

Little declares for Lt. Governor

By ALECIA WARREN
Staff writer—CDA Press

The rancher is running.

At a special visit to Coeur d'Alene on Friday as part of a state-wide announcement tour, Lt. Gov. Brad Little declared his candidacy for the 2010 office of Lieutenant Governor.

"As your Lt. Governor, I want to continue doing the work I've done in the past — allowing Idaho to adapt, survive and thrive in our changing world," Little said, speaking in front of a banner brandishing his name at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.

A rancher from Emmett and a graduate of the University of Idaho, Little was appointed Lt. Governor this January after Jim Risch resigned from the position to become a member of the U.S. Senate.

If elected, Little plans to restore the state's work force, he said, which he dubbed as faring better than most spots in the country because of the state's budget management.

"We've got a lot to do between now and the end of next session," he said. "If we get discouraged, all we have to do is look at the rest of the states and even what's going on in Washington."

Little boasts a strong rapport with the state legislature after his several years of office, he added, which will help him garner support on tough decisions.

"The state government is big business, and the most important part is getting along with your board, which is the legislators," he said.

Little first served in the state government substituting for his father representing District 9 in 1981 and 1985, then was appointed to the position by Gov. Dirk Kempthorne in 2001.

He was elected and re-elected senator from District 11 four times.

He has tried to serve by a philosophy of minimal government, he said. "As a rancher, by nature we're independent and believe in personal responsibility," he said. "I believe the government should be there to protect businesses and individuals, but not stand in their way."

A crowd of state legislators turned out to show their support for Little's announcement.

"I've served with the senator for a number of years, I believe he is a good fit for Otter," said Sen. Michael Jorgenson. "He's a great senator; I think he's a guy who could step in as governor at any point."

Sen. John Goedde said he thinks Little has shown just as much competence in his tenure as Lt. Governor as in the nine years Goedde served with him on the state legislature.

"I have a great deal of respect for his ability, his intelligence and his dedication to the state," he said.

All candidates for Lt. Governor must be filed by March. The office will appear on the ballot in Nov., 2010.

Former Lt. Gov. Jack Riggs, who introduced Little, wasn't surprised Little had so many fans. "He has deep roots, and he's the right person," Riggs said. "He certainly deserves the opportunity to continue in the position because he's shown himself to be a very worthy person."