

OUR VIEW: Events do little for taxpayer confidence

By Murf Raquet, for the editorial board

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Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter should be ashamed of himself.

There is no other way to put it. Idaho's chief executive has crossed the line when it comes to ego.

In the process, he's cost taxpayers about \$70,000 since June.

Seventy grand is not a huge amount when it comes to government spending. But we still would like to see it go to something important like health care or education.

Sadly, that was not the case.

The 70K was spent by the Idaho Transportation Department on ribbon-cuttings; specifically, a series of events meant to celebrate the completion of highway projects.

Such events are attended by politicians and other officials for little else other than photo opportunities.

Mark Warbis, the governor's communication director, told the Idaho Statesman that such ceremonies also serve to remind taxpayers how their money is spent to create jobs and improve infrastructure.

OK, that doesn't make us feel any better.

Some of the \$70,000 - ready for this - was used to hire a private company to put on the more expensive ceremonies.

Apparently the company did a poor job, and the governor's office intends to take a more active role in planning the ceremonies.

Future ground-breakings will be "signature events for the governor," Warbis said.

We can hardly wait for video at 11.

At least Otter won't have to travel too far. The three most expensive projects were in the Boise area.

We doubt he'll have a "signature event" north of the Mason-Riggins Line.

The event we'd like to see is one where he "signs" new life into the state's human rights commission or Idaho Public Television - to name a few.

Even in the best of times, \$70,000 spent on ribbon-cuttings is a waste, no matter how it's spun by the governor's office.