

Jindal taps adviser for revenue posts

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By Jan Moller

BATON ROUGE -- Former Gov. Buddy Roemer's chief financial adviser will help Gov.-elect Bobby Jindal put together his first budget and pick leaders for the state's top money departments, Jindal's transition team announced Tuesday.

Dennis Stine of Lake Charles, who served as commissioner of administration under Roemer from 1988-92, will head up Jindal's "government and fiscal reform transition advisory council."

The council is expected to hold public hearings and make recommendations to the new administration on who should head the Division of Administration and the Department of Revenue.

Jim Brandt, president of the nonpartisan Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, will serve as vice chairman of the advisory council.

Both Stine and Brandt bring reputations as good-government advocates to the job. Stine is a former state legislator who is president of the Stine Lumber Co. in Sulphur and has held a number of government and civic positions in addition to his work for Roemer.

Most recently, he served on the steering committee for Blueprint Louisiana, a coalition of business and community leaders that put together a series of policy recommendations for the current election cycle. Brandt is a veteran policy analyst who headed the Bureau of Governmental Research in New Orleans before coming to PAR. He also served as assistant director of the Institute for Governmental Studies at Loyola University.

In addition to making hiring recommendations, Brandt said he expects the advisory group to focus on some of the issues that Jindal raised in the campaign, such as making the budget process more transparent and requiring greater disclosure of legislators' pet projects.

As a candidate, Jindal campaigned against "out of control" spending in Baton Rouge, but he offered few specifics on how his spending priorities would differ from those of Gov. Kathleen Blanco. One of the first orders of business for the new administration will be deciding how to spend a \$1 billion surplus from the 2006-07 budget year, a move that will require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to raise a constitutional cap on spending.

The council is one of nine advisory bodies that Jindal has named, or plans to name soon, that will collect public testimony and provide detailed recommendations to the new administration as it prepares for the Jan. 14 transfer of power.

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