

Blue State Digest

Newsletter of the
Association of County Chairs

Picture this-Idaho will someday be a "blue state," and vote Democratic. The question before us is "How soon?"

Start Now

Welcome the first premier edition of the Blue State Digest, a venture of the Association of County Chairs.

The motivation behind this newsletter is straightforward, to turn Idaho from a state that votes Republican with great regularity (a "red state" in television parlance), to one that votes dependably Democratic (a blue state).

Nobody said it was going to happen overnight, but there is a lot of energy in the Democratic Party in Idaho. A lot of analysis says that we don't need to move many voters to Democrats to start winning elections. We think the voters are there, but they're not voting, or they're voting Republican by habit, or they're voting Republican because the Democrats fail to field a candidate. This newsletter will help fix that.

The Chairs of county Democratic parties solve a lot of problems as they go about their business, and because they aren't communicating with each other, each solves the problem on their own. Chairs also come up with wonderfully inventive ideas for registering voters, raising money, recruiting volunteers, and getting voters to the polls, and we will all do better if we share those ideas around.

A final purpose it to just plain keep in touch. Finding out if anything happened at the State Central Committee meeting can be pretty hard if you weren't there.

That's the idea behind this letter-to get chairs in touch with one another. That means the best content comes from the readers; the solutions, the ideas, and the information that will make every chair's job easier and make every chair more effective.

It's easy to see that changing Idaho from a red state to a blue one will take a lot of work, a lot of people working together, and some time. How long it will be, nobody knows. But we know that it won't happen unless we start now.

– Jim Wallis
Acting editor

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June 2004

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Share ideas
Share solutions
Know what's
going on.



Minutes for February 21, 2004, at Boise

Chair Jerry Shriner called the meeting to order 8:05 AM., and the agenda was adopted after some additions.

Old business: The County Development funds approved by the last meeting of the Central Committee will need to be dispersed in an orderly fashion. After some discussion, it was agreed that county groups could apply for support by providing the following information: A county background statement making their need clear, and including the amount of money they currently have available; a list of their officers to include, at minimum, a Chair and a Treasurer; a schedule of their regular meetings; and a spending proposal that describes the intended use of the money, which may best be couched as a list of not more than 3 goals that they hope to accomplish. [Note that in the Central Committee meeting it was determined that a checking account would be required for the State Party office to issue a check.] It was agreed that time was of the essence in the application process, and that the application should be sent to the Chair of the Chairs Association for review, and if approved by him sent immediately to the state Executive Director who would disperse the funds promptly; the approval process should take no more than 5 days.

New Business: Jerry Shriner (Kootenai) pointed out that a number of questions about conduct of the February 24 caucus have been raised, but that Maria Weeg would like to address the questions in the Central Committee meeting. Liz Chavez (Nez Perce) raised the general issue of communication with the State Party office. In particular, she was concerned that tickets to the Frank Church Banquet were sold before her county had an opportunity to buy a group for themselves, and that other counties may be shut out if they don't buy tickets promptly. The issue resulted in approval of a resolution that the state party establish a mechanism for allocating tickets to ensure that counties have an opportunity to purchase them.

The discussion continued concerning the general issue of communication between the county organizations and the state party office. This has been a continuing issue and several instances were cited, including things like meeting agendas, which arrive with barely time to talk to other Democrats about the contents, and the time it takes for minutes to be reported. In the discussion, allowance was generally given for the change in office staff and the limited resources of the state party, but the problem is not confined to the recent period of stress in the state office. Jerry Shriner stated that he felt he needed to be more forceful in bringing the concerns of the county chairs to the executive committee.

As part of this discussion, it was agreed that chairs share too little amongst themselves, either their problems or their good ideas. Jim Wallis (Latah) suggested that an e-mail group might help with communication amongst the chairs, and volunteered to start such a group. A motion that Jim create such a group was readily approved.

In the waning moments of the meeting, a brief discussion of establishing a newsletter that would be sent approximately every other month to all county chairs to keep them in touch with party events and news was suggested. Jerry Shriner pointed out that any newsletter needed to be sent as paper, because many county chairs do not have e-mail access. Jim Wallis offered to attempt to produce a newsletter every other month through the election this year, on the condition that two other people could be found to help prepare the content. The proposal would use e-mail and some small amount of Latah County resources for the paper version. There was general assent to this proposal, but no other volunteers for participating in creation of the newsletter.

The final hurried discussion concerned the limited time allotted for the Chairs meeting. There was a general desire that more time be found for chairs to meet, since we have been running out of time before we run out of discussion topics.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM

Jim Wallis

February 25, 2004



County Development Funds

The state party has a new program to help county organizations who have been struggling, by providing \$250 in seed money. Enough, they hope, that you can have a booth at the county fair, photocopy some literature, or advertise Democratic meetings. There's a one-page application available from Jim Wallis, and a couple of counties have already applied. If you need startup money, contact Jim immediately.

The state party has a new program to help county

Have you met VAN?

The State Party has put together an online computer system to help everybody find voters, find Democrats, and get those voters to the polls. The Voter Activation Network (VAN) can be used from the comfort of anybody's computer that has access to the world wide web—you don't need a high speed connection, just a modem. It really works, and it's a powerful tool for counties to start finding Democrats. If you haven't seen VAN in action contact Maria Weeg at the state office, or Jim Wallis and they'll arrange a demonstration. No computer? Contact Blue State (below) and we'll mail you a list of Democrats in your county.

The State Party has put together an online computer system to help every-

Calling all County Vice-chairs!

Join the Chairs of the county organizations in planning for Idaho's Democratic future!

Come to the Association of County Chairs meeting at the convention and help us plan for Democratic victories in November.

Editors and contributors wanted

The current issue of the Blue State Digest is the product of an individual effort, and it needs more. A lot more. We need opinions and ideas from across the state. At least two more editors, one from the East and one from the South or central part of the state. And it needs ideas. Lots of ideas. Letter length advice about organizing, or one-line tips on working with newspapers, or whatever advise you have to give. We can do questions as well-how do you find volunteers for a fair booth, what's the best place to buy a banner. Any good advice, or bad experiences that we could avoid, or any advice that makes life easier for a county chair. Do you want personal news, like new chairs or officers? We can publish the best Democratic cookie recipe, or the worst things Republicans have said lately. This will be as good as the readers make it. Join in. Volunteer to edit, or write, or just send in a good idea, and make this worthwhile reading for everyone.

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Keeping in touch

There's a web page—isn't there always a web page these days? This one. BlueStateIdaho.org, is blissfully free of content. There will be a link to this newsletter, and maybe a few other files that seem useful. To contact the newsletter, mail to Blue State Idaho, P.O. Box 9772, Moscow Idaho 83843, or e-mail to bluestate@moscow.com.

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Blue State Idaho

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Idaho Democratic Party

www.idahodemo.org

County Chairs Association

Chair: Jim Wallis
Vice-Chair
Secretary

Agenda

June 18th: Friday 8:30-9:30 AM in the Jasper Room.

Call to order, Minutes.

Election of Vice Chair and Secretary-Treasurer

Old Business: Yahoo Newsgroup, Newsletter to all committee members, County Support Grants.

New Business:

Vice-chairs:

County Vice-Chairs are included in the Association membership. How can we encourage their participation?

Regional conventions: Should the County Chairs convene a meeting of candidates, county party and legislative district officers, and elected officials to discuss the outcome of the convention and plan strategy for the fall elections?

Funding the County Chairs Association: What means can we devise to provide minimal funding for the Association? One would be to ask counties to allocate \$10-\$50 for Association activities.

Legislative District officers: What can our Association do to tap the energy of the Legislative District Chairs?

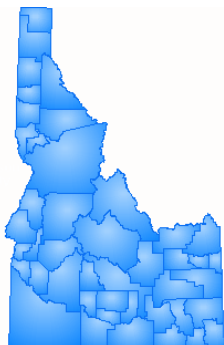
Adjournment

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Patty Nance and the Rural Caucus

Patty Nance has started a caucus for rural Idaho Democrats. They will get together and talk about the issues important to rural Idaho and then convince the state and national Democratic parties to adopt policies friendly to rural people. To join the discussions, or just to volunteer an opinion, contact Patty Nance, or contact bluestate@moscow.com for more information.



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