idaho can stay engaged in the operations of their local government through Idaho Legislature Live. Idaho Legislature Live extends Idaho Public Television's long-standing commitment to airing live gavel-to-gavel coverage of Idaho House and Senate floor action via over-the-air broadcast, on cable via Idaho Public Television's Learn/Create and World channels, and via live streams online at idahoptv.org/leglive/.

Cameras installed in the chambers of the House and Senate capture the floor action for live broadcast/streaming only. Anyone in Idaho with over-the-air reception of IdahoPTV's four digital channels can watch the gavel-to-gavel action from the Idaho House (Learn/Create Sub-Channel 3) and Senate (World Sub-Channel 4). These channels are also carried by CableONE in southwestern Idaho, Time Warner cable systems in Moscow and Pullman, Washington, and some additional cable systems in the state.

The C-Span-like coverage also includes budget presentations to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC). Other committee hearings may be streamed online only — sometimes with video, sometimes audio only, depending on the Statehouse hearing room being used.

Idaho Legislature Live is a collaborative effort among Idaho Public Television, the Idaho Department of Administration, and the Legislative Services Office. Operational funding is provided by grants from the Idaho State Broadcasters Association, Idaho Association of Counties and Idaho Public Television Endowment.

Idaho Legislature Live

<http://www.aptv.org/local-stations/local-station-stories/idaho-public-television-keeps-idaho-residents-engaged-through-i>

MISSION US A REVOLUTIONARY WAY TO LEARN HISTORY



—Ross Schultz, teacher in the Boise School District, was named Idaho Teacher of the Year for Mission US. He was recognized for outstanding efforts in using Mission US, For Crown and Colony, an innovative multimedia resource, to enrich the teaching of American history with his students at Les Bois Junior High in Boise. Mission US is a series of free online games, produced by public television station THIRTEEN, in association with WNET.ORG, designed to “revolutionize” the way social studies learning takes place in classrooms and homes. The games, together with a rich variety of supplemental resources for students and teachers, are available at www.mission-us.org.

“I thought the program was great and my kids loved it, more importantly they learned the content material. I teach 9th grade and this was great for all of my kids from the accelerated classes to the kids who struggle in my class... As a new teacher I look to get the content to my kids in the format that interests them the most. [The] program had the kids playing the game and learning the content and relearning on their own time.”

IdahoPTV People Updates



Tan's Going Away Party,
February 1, 2011

Hahn Becoming Thank

—As you know, last month I announced Thanh Tan is leaving Idaho Public Television. Her last day was February 5. She has accepted an exciting new position for the *Texas Tribune* in Austin, Texas that will focus on reporting politics via cross media platforms.

In the two and half years Thanh has worked for IdahoPTV, she has made a real mark on our organization through her efforts on *Idaho Reports*, *Idaho Debates* and several *Outdoor Idaho* episodes. I will personally miss her warmth, vigor and enthusiasm that she put into everything she did here at Idaho Public Television.

I'm very excited that Greg Hahn of the *Idaho Statesman* has agreed to serve as host/editor of *Idaho Reports* while we search for Thanh's replacement. Greg has a decade of experience reporting on Idaho politics and has been a frequent guest and contributor to *Idaho Reports*. I'd like to thank Mi-Ai Parrish, *Idaho Statesman* Publisher, for her willingness to let us borrow Greg during the session.

—It is with great sadness I acknowledge the passing of DeVaan Anderson, longtime director of the Friends of Idaho Public Television, Inc. Board of Directors. DeVaan served Idaho Public Television with great distinction and dedication for 35 years. He was a veteran of World War II. During his decades of service to IdahoPTV, he brought great perspective to our grand endeavor. Thank you DeVaan. Your efforts have been appreciated and you will be missed.



Our IdahoPTV Productions



January "Iconic Idaho" Photo Contest Winners

Don't forget to check out *Outdoor Idaho's* January's "Iconic Idaho" Photo Contest winners on Facebook. These are great pictures, especially these two eagles. Enjoy!

facebook <http://www.facebook.com/outdoor.idaho>



© jay's photo's



Behind the Stories Goodbyes are Tough

By Bruce Reichert
January 19, 2011



Thanh Tan in front of the State Capitol.

It's always tough to bid adieu to a colleague, especially one as smart and talented and energetic as Thanh Tan. For more than two years, she has brilliantly steered our longest-running local show, *Idaho Reports*, making it 'must-see' TV for anyone even remotely interested in Idaho politics. And along the way she has produced some wonderful *Outdoor Idaho* episodes, too, my favorite being "Eating Local," about Idaho's growing local-foods movement.

But she's leaving for Austin, Texas, where she will be the multi-platform reporter for the *Texas Tribune*. Politics is a contact sport in Texas, but, hey, the music is great, and I have no doubt that Thanh will soon liven things up in the Lone Star State.



Greg Hahn

Not wanting to weaken our other shows like *Dialogue*, we decided to move forward by trying something a bit unorthodox. We asked long-time political reporter and *Statesman* editor Greg Hahn to take over the reins for the next couple of months. Some of you may recall that Greg and Betsy Russell were our go-to Statehouse correspondents for *Idaho Reports* a few years back.

He may know next to nothing about a teleprompter, but Greg understands Idaho politics like few others do. And he's well respected among his colleagues and among those he's reported on.

When *Statesman* publisher Mi-Ai Parrish gave her blessing, she offered only one piece of advice: work with him on his wardrobe and his hair!

Easier said than done. Greg is not your buttoned-down kind of host...which we're hoping means only good things for *Idaho Reports* and our viewers.



Senator Mike Crapo

- Airs Thursday, February 10, at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
- Repeats Sunday, February 13, at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT
- See it in HD Thursday, February 10, at 9:30/8:30 p.m. MT/PT and Sunday, February 13, at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT (High Definition, Sub-Channel 2)

On February 10, *Dialogue* host Joan Cartan-Hansen will interview U.S. Senator Mike Crapo, R-Idaho.

Crapo wants the new Congress to focus on deficit reduction. Crapo was one of 11 members of the President's Commission on Fiscal Responsibility to support the Commission's report.

Crapo also discusses his priorities for controlling America's debt. He'll also talk about what to expect as Republicans take control of the House and what issues he anticipates will come up before the Senate as Congress begins a new session.

The February 10 live show will take calls from viewers on a toll-free line: 1-800-973-9800. Questions can also be submitted before the show begins via email at dialogue@idahoptv.org or to the *Dialogue* Facebook page at www.facebook.com/dialogue.

Medicaid Woes

—Aired Thursday, February 3, at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, February 6, at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT



Dialogue host Marcia Franklin and her guests discussed the challenges facing the Medicaid system. Franklin's guests were Richard Armstrong, director of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare; and Leslie Clement, the Medicaid administrator for Idaho Health and Welfare.

The two administrators discussed some of the tough choices their agency confronts in the face of continued budgetary reductions. They also reacted to the testimony presented by Idaho citizens during Friday's special hearings by the Legislature's Joint Finance – Appropriations Committee on potential cuts to Medicaid. Governor Butch Otter has asked the agency to pare \$25 million in state funds from its budget.

Schools Chief Luna

—Aired Thursday, January 27 (Thursday) at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, January 30 (Sunday) at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT



Dialogue host Joan Cartan-Hansen interviewed Tom Luna, Idaho superintendent for public instruction.

Luna wants to change the way Idaho's schools do business. He and Gov. Butch Otter propose reforming how schools are financed, changing teacher tenure, promoting digital learning and adopting national standards, and they plan to do so with or without any additional money. Cartan-Hansen talked with Luna about these plans and the future of K-12 education in Idaho.

Lt. Col. Victor Fehrenbach

—Aired Thursday, January 20, at 8:30/7:30 p.m. MT/PT
—Repeated Sunday, January 23, at 5:30/4:30 p.m. MT/PT



Dialogue host Marcia Franklin talked with Lt. Col. Victor Fehrenbach of Mountain Home Air Force Base, whose challenge of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) policy regarding gays in the military was one of the centerpieces of the debate on the issue.

Now that DADT has been effectively repealed, what's next for Fehrenbach and other gays serving in the military? What changed lawmakers' minds about lifting the ban on gays serving openly in the U.S. armed forces? Will the repeal hurt morale in the military? Franklin and Fehrenbach discussed those and other issues.

Fehrenbach, who has served in the U.S. Air Force since 1991, has deployed six times in support of seven major combat operations, including missions over Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan. His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, nine Air Medals — including an Air Medal for Heroism — and five Air Force Commendation Medals.

In May of 2008, Fehrenbach discovered that he had been “outed” by a civilian and that the Air Force was seeking to terminate him under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” He decided to fight his discharge and then go public about his situation. His case added to the national discussion on the issue, with newly elected President Barack Obama saying he wanted to repeal DADT.

On Dec. 15 of last year the U.S. House passed a repeal bill, and three days later the Senate also passed the legislation. President Obama signed the bill the following week. However, under the new law, the president, the secretary of defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff must, among other measures, certify that they have drafted repeal regulations that don’t harm military readiness, effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting and retention. Once that certification is given, a 60-day waiting period will begin before DADT is formally repealed.

Public Television in the News



<http://www.mtexpress.com/index2.php?ID=2005135195>



Hear about nukes at Science Café

The public is invited to the Sun Valley Science Café today, Feb. 2, to learn about “clean energy.”

The event will run from 6-9 p.m. at the nexStage Theatre in Ketchum. It is sponsored by the Discovery Center of Idaho, Idaho National Laboratory, Boise State University and Idaho Public Television.

Science Café will include a premiere showing of NOVA’s “Making Stuff: Cleaner” and a presentation from Steven Aumeier of INL’s Energy Systems & Technology Division, on “how nuclear energy will play a role in hybrid energy systems of the future.”

Admission is free. Light hors d’oeuvres and beverages will be served.

Can TV Be a Partner in Your Child’s Education?

By Heather Robson

February 2011



There’s no doubt that most children watch too much TV. But that doesn’t mean that all TV is bad. In fact, on Idaho’s public television station you’ll find dozens of shows meant to educate, challenge, and engage children on different topics.

If you're looking for ways to introduce new ideas to your young children in a way that sticks, you might find that judicious use of the children's programming available to you can be a big help.

Ron Pisaneschi, the Director of Content for Idaho Public Television since 1987, knows a few things about children's public television—how you can use it to enhance your children's education and provide them with a unique learning experience that is tailored to their interests and needs.

He was kind enough to sit down with me and share his insights into the process behind education programming for children and the goals those programs are meant to achieve.

Pisaneschi's opinion is a respected one. In addition to taking the helm at IDPTV, he also serves as an advisor on the national level, providing advice to producers on how to create educational programs that succeed in engaging and educating children.

Pisaneschi emphasizes two things when it comes to successfully using television as an educational tool. First, parent participation is important. And second, the TV show should serve as a jumping-off point. It's not just about watching TV, but about watching and learning and then doing and exploring.

To give this goal more momentum, today's public TV shows that are geared toward kids are very interactive. The show's characters often ask the audience to participate. They might ask a watching child to remember a specific word or to do a certain action. This helps keep kids engaged and turns the viewing experience into something more than a passive activity.

But the interactivity goes further than that. Each show has suggested activities associated with it that parents can find online and do with their children.

"We hope," says Pisaneschi, "that parents are watching these shows with their children and discussing them afterwards, so that the lessons the show is working to impart stick even better. We know it doesn't always work that way, but that is the ideal."

So, it's easy to say in general you should watch a show with your child, discuss the lessons, and then build an activity around what you've learned, but let's take a look at what that really means.

One of the current popular shows is *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*. In this show, Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat takes two children, Sally and Nick, on adventures that help them learn about nature, the environment, and animal behaviors. The show weaves in songs and rhymes to engage young children.

When you watch *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*, encourage your children to sing along with the songs and to learn the rhymes. Ask them about what they think is going to happen and listen to any questions they have about the show. For example, in one episode, *Migration Vacation*, Sally and Nick discover the purple martin swallow that lives in Sally's backyard isn't there anymore. The Cat and Nick and Sally track down the missing bird and learn about bird migration along the way. As you watch, you could ask your children about where they think the bird has gone and why.

When the show is finished, talk about what you saw and learned. If possible, draw connections between the show and experiences your child has had. In the case of *Migration Vacation*, you might ask your child what she thinks it would be like to migrate every year or if she knows some local birds that migrate.

Then, plan an activity that will support what your child learned in the show. This is something that you can design yourself. It can be as simple as drawing a picture of a favorite scene or as involved as going out and observing real life instances of what was discovered in the show. For *Migration Vacation*, you might ask your child to draw the

different habitats the purple martin travels to during the year. Or you might take him to visit the Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge to learn more about local migratory birds.

If you're stuck for activities, you can visit the show's website for ideas and for more resources to help you bring science to life for your kids. For the episode Migration Vacation, the site has instructions for making a hanging bird feeder. It also provides tips on observing birds as they come and go and recording your observations.

Each of the children's programs on Idaho Public Television has a corresponding website with activities and resources to help you make the most of your child's TV time. You can find Idaho's full programming schedule at idahoptv.org/schedules. Click the "Full Day" link, so you can see all the shows. When a show interests you, click its title to learn more. In the window that opens, look for the link to the show's specific website with activities for kids, suggestions for parents, and resources for both.

In closing, Pisaneschi underscored the community effort that is involved in bringing quality educational programming to the public broadcasting channels. "These shows aren't like others that are meant to provide a vessel for commercials. These shows are meant to educate and entertain, but that means the funding can be harder to come by."

Idaho Public Television uses donations from private citizens and businesses to contribute to the development of engaging, interactive, educational, and fun programs. Because community involvement is important from beginning to end, Pisaneschi emphasized that he loves to receive feedback from parents about children's shows—what's working, what's missing, what you love, and what could be better. Your feedback helps make children's public programming better for everyone... including the next generation of growing, curious, precious young minds.

You can contact Ron Pisaneschi at Idaho Public Television by writing to Idaho Public Television, 1455 N. Orchard St., Boise, ID 83706-2239, or by calling 373-7220.

Heather Robson is a local freelance writer with a passion for healthy families. You can reach her with questions and comments at heather@dragonfly-media.com.

Gov. Butch Otter's blown-up budget empowers lawmakers



Budget hawks seize the day after the governor says he's off by \$150 million.

By Dan Popkey - dpopkey@idahostatesman.com

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Published: 01/29/11

Legislators and headline writers like saying a chief executive's budget is "Dead on arrival."

In Gov. Butch Otter's case, the dying was operatic.

It took 18 days for Otter to acknowledge that trimming a projected \$340 million two-year gap to \$35 million couldn't withstand scrutiny. Now, says Otter, the shortfall is \$185 million.

That tragic end rewards budget hawks who prepared for a death scene they knew was coming.

"It's the governor's obligation to balance the budget when we're not here," said a leader of the hawks, House Majority Caucus Chairman Ken Roberts, R-Donnelly. "When the Legislature comes to town, it's our responsibility."

Roberts is targeting a rich new prospect: \$128 million in revenue sharing passed from the state's sales tax to city and county governments.

"The state has been forced by lack of revenue to reduce spending," he said. "Counties and cities and other local taxing districts need to do the same thing because their property taxpayers are paying the bill."

Roberts said he wouldn't be raising the idea had Otter's \$35 million figure held. "But now that we've got a much more significant hole to fill, we have to look there."

The collapse of Otter's Jan. 10 budget has three causes: revenue that dropped in December after a few months of positive returns; \$47 million in unexpectedly high claims for sales tax rebates on renewable energy equipment; and \$70 million to conform with federal tax law changes enacted in late December.

The new shortfall raises questions about gubernatorial attention to detail:

- Three days after Otter's cheery assessment for the first five months of fiscal 2011 put the \$33 million in the pot, his economist told lawmakers that December revenue was down \$10.7 million. Was Otter unaware of the news?

- Otter campaigned last year as a booster of renewables, signing blades on wind turbines and running a TV spot touting his vision. How did he miss the tax implications of a 6 percent break on \$783 million in machinery and equipment?

- Federal income tax changes were long anticipated, including doubling the accelerated deduction for capital investment. Why didn't Otter at least raise a red flag for lawmakers on Jan. 10, even if he didn't have a firm estimate of the cost to Idaho?

"We have asked those questions," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman Dean Cameron, R-Rupert. "I am surprised that the Tax Commission or (Otter's Division of Financial Management) would not have anticipated those items."

Cameron's co-leader on the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, Rep. Maxine Bell, R-Jerome, balks at the notion that Idaho must simply agree to the larger federal tax breaks. "We're conforming to the federal Tax Code? Why?"

In fact, in 2003 and 2004 the Legislature rejected conformance, costing state taxpayers \$75 million.

The chance to use lower revenues to shrink government has turned lion-hearted resisters of federal fiat to compliant kittens. "We're trapped," said Sen. Monty Pearce, R-New Plymouth, ordinarily a fed fighter. "If we don't comply, we have to keep two sets of books."

GOP leaders including Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill, R-Rexburg, are talking about suspending rules next week to speed conformance. "Our citizens can't even file their 2010 tax returns," Hill said.

Hill said Otter deserves a break and described a meeting in the governor's office Thursday morning where participants were making hasty calculations "on the back of an envelope."

"This is brand-new news," Hill said. "I don't think there are any games being played."

Gamesmanship or not, Otter has ceded leadership on reshaping government to the legislative branch.

Rep. Steve Thayne, R-Emmett, has drafted a bill to eliminate the Idaho Commission on the Arts, a \$1.7 million agency. "We're shopping it around," Thayne said, adding that sufficient interest could mean runs at killing funding for the Hispanic Commission and Idaho Public TV.

Thayne also is circulating a list of cuts to the \$1.2 billion K-12 budget. Among the savings: raising class size by two (\$100 million); cutting teacher compensation 12 percent (\$89 million); cutting 3,000 teachers' aides (\$70 million in salary); cutting kindergarten by two-thirds (\$40 million); creating a teacher health insurance pool (\$15 million to \$35 million), spurring early graduation (\$13 million to \$90 million); and cutting technology (\$6 million to \$12 million).

Lawmakers aren't being disrespectful of the governor, who remains well-liked. They're filling a vacuum.

Though he's been continuously employed in elective office since 1985, Otter chickened out on offering his own restructuring plan in his State of the State speech.

"Now is the time to come forward with your ideas for eliminating whole programs that may fall outside the statutory or constitutional responsibilities of state government," he told lawmakers.

They're taking him at his word.

Dan Popkey: 377-6438

Read more: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/29/1506900/otters-blown-up-budget-empowers.html#ixzz1CRQsPgu7>

Emotional Testimony on Health and Welfare

Posted by Andrew Crisp on Fri, Jan 28, 2011 at 10:02 AM



The Joint Finance Appropriations Committee opened its chambers this morning to the second round of public testimony on the tough budget faced by legislators this session. In the first round, hundreds of Idaho citizens—some driving hours to attend—gave three-minute, rapid-fire testimony on the services they needed from the state Department of Education.

Now, JFAC is turning its ears to Health and Welfare. Already this morning we've heard from adults with mental disabilities, doctors, health-care providers and health-services industry professionals—and Elizabeth, an adorable teenage girl with autism.

"I want to go to college," she read from her notes, obviously shy. "I want to have an apartment and a cat named Adam. I also want to have a rabbit named Chocolate Syrup. I want to have a job. I want to be a good citizen. I want to pay taxes."

Elizabeth Reedy, like others who have testified this morning, fears the ramifications of cuts to the health-care services portion of the Fiscal Year 2012 budget. With a budget hole of \$84 million, Health and Welfare will inevitably sustain some cuts. Of most concern to those testifying: psychosocial rehabilitation services, adults with developmental disabilities and home health care—programs likely to sustain cuts.

"I've been a quadriplegic for over 20 years due to an auto accident," said Greg Renshaw from his wheelchair. With state services, Renshaw is able to live in his own home—for now. "Recent Medicaid policy changes have put me into an economic tail spin ... I'm in danger of losing my house," he said.

Every testimony thus far has been a plea to keep a program, or a suggestion to provide a new one, in hopes of ultimately saving the state money. Numerous individuals have suggested that deep cuts will ultimately cost the state more money.

"The system is broken because the reimbursement rates went from \$.40 on the dollar to \$.30 on the dollar," said dentist Rich Bailey of reimbursement on dental services for Medicaid patients. His program School Smiles, he claims, could help save the state money through prevention.

"Forty-two percent of all births in Idaho are paid for by Medicaid," said Michelle Bartlett of the Idaho Midwifery Council.

"At 18, I was a dysfunctional mess," said Mark Reinhardt, a self-described aspiring Walter Cronkite. "There were road blocks but I was able to pass them. Without these services, I would be institutionalized and/or in prison."

By 9 a.m., 142 people had signed up to testify. In addition to being shown from the Capitol's largest auditorium on the Garden Level where JFAC is convened, the hearings are being shown in five other overflow committee rooms, as well as online at Idaho Public Television.

Mountain Home News

Idaho Public Television has come to the rescue of Clifford the Big Red Dog and students in Diane Murphy's kindergarten class at North Elementary School.

Friday, January 28, 2011

<http://www.mountainhomenews.com/story/1698456.html>

Clifford is a beloved cartoon character on the PBS channel and a stuffed animal Clifford was a mascot of Murphy's class. But Clifford turned up missing a few days ago when he went home with a student as part of an in-class project where he goes home to visit with children and their families.

During the stuffed dog's recent stay with one child's family, the student opted to bring him along as he and his father walked to the local Albertson's to rent some videos. Tucked into the child's coat -- to keep him warm, the student admitted -- the stuffed dog apparently slipped out of his coat and wasn't missed until they returned home.

The child and his father retraced their steps hoping to find the elusive mascot but had no luck. But unwilling to give up, the student urged his parents to put out hand-drawn "missing animal" flyers, including one that reached the Mountain Home News, which reported on its website Thursday the effort to find the mascot.

The story was spotted by Ramona Dopps, Idaho Public Television's director of membership and a Mountain Home resident perhaps best known for organizing the annual rodeo in the city that's named after her late son.

She shared the story of the missing mascot with her colleagues.

"I work where Clifford lives," Dopps said. "I knew we had to have some stuffed Cliffords in the building.

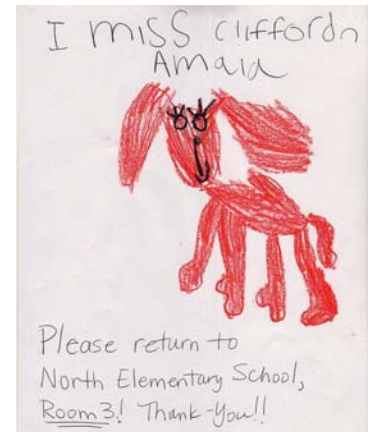
"I didn't want those kids to be without a Clifford, so I contacted my fellow employees here to see if there was something we could do about it. Everybody here wanted to find a Clifford to help out."

IPTV graphic artist Lisa Sommer did have her own stuffed Clifford in her office and donated it to replace the missing mascot at North Elementary.

"I was touched by the kid's story," Sommer said. "I was more than happy to part with the one I had for such a good cause."

The replacement pooch was delivered to North Elementary first thing Friday morning by Dopps' husband, Dave.

A kindergarten student at North Elementary School drew this poster in hopes of enlisting the community's help in finding the mascot of Diane Murphy's classroom. The stuffed animal went missing as the boy and his father walked from their home to the local Albertson's.



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Luna releases two draft K-12 reform bills Thursday night, softens online mandate

By Dan Popkey, Idaho Statesman
01/27/2011



Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna has loosened his proposed mandate for online high school coursework from eight units to six, and would allow students to take the courses at any time during their four years of high school.

To graduate, 46 units are required.

Luna announced the changes in an interview on Idaho Public Television's "Dialogue" Thursday night. His original plan, outlined Jan. 12, mandated two online courses per year in high school, partly to save money to buy laptops for all high school students and a teacher pay-for-performance program.

Instead of a single bill, which Luna originally said would be delivered to the Legislature by early last week, his office posted two drafts on his website Thursday night. For bill to be printed and given a number, a legislative committee must vote to do so.

The first draft, titled "Public School Modernization & Reform," is 91 pages.

The second, "Labor Relations & Employee Entitlements," is 45 pages.

Hearings on the measures will begin in the Senate Education Committee of Feb. 7 and continue through Feb. 10.

Luna fielded questions submitted online and from callers. He countered the argument that teachers will be displaced and students left to their own devices. Luna said teachers would be an integral part of online instruction.

"We're not replacing teachers with laptops," he said.

Luna was asked why he didn't mention his plan during his re-election campaign last year. He said he had long supported online education and other options to traditional K-12 education. "What we have talked about is we want more choices in education," Luna said.

Asked why he's pressing hard for adoption for the program this year, Luna said the state's financial crisis is pivotal.

Piloting aspects of the plan would hurt schools not included, Luna said. Non-pilot schools would have fewer school days and four-day school weeks, he said. "They have no money for technology, no money for teacher pay," Luna said. "We have to do this now or we cut the system more...We can't stay on that death spiral. We have to change what the system does."

Read more: http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/27/idahopolitics/luna_releases_two_draft_reform_bills_thursday_night_announces_ch#ixzz1CLxXEHW6

Superintendent Luna to take calls on TV tonight on K-12 reform plan

By Dan Popkey, Idaho Statesman
01/27/2011



Idaho Public Television's weekly public affairs program, "Dialogue," will host Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna Thursday at 8:30 p.m.

IPTV's Joan Cartan-Hansen will interview Luna. The program includes comments and questions from viewers who call 1-800-973-9800.

Luna's reform plan has been the unexpected big issue of the 2011 Legislature. Luna announced his plan on Jan. 12 and the topic dominated a four-hour hearing in the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee last week.

Read more: http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/27/idahopolitics/superintendent_luna_live_tv_tonight_talking_k12_reform_plan#ixzz1CLxAcfDW

State Cuts to Public Broadcasting Would Affect Federal Mandates, Maintenance

Idaho Reporter, January 25, 2011
By Brad Iverson-Long

<http://www.freepress.net/news/2011/1/26/state-cuts-public-broadcasting-would-affect-federal-mandates-maintenance>



Idaho Public Television says it needs more than \$1 million in additional to meet federal mandates and maintain its broadcasting equipment, but would see a \$154,500 drop in funding from its current \$2.4 million budget in the next proposed state budget.

Luna to talk school reform on 'Dialogue' tonight, take calls

By Betsy Russell, Spokesman Review
Jan. 27, 2011

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

State Superintendent of Schools Tom Luna will appear on Idaho Public Television's "Dialogue" program tonight to explain his school reform plan and take calls from the public. The show airs live statewide, at 8:30 p.m. Mountain time, 7:30 p.m. Pacific time. Questions can be emailed before the show to dialogue@idahoptv.org; to call in during the show, call (800) 973-9800.



Thanh Tan
IdahoPTV journalist signs off

By George Prentice, Boise Weekly

Thanh Tan is busy this week saying her good-byes and packing her reporter's notebook before heading to Austin, Texas, to become the multi-platform reporter for the Texas Tribune. Following commercial television assignments in Portland, Ore., and at Boise's KBCI-TV, Tan assumed the producer/host duties of Idaho Public Television's Idaho Reports, the Friday night recap of all things political.

This is a significant change.

The Texas Tribune is a public media organization that uses a digital platform. They have a full staff of reporters presenting content for an online audience. I'm coming in there as a multi-media reporter. That means I'll be doing a mix of everything--video reports, data visualization and a decent amount of writing for the Texas Tribune website and occasionally contributing to the New York Times, because they have a partnership.

What will be your beat?

The Texas Tribune covers public policy for the state of Texas. It was started 14 months ago by Evan Smith, the former editor of the Texas Monthly, who I consider to be a visionary. He secured funding from a venture capitalist to create a new media start-up and decided to hire the best of the best, pay them the way journalists should be paid and put out the best possible news content.

Have you spent any time in Texas?

No. My only exposure was a one-day trip to Austin for my interview three weeks ago.

What was the difference between your first Idaho Reports broadcast in January 11, 2008, and your last on January 21, 2011?

In 2008 my goal was to get a show on the air, keep it going and try to make it interesting. And the program was a half-hour then. Pretty quickly, I learned to engage more with our audience through social media like Facebook and Twitter.

And you expanded the show.

We used to have the same line up every week. But I wanted to hear different voices, different power players and people who had direct knowledge of government. So that meant a new mix of reporters, scholars and lawmakers.

Would people be surprised at how hard it is to put that show on the air?

Absolutely. Thirty minutes was hard enough, but we expanded the format. And we were covering a moving target. Sometimes there would be breaking news an hour before show time. Throughout the week, you thought you knew what the big topics were going to be, but things happened very quickly.

Let's talk about Idaho Public Television. In 2010 you were in the unique position of covering the legislature when IdahoPTV was on the chopping block. It must have been a delicate balance to report on something that was your livelihood.

That was the most challenging time I ever had at public television. I so believe in the mission of IdahoPTV, and I believe that government should play some role in our ability to get our content out there and educate people throughout the state. When the proposed cuts were announced, there was a real possibility that I could lose my job. I remember the morning that our general manager told us the governor was considering phasing out funding for public television. I just started crying. The next day I went to the briefing to hear what would be in the governor's State of the State. I had to step outside into the hallway to have a good cry. I had to go on the air a couple of hours later. It was really hard. That's when you summon up all the professional ability that you have. You have to train yourself to disengage from the part that is affecting you personally.

Tell me about the friends you've made while in Idaho.

My best friends, those that know me best as an adult, are all here. I have friends from all walks of life--inside and outside journalism, my foodie friends from my local food group, my political friends and my friends at IdahoPTV, who I'm going to miss so much.

And what are you looking forward to the most?

Professionally, I'm at a point in my life where there was still time to take a risk. I think I have found a place that values really strong journalism. I'm fascinated with the idea of working in a place like Austin and working for an organization with a huge emphasis on innovation, taking journalism to the next step.

When do you leave?

I have to report to work on Feb. 7. This happened very quickly. It's quite overwhelming.

Where will we be able to see your work?

Texastribune.org.

BSU Radio January 26

Scott Ki interview with Peter Morrill

Reporter Scott Ki: In a broad overview of its operations, Peter Morrill, head of Idaho Public Television, made clear budget cuts are affecting the future of IPTV.

Peter Morrill: Where we have made our reductions have been in the variable operating expenses which are, you know, pure dollars for putting out for parts and ongoing maintenance and then finally personnel.

Ki: Morrill says IPTV would have to defer much needed equipment maintenance and cut two to three full-time employees to meet Governor Butch Otter's budget recommendations. The governor calls for reducing IPTV's budget by more than 4%. Morrill also noted that public broadcasting is limited in what it can do to raise alternative funding.



Morrill: We can't charge for our broadcast signals. And we can't charge cable and satellite for the use of those signals. By federal statute we have to give those signals free to cable and satellite. So we cannot derive revenue from that kind of activity unlike commercial broadcasters that do have the ability to go in and negotiate carriage fees and what not.

Ki: And federal money is in danger.

Morrill: Likelihood of more federal support or support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting this coming year is not likely given the budget scenarios in Washington, DC at this time.

Ki: On a positive note, private donations and pledges are meeting basic goals.

Morrill: Given these very difficult economic times, we are gratified that we've met very basic fundraising goals. But there are no easy pots of gold out there that we have found. And we are also very proud of the fact that we are exceeding our peer groups in our ability to raise private funds, so. Also we are running an efficient, and efficient statewide delivery system. We have fully one-third less technical staff than our peers.

Ki: But the average dollar amount of donations is down from previous years. And without money to maintain or replace infrastructure IPTV's basic equipment is in danger of deteriorating. For Boise State Public Radio, I'm Scott Ki.

State cuts to public broadcasting would affect federal mandates, maintenance

By Brad Iverson-Long, Idaho Reporter.com

January 25th, 2011

The head of Idaho Public Television spoke to JFAC

<http://www.idahoreporter.com/2011/state-cuts-to-public-broadcasting-would-affect-federal-mandates-maintenance/>



Idaho Public Television (IPTV) says it needs more than \$1 million in additional to meet federal mandates and maintain its broadcasting equipment, but would see a \$154,500 drop in funding from its current \$2.4 million appropriated budget in the next proposed state budget.

"There are definitely cracks in our system that are beginning to appear," said IPTV General Manager Peter Morrill, who said IPTV has put off maintenance for three years. Morrill said IPTV needs to remove some of its analog broadcast equipment, now that it's switched to digital broadcasting. "There is still a boatload of analog equipment along mountaintops."

State funding makes up 20 percent of IPTV funding, with grants and donations covering the rest of its budget. Lawmakers on the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee questioned whether Morrill has looked at getting more private contributions to fund the statewide TV network.

"This committee got a lot of e-mails in support of public TV from last year," Sen. Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson, said. "If each one of those e-mails came with a financial contribution, you'd be in a much different financial situation this year." Last year, Gov. Butch Otter suggested that the state phase out its funding for IPTV, a move lawmakers didn't follow.

Morrill said that IPTV increased the number of donors through fundraising, but the average amount given dropped. "Times are not the easiest times out there," Morrill said. "Corporate contributions are very challenging right now. It's not an easy field to plow."

Besides old equipment, Morrill said IPTV also needs to extra funding to not run afoul of mandates from the Federal Communications Commission to improve its emergency alert system and follow the CALM Act, which is designed to limit how loud TV commercials can get. Morrill said public television stations, which don't run traditional 30-second commercials, failed to get an exemption in the law.

Los Angeles Times

KCET's prime-time ratings slip 38% in first three weeks without PBS

January 24, 2011 | 5:37 pm



Helen Mirren

Finding viewers after PBS continues to be a challenge for KCET-TV Channel 28.

Through the first three weeks of the year, the Silver Lake-based broadcaster has been averaging 19,000 households, a 38% plunge compared with the same period last year, according to the Nielsen Co.

KCET, once the West Coast flagship of PBS, exited the network at the end of last year after months of disputes over fees and other issues. The schedule now consists of reruns of British dramas such as the spy caper "Mi-5" and the whodunit "Prime Suspect" with Helen Mirren as well as imported news programs and documentaries. Most of KCET's former PBS lineup was picked up by Orange County's KOCE-TV, now called PBS SoCal.

As bad as the prime-time ratings are, the total-day numbers are even worse. Over the course of its entire broadcast day, KCET has lost fully half its viewers compared with last year. The station now averages just 10,000 households, a figure that suggests the station's potential donor pool will be considerably reduced. That's important because member gifts make up a large portion of the budget at public stations.

Perhaps not surprisingly, KCET has seen its greatest declines with shows that represented the biggest changes to its old PBS lineup. So the daytime block of cooking shows, which replaced the popular PBS kids shows such as "Sesame Street," has been hit particularly hard.

But there's at least one ray of hope. The Saturday night block of British repeats — including "Mi-5" and the sitcom "Keeping Up Appearances" — is actually up 33% compared with last year, to 33,000 households.

— Scott Collins (Twitter: @scottcollinsLAT)

Photo: Helen Mirren as Detective Jane Tennison in "Prime Suspect," which has returned to KCET-TV. Credit: Granada International.

Spending cuts as culture war

By Ezra Klein, Washington Post

January 25, 2011

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/ezra-klein/2011/01/spending_cuts_as_culture_war.html

The Washington Post

In his column on Friday, Dana Milbank argued that the spending cuts (pdf) proposed by the Republican Study Committee were as much culture war as fiscal policy. "Among the items the group proposes to eliminate or decimate: the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Title X birth control and family planning, AmeriCorps, the Energy Star program and work on fuel efficient cars, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change." NPR, Amtrak and efforts to prevent beach erosion also come in for specific fire. Not a single program in the Defense Department gets mentioned.

Compare that document with the \$600 billion in named cuts (pdf) the that conservative National Taxpayers Union released in partnership with the liberal U.S. PIRG. The big ticket items there eliminate \$35 billion in agricultural subsidies, \$22 billion in ethanol subsidies, \$93 billion in orders of "obsolete" parts for the Air Force, \$56 billion in spending on the nuclear arsenal, \$11 billion in Medicare payments for high-cost regions, and so on. Love the cuts or hate them, they look a lot more like what you'd end up with if you scoured the federal budget to figure out where we could save money, and maybe get some bipartisan agreement while doing it. The named cuts in the release from the Republican Study Group looks more like what you'd get if you wanted some applause lines at CPAC.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



IPTV winning awards despite funding crunch

By Betsy Russell, Spokesman Review

Jan. 25, 2011 7:35 a.m.

<http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/>

Peter Morrill, general manager of Idaho Public Television, told lawmakers this morning that broadcast television actually is drawing more viewership these days: People are watching an average of 35 hours a week of broadcast TV, but just 20 minutes of online video. He also noted that Idaho Public TV has won 71 major awards this year, including three Emmy awards for "Outdoor Idaho" and "Dialogue for Kids" and an Edward R. Murrow Award for "Outdoor Idaho." "There's some good stuff happening even in these very, very challenging times," he said.

The budget news for Idaho PTV is less sunny, however. Though the network has met its fundraising goals, raises more private funds than similar networks in other states and operates with a third less staff than its peers elsewhere, the governor's budget recommendation is for a 4.1 percent cut in state general fund support and 6.4 percent in total funds. That would mean cutting three positions; making permanent a \$97,200 cut from last year that was replaced by a one-time federal grant that's no longer available; and the governor recommended zero funding for the \$1.3 million in replacement capital the network has requested, including several items mandated by federal law.

Sen. Shawn Keough, R-Sandpoint, asked the consequences of not meeting those federal mandates. Morrill responded that there are two: The emergency alert service mandate, which requires IPTV to be able to provide emergency alerts on a localized basis to four zones; just the equipment to meet that mandate costs \$120,000, and there's a deadline of Sept. 30, 2011. Failure to comply will bring fines starting at \$8,000 per transmitter; IPTV has five transmitters. The second federal mandate comes under new federal legislation regulating loudness from one TV station to another; IPTV will need \$57,000 worth of equipment to meet that by a fiscal year 2012 deadline; fines for non-compliance haven't yet been set. The replacement capital also includes \$75,000 for tower maintenance that Morrill said is much-needed.

Rep. Shirley Ringo, D-Moscow, asked, "Can we duct-tape and bailing wire and get through the time?" Morrill responded, "We're now about three years behind on deferred maintenance, and there are now cracks in our system that are beginning to appear. We have some absolutely required tower maintenance we're expecting this summer that needs to take place." He acknowledged, "It's not going to be the kind of news you want to hear."

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Lawmakers: Turn support into dollars

By Betsy Russell, Spokesman Review

Jan. 25, 2011 7:42 a.m.

<http://www.spokesman.com/blogs/boise/>

Sen. Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson, told IPTV general manager Peter Morrill, "This committee got a lot of emails in support of Public TV last year. My question is, if each one of those emails came with a financial contribution you would be in much different financial shape this year. ... Can you visualize a plan where that support can be turned into greater financial support?"

Morrill responded that IPTV is working hard on fundraising, and has had strong support. But the economy is a factor, he noted. "These are challenging times. Private fundraising is not a robust area right now. ... We have had good individual contributor success. Foundation support right now is kind of like that," and he waved his hand in a wave-like motion. "We went through a dip." More challenging, he said, and key to support for local programs, is corporate fundraising. "Corporate contributions are very challenging right now," Morrill said. "It's not an easy field to plow now."



Boise, Idaho -- The new NOVA public television series "Making Stuff" premiered nationally Wednesday night. And one of its major contributors is a professor from Boise State.

BSU engineering professor Amy Moll was recognized for her work on the series at the Discovery Center in Boise Wednesday morning. She helped shape the four part series by provided show ideas and scientific accuracy. She also helped by raising millions of dollars from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Energy.

"It's just fun. David Poge is the host. He's a columnist for The New York Times. You are going to learn a lot but you're going to enjoy the series as well," said Moll.

The remaining NOVA shows in the series will air on public television over the next three Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

Science NOVA and The Discovery Center of Idaho Team Up

By Andrew Crisp on Wed, Jan 19, 2011 at 5:45 PM

The result of intrepid Idahoans, the NOVA series Making Stuff is all about materials science (see yesterday's post).

Boise State's Dr. Amy Moll helped spearhead the documentary, providing lots of guidance to the folks from PBS, in a joint operation that includes collaboration with the Idaho National Laboratory, Micron Technology, the Discovery Center of Idaho, and Idaho Public Television.



To commemorate the four-part, four-hour series, representatives from the aforementioned were at DCI today along with Moll and astronaut and educator Barbara Morgan, Boise State's Distinguished Educator in Residence.

Dough Lambuth, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for DCI, introduced the group and the project, which includes a series of exhibits at the center that relate to materials science and the NOVA series.

"I've been at the Discovery Center for almost four years and this is the first of its type that I've seen," said Lambuth of the scale of this collaboration.

As part of a national push for STEM education—science, technology, engineering, mathematics—and with Moll as its champion, this project garnered national funding from both the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation.

"I can't wait to watch the NOVA program," said Barbara Morgan. "There's nothing like getting your hands on science and technology."

In conjunction with today's event, Moll and the DCI's Woody Sobey will tour Idaho for special presentations in a number of locations, including Boise, Sun Valley, and Idaho Falls.

"Getting involved in K-12 education makes me a better educator," said Moll. "Public outreach is part of our job. We take money from the National Government, so we should be telling people about what we're doing."

We caught up with Morgan and Moll, and took some time to experiment with the exhibits. Check out the video below.

The Discovery Center will host a special showing of the first installment Making Stuff: Stronger at 7 p.m.—an hour earlier than the debut on IdahoPTV, at 8 p.m.

Star in PBS Constellation Will Join Trib Staff

By Evan Smith, January 19, 2011
Texas Tribune

<http://www.texastribune.org/texas-newspaper/texas-news/star-in-pbs-constellation-will-join-trib-staff/>

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

It gives me enormous pleasure to announce that Thanh Tan will join the staff of the Trib on Monday, Feb. 7, stepping into the multiplatform reporter position that will be vacated in early February by Elise Hu.

Thanh comes to us from Idaho Public Television in Boise, where she has built a reputation as that state's premier practitioner of public interest journalism. For more than two years, Thanh has hosted, produced, booked and written Idaho Reports, the longest-running public affairs program in the West (the hour-long program features original reporting, interviews, field tapings and roundtable discussions with analysts). She has anchored live coverage of major political events in Idaho — the inauguration of state officials, the governor's State of the State address — and moderated debates between candidates for statewide office. She has covered two legislative sessions and part of a third. She has led the station's foray into social media. She has enthusiastically adapted broadcast content for an online audience. She has worked closely and collaboratively with Idaho's public radio stations. For good measure, she has also been an occasional contributor to both the NewsHour on PBS and This American Life on NPR.

For her efforts over the years, Thanh has won a regional Emmy Award, four Capitol Beat Awards (which honor the best statewide reporting), and numerous Idaho Press Club awards and Idaho State Broadcaster Association awards.

Previously, Thanh was a general assignment reporter at KATU-TV in Portland, covering everything from crime to the 2008 presidential election, and before that she was both a general assignment reporter and a political reporter at KBCI-TV in Boise.

A native of Olympia, Wash., Thanh is an honors graduate of the University of Southern California with degrees in international relations and broadcast journalism. During college, she interned for various local TV stations as well as NPR and Nightline. After college, she freelanced for NPR and CNN.

"I've wanted to be a journalist since I was a little girl," she wrote me several weeks ago. "I toyed with other professional aspirations, but something about storytelling always brought me back to the concept of news reporting. I like to know what's going on — and I like to tell people. It's as simple as that."

I must admit that Elise's departure knocked us back a bit, but meeting Thanh and contemplating her addition to our staff gave everyone at the Trib a feeling of great optimism and got us excited all over again about building the team. We can't wait to incorporate her high energy and boundless ambition into our emerging journalistic culture. She's a natural, and she'll be the latest in a long line of got-here-as-fast-as-she-could types to take the Capitol by storm.

Television "Making Stuff" Airs on Nova

Posted by Andrew Crisp on Tue, Jan 18, 2011 at 5:32 PM

Materials science has given us some everyday items: bulletproof vests, ceramics, PVC pipe. But in the laboratory, scientists are applying advancements at the molecular level to create things out of science fiction movies.

"I think we're developing quite a reputation in materials science across the nation," says Mark Rudin, Vice President of Research at Boise State. "[We're] really doing cutting edge stuff."



Scientists like Boise State's Dr. Amy Moll, an engineering professor (remember our Citizen on Moll?) are tackling that next level of technology. By exploring structures on the molecular and atomic level, we can make some surprising "stuff."

Making Stuff is a four part television series created by NOVA in partnership with Moll, Boise State, Discovery Center of Idaho, the Micron Foundation, Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV), and Idaho National Laboratory.

"It's one of those situations where we were lucky to land a number of good, key faculty members that sort of served as a magnet to attract other great talent to the university," says Rudin of hires like Moll.

Moll's work helped fund the series, with a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy for education and outreach, and a \$2.5 million gift from the National Science Foundation. She also served as technical expert by scripting, reviewing scripts and pitching ideas for filming.

Armed with federal and state endowments, molecular science experts are using the molecular properties of materials to create self-healing vehicles, containers that don't absorb bullets (instead of repel them) and plastics made of sugar that dissolve in landfills.

The partnerships that helped create Making Stuff are hosting statewide events for hands-on experiences with the science in the documentary. Moll and DCI Education Director Woody Sobey will perform demos as part of a road show around the state. Catch it at one of the following locations:

Wednesday, Jan. 19—Making Stuff Road Show Kick-Off, 3-4 p.m. in the Idaho State Capitol Auditorium, 700 W. Jefferson St., Boise.

Saturday, Jan. 29 —Discover Engineering Day, 1375 University Drive. Boise (free parking in the Lincoln Parking Garage on the corner of University and Lincoln).

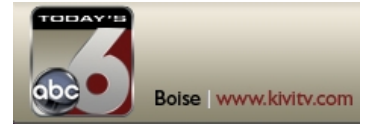
Wednesday, Feb. 2—Sun Valley Science Cafe, 6-9 p.m. nexStage Theatre, 120 S. Main St., Ketchum.

Wednesday, March 16—Idaho Falls Science Cafe, 995 University Blvd., Idaho Falls.

Get a full schedule of statewide events here, watch previews of Making Stuff here and find out when the show airs here.

Statesman editor to host Idaho Reports

Associated Press - January 17, 2011 10:24 AM ET



BOISE, Idaho (AP) - Idaho Statesman local news editor Gregory Hahn will be the next host and moderator of "Idaho Reports" on Idaho Public Television.

IPTV executive producer Bruce Reichert says Hahn will succeed Thanh Tan beginning with the Jan. 28 show, and continue through the 2011 legislative session. Tan has accepted a job as a reporter with the Texas Tribune.

Hahn is a former statehouse reporter for the Statesman. He oversees the newspaper's coverage of politics, state government, the environment and breaking news.

Information from: Idaho Statesman, <http://www.idahostatesman.com>

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(Media-Newswire.com) - From computer guts to spacecraft skins and biomedical robots, technology is driven by materials — the metals, ceramics, polymers and composites from which the modern world is

made. They are the focus of a new NOVA series called "Making Stuff," and the nationwide premiere on Wednesday, Jan. 19, will anchor dynamic educational opportunities throughout the state presented by Boise State University, Discovery Center of Idaho (DCI), Idaho Public Television (IdahoPTV), Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the Micron Foundation.

This unique partnership is rooted in an idea NOVA shares, that "the human story behind the science story" is the best way to engage and get people excited about the breakthroughs that changed the course of history as well as those driving the future. The study of materials is key to the brightest version of that future, especially when you explore the eye-popping possibilities of structural manipulation on the level of molecules and atoms.

"We couldn't build skyscrapers until we figured out how to make steel economically, and we couldn't make smart phones without creating integrated circuits and making them smaller and smaller and smaller," said Boise State engineering professor Amy Moll. "The importance of materials to civilization is reflected in the naming of the historical ages: Stone, Bronze, Iron and the current Silicon Age. Progress depends on them."

For Moll, the "Making Stuff" premiere is the culmination of many years of work behind the scenes. As co-founder of Boise State's Department of Materials Science and Engineering and chair of the Public Outreach Committee of the international Materials Research Society, her expertise helped shape the four-part series. She provided show

ideas and a technical primer for the production team, reviewed scripts for scientific accuracy and identified resources, experts and locations for filming. She also helped secure funding for the series, including a \$2.5 million gift from the National Science Foundation and a \$1 million grant for outreach and education from the U.S. Department of Energy.

“Without Amy’s guidance and dedication, I don’t think ‘Making Stuff’ would have been possible,” said Richard Souza, manager of education and outreach for the Materials Research Society, which has been involved with the NOVA production from its inception.

Seeing biodegradable sugar-plastic and self-healing military vehicles onscreen is impressive, but the local collaborative is providing opportunities for exploration that are hands-on and closer to home, starting with the materials science-themed “Matter Matters” exhibition at DCI (Jan. 13-June 5).

“You can get your hands on and mind around some of the materials featured in ‘Making Stuff,’ ” said DCI Executive Director Janine Boire. “Inspiring lifelong learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics is our mission. We are honored to be working with outstanding partners who share our dedication to raising the bar in both formal and informal STEM education. Collaborations like this one reach farther than any one of us could alone.”

DCI also is hosting Science Cafés in Boise (Jan. 18), Ketchum (Feb. 2) and Idaho Falls (March 16). In a relaxed discussion format, scientists and engineers from INL and Micron will share some of their exciting work with and insights about materials.

“INL is known for treading new ground, from developing the world’s most advanced nuclear test reactor to helping NASA launch a nuclear-powered mission to Pluto,” said Harold Blackman, director of INL’s Center for Advanced Energy Studies. “Our world-class scientists and engineers are addressing challenges that affect communities all over the world, and it’s important that we educate people about how things work — not to mention what they’re made of.”

INL and Micron directly benefit from STEM education, as young students and skilled graduates in technical disciplines become the professional engines of discovery and innovation.

“Micron’s international team of visionaries engineers the technologies that transform what’s possible in everyday life,” said Dee Mooney, executive director of the Micron Foundation. “We hope this public, private and non-profit partnership can help to spark a passion for STEM topics, highlighting the value of materials science and our state’s growing reputation and capabilities in the field.”

Sparking that passion will take many forms, including “Making Stuff” screenings and presentations at Boise State’s annual Discover Engineering Day Jan. 29, as well as a Road Show of demos performed by Moll and DCI Education Director Woody Sobey. The traveling show will launch at 3 p.m. Jan. 19 in the auditorium of the Idaho Statehouse, where local students, teachers and legislators will get a taste of “Making Stuff” and the concepts behind the amazing inventions featured on the show. IdahoPTV will record the performance for use in further outreach.

“IdahoPTV programming is about expanding horizons and deepening understanding of the world. NOVA is one of the best vehicles we have, and I am pleased to see it become the foundation for this educational adventure,” said IdahoPTV General Manager Peter Morrill.

For the full roster of Idaho events showcasing materials science, visit <http://news.boisestate.edu/update/2011/01/11/nova/>. For previews and more about “Making Stuff,” visit <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/tech/making-stuff.html>. A broadcast schedule is available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/schedule.html>.

Idaho politics: Video of State of the State (and post-speech analysis)

Submitted by Kevin Richert on Mon, 01/10/2011 - 6:09pm

http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/10/krichert/idaho_politics_video_state_state_and_postdebate_analysis



Here is the Idaho Public Television video of Gov. Butch Otter's State of the State speech.

<http://video.idahoptv.org/video/1735486686>

Stay tuned after the debate for analysis: I'm on a panel with Wayne Hammon of Otter's Division of Financial Management and Gary Moncrief of Boise State University.

Read more:

http://voices.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/10/krichert/idaho_politics_video_state_state_and_postdebate_analysis#ixzz1AkxaHcdl



State legislature opens session Sun Valley Brokers

By Katherine Wutz, Idaho Mountain Express

Updated: January 10th, 2011

The Legislature will open its 2011 session today at noon, facing issues such as a projected \$340 million budget gap and the resignation of Royce Chigbrow, the Tax Commission's chair.

The budget gap had been funded by one-time stimulus money and other support, said Rep., Wendy Jaquet, D-Ketchum, but much of that funding is set to expire this year. Legislators will have to decide where and how much to cut, as well as taking measures to possibly increase revenue.

One possible revenue source could come from a proposed hike in the cigarette tax. The tax stands at 57 cents a pack, but could be raised to \$1.82 a pack this year. The increase would bring an additional \$51.1 million to the state, which would be used toward programs focused on smoking prevention programs among other related expenses.

Gov. Butch Otter will issue the State of the State address at 1 p.m. today, likely focusing on budget issues and the challenges facing the state legislature. The address will be streamed live on Idaho Public Television's website, and is available here.



2011 Idaho Report on Government Waste

Idaho Freedom Foundation

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Government's job: protect the people and provide ... TV programs?

Let's say you were going to create a state from scratch in the 21st century. What would this government look like? What programs would it offer? It likely would have a police force of some kind, a national guard, a prison system to lock up the bad guys. What else? How about a statewide television network? Of course not. Yet the state of Idaho still spends \$1.4 million in state taxpayer dollars on Idaho Public Television.

Supporters of Idaho Public Television have several easily-debunked reasons for continuing to insist on taxpayer support of IPTV. They say the broadcaster provides programming that can't be found anywhere else. In reality, there are plenty of commercial broadcasters and cablecasters providing exactly what IPTV offers -- education programming, science, history, arts and entertainment. These programs are being offered up and down the dial in multitude. In addition to TV signals, we also have Internet resources, which were not around when IPTV first signed on the air.

Supporters of IPTV say government television helps "unify" the state, allowing one end of Idaho to see the same Idaho-based programming as any other. With IPTV, people north of Riggins can see the same Idaho shows as those in the south. While true, this is nothing extraordinary in 2011. There are no barriers to people in Boise, for example, seeing the same programs as people in Sandpoint at any given time. Once upon a time, television newscasts in Boise could only be seen in Boise. Not anymore. The Internet is the great equalizer when it comes to information availability.

Our friends who back government television say it provides uniquely-Idaho shows that other stations don't air. That's somewhat true. "Outdoor Idaho" is unique programming. But we don't know what shows commercial stations won't produce because the government television station is already producing it.

Would a local television broadcaster in Boise invest time and money in a show like "Outdoor Idaho" if the government broadcaster weren't already in the business? Quite possibly, but not as long as the government is in the business of producing that kind of show. The government has managed to kill similar types of programming by cornering the market.

The one thing IPTV does that is unique is provide live, gavel to gavel coverage of the state Legislature. That's a good thing. But even that could be taken on by the private sector. It is up to state lawmakers to consider the relevance of IPTV in 2011, consider the private sector, and get the state and its taxpayers out of the business of paying for television programming.



January 9, 2011

BOISE - It's 80 pages of purported waste and ineffectual government spending.

It's called the 2011 Idaho Report on Government Waste and it's put out by the Idaho Freedom Foundation, a nonprofit governmental watchdog group. Inside the huge report is page after page of citations, research and advice from experts who say various programs in Idaho's schools, pension programs and urban renewal plans are ineffectual across the state.

Wayne Hoffman is Executive Director of the group.

"I still read it and I get angry," he said. "I'm sitting here looking at all these expenses tax payers are putting their money into and I'm saying why? Why are we doing this and what can we do?"

His suggestions often upset people because he proposed outright elimination of many social programs.

"We can easily get rid of the arts commission, public television, the hispanic commission," he said. "You could combine mirrored other agencies."

He hopes lawmakers in the state legislature and Gov. Otter read the report and use his research to cut some programs his group claims are unneeded indicative of useless government spending.



TCA press tour, days three and four: Hi, we're PBS. You may have heard of us?

By Todd VanDerWerff January 10, 2011

<http://www.avclub.com/articles/tca-press-tour-days-three-and-four-hi-were-pbs-you,49801/>

For people who write about TV professionally, the TCA press tour is a real boon. While, to a degree, it's about sessions where the news could be handed out more efficiently via press release, it's also about seeing how casts and creative teams interact with each other or about tracking down showrunners in moments when they might be more candid than usual and offer up hints on how they're going to right past wrongs on their series or push forward through a troublesome storyline. (In particular, the interview Alan Sepinwall and a handful of other critics did with the producers of *How I Met Your Mother* at last summer's press tour is a great case in point of good TV journalism arising from this event.) And for those who cover the business side of the medium more than the artistic side, the sessions with the network executives are invaluable, providing the best chance to ask just why, say, network television is so crappy right now.

But don't get me wrong. This event is also about the networks seeing if they can buy us. Getting all of us together in a room with them is supposed to be advantageous for us, and it usually is. But it's also a way for them to ply us with gifts or get us to consider covering shows we might not normally cover or get us to look on shows we might be skeptical about more favorably by putting the producers or stars in the room with us and reminding us that they're human beings too. Now, we're professionals, so this doesn't go very far, but it's still bizarre to walk into a session and realize that any given network has lavished what amounts to several dozens worth of dollars on each press tour attendee, in the form of gift bags or snacks or what have you. Hell, HBO bought everybody a mini-pie from Porch Pies, one of the best purveyors of pie on the Internet, but also one of the most expensive. (Now you know why the subscription rates are so expensive!)

But where these actions cause sneers when big cable networks do them, they feel downright desperate and kinda sweet when PBS gets involved. The nation's public broadcasters spent the weekend trying to get us to remember they exist and that we once saw them as THE home of quality TV, long before scripted programming on cable was a twinkle in HBO's eye. The tone of most PBS sessions is, "Hey, we're the only people doing this kind of stuff on a weekly basis. NOTICE US!" And while that's a little sad, it's also true, more or less. The kind of arts, news, and science programming PBS offers just doesn't pop up anywhere else. What other network would air *Frontline*? Or *Great Performances*? Or *Nova*?

The idea at one time was that cable would eventually replace PBS wholesale, that arts channels would broadcast the arts and history channels would broadcast history programming and so on. That would leave PBS with no natural niche, and the government, sufficiently impressed that public funding was no longer necessary, would be persuaded to cut off the federal cash and wander off on its merry way, leaving PBS to wither on the vine. But now, after nearly two decades of actually testing this theory in the wild, we know what happens to cable networks that program the arts or history programs: They eventually start programming shitty reality shows. And that leaves, well, PBS.

Yeah, PBS is somewhat reliant on ratings. Much of the network's weekend at press tour was spent crowing about relative ratings successes in the past year. (*Sherlock*, in particular, scored big for the network.) But the fact that it's supported by public funds and private donors means that the network can do less commercial things, particularly

in months that aren't pledge drive months. I don't want to sound like some PBS shill, particularly after the network spent so much money trying to make me one this weekend, but it is bracing to be reminded of just how much the network seems to be the only one out there willing to risk being blatantly uncommercial.

Take the programs the network promoted during its weekend sessions. Sure, you have a Jeff Bridges career retrospective documentary (highlighted with a session featuring Bridges himself, a session that will be hard to top for entertainment value this press tour) and a Harry Connick, Jr., concert special, but you also have a two-part documentary about forgiveness, of all of the vague topics anyone could build a documentary around, and Independent Lens, one of the few remaining consistent places on the cable grid for independent documentaries, including the well-reviewed Marwencol, which makes its debut later in the year. The sheer breadth of programming from the network is surprising. Where most other networks fight to brand themselves as thoroughly as possible, PBS' brand seems to simply be, "Turn us on. We won't even be sure what the hell we're airing." Rufus Sewell as an Italian detective? A continuation of Upstairs Downstairs? A special about building a computer that can win at Jeopardy? A film about the freedom riders of the civil rights movement? A deeply serious documentary about whether the government's homeland security program has grown so big that it controls the other branches of government? All coming up this winter and spring. It's simultaneously thrilling and daunting. (And in case you were curious, I asked the CEO of PBS, Paula Kerger, if the network would be working again with the team that produced the terrific Circus. She said the network has had discussions with that team about doing other projects, but there's nothing definite yet.)

Furthermore, the network's offerings at press tour weren't just an eclectic mix of programs. They also featured a collection of fascinating people on the panels. Bridges was just the start. Connick discussed the minutiae of jazz. The engineers of the Jeopardy-beating computer tried to calm our fears that their work would lead to the rise of Skynet. Some biologists let us know why it was totally cool for them to get within a few feet of grizzly bears and tried to help a TCA member figure out how to deal with the bear that makes trouble in her backyard. A few Laugh-In cast members gave us insights into the background of that groundbreaking, influential show (and let Jo Anne Worley sing parody songs loudly). Chef Jose Andres talked about how everyone, even restaurant critics deserves to be treated with respect, and decried government farm subsidies that support the same giant food corporations. And on a weekend rocked by national tragedy, having big, smart minds like these around was even more reassuring. Talking with now-elderly freedom riders or experts on forgiveness or talk show host Tavis Smiley about the frayed discourse and violent rhetoric in the current cultural dialogue was much more helpful than if we'd been forced to talk about the same with the cast of Off The Map.

Yet many TCA press tour attendees don't bother attending these sessions, instead choosing to work over the weekend. I get the impulse. Unlike many of the other sessions, there are no immediate new hooks to hang stories about the PBS sessions on, which leaves the day-to-day filers who make up the bulk of tour attendees struggling for something to write about. Even I, someone who has much freer rein to write about whatever the hell I want, struggled for a tack to take with the weekend, which was much closer to something like the TED conference, where vital, intriguing personalities hold forth on a number of topics dear to their hearts, than a press event. And yet, at the base of all of this is another simple, sad question: Who the hell still watches PBS? Outside of the network's children's programming, when was the last time PBS felt like it was at the forefront of the medium? For all of the good stuff the network does, for all of the uncommercial risks it takes, it's still a network that's airing stuff nobody else will. And that's usually because, well, the audience for this kind of programming is limited. It's too bad, but at least at press tour, the network gets a chance to remind us it still exists and is doing something necessary.



Idaho's projected \$340 million gap is a full 14 percent of the state's \$2.3 billion general fund budget. And this time, there's no federal stimulus and few reserves.

BY DAN POPKEY - dpopkey@idahostatesman.com

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Read more: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/09/1481682/we-have-come-to-the-cliff.html#ixzz1AYApVnLe>

HOW DEEP IS THE HOLE?

Here's one way to grasp the scale of the shortfall: The state may have to eliminate the equivalent of the general fund spending for these 27 programs and departments to balance the 2012 budget.

\$47,600,000 Professional-technical education

\$32,800,000 Department of Juvenile Corrections

\$27,700,000 Judicial branch

\$26,400,000 Department of Revenue and Taxation

\$24,000,000 Community colleges

\$22,600,000 Agricultural Research and Extension Service

\$15,800,000 Attorney General

\$15,200,000 Governor

\$14,300,000 Department of Environmental Quality

\$13,700,000 Idaho State Police

\$10,800,000 Department of Water Resources

\$10,600,000 Legislative branch

\$10,000,000 Health education programs

\$9,000,000 Department of Agriculture

\$8,400,000 Self-governing agencies

\$8,300,000 Public health districts

\$7,200,000 Vocational rehabilitation

\$6,900,000 Department of Administration

\$6,600,000 Superintendent of Public Instruction

\$6,000,000 Controller

\$4,100,000 Department of Commerce

\$4,100,000 Department of Lands

\$2,000,000 State Board of Education

\$1,800,000 Secretary of State

\$1,400,000 Department of Parks and Recreation

\$1,400,000 Idaho Public Television

\$1,400,000 Treasurer

Read more: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/09/1481682/we-have-come-to-the-cliff.html#ixzz1AYAyCius>

We have come to the cliff.'

That's the word from Maxine Bell, R-Jerome, co-chair of the Legislature's budget committee and a Statehouse veteran of more than two decades.

And she's not the only one who'll have you hankering for reruns of Acapulco divers on "Wild World of Sports."

"The cliff is here," said the other co-chair of the Joint-Finance Appropriations Committee, Sen. Dean Cameron, R-Rupert.

"I don't think anybody appreciated the cliff, the magnitude of the drop, when the one-time money ran out," said Sen. Bert Brackett, R-Rogerson.

Added Rep. Fred Wood, R-Twin Falls: "Everybody's going to have to come to the cliff, look over, and see just how far they want to go in cutting before determining whether they want to raise any revenue."

The first to take the plunge: The 20 members of the budget committee, who, for the first time, will directly face citizens frightened by budget cuts.

COLLECTIONS SHORT, SAVINGS DISAPPEAR

From fiscal year 2008's \$2.9 billion peak, general fund revenue has fallen \$645 million, or 22 percent, in two years. That prompted a historic \$128 million cut in K-12 education spending for fiscal 2011, which ends in June.

The impact was softened by two big pots of one-time cash, federal stimulus and state rainy-day accounts, that contributed \$1.12 billion in fiscal 2009-11. Mere spittoons remain — most significantly \$80 million in tobacco settlement money.

It means that major cuts are inevitable for the 2012 budget and will dominate the session that begins Monday and can end only with the passage of a spending plan.

“There are no places we haven’t looked,” Bell said. “There’s nothing but simply making government look more like the people that are supporting it.”

Only higher-than-anticipated tax collections and possible increases in tobacco and beer and wine taxes likely could cushion the 2012 fall. Democrats talk of temporary sales tax increases, but Republicans, who hold 81 percent of the seats, widely oppose raising sales or income taxes — the state’s two main sources of cash.

“I don’t think, in my little crystal ball, that either the Legislature or the governor is very interested in raising taxes, or at least not any major taxes,” said Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill of Rexburg.

MIND THE GAP

This year’s degree of difficulty is so tough the members of JFAC are taking two unprecedented steps: joint meetings with colleagues on the Education and Health & Welfare committees and two days of public hearings on K-12 and Health & Welfare spending.

“Unlike last year, I don’t have a clear direction,” said Sen. Dean Mortimer, R-Idaho Falls. “This is so large that I’m not sure how to tackle it.”

Mortimer uses shorthand to explain the scale to constituents: If the shortfall winds up at \$340 million and K-12 education took an across-the-board cut reflecting its 51 percent share of spending, that’s \$173 million. “That brings it into perspective. The reaction I’ve gotten is, ‘Look at alternatives and don’t cut education more than you have to.’ “

Rep. Marv Hagedorn, R-Meridian, is one of five newcomers on JFAC and a touchstone for House budget hawks. He predicted significant cuts for education and Health & Welfare’s Medicaid programs for the poor, disabled and mentally ill.

“Those are the two tigers in the room,” Hagedorn said, predicting cuts of \$270 million. Only a \$51 million tobacco tax increase might lessen the blow, he added.

‘PAIN AND TERROR’

The four Democrats on JFAC hope to limit the damage with “a temporary something” to raise revenue, a term of art cited by both Sens. Diane Bilyeu of Pocatello and Nicole LeFavour of Boise.

LeFavour said Republicans will agree to raise taxes after realizing deep cuts will mean legal challenges, including a claim the state won’t fulfill a constitutional obligation to provide “uniform and thorough” schools.

“I have to proceed as if we’re a rational body,” LeFavour said in predicting a tax-raising epiphany.

Bilyeu is less sanguine about a GOP conversion, particularly among House conservatives. Should Gov. Butch Otter urge general tax increases in Monday’s budget address — a prospect he’s consistently rejected — she doubts he’d win enough votes. “Even if he said, ‘Look, boys, we need to increase the sales tax or we need to increase whatever,’ I’m not sure they would listen to him.”

Bell expects the public hearings to be emotional. “It’s a very personal thing to have the legs pulled out from some services for a disabled child or an elderly person. They’re thinking about the pain and the terror of losing that help.”

Feelings, however, don't trump arithmetic, Bell said. "We're not a closed committee with no caring and no concern at all. We know what's out there, and we'll hear it from them. And then we'll have to go ahead and do what we have to do."

DEFINING 'ESSENTIAL'

Sen. Joyce Broadsword, R-Sagle, is on JFAC and is vice chair of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee. She said she'll focus on long-term outcomes and essential services in weighing cuts.

For example, she cited \$54 daily payments that go to parents of developmentally delayed adult children who also receive daytime services paid by Medicaid. Possibly ending those parental payments is the kind of tradeoff the state must consider.

"What scares me is if we don't provide mental health services people will end up in prison or hospitals where the care is more expensive," Broadsword said. "I'm not saying we shouldn't be helping families trying to keep their children home, but I don't know that the rate we've set is fair."

Sen. Shawn Keough, R-Sandpoint, is a JFAC vice chair who is "very troubled" by the impact of cuts, but not only on clients. She cites the service providers who earn their living from Medicaid.

"Right now, I'm thinking we'll have to cut \$200 (million) to \$400 million and wondering how we get there."

AN OTTER RESCUE?

The other vice-chair, Rep. Darrell Bolz, R-Caldwell, had hoped revenue would continue to outpace projections, as it did for the first five months of fiscal 2011. He hoped it would drop the range of cuts to between \$100 million and \$150 million, he said.

On Friday, though, lawmakers heard that preliminary December revenues were down more than \$12 million— a dramatic turnaround to the previous months.

JFAC Co-Chairman Cameron saw a draft of Otter's budget a few weeks ago.

"It mitigates some of the reductions," Cameron said. "In some cases, it punts some decisions down the road a little bit. As for the fear of the \$340 million, once you've seen the governor's budget, people may breathe a little bit of a sigh of relief."

Cameron said higher sin taxes may become more palatable as the spotlight shines on potential cuts. "If you're talking about cutting services to the disabled poor, the mentally handicapped, somebody's going to say, 'Wait a minute. I'm not willing to go there. I'm willing to vote for a cigarette tax.'

"Or, if we're forced into a discussion of releasing prisoners, somebody's going to say, 'Wait a minute, I'm not willing to go there. I'm willing to raise taxes on beer and wine to make sure bad guys are kept off the street.' "

Otter hinted of sleeved aces in a meeting with reporters.

"There's some things that we're going to be offering up," he said Thursday. "It could lessen that shortfall."

Said Bell: "Bless his heart. What a tough time."

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Read more: <http://www.idahostatesman.com/2011/01/09/1481682/we-have-come-to-the-cliff.html#ixzz1AYB3Z6RH>



NEA feels the heat

With new Congress in town, arts org draws up plans

By Ted Johnson, Variety

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118029889?refCatId=13>

If there's one word you're more apt to hear, over and over again, from arts orgs in the coming months, it's "jobs."

With the House's new Republican leadership preaching as-yet unspecified cuts to all domestic discretionary spending, it's probably not out of line to assume that those cuts will include government funding for the arts.

The National Endowment for the Arts, the nation's largest single arts funder that funnels support to orgs as varied and wide-ranging as local theater groups, the Sundance Institute and public television's "Great Performances," will have to withstand the winds of austerity to maintain its appropriation level, which so far is running at \$167.5 million this fiscal year. That follows a steadily rising allotment over the past decade after the drastic cuts that came in the mid-1990s.

appropriation level, which so far is running at \$167.5 million this fiscal year. That follows a steadily rising allotment over the past decade after the drastic cuts that came in the mid-1990s.

NEA chairman Rocco Landesman has traveled across the country in a kind of whistle-stop tour to promote programs that tie the arts to economic development, and in talking of one NEA program, he rather shrewdly told lawmakers last year that he'd challenged his staff to "fund at least one arts education project in every Congressional district."

Jamie Bennett, NEA's communications director, says that org execs "very much look forward to working with the members of our subcommittee and all the members of Congress."

But Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts, one of the most prominent arts advocacy orgs, says, "I am worried, because when they talk about across-the-board budget cuts, good programs can get caught up in ... sweeps like that."

On the day the new Congress was sworn in last week, Lynch's org sent out alerts to its members urging them to write to lawmakers to "educate the largest congressional freshman class in decades about the profound role the arts play in spurring economic growth and job creation."

Celebrities customarily have been asked to testify for arts funding on Capitol Hill, but Lynch's org has been enlisting economists and even former military officials to make the case in recent years. He's been talking of government arts support in ways he hopes will strike a chord with conservatives -- namely that federal, state and local support make up just 9% of arts budgets, and that the money acts not as a "subsidy," but as "incentives" that help trigger growth from the private sector.

What is also worrisome to national arts orgs is that the funding cuts are exacerbated by the cutbacks at the state and local levels, along with a slowdown in private funding, all coming at a time when so many new lawmakers are riding into town. Last fall, Heritage Foundation fellow Brian Riedl put the NEA on his list of \$343 billion in suggested cuts for 2012 to counter "unsustainable" budget growth.

Yet what is unclear is whether the age of austerity also will evolve into a culture war. There certainly have been recent flareups when it comes to public funding of journalism, such as last year's Juan Williams firing at NPR. A National Portrait Gallery flap over a video display that included footage of ants crawling over a crucifix led to the museum pulling the display after some Republican leaders complained and inferred that government funding could be in jeopardy.

Back in 1995, lawmakers who were part of the Newt Gingrich revolution targeted the NEA, along with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corp. for Public Broadcasting, igniting a bruising battle that targeted controversial works of art (some deemed it “porn”) or programs labeled elitist.

The NEA was saved, but with 40% cut from its budget and a pullback in grants to individual artists, the agency was largely in shock.

As yet, those same dynamics aren't in play. For one, the Democrats, albeit pared back, still control the Senate, perhaps providing a check on more draconian drives to pare funding. For another, it may be too simplistic to conclude that support for the arts can always be discerned by partisan stripes.

In their most recent results, Americans for the Arts gave grades of F or low marks to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) and influential House Budget Committee chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) for their support for the arts. But Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), ranking member and now chair of the appropriations subcommittee that has overseen NEA funding, earned an A.

Moreover, Lynch says that for the most part, many state and local arts programs that faced elimination altogether last year were saved, albeit in scaled-down form.

Contact Ted Johnson at ted.johnson@variety.com

Politics

10 ideas for freedom in the 2011 legislative session

By Wayne Hoffman

January 8, 2011

http://www.pocatelloshops.com/new_blogs/politics/?p=7343

This could be the year Idaho legislators really redefine state government in fantastic, positive ways that lead to more freedom for the state's residents. Here's a wish list of 10 ideas for freedom in the 2011 legislative session that starts this week:

1. Don't raise taxes. And yes, raising so-called “sin taxes” counts as a tax increase. Don't do it. It's not right.
2. Get the federal government out of the business of regulating wolves in Idaho. Empower county sheriffs to protect lives, livestock and private property. Form interstate agreements for the management of wolves, so we're calling the shots, not Washington, D.C. bureaucrats or the courts.
3. Prevent the operability of Obamacare in Idaho. State lawmakers made a good start in 2010 with the passage of the Idaho Health Freedom Act, which keeps Idahoans from being compelled to buy health insurance. Now, it's time to tell the federal government that its unconstitutional and overreaching law is not recognized by the state; we won't lift a finger to implement it and we'll block its enforcement.
4. Cut entitlement programs, including Medicaid. Cut agencies that defy the proper role of government. Eliminate Idaho Public Television, the Arts Commission, the Hispanic Commission and others. Remember that government is supposed to be limited, the provider of last resort, not a substitute for charities and families.
5. Lawmakers should stop urban renewal districts from cheating taxpayers out of their hard-earned money. Restrict the creation of renewal districts, keep projects limited to public infrastructure, not government buildings and private development. Insist on a public vote before new urban renewal districts can come into being.
6. Get state and local government out of the business of competing against the private sector. The state of Idaho owns and runs, for example, a storage unit business in Boise and is looking to open even more businesses that compete against Idaho business owners.

7. Fix the state's retirement system. The state pension system is too expensive and will only get costlier. The fix does not mean forcibly removing pensions from state retirees who have paid for and earned their benefits. Instead, legislators should follow Utah and create options and incentives for new employees and willing current employees to enroll in less expensive 401(k) plans. Additionally, the judges' retirement system is running out of money. It's time to begin moving away from pensions and toward a defined contribution system for state employees, including judges.

8. And speaking of the state pension system, it's wrong that employees of the private state teachers' union, the Idaho Education Association, get to be on the state employee retirement system. Time to pull the plug on this cozy relationship. State taxpayers should not be on the hook for the retirement benefits of the employees of any private organization, period.

9. Let's have a wholesale reform of the public education system in Idaho. Encourage the ability of parents and students to choose the education venue that's right for them. Lift the cap on the number of charter schools. Support digital learning. Institute systems that track outcomes and reward results. Pay the best teachers more. Make it easier to replace underperforming teachers. Focus funding on students and educational achievement, not the continuation of bloated school bureaucracies.

10. Limit teachers' union contracts in time and content. The agreements should address wages and benefits only, not general school district operations, as is too often the case now. Labor agreements should be negotiated in plain public view, not in secret as is the case today.

It's time to get to work. Let's hope 2011 is the year a freedom-based agenda prevails at the Idaho Legislature.

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