

Summertime Blues

By IFRR President Jeffrey Ward



It appears that summer has finally made it to North Idaho. Being in one of the more glorious places to spend a summer makes keeping our minds on the work of politics much more difficult. I catch myself staring out my window at the sunlit tableau of blue sky and green trees and not want to work or even write this column. There is a lot for us to do but the allure of the mountains, the lakes, and the sun can be distracting.

2012 may be the most important election of our life times and Republicans must work now to prepare for the battle this fall. Please do not buy into the conventional wisdom that says that the election is already over in Idaho. We may have been highly successful in the May Primary. Many of us are quite disappointed that we do not have a recall campaign to wage in August or November. But the election battle for Reagan Republicans is far from over.

The Democrats, for once, were quite successful in fielding Legislative candidates. Every Idaho legislative district north of the Treasure Valley, except one, has a full slate of Democrats running. Democrats are especially making pushes in the Coeur d'Alene, Moscow and Lewiston districts. In Kootenai County they have abandoned the county offices and concentrated on the Legislature. We cannot rest on our laurels and assume a Republican wave will mitigate our inaction. We must be ready to support our candidates. The elections will be won or lost on how we prepare this summer.

We also must resist the summer temptation to be at ease because the Republican Presidential nominee will most assuredly win Idaho, we have no statewide races this year and our popular Congressman Raul Labrador should easily dispatch his Democrat opponent. Idaho is not in a vacuum. Money and volunteers that the Democrats do not use here will flow to our neighboring states. Unions are masters at moving manpower where it is needed. In the Presidential election Oregon will likely be in play and so may Montana and hopefully Washington. I would hate to see Idaho Democrats and their money trudge across the state lines to Ontario, Missoula and Spokane and make the electoral difference in toss-up states. We must either pin them down here or make our own efforts over there. Spokane County will also be crucial in Republican Rob McKenna's quest to win the Washington Governor's seat as well as Spokane's state Senator Michael Baumgartner's bid to win a U.S. Senate seat for Republicans. What we do or don't do here just may determine which party controls the U.S. Senate even though we don't have an Idaho race. Folks, it's time to suit up and get ready to do what we do so well. We need to fill our campaign coffers, shine our walking shoes, stretch our doorbell fingers, warm-up our phone voices and be ready to hit the streets for one heck of a campaign season.