

# Democrats find themselves in sync at convention

*Unanimous votes, laughs mark harmonious event for Idaho's less powerful party*

**Elizabeth Rudd/Lewiston Tribune**

MOSCOW - The Idaho Democratic Party ended its state convention on a high note Saturday, accomplishing all it set forth to do while in Moscow - and unanimously.

Nearly 200 delegates and alternates approved without a single dissenting vote or comment to approve the third and final draft of the party's 2014 platform before concluding the state meeting.

"We learned a lot, we heard a lot, we've accomplished a lot," said Larry Kenck, Idaho Democratic Party chairman.

What delegates need to do next, Kenck said, is spread the platform's message by talking with friends, family, neighbors - even the media - to tell them what the party stands for, its values and why they each became Democrats.

"That's how we're going to grow," he said. "That's how we're going to get it done. That's how we're going to get Democrats elected. That's why I'm proud of you."

Past Democratic Party conventions have gone smooth, Kenck said, but this year's was even more so and he thinks that's because the group came in with a focus. The platform had been worked on at length prior to the start of the convention.

"I am in awe of how this convention went," he said. "These delegates came here ready to work and they did their work."

The same could not be said for the Idaho Republican Party following its state convention last week - a difference that served as the butt to several jokes during the Democrats' meeting.

The GOP's state convention concluded in a less-than-stellar manner last week in Moscow with delegates failing to approve a party platform or select party leaders.

"A thousand percent different," Kenck said after Saturday's vote. "I think the city (Moscow) saw the difference. I think the state saw the difference. I think the voters saw the difference."

Kenck said he thinks the difference will demonstrate that Democrats are true leaders who want to include and represent everyone and will take Idaho in the direction it needs to go in order to prosper.

A similar message was delivered later in the evening by former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, who was the keynote speaker for the party's victory feast.

Rendell, who served two terms from 2003-2011, said Democrats need to stand up for what they believe in and he admires those in Idaho because that's a hard task to accomplish.

"I know it's not easy to be a Democrat in Idaho," he said.

The former governor said he was getting grief from friend back home about coming to talk to Idaho Democrats, but he applauded them because they stand up for their values - something he thinks voters are looking for in this election. He said he thinks Americans are looking for leaders who are not afraid to stand up for their beliefs.

"We should stick to our core beliefs and our core beliefs are right," he said, "and I think that people are going to come to that soon enough."

Tony Stewart, of Coeur d'Alene, said this year's convention was the smoothest running, most harmonious and effective one of all the Democratic Party conventions that he's attended since the 1980s.

"I think the citizens of Idaho can trust the Democratic Party to be as effective at governing as they were at running this convention," he said.

The spirit of those in attendance was also wonderful, Stewart said, and it was apparent people were enjoying each other's company "immensely" - another aspect lacking from this year's GOP state convention.

"For this particular year, it's showed the difference between a party that is united and full of compassion to work for the future of Idaho," Stewart said. "Whereas the other party (the Republicans) is in very great crisis and conflicted at this time."

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*Rudd may be contacted at [erudd@lmtribune.com](mailto:erudd@lmtribune.com) or (208) 791-8465. Follow her on Twitter @elizabeth\_rudd.*