



January 2024 Report

The start of a new year brings renewed commitment and opportunity, as well as a new legislative session. The BB&A team is prepared and eager to start the session off strong advocating for you and your interests. Leading up to the 2024 Idaho Legislative Session, we have had conversations with committee chairs, members of legislative leadership, key agency staff, and many stakeholders who are spearheading issues. Interim committees have wrapped up their work, with some resuming again after session, but we may see meetings pop up as a pressing issue arises. Otherwise, it's all eyes on the upcoming State of the State and Governor's Budget address on January 8th as we start session.

December was the perfect time for us to check in with legislators and for us to give feedback on a variety of potential legislative ideas. We have also been working with budget committee (JFAC) members to determine their strategies for budget review under a new process this year. Thus, giving us the best opportunity to be strategic, and protect important budget items. Before the session begins, various political events offer a last chance for fundraisers. Traditionally, this includes House and Senate Majority Caucus fundraisers, the Lt. Governor Luncheon, and the Governor's Dinner. Giving us one last chance to join together in a social setting before the work of session begins.

The 2024 Idaho Legislative Session will begin at noon on January 8, 2024, with Governor Little's State of the State Address, which will outline his top priorities for the upcoming session. The past several years brought record investments in education and infrastructure including roads and bridges, water quality and quantity, broadband, outdoor recreation, education, and more. We have also seen the largest tax cuts (income and property tax) in Idaho history back-to-back-to-back over the last 3 years. It's been working so we expect this year will be more of a continuation of what works, a protection of programs and processes with a limited budget, and legislators being up for re-election in May.

While it would be easy to wonder what's left to do, there is a strong urgency by the legislators to show value heading into an election year. For Governor Little and his administration, this is not an election year, but the power struggle between the executive and legislative branches of state government in Idaho will be on full display. The Governor will begin rolling out his new agenda for what's been working in Idaho. His priorities for strategic one-time investments and bolstering education programs and funding will be scrutinized by the Legislature led by Speaker Mike "King" Moyle who is continuing to seek income tax reductions, this time from 5.8% to 5.6%. Legislators are also working to find a solution to school choice vouchers while meeting the constitutional mandates for uniform and complete public K-12 education for all Idaho students.

Rules are expected to be heard and deliberated throughout January, hopefully prior to the session becoming overwhelming for most legislators. But with an Idaho Supreme Court decision looming on the timing of when rules must be approved this could cause more drama. The JFAC co-chairs made plans to have budgets on the floor in February instead of March. This should give legislators more time to discuss and work on budgets, but it may cause some undue stress and commotion as they change the one function of the Idaho Legislature which is the envy of all other states. The Sine Die target date is set for March 22, 2024. Many legislators want to stick to this deadline to give them more time for the May Primary Election on May 21st. To view all major deadlines, please click [HERE](#).

The election year sessions are traditionally a bit shorter, but not less busy, as social issues from guns to abortion continue to be debated. In addition, we expect more attacks on local units of government and their budgets, Medicaid expansion debates, Article V Convention resolutions, bills to curb the influx of fentanyl trafficking, attacks on transportation, Empowering Parents, Launch funding, and much more. Our continued diligence and work on your behalf throughout the year has helped us remain ahead of the curve and ready. Nevertheless, there will always be a portion of policies that were unknown heading into the session. It comes with the process, and we do our best to be ready for that as well to make sure we are doing our very best for you.