

# Singling out Boise? Not time yet, partner

## Top of Form

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By Marty Trillhaase The Lewiston Tribune

In Idaho, there's Boise.

Then there's everywhere in Idaho that's not Boise.

That's not how Idaho's political map appears today. But what if it did?

As happens every decade when the state equalizes its population growth, there's talk of radically altering the design of Idaho's two congressional districts.

Traditionally, the 1st District runs from the Canadian border into the suburbs of western Ada County. The 2nd District begins at the Wyoming line and runs west and south into Boise's north end.

That line is going to shift - presumably the 2nd District will take in more of Ada County.

Of course, nothing could stop the citizens commission assigned with revising legislative and congressional district boundaries from adopting something more drastic. As the Tribune's William Spence reported this week, 10 of the 23 people who have submitted plans separated Boise and Treasure Valley's population center from the rest of us.

That would put a big diverse state - from Coeur d'Alene to Idaho Falls - in one district.

Here's the unshakable logic: Treasure Valley sees the world through one lens.

We see it through another.

Boise has urban transit.

We have megaloads.

In Boise, it's possible to confuse Twin Falls with Idaho Falls.

Really. It happens.

Boise has the state capital.

A century and a half later, the former territorial capital of Lewiston still seethes with anger about that.

Boise has Hewlett-Packard and Micron Technology.

Grangeville has a stop light.

Boise got the connector and rush-hour traffic.

Moscow has some passing lanes on U.S. Highway 95.

Boise goes nuts over its Boise State University Broncos football squad.

Pocatello? Not so much.

Boise has downtown parking garages.

Lewiston has some empty buildings.

Boise is home to the Simplot corporate headquarters.

Blackfoot has some potato cellars.

Of course, once they get past their Ada-phobia, the various regions of Idaho quickly will turn on themselves.

Don't expect the folks at the University of Idaho at Moscow to toast Brigham Young University-Idaho at Rexburg with a glass of Budweiser.

Lewiston and Idaho Falls share the Snake River - but one town was born of coarse miners and loggers, the other settled by more sedate Mormon farmers.

Even the north can't get along. Ask some of Kootenai County's residents where to place northern Idaho's southern boundary and it will wind up a mite north of the Palouse.

Just mention the idea to a congressional staffer and you'll confront a solid half-hour's argument about how this would be a nightmare.

How any congressman who wins the seat would spend all his time commuting on the one highway that links Bear Lake with Sandpoint - through Montana.

How Idaho's tiniest communities would get forgotten in the mad hustle to serve the regional hubs.

How Ada County could no longer claim the attention of whichever Idaho member of Congress had more to offer. Idaho tends to send some serious people to the House of

Representatives, but rarely two at a time. In the early '90s, Ada County could turn to Mike Crapo from the 2nd District while the 1st District carried on its infatuation with Helen Chenoweth-Hage.

A decade earlier, it was just the reverse. Ada County relied on Larry Craig from the 1st District while the 2nd District refused to retire George Hansen.

However theoretical they seem now, keep the proposals on file. In 10, 20 or even 30 years, Idaho may grow large enough to warrant a third congressional district.

Then we can talk about putting Boise in its place. - M.T.