Task Force to Identify Alternative Funding Sources for the Idaho State Police and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Johnson
June 30, 2009

Good afternoon, co-chairs, members of the Task Force and guests. I'm Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Johnson, speaking on behalf of Colonel Jerry Russell, who could not attend today's hearing because of a previous long-standing commitment.

On May 12, 2009, Governor Otter signed into law House Bill 376, to revise distributions from the highway distribution account, to revise distributions of tax revenues from the tax on gasoline and aircraft engine fuel, and to revise provisions relating to the Idaho law enforcement fund.

While both DPR and ISP were affected by the bill, recommendations presented here address only ISP needs.

The practical effect to the Idaho State Police (ISP) of H376 was twofold: ISP no longer will receive up to 20 million dollars of dedicated funds from the law enforcement account, and the legislature pledged to provide a "dedicated source of funds ... to safeguard the Idaho state police from the impacts of future economic downturns."

Funding to ISP from the law enforcement account varies due to the revenue stream and has declined in recent years, but ISP requires a minimum of 18 million dollars from that dedicated source to support a large portion of its enforcement operations.

In FY2009, ISP was appropriated $18.1M from the law enforcement account.

Throughout FY2008, Patrol activities supported by the law enforcement account included more than 2,000 DUI arrests; nearly 15,000 crash investigations; over 50,000 hazardous moving violations and a staggering 243,000 calls for service. These service activities are directly supported by the law enforcement account.

To assist the Task Force in its deliberations, ISP offers a number of alternative funding proposals for consideration:

- Increase vehicle registration fees – a $5.00 increase will generate more than $8M
- Increase drivers license fees by $5.00 to generate approximately $1.7M
- Consider a surcharge or dedicated sales tax on transportation-associated items such as tires and vehicles batteries to generate additional funds of up $13M
- Attach a one-half of 1% fee on all new car sales to generate just under $10M
- Increase new, transfer, and out-of-state title fee by $5.00 to generate $2.7M
- Access the general fund reserve for a "not-to-exceed" amount when dedicated fund sources fall short of $18M

ISP thanks the Task Force for soliciting its input and stands ready to assist the Task Force as requested. Hopefully, you will find the recommendations we've submitted helpful.