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## Beebe, Bilbao want Senate seat

CANYON COUNTY — Retiring Canyon County Commissioner Matt Beebe will try for former Emmett Sen. Brad Little's District 11 state senate seat. District 11 Rep. Carlos Bilbao, of Emmett, also said he is interested in the position left open by Gov. Butch Otter's Tuesday appointment of Little as lieutenant governor. Little replaces Jim Risch, who became a U.S. senator.

Melinda Smyser of Parma, the District 11 Republican chairwoman, also said she is considering submitting her name for consideration for the post. District 11 precinct chairpersons will submit to Otter a list of three Republicans for the seat in order of preference. Otter will choose a new senator from those names.

### *Local reaction to Brad Little's appointment:*

"I had a great conversation with the governor about all of the candidates the other day and encouraged him to choose someone who represents Canyon County. (Little) is very knowledgeable, he's very bright and he would some day make a great governor. He was a tremendous (majority) caucus chair."

- Huston Sen. Patti Anne Lodge: "The safe money was on him. Brad Little has a very good reputation and he's very well thought of by Democrats and Republicans. Obviously Otter feels strongly (about) him because he said he would campaign for him if Little decides to run for lieutenant governor in his own right."

- Steve Shaw, Northwest Nazarene University political science professor: "(Little) has proven himself to be a successful senator and I think Brad's going to make an excellent lieutenant governor. Brad's part of District 11 which is in Canyon County, and that makes me particularly excited about the governor's selection. I think Brad understands the issues of Canyon County very well."

"One way or another, I'm interested in what ever might shake out of that situation," Beebe said. He said he would be interested in Bilbao's seat in the Idaho House if Otter appoints Bilbao to replace Little.

Beebe, 65, lost a Republican primary race to Rep. Steven Thayne in May. This is his last week as county commissioner after serving almost nine years in the position. "It could be positive or not, I guess we'll have to see," Beebe said about whether his tenure as a county commissioner would help his chances for a senate seat.

Thayne said he would probably not submit his name for consideration for Little's seat. Bilbao, 72, filled in for Little in the senate for part of the 2004 session when Little was ill. "I've worked with a lot of the senators on different projects in the past four years," Bilbao said. "I think I have a good reputation with them."

Smyser, 50, has been active in local and statewide GOP politics for years. She sits on the Parma School Board. Smyser's husband Skip Smyser served in the Idaho House and Senate from 1980 to 1990. As the District 11 Republican chairwoman Smyser will determine a meeting date for district officials to decide which three names to submit to Otter. She said she wants to give potential candidates ample time to submit their names for consideration. "I'm not in a rush because I want everybody who wants to run to be able to do that," Smyser said.