



## October 2024 Report

September once again marked the unofficial kickoff to what we like to call “conference season.” Things got underway with the annual Governor’s Cup fundraiser, which included business leaders, legislators, governor’s staff, agency heads, and others gathering for a three-day scholarship benefit for Idaho high school seniors. Gov’s Cup is traditionally the first of many September events that offer decision makers, stakeholders and others the chance to catch up and set sights on the upcoming 2025 legislative session.

The BB&A team attended Gov’s Cup and used the time to reconnect with those we haven’t met with during the summer. We were also present at the annual Idaho Behavioral Health Association Conference, the annual Idaho Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Clay Buster Bonanza, and the Congressional Western Caucus Field Tour and Policy Forum, which featured conversations about agriculture, wildlife, and a robust discussion on wildfire and its many impacts. Each of these events are great networking opportunities with elected officials and agency leaders from across the state and help us deepen relationships and further policy goals.

As the November General Election draws near, our calendars are filling up with political fundraisers, a couple more conferences and other events. We’ll experience an uptick in this kind of activity as we near crunch time for political candidates to make their final pitch to voters. While the General Election in Idaho is never as intense as the May primaries, we still anticipate some hearty political rhetoric and drama in the state’s swing districts.

It’s also important to remember that the General Election – scheduled for Nov. 5 – features one ballot initiative and [one proposed constitutional amendment](#). It’s our take that the ballot initiative will cause significant handwringing for voters and lawmakers alike. The initiative is designed to change elections in Idaho by opening the May primaries and incorporating ranked choice voting (RCV) during the general election. If approved by voters, the initiative would end the closed primary system that has defined Idaho GOP primaries for more than a decade, and essentially allow anyone, regardless of political affiliation, to vote in the primary. In addition, the top four vote getters would move on to the General Election in November when the RCV system ultimately determines the outcome of each race. Simply, for RCV, voters would rank their preference for each candidate, votes would be tallied in a series of rounds until one candidate earns an outright majority. More information about the initiative, known as Proposition 1, can be found [here](#).

Additionally, our efforts in September focused on strengthening relationships with veteran legislators and reaching out to newcomers. A sizeable group of returning lawmakers will be entering their “Sophomore” terms and several are angling right now for leadership and Committee Chairmanship positions in the House and Senate. With only a few open leadership seats, we anticipate some highly competitive races between two to three aiming to win a leadership post or committee chairmanship. The Senate is of particular interest after Senate Pro Tem Chuck Winder, (R-20), lost his primary, causing chaos in the Senate’s long-standing leadership transition process. This, coupled with the legislature moving in an even more conservative tilt, has caused uncertainty and curiosity in the outcomes of key senate races.

October has historically been the month when final changes and negotiations are wrapped up between the Division of Financial Management (DFM) and state agencies. However, with the new budget system through JFAC and recent staffing changes, an official deadline for approved revisions and finalized budgets has not yet been set. As DFM and the Governor’s staff continues to work through budgets, BB&A is committed to staying on top of these discussions and potential opportunities that could emerge.

As we continue to meet with agency heads, we’re gaining insight on legislation, budgets, and regulatory changes. We’re on alert for chances to advance your priorities. Now is the time to finalize legislative priorities with us or identify potential legislation to give us the best chance at success going into session. January is right around the corner, and we’re poised to dive into policy discussions and help prepare for another busy and fascinating session.