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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: The Idaho Press Club today sued Ada County for multiple violations of Idaho's public records law. The lawsuit, filed in 4th District Court in Boise, seeks full release of records related to four different public records requests by the Press Club and its members. It also seeks a change in how Ada County handles future public records requests, to make county officials comply with Idaho Code.

State law provides just one recourse to correct a public records violation: a lawsuit.

The incidents summarized in today's lawsuit include the following:

- Ada County waited nearly 40 days to respond to a public records request by Cynthia Sewell of the Idaho Statesman. Idaho law requires a response within three days, and allows for an extension of no more than 10 days.
- Ada County responded to a second request by providing pages of almost entirely redacted documents. The request, filed by Melissa Davlin on behalf of the Idaho Press Club, concerned any communications regarding fulfillment and delay of Sewell's initial request. This response rendered impossible any effort to determine why the county ignored state law. Among the excessive redactions, the county removed Davlin's own email address from the records it then provided her.
- Ada County similarly illegally redacted records provided to Jennifer Swindell, who asked on behalf of the Idaho Press Club for information on previous public records requests to the county.
- Finally, Ada County completely denied a records request by Katy Moeller of the Idaho Statesman, citing privacy grounds that do not exist in Idaho Code. Moeller had requested 911 recordings regarding two accidents.

"These violations by Idaho's largest county only encourage further confusion and abuse of public records law throughout the state," said Melissa Davlin, vice president of the Press Club and chair of its First Amendment Committee. "We trust our efforts today will result in increased access to records for journalists and members of the public."

"Our laws say that the public has a right to access public records, and we expect all levels of government in our state to follow the law," said Betsy Russell, president of the Idaho Press Club. "The Idaho Press Club takes this very seriously."

Boise attorneys Deborah Ferguson and Craig Durham are representing the Press Club. Davlin is available for interviews Tuesday and Wednesday.

A copy of the complaint is attached.