

# Idaho Employment

A monthly update of how Idaho's economy is doing in your area

IDAHO  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Volume 23.3

March 2011 Issue

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, GOVERNOR

ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Green Collar Jobs Collide with Gray Collar Industry, page 1
- Willie Nelson Launches "Green" Fuel Company, page 4
- Compressed Natural Gas: An Alternative, page 5
- Newest Census Data Reflects Recession Fallout, page 6
- Alpacas – Why the Growth in Magic Valley and Beyond? page 11
- U.S. Forest Service Technician Jobs Popular, Competitive in North Central Idaho, page 14
- Sustainable Energy Solutions Developing in Northern Idaho, page 19
- Area Developments, page 26
- State Economic Indicators, page 40



## GREEN COLLAR JOBS COLLIDE WITH GRAY COLLAR INDUSTRY

### INDUSTRY SUMMARY

Biomass power generation is considered relatively new technology although the concept of recycling items dates back to the pioneer days when emigrants to the West gathered cow and buffalo chips to burn for their cooking fires.

It is one of south central Idaho's renewable energy industries and has some overlap with biogas, which typically uses spent oils from restaurants. The most common biomass operation, primarily found in northern Idaho, involves burning wood product residue to generate heat for a turbine.

The anaerobic digesters in south central Idaho are usually on large dairy operations with private companies and their plant and systems operators handling the conversion of manure to methane gas. These companies design and build the digesters, which create a cooked waste product that is converted to methane gas. The gas fuels high horsepower engines that drive generators to produce electricity that is moved to the power grid. In south central Idaho, four digesters are in the works. The process also produces a residual fiber that is sold as a soil additive.

### INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

Those involved with digesters believe the outlook is strong for the energy industry in general and green energy in particular, accentuated by federal, state and local directives and incentives. The Center for Advanced Energy Studies in Idaho Falls estimates that 1,300 digesters will be built nationally in the next 10 years. In addition to generating demand for plant and system operators by itself, that much activity should also lead to breakthroughs in technology, creating new applications and with them more new jobs.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is forecasting a slight decline in plant and system operators through 2018, but that projection is based on this occupation being historically tied to manufacturing and government, which show no sign of increasing jobs in the near term. The advent of green energy in Idaho has created a positive outlook because this occupation is tied to the utility and

energy sectors, which have bright job prospects. While the number of new jobs at 10 through 2018 is low, these jobs pay very well, requiring some on-the-job training or education for handling these smaller power plants.

State and National Trends					
	Occupation	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings *
		2008	2018		
US	All other plant and system operators	12,700	12,100	-5%	290
Idaho	All other plant and system operators	70	80	26%	N/A

\*Job openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Technological breakthroughs have enabled agricultural producers to partner with businesses to optimize their use of waste products beyond land application as fertilizer and composting. These developments have been spurred on by the persistent urbanization of land traditionally given over to farming. Anaerobic digesters and other systems are letting farmers mitigate the smell, flies and disease that often create tension with their new neighbors. There are still issues within the digester process, but the waste is contained in a smaller area and takes less time to break down. In addition to generating electricity, biomass offers the potential for marketing carbon credits to recover the capital investment in the renewable system as well as reducing the farm’s carbon footprint and generating revenue through the sale of the residual dry fiber.

Companies managing anaerobic digesters have been trying to recruit more educated workers over food processing plant maintenance workers although both skill sets are important. These companies want to match up hydrology, biology and wastewater chemistry with the know-how in repair, maintenance and troubleshooting pumps, engines, generating equipment and separators. The current training in environmental technology at the College of Southern Idaho does not cover all of the requisites employers are seeking but it is a good starting point.

### THE AGING WORK FORCE

The push for oil and gas development in the 1970s, at a time when other energy sources were gaining popularity, served as the foundation for today’s work force in the utility industry. New transmission lines were needed across the western states, exploration and drilling workers were everywhere and power plant operators were an integral part of the equation. Comparatively high wages, good working conditions and a career ladder for advancement significantly limited turnover in the decades that followed. While some of these workers are in their 50s and 60s and approaching retirement, their colleagues are also well established in these traditional energy sectors and are unlikely to provide an applicant pool for plant and system operators in the renewable energy field.

Working with biomass, particularly anaerobic digesters, is not for the faint of heart. These operators need to know biology, hydrology, chemistry and how the power a digester generates and is transmitted to the grid, and then there could be the heavy lifting – pulling on waders and slogging through a manure canal to unclog it so the manure remains free flowing. The physical nature of the job can create a barrier for some job seekers although some companies contract out the physical labor in digester operations.

### INDUSTRY GROWTH - GREEN

Not only will replacement workers be needed for the energy and utility industries as many in that work force retire, but the green energy initiatives encouraged with tax incentives is creating new jobs. Training is often similar to that needed for other green energy areas like geothermal, wind and solar.

These small power producers are supported by a 1978 federal law, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act that has been used until recently in Idaho for small hydropower operations. The law requires the utilities to carry a portfolio of small renewable energy projects to complement its own generation, and it must pay the small generators a price for their power that equals the money the utility saves by not having to build its own generator to produce that power. Most of these small power projects generate 10 megawatts or less in Idaho.

### TRANSITIONAL SKILLS

Plant and systems operators monitor the generating process, ensuring that it operates efficiently in either creating biogas or putting electricity on the grid. The general skills are similar to those required in other industries like food processing or municipal waste water treatment, offering the possibility of cross utilization.

In addition to familiarity with hydrology and wastewater biology and chemistry, anaerobic digester operators need a solid understanding of the gas component and its inherent dangers.

This job pays as well – better than food processing or local government – so the applicant pool has been strong although typically applicants have either experience or education but not both.

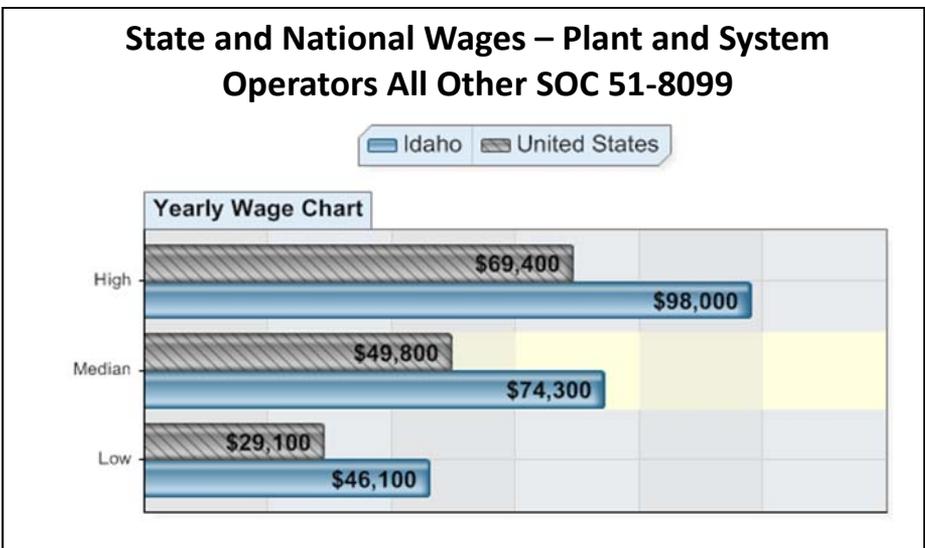
### COMPONENTS OF THE JOB

The responsibility for an efficient, undisrupted generating system lies with the operator, using his scientific knowledge to stay on top of the process. The operator has to keep pumps, separators, valves, engines and generators working optimally, following a schedule for preventive maintenance and quickly troubleshooting any breakdown and arranging immediate repair or replacement. Soft skills such as logic, initiative and flexibility are almost as important.

Documentation and reporting accompany the job, requiring familiarity with Microsoft Office although additional education is typically provided.

### WAGES

The median wage for these jobs in Idaho is \$35.74 an hour, substantially higher than the national median of \$23.92. But the Idaho wage reflects the



lengthy tenure of workers in the traditional utility sector, whose wages have risen over their decades of work. There are also instances in south central Idaho where biomass operators are earning substantially higher than the median. But the wage structure does reflect the structures in food processing and local government regionally.

**SUMMARY**

Anaerobic digesters are either generating or will soon be generating sufficient energy to power 8,000 homes in south central Idaho. The legislative climate and rising power prices encourage this green industry, and the wages make occupations attractive to job seekers interested in renewable energy.

[Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov), *Regional Economist*  
(208) 735-2500 ext. 3639



**WILLIE NELSON LAUNCHES "GREEN" FUEL COMPANY**

Willie Nelson conjures up many images – country music icon, celebrity with Internal Revenue Service tax problems and the famous pony tail. But Willie Nelson is also making a contribution to America’s “green” economy.

Nelson is the founder and owner of Willie Nelson Biodiesel. The company produces a biodiesel fuel called BioWillie™ made of soybean and other vegetable oils that can be used without modification in modern diesel engines instead of regular fuel. BioWillie™ contributes to renewable fuel production in America, thereby reducing dependence on foreign oil.

According to the National Biodiesel Board, biodiesel is a clean-burning, alternative fuel produced from domestic, renewable resources such as plant



Willie Nelson promotes his biodiesel company.  
*Photo: Greencar.com*

oils, animal fats, used cooking oil and new sources like algae. It contains no petroleum but can be mixed at any level with petroleum diesel to create a biodiesel blend, which can be used in diesel engines with little or no modifications. Biodiesel is simple to use, biodegradable, nontoxic and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics.

The chemical process to produce biodiesel may seem complicated, but some individual consumers have successfully converted various cooking oils including recycled restaurant deep fryer oils into a useable bio-fuel for diesel vehicles. In these cases, however, the diesel vehicles often must be modified to run on this homebrew form of biodiesel.

Idaho has yet to attract its first commercial biodiesel manufacturer, according to the National Biodiesel Board. But in Chester, Mont., fourth generation farmers Brett Earl and Logan Fisher have formed Earl Fisher BioFuels LLP. They produce biodiesel from local

crops, mostly rapeseed which is also used to produce canola oil. Most of the company’s biodiesel is blended with traditional diesel fuel.

In addition to biodiesel for vehicles, the company also produces home heating oil. Byproducts of fuel production are used to make top soil enhancer and pellet fuel for wood burning stoves.

Business ventures such as Earl Fisher BioFuels are a model for how local agriculture can contribute to meeting America’s energy needs while participating in America’s growing high technology economy.

According to the National Biodiesel Board, there are 1,336 stations where consumers can buy either pure biodiesel or blended biodiesel. Idaho has 27 stations.

Despite that small number and no commercial biodiesel production, the University of Idaho is taking steps to educate the public on the advantages of biodiesel. Jon Van Gerpen of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering is heading up the school's Biodiesel Fuel Education Program, which will:

- Enhance the collection and dissemination of information
- Coordinate with other biodiesel educational programs and with government programs aimed at encouraging biodiesel use
- Create a nationwide network to deliver biodiesel information to targeted audiences
- Identify and document the benefits of biodiesel
- Identify gaps in technologies and information and develop strategies to address the gaps

Biodiesel is still a new technology, but it holds the promise of allowing agricultural states like Idaho to play a larger role in meeting America's energy needs.

*[Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 236-6710 ext. 3713*



## COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS: AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCE WITH PROMISE

The present political turmoil in Libya and the Middle East has sent crude oil prices above \$100 a barrel while local gas prices are well over \$3 a gallon, highlighting America's dependence on foreign sources for oil.

According to the Rand Corp., the United States consumes 25 percent of world oil production while producing only 10 percent of that oil. In 2007, on a net basis, the United States imported 58 percent of what it consumes. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke recently said that the "sustained rises in the prices of oil or other commodities would represent a threat both to economic growth and to overall price stability."

Recently David Kotok, chief investment officer for Cumberland Advisors, predicted that "we could see gasoline between \$4 and \$5 a gallon by Memorial Day, maybe sooner." Given American Transportation's reliance on petroleum-based fuels, a sharp rise in energy costs could be devastating.

A suggested solution to this dilemma is converting America's motor vehicles to compressed natural gas, often called CNG.

One of the champions of that idea is the iconic oil tycoon T. Boone Pickens. Pickens during the 2008 election pushed his self-named Pickens Plan promoting both wind energy and compressed natural gas.

Under the proposals:

- Private industry would finance installation of thousands of wind turbines in the Great Plains, which Pickens referred to as the "wind corridor" of the United States due. Pickens estimates that wind turbines alone could generate enough power to provide at least 20 percent of the country's electricity supply.
- The federal government would pay for electric power transmission lines to connect the turbine farms to the power grid. These transmission lines would provide power to much of the United States.
- With wind providing a large portion of the nation's electricity, natural gas, which is currently used to fuel power plants, could be used as a fuel for thousands of vehicles. To increase efficiency, the Pickens Plan put an emphasis on natural gas-burning fleets of trucks and buses. A key goal of the plan was to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

CNG, which is 1 percent of the normal volume of natural gas, is a plentiful resource in the United States, which produces 99 percent of the natural gas it uses.

The price of the CNG in northern Utah, a state with an expansive network natural gas fueling stations, is \$1.02 to \$1.27 for the equivalent of a gallon. CNG-powered vehicles may see a 20 percent reduction in miles per gallon compared to gasoline and a slight reduction in horsepower. But the savings is still significant.

CNG offers a clear environmental benefit. It emits significantly less pollutants such as carbon dioxide, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and particulates compared to gasoline. Carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by about 40 percent.

Unlike many other alternative fuel technologies, CNG does not require replacement of existing vehicles. Most existing gasoline and diesel motors can be converted to CNG at a cost of \$600 to \$2,000. The conversion takes about 10 hours. Given the price differential with gasoline, a consumer could recover the cost of vehicle conversion in a single year.

The rise of CNG coincides with the development of natural gas industry in Idaho. Bridge Resources, a Calgary, Alberta-based company, began exploratory natural gas drilling in Payette County early last year and has developed seven commercially viable natural gas wells.

More natural gas deposits are expected to be found in Idaho. Bridge Resources estimates the value of natural gas near its Payette County drilling operations at up to \$200 million.

The state of Idaho stands to benefit from the discovery since two of the wells are on state land. The state will earn a 12.5 percent royalty on any production from those wells in addition to a 2 percent production tax on all the wells regardless of their location. A portion of that revenue is earmarked for public schools.

CNG represents a fuel technology with benefits to the average consumer and the environment as it possibly supports America's drive for energy independence.

*[Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 236-6710 ext. 3713*

---

## NEWEST CENSUS DATA REFLECTS RECESSION FALLOUT

The recession of 2007-2009 had a dramatic impact on the Idaho economy. Almost 60,000 jobs were lost. Wages fell by nearly \$2 billion. Personal income dropped for four consecutive quarters for the first time ever. And gross state product, the value of all goods and services produced in Idaho, declined in 2009 for the first time in over 45 years.

The latest figures from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey provide even more insight into just how these economic disruptions affected the lives of Idahoans.

There were 7,700 fewer Idaho households receiving a paycheck in 2009 than in 2007.

The unemployment rate among 16 to 19 year olds jumped from 9.2 percent in 2007 to 11.6 percent in 2009. For workers in their 20s, the rate nearly doubled to 12.5 percent, and rates were up for all older workers as well.

The recession cut across every strata of the economy, but wealthier Idahoans felt it the most. The richest 20 percent of Idaho households controlled 46.3 percent of all the income in Idaho in 2009. But that was down \$2.8 billion from 2007, when that same 20 percent controlled over 48 percent of all

income. About half that loss was sustained by the richest of the rich – the top 5 percent of all households which still controlled almost 19 percent of all Idaho income.

By contrast, the bottom 20 percent of households controlled just 4.3 percent of all income in Idaho.

The number of Idahoans living in poverty more than doubled from 2007 to 2009, hitting 216,000 or 14.3 percent of the population. Over 14,000 of the adults living in poverty also worked full-time, and another 70,000 worked part-time. Just over 75,000 were children under 18. One in 10 households was receiving food stamps or some other type of public assistance. By comparison, the poverty rate was 12.1 percent in 2007, reflecting 101,000 people of all ages in poverty.

The number of homes owned by the people living in them dropped by 4,400 from 2007 to 2009 to under 400,000 even as the population rose by 46,000 during the same two years. The 1 percent decline in owner-occupied homes came as values plummeted and people were left owing more on their mortgages than their houses were worth.

The aggregate value of housing in Idaho fell over 8 percent from \$95.1 billion in 2007 to \$87.3 billion two years later. Homeowners under 35 took the hardest hit, losing 22 percent of their home value between 2007 and 2009. Upper end homes lost 8 percent of their value. Homes in the mid-range were down 4 percent while the low-range home values were off less than a percent.

With those declines in home values, more Idahoans were staying put in 2009. Nearly 83 percent were living in the same home they lived in a year earlier compared to 80.6 percent in 2007. Fewer people were also moving to Idaho from elsewhere. Just 4.4 percent of the state's 2009 population of 1.5 million people over a year old were living somewhere outside Idaho a year earlier compared to 5.2 percent in 2007.

The decline in home values was seen in the ratio of value to household income. Almost four of every 10 homes in Idaho were worth four or more times the owners' annual incomes in 2007. In 2009 that had slipped to fewer than 3½ in every 10. In 2009, 192,000 homes were worth three times annual income or less, up from under 180,000 two years earlier.

There was a possibility that homeowners were using more of their monthly paychecks to maintain their homes. In 2007 about 35 percent of owners and renters were paying 25 percent or more of their monthly income for maintaining their homes. By 2009, that percentage had risen to nearly 39 percent, and those spending over half their income on their homes jumped from under 9 percent in 2007 to 10.5 percent in 2009.

A remnant of the housing boom that contributed to the recession was the size of homes Idahoans were occupying in 2009. In just two years, the number of homes with eight or more rooms increased by more than 23,000 – 19 percent – while the total number of occupied housing units dropped 1 percent.

Going along with those bigger houses, Idahoans had more room to move around at home. Over 72 percent of all housing units in 2009 had two or more rooms for each occupant, up from 69 percent in 2007.

But the setbacks Idahoans took in their paychecks and on their homes did not have much effect on their love affair with vehicles. While fractionally more households – 4 percent – did not own any vehicles in 2009, 40 percent of households still had two cars or trucks and over 19 percent had three. That was down only slightly from 2007, and there were actually more households with four or more vehicles in 2009.

As the recession wore on, more and more Idahoans were driving to work alone each day. In 2009, 77.5 percent of Idaho's 640,000 workers drove to

work alone compared to 76.4 percent of 661,000 workers in 2007. At the same time carpoolers decreased from 11.6 in 2007 to 11 percent in 2009. Surprisingly, slightly fewer workers – 5.1 percent in 2009 compared to 5.3 percent in 2007 – were working from home and did not commute while public transit riders were up fractionally to 1 percent.

There was no major change, however, in the time people left each day to go to work or the amount of time they spent getting there. About 10.5 percent of Idaho workers were still working the overnight and early shifts while around 70 percent of all workers left home for work between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.

About 20,000 more people were enrolled in postsecondary education in 2009 than in 2007, a normal reaction to recessions that send laid-off workers searching for new and better skills.

And the campaign for universal telephone service was reaching its goal. By 2009, only 1.7 percent of Idaho households did not have telephone service. That was a significant improvement from 5.8 percent just two years earlier.

See chart on page 9.

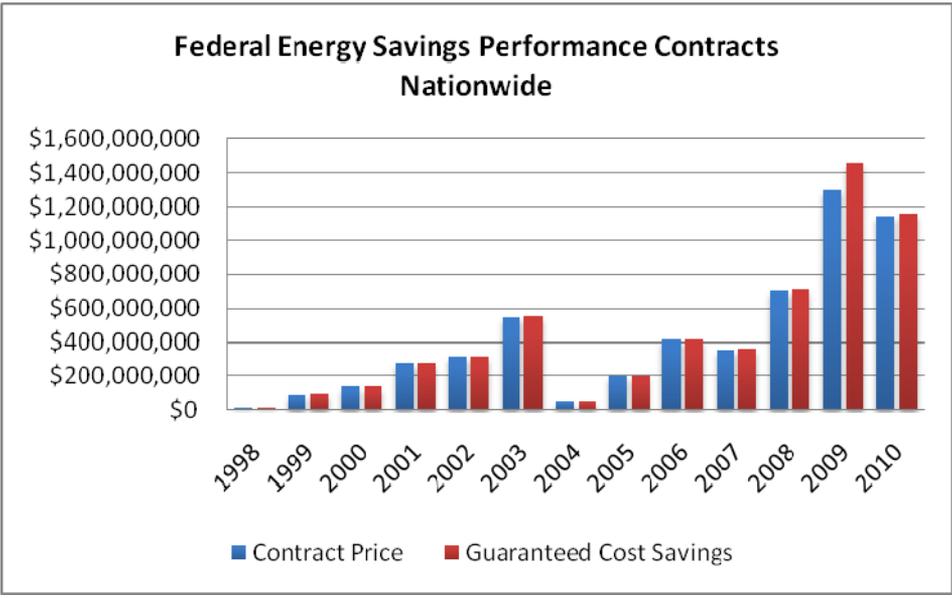
[Bob.Fick@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Bob.Fick@labor.idaho.gov), *Communications Manager*  
 (208) 332-3570, ext. 3628



**PERFORMANCE CONTRACTS ENCOURAGE ENERGY SAVINGS PROJECTS**

More than two dozen federal agencies have already awarded over \$3.6 billion for nationwide Energy Savings Performance Contracts – more than \$115 million in Idaho guaranteeing over \$118 million in energy cost savings. These projects fall under a unique initiative to improve energy efficiency throughout the federal government. Sixteen companies have been approved to bid on these contracts although none is in Idaho.

But while energy savings contracts are mostly affiliated with federal government agencies, some states have adopted similar programs. Projects follow guidelines much like those of the federal program but are adapted for use with state and local government agencies, school districts and universities. In fact the state of Idaho used the equivalent of an Energy Savings Performance Contract in part of the state Capitol renovation, and the Caldwell School District. The city of Caldwell and some other local governments have done the same.



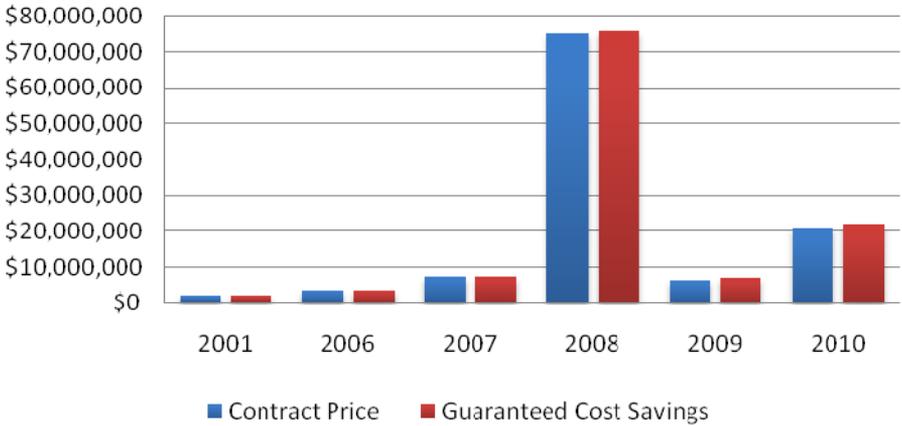
Article continued on page 10.

## How the Recession Affects Idahoans

	2007	2009
Population	1,499,402	1,545,801
Households Receiving Paychecks	437,808	430,132
Unemployment Rate 16-19	9.2%	11.6%
Unemployed 16-19	7,921	11,400
Unemployment Rate 20-29	6.8%	12.5%
Unemployed 20-29	11,726	21,973
Unemployment Rate 30-44	3.4%	7.1%
Unemployed 30-44	8,307	16,573
Unemployment Rate 45-64	3.5%	7.6%
Unemployed 45-64	9,378	21,255
Unemployment Rate Over 64	3.4%	7.0%
Unemployed Over 64	867	1,856
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Bottom 20 Percent of Households	4.3%	4.3%
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Second 20 Percent of Households	9.8%	10.0%
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Middle 20 Percent of Households	15.3%	15.9%
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Fourth 20 Percent of Households	22.6%	23.6%
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Top 20 Percent of Households	48.1%	46.3%
Percent of Total Income Controlled by Top 5 Percent of Households	21.5%	19.4%
Total Housing Units	560,567	558,466
Owner Occupied Homes	403,904	399,498
Loss of Home Value for Owners Under Age 35	—	22.0%
Loss of Home Value for Owners Age 35-64	—	9.5%
Loss of Home Value for Owners Over Age 64	—	4.3%
75th Percentile Home Value	\$278,000	\$255,900
Median Home Value	\$178,100	\$171,700
25th Percentile Home Value	\$119,800	\$118,800
Home Value Less Than Three Times Owner Income	44.5%	48.2%
Home Value Three to Four Times Owner Income	16.4%	16.5%
Home Value Over Four Times Onwer Income	38.4%	34.7%
Living in the Same House as the Previous Year	80.6%	83.0%
Households Spending More Than 25 Percent to Maintain Their Homes	35.6%	38.6%
Households Spending More Than 50 Percent to Maintain Their Homes	8.80%	10.50%
Percent of Homes with Eight or More Rooms	22%	26.40%
Housing Units with One Occupant for Two or More Rooms	69.3%	72.4%
Housing Units with One Occupant Per Room	28.3%	25.2%
Housing Units with More than One Occupant Per Room	2.5%	2.4%
Households with no vehicles	3.7%	4.0%
Households with one vehicle	25.5%	26.9%
Households with two vehicles	41.2%	40.0%
Households with three vehicles	19.9%	19.1%
Households with four or more vehicles	9.8%	10.0%
Workers 16 and Older	697,827	674,773
Driving Alone To Work	76.4%	77.5%
Carpooling to Work	11.6%	11.0%
Public Transportation to Work	1.0%	0.80%
Bicycling to Work	1.2%	1.09%
Walking to Work	1.6%	1.72%
Working at Home	5.1%	5.30%
Leaving for Work Between 4 p.m. and 5 a.m.	10.6%	10.5%
Leaving for Work Between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.	70.4%	70.5%
Leaving for Work Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.	11.0%	11.0%
Commute Time Under 10 Minutes	21.8%	21.9%
Commute Time 10 to 20 Minutes	36.6%	38.3%
Commuter Time 20 to 35 Minutes	27.9%	27.0%
Commute Time 35 minutes to 60 Minutes	8.3%	8.4%
Commute Time Over 60 Minutes	4.5%	5.4%
Enrollment in Postsecondary Education	85,519	105,249
Percentage of Idahoans Over 15 Enrolled in Postsecondary Education	7.4%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

## Federal Energy Savings Performance Contracts In Idaho



### HOW DO THESE CONTRACTS WORK?

Take the case of a federal agency that pays \$1 million a year in utility bills, and its equipment and facilities are dated and should be replaced. Under normal conditions the agency would need up-front capital through an appropriation from Congress to finance the improvements – a lengthy process further inhibited by the federal budget crisis.

Energy Saving Performance Contracts, however, can make the improvements a reality without increasing the budget and at the same time increase local economic activity across a number of industries while boosting labor demand. Under these contracts, a federal agency requests bids for energy savings projects from approved companies specializing in the specific improvements with the goal of reducing energy consumption and saving on energy bills.

When an approved company bids on a project, it assumes the responsibility for financing the projects and guarantees the agency will save a certain amount of energy every year. If the agency typically spends \$1 million a year for utilities and saves \$50,000 a year after the improvements, the winning bidder is repaid for the work and materials with the annual cost savings through the life of the contract. Once the contract expires, cost savings are captured by the agency. The one condition is that the total amount of guaranteed savings must be greater than the cost of the improvements in the contract.

### Common Sources of Energy Cost Savings for Government Agencies

Reducing system use	Improving efficiency
Reducing use in peak-demand periods	Reducing energy rates
Switching to less expensive fuels	Moving to self-generation – cogeneration of heat and power
Shifting time-of-use to lower-cost periods	Reducing water and sewer use and cost

The U.S. Department of Energy has developed the Federal Energy Management Program to help manage these contracts. Assistance with identifying resources, case studies, training, laws and regulations to help agencies and companies get started on the contract process is available online at <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/financing/espcs.html>.

If an Energy Savings Performance Contract program were developed for state and local governments, private businesses could benefit by acquiring new contracts. New employment opportunities could lead to much needed relief for a depressed construction industry. State and local energy consumption would be reduced without increasing budgets beyond current allocations – all with the ability to capture long-term cost savings once the contracts expire.

See table on page 12.

[Will.Jenson@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Will.Jenson@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 557-2500 ext. 3077

## ALPACAS – WHY THE GROWTH IN MAGIC VALLEY?

Alpaca herds are growing in the Magic Valley, in the state and throughout the nation. Past trends included emus and ostriches that got a lot of publicity over the potential for high prices on high protein, low fat meat but never materialized as yet “another white meat.” Alpacas are cute and enough can’t be said about the quality of the fiber they produce, but the question lingers whether they are a viable enterprise.

Alpacas are native to Peru, Bolivia and Chile in the Andes Mountains. The herds are estimated at 3.5 million head. Their fiber is comparable to cashmere with qualities that compete robustly with other wools and fibers.

- Alpaca fiber pills less than cashmere.
- It is hypoallergenic because it does not contain lanolin.
- Alpacas have the largest range of colors from black to brown to white with up to 30 shades in between.
- The fiber retains its shape better than most wool, is lightweight, water resistant and has thermal insulation properties.

A part of the camel family, alpacas are cousins of the South American llama, vicuna and guanaco. They are generally smaller, considered domesticated, are not slaughtered for meat and are too small for packing.

They are commonly called “Animals of the Gods” for their place in Incan history. Alpacas were not imported to the United States until the 1980s when the first breed stock entered the country. There are two species, the Suri and the Huacaya, with the latter the most popular. The Suri is considered more elegant and the Huacaya more like a Teddy Bear. Both are found in Twin Falls County. Suris possess long, straight hair, which is silky and exceptionally lustrous. The Huacaya has relatively short fiber that is dense, curly and voluminous. Both the Suri and Huacaya fibers are used to produce a large variety of woven and knitted fabrics. The Huacaya is the more numerous representing 93 percent of the Alpaca population in Peru. This holds true throughout the United States while Idaho’s percentage is a little lower at 81 percent. Hobby farmers represent the majority of alpaca operators. Many are interested in the arts and crafts associated with adding value to the alpaca fiber. They enjoy the animal’s personality and the beauty and practicality of the value-added product.



A Huacaya alpaca, often described as resembling a Teddy bear.

The Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association was founded in the late ‘80s and organized shows. In the mid-‘90s, it established the Alpaca Registry Inc., the industry’s attempt to account for bloodlines and track parentage. The reg-

Federal Energy Savings Contracts In Idaho							
Year	Agency	Location	Contract Price	Guaranteed Cost Savings	Annual Energy Savings*	Cumulative Energy Savings*	Period of Performance (Years)
2001	DOE	Idaho Falls	\$2,107,187	\$2,107,201	2,664	53,280	20
	Lighting Improvements, Electric Distribution System						
2006	BLM	Boise	\$3,540,545	\$3,696,203	10,241	225,302	22
	Lighting Improvements, Boiler Improvements, Building Automation Systems/EMCS						
2007	BLM	Boise	\$7,263,042	\$7,268,720	15,411	308,220	20
	Boiler Improvements, Building Automation Systems/EMCS, Lighting Improvements, Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning						
2008	DOE - Nuclear Energy	Idaho Falls/Scoville	\$74,940,237	\$75,940,253	53,395	854,320	16
	Boiler Improvements, Building Automation Systems/EMCS, Lighting Improvements, Proposal Development Energy Surveys						
2009	DOE - Science	Idaho Falls	\$6,419,749	\$6,923,729	33,296	432,848	13
	Ventilating & Air Conditioning, Lighting Improvements						
2010	USDA	Boise, Pocatello, McCall, Salmon (also included parts of UT, WY and NV)	\$2,620,054	\$3,437,657	2,654	39,810	15
	Lighting Improvements, Proposal Development, Energy Surveys Water & Sewer Systems, Renewable Energy Systems Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning, Building Envelope Modifications, Chilled/Hot/Steam Piping & Dist Systems						
	BLM	Boise (also included parts of NV, AK and WY)	\$18,440,294	\$18,626,828	10,764	64,584	6
	Renewable Energy Systems, Heating Ventilating & Air Conditioning, Building Automation Systems/EMCS, Boiler Improvements, Water & Sewer Systems, Other (TC.17 Commissioning), Other (TC19 Appliance/Plug)						
<b>Total</b>			\$115,331,108	\$118,000,591	128,425	1,978,364	
<b>Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Federal Energy Management Program</b>							

istry has worked to ensure 99 percent of the United State herd was registered and accounted for by blood typing and DNA testing. The registry is considered complete and closed to additional entries. The results are available to the public to guarantee buyers get the real thing. Those animals not already in the database have zero value for breeding purposes, which is really the only other income owners can generate beyond the fiber. The registry provides perceived barriers to the entry of new stock, restricting the supply and inflating the cost of registered bloodlines.

### Top Alpaca Herds In the United States

State	Suri	Huacaya	All Alpaca	Rank
Ohio	5,582	20,454	26,036	1
Washington	3,956	13,547	17,503	2
Oregon	3,433	10,996	14,429	3
California	2,203	10,465	12,668	4
Colorado	1,819	10,371	12,190	5
Pennsylvania	1,796	8,786	10,582	6
<b>Idaho</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>4,801</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Alpaca Registry Inc., 2010

The 2007 Agricultural Census reported alpacas separately for the first time, showing both the alpaca inventory and the number sold. The 2002 Agricultural Census had combined the breed with other livestock. Idaho's inventory was 2,213 on 128 farms, about 17 animals per operator. The Alpaca Registry has an updated 2010 estimate of 4,801 head. The nation's inventory of alpacas in the 2007 Agriculture Census was 121,904 on 8,708 farms, about 14 alpacas per farm. A farm website recently estimated the number at 350,000 alpacas nationally. An alpaca trade journal said a herd concentration of one million is needed to develop commercial mills to process alpaca fiber. Currently, there are a few small specialty mills and home based knitters that custom design products.

The 2007 Agricultural Census shows about half of Idaho's counties have alpaca operations. Twin Falls County has seven with 145 alpacas. That compares to the Sandpoint area in Bonner County with 662 head on 16 farms. Kootenai County had the most farms at 24 with a few less alpacas at 584. The significantly higher tourism activity in the Panhandle compared to south

### Idaho Alpaca Farms

County	# of Farms	Inventory
<b>Ada</b>	14	113
<b>Bannock</b>	1	N/A
<b>Benewah</b>	2	N/A
<b>Bingham</b>	2	N/A
<b>Boise</b>	3	24
<b>Bonner</b>	16	662
<b>Bonneville</b>	3	9
<b>Boundary</b>	5	76
<b>Butte</b>	2	N/A
<b>Canyon</b>	17	195
<b>Franklin</b>	4	18
<b>Gem</b>	12	102
<b>Jefferson</b>	4	22
<b>Kootenai</b>	24	584
<b>Latah</b>	1	N/A
<b>Lemhi</b>	6	188
<b>Oneida</b>	3	6
<b>Owyhee</b>	1	N/A
<b>Teton</b>	1	N/A
<b>Twin Falls</b>	7	145
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>2,213</b>

N/A = Figures for these counties cannot be disclosed.  
The aggregate is 69 head.  
Source: 2997 Ag Census

central Idaho supports higher end products such as alpaca sweaters and throws. However, tourism-rich Blaine County has not invested in or promoted alpacas.

A study by the University of California, Davis in 2006 confirmed a bubble in the growth and sustainability of profits within the industry. The quality of the fiber is directly impacted by the quality of food, regular veterinary services and strong bloodline. Each animal provides about 6½ pounds of fiber a year. The Co-operative, the larger and dominant of the nation's two markets, buys alpaca fiber at \$5 a pound while the smaller cottage industry market pays \$44. Importing the fiber from Peru or the textile products themselves is still cheaper. The California-Davis report did not discuss the tax benefits from an agricultural operation, which could make a difference depending on individual creativity and account practices.



The Twin Falls Times-News recently reported on the favorable tax regulations for alpaca farms. The one-year depreciation of breeding stock, which can cost up to \$18,000 a head, can be a big plus.

In Twin Falls County, the alpaca business has spun off into a cottage industry. Products created from the fiber are sold at Farmer's Markets throughout the summer. This has added diversity to area's agriculture, especially for 4-H participants, who have become intrigued with the animal even though it is not likely to generate college tuition like a fattened steer typically does.

[Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov), *Regional Economist*  
(208) 735-2500 ext. 3639



## U.S. FOREST SERVICE TECHNICIAN JOBS POPULAR, COMPETITIVE IN NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

The largest source of green jobs in north central Idaho, and one of the largest throughout the state, is the United States Forest Service. The largest occupation at the Forest Service is forest technician, who fights fires, plants trees, builds trails and performs many technical tasks.

Becoming a technician is the most common way to gain the experience required to compete for professional jobs at the Forest Service. Many federal, state and private-sector forest owners model their forest jobs on the Forest Service. They like to hire people with Forest Service technician experience, which brings with it training and the required certifications. Because Forest Service technician jobs offer the attractions of working in the forest, a sense of pride in public service and high pay and benefits, competition is usually fierce.

### THE NATIONAL FORESTS

The Clearwater National Forest is 2,813 square miles of north central Idaho, bounded on the east by Montana, on the north by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest and on the south and west by the Nez Perce National Forest and Palouse Prairie. It covers parts of Idaho, Clearwater and Shoshone counties. The Lochsa and Clearwater rivers flow through the forest, and it includes part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Clearwater is renowned for its whitewater, fishing and hunting opportunities. Cutthroat and rainbow trout, chinook salmon and steelhead swim in its streams while elk, deer, moose, bear, cougar and mountain goats make the steep canyon country their home.

The Nez Perce National Forest stretches from the Oregon border to the Montana border, bounded by the Selway River drainage on the north and the Salmon River on the south. Nearly half of the Nez Perce forest is designated

wilderness, loved by backpackers, hunters and anglers. The Salmon and Selway rivers are both popular with thrill-seeking floaters. At 2.2 million acres, the forest covers 41 percent of Idaho County, which is Idaho's largest county. Altogether national forests cover 81 percent of the county, which also contains parts of the Clearwater, Payette and Salmon national forests and a slice of the Bitterroot National Forest managed from Montana.



For the last two years, the Clearwater and Nez Perce national forests have had the same supervisor, and now some employees working at the Clearwater headquarters in Orofino and the Nez Perce headquarters in Grangeville perform administrative tasks for both forests. A few staff alternate work locations between Grangeville and Orofino.

The forests also have the same human resource specialists, which have regained some of the tasks that had been centralized in New Mexico for several years.

### *TECHNICIAN JOBS*

The staffing patterns at both forests are similar to those of national forests across the country. This is not only the largest occupational group in the Forest Service but also in other federal, state and privately owned forests.

In 2010, more than 270 people – over a third of them forest technicians – worked year-round for the Clearwater and Nez Perce forests. Another 260 were hired for the summer when fire danger is high, and the vast majority of them were forest technicians as well.

The permanent Forest Service jobs filled in significant numbers each year include foresters, forest technicians, general biological scientists, fish and wildlife biologists, civil and general engineers and engineering and biological science technicians. Besides forest technicians, the Clearwater and Nez Perce forest also employ archaeological, biological, hydrologic and engineering technicians.

### *PAY SCALES*

Technician pay varies. Many start at a GS4, which is \$28,000 to \$36,000, and go up from there. Jobs below the GS4 level are designated forest aides and pay between \$17,800 and \$28,000 a year. Forest Service pay scales follow experience and education. In some cases experience can be substituted for education.

- GS1 – for people who never have worked before and is rarely used.
- GS2 – for people with a high school diploma or a GED.
- GS3 – for people with six months of experience.
- GS4 – for people at the technician level with both education and experience.
- GS5 – for people with a post-secondary degree in a related field.

In 2009, the average annual salary for federal forestry technicians was \$42,733 plus comparatively generous benefits. Employers are paid every other week. The median wage in Idaho for all forest and conservation workers was \$32,860 a year.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF TECHNICIAN JOB*

As the backbone of the Forest Service – its largest occupational cadre – technical positions do not generally require a college degree to do this wide

range of challenging and interesting work. Forestry, engineering and biological science dominate the technical jobs. Technician staffing is determined largely by a forest's natural resource problems and the types of public access required.

Forestry technicians are involved with everything from firefighting and prevention, improving roads and building trails to insect and disease control and reforestation and habitat improvement. They help professional foresters, engineers, biologists, contractors and landowners implement projects to manage the forest for renewable resources and natural values.



Technicians are assigned as firefighters, Helitack workers supporting fire suppression, smokejumpers, fire engine operators, dispatchers, lookouts, air tanker base workers who mix fire retardant for aerial drops, fuel reduction specialists and fire prevention specialists who educate the public including school students about fire prevention.

In the off season, these year-round technicians collect tree measurement data, maintain forest service campgrounds and shelters, thin timber stands and collect other forestry data.

To become a dispatcher, technicians must have at least 90 days of on-the-ground experience with fire crews.

Forestry technicians assigned to recreation work on trails, assist wilderness rangers with visitors, clean up after outfitters including removing temporary structures and tending campgrounds. Some work with river rangers and outfitters who bring people on rafts.

Forestry technician assignments can encompass timber sales preparation including cruising and marking the trees, laying out unit boundaries, GIS mapping and inventory examinations; timber harvest including timber appraisal, logging contract inspection and oversight, controlling log quality, organization log yard, bidding, buying logs and timber procurement; reforestation including regeneration plans, contract inspection and oversight for tree planting, site preparation, erosion control seeding, cone collection, seedling protection, vegetation and predator control and slash piling; and stand management including pre-commercial thinning, fertilization, forest protection, fire prevention, road monitoring, road gating and access management, recreation management and GIS mapping.

In reforestation, technicians plant trees, grass or groundcover on land, public or private, that has been logged, used for industrial purposes or burned by fire to prevent erosion. They sometimes lead the crews that do the planting. They also help foresters check for evidence of harmful insects or tree diseases.

Today most technicians working on timber sale preparation must be familiar with the different methods of harvesting including helicopter logging, regular skidding and log lines. Because this requires more knowledge and experience, most of these jobs are in pay grades eight to 10.

### *SKILLS*

These jobs are physically demanding, requiring stamina and the ability to hike while carrying equipment in steep forest terrain. Good eyesight is vital, especially for firefighters and lookout workers.

Most jobs also require a driver's license since technicians usually work in remote areas and travel long distances to ever-changing outdoor locations.

Knowledge of field data recorders and electronic devices like geographic information systems and global positioning systems and how to use them is

often required. Some technicians collect, test, analyze and process biological or other samples. Others apply their technical knowledge of instrumentation techniques and procedures or collect data for environmental studies required by federal law for compliance inspections or timber sales.

### *ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS FOR STUDENTS*

Jobs in the Forest Service are extremely competitive and require considerable study and hard work. The Forest Service provides a host of opportunities for part-time and temporary employment for students. It also offers internships, student opportunities and scholarships for promising student candidates. Two Forest Service programs – the Student Temporary Employment Program and the Student Career Experience Program – provide opportunities for students to learn about working for the Forest Service while gaining valuable first-hand experience and earning money.



The Student Temporary Employment Program gives high school and college students on-the-job experience. The work does not need to be related to a student's major. Though employment usually is for one year, it can be renewed at the forest supervisor's discretion.

This program lets Forest Service managers offer jobs to qualified students without competition. Applicants need a high school diploma or college degree or currently be attending school. For managers the program minimizes paperwork and avoids extensive interviewing so jobs can be filled rapidly. Managers believe they can hire individuals whose work ethic they know and trust.

The Student Career Experience Program allows college students to combine their academic studies with on-the-job experience working with Forest Service professionals in areas directly related to their academic or career goals. The program is the Forest Service's primary source of external recruits for entry-level jobs.

### *SEASONAL POSITIONS*

Seasonal jobs typically last a half year although some can end in a matter of four months while others can run as long as nine months.

Many seasonal workers are college students and a few are high school students. Others work the spring and fall fire seasons in southern states. They can draw unemployment and do odd jobs to support themselves during the off season. The Forest Service does not run ski hills, but in some other parts of Idaho, Forest Service seasonal employees work at ski resorts in the winter.

### *YEAR-ROUND TECHNICIANS*

Year-round technicians usually are more experienced and help with budgeting, training, planning, stocking supplies and making other preparations for the next summer. They also may be involved in prescribed burning and other environmental projects. Burning reduces fuel build-up that can lead to fires and slow the spread of insects or diseases. It can be done following timber harvest in preparation for replanting. With more and more homes on the edges of national forests and with some homes and recreational properties in them, it has become even more important to reduce the build of fuels that could start fires that destroy buildings.

Some workers serve as seasonal employees for several years before securing a permanent job.

### *ADVERTISING POSITIONS*

The Forest Service uses an outreach system to notify people of upcoming job openings. The notices last for 30 days. Managers are looking for diversity among applicants, and if they don't get it, they will open the listing at a lower grade to attract more candidates.

### *QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF APPLICANTS*

Competition for Forest Service jobs is intense. Even during recent labor shortages, the Forest Service found plenty of qualified applicants. With unemployment currently at record levels in Idaho, the pool of candidates for Forest Service jobs is even greater, even for remote locations.

Last summer, the Nez Perce National Forest had about 100 people apply for one technician job in a remote area on Slate Creek in the Salmon River Ranger District.



### *CAREER LADDERS*

Targeted experience affects a worker's chances of moving to different areas of specialization. Job applicants should clearly spell out their experience – what they did, what percentage of time they spent doing it and where they did it.

Applicants can see if there is a career ladder by looking at the standard position description, also called a PD, at the next lower grade and try matching their experience to it.

Typically workers who do an excellent job are most likely to get help moving up a career ladder.

Competition is particularly stiff when people are trying to move from technician jobs to professional services. Some may spend 15 or 20 years as technicians. At some national forests, there are people who have spent 30 years or more as temporary, or seasonal, workers.

### *TEMPORARY PROMOTIONS*

Forest Service employees can work in temporary jobs for up to 120 days. After that, they must compete for the job.

### *MOVING UP*

Employees often have to move geographically to get the varied experience required to move up.

Moving can be difficult for workers with families, especially when it might interrupt a spouse's career. In addition, there are many dual-career families where both spouses work for the Forest Service. So the need to move for a promotion can become very complicated. Individuals either have to move on their own or search for a place where both spouses can continue their careers. Another complication is that Forest Service rules forbid people from supervising their relatives so a couple cannot move into an area where one might have to supervise the other.

### *AGING OF THE WORK FORCE*

The Forest Service work force is aging, both the professionals and the technicians. In the next 10 to 20 years the Forest Service including the Nez Perce and Clearwater national forests will see a wave of retirements. Timber sales experts are retiring in especially high numbers. The Forest Service is trying to reduce the number of higher-grade jobs so more technician jobs remain available. But funding has not allowed the Forest Service to hire people who can train the workers who will replace the retirees.

The Local Employment Dynamics programs shows that 24 percent of the Idahoans working in the administration of environmental quality are 55 or older. The Forest Service is the largest part of this sector followed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Idaho Department of Lands and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. Overall, 18 percent of Idaho workers are 55 or older.

**LONG-TERM PROSPECTS**

With budgets likely to be stagnant or reduced, federal payrolls could be cut as well. The Forest Service is attempting to preserve on-the-ground jobs such as forest technicians by reducing administrative costs. The Nez Perce and Clearwater national forests are consolidating to reduce administrative jobs and costs.

Although the number of Forest Service technicians may not increase, growing emphasis on forest management is likely to increase the demand for forestry technicians by state government and private forest owners. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment of forest and conservation technicians nationally will grow 9 percent from 34,000 in 2008 to 36,900 jobs in 2018. That is about average. Most of the growth is expected to come from state and local government. The Idaho Department of Labor projects that the number of forest and conservation technicians in the state will decline 2.4 percent from 2,427 in 2008 to 2,370 in 2018. Despite the decline, the upcoming retirement of many technicians should create more than 100 job openings a year.

**BOTTOM LINE FOR PURSUING CAREERS AS FOREST TECHNICIANS**

To be competitive for entry level jobs with the Forest Service, applicants need to have experience working in forests, an extensive forest-related background in forestry through 4H, FFA and Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs or training in forestry from a high school or college program.

U.S. Forest Service in Idaho 2009 Average Monthly Employment	
Region	Employment
North	443
North Central	519
Southwest	934
South Central	186
Southeast	121
Eastern	479

*This report is based on an interview last October with Human Resource Specialist Rita Herman of the Clearwater and Nez Perce national forests.*

[Kathryn.Tacke@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathryn.Tacke@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 799-5000 ext. 3984



**SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS DEVELOPING IN NORTHERN IDAHO**

Energy efficiency programs developed by utilities trace back to the energy crises in the 1970s when a new concept of "energy conservation" emerged to help customers cope with soaring prices. Over time, this led to the development of expanded energy efficiency programs by electric and natural gas utilities.

Many federal incentives and policies for renewable energy and energy efficiency followed enactment of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Since then, more challenging goals were established by Executive Order 13423, Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management. As a result of these policies, states and utilities have created their own set of incentives and policies. These federal, state and local programs available to commercial and residential users are listed on page 23.

### *NORTHERN IDAHO PROGRAMS*

The three northern Idaho utility companies – Avista Corp., Kootenai Electric Cooperative and Northern Lights Inc. – have been committed to providing customers with sustainable energy solutions.

Avista offers a variety of rebates, incentives and other energy management tools to their 357,000 electric and 316,000 natural gas customers. Over 122,000 of them are in Idaho. For over three decades, Avista has offered energy conservation programs financed through customer rates approved by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. These programs help customers reduce their energy use and allow them to have some control over rising energy prices.

In 2010, Avista paid nearly \$17 million in energy efficiency rebates and incentives to residential, commercial and industrial customers in Idaho and Washington combined.

- \$9.3 million to non-residential customers for over 2,500 completed projects
- \$5.7 million to residential customers for more than 34,000 qualifying energy efficiency projects. Of those, 10,458 rebates were paid to Idaho customers.
- \$1.9 million to limited-income customers. More than 1,500 rebates were paid to over 556 qualifying households.

Through Avista's energy efficiency rebate and incentive programs, customers saved 78,803 megawatt hours of electricity and 2.1 million therms of natural gas. That is enough energy to power over 6,500 homes for one year and provides natural gas to 2,500 homes for one year.

Clean, renewable hydropower provides 50 percent of the electricity Avista needs to serve its customers. An additional 4 percent is generated by wind and biomass. Customers choosing Avista's Buck-A-Block program can make a voluntary payment above their normal rates to support renewable energy. Avista makes no profit from the additional funds, which go to purchase environmental offsets from renewable energy generation. Currently, Avista has about 4,000 customers participating in the Buck-A-Block program. A quarter of them live in Idaho.

In addition, Avista offers businesses power quality, preventative maintenance and specific tools for making operations more energy efficient. Another tool Avista offers to businesses is the Business Energy Analyzer. This free energy analysis shows the business the top ways to save energy.

Over 71 million kilowatt hours of environmental offsets were purchased by Avista customers in 2010, enough to power over 5,900 homes for a year.

Kootenai Electric Cooperative has a smaller customer base. Its 2,500 customers each own a piece of the utility cooperative. Kootenai Electric spent \$700,000 on energy efficiency improvements in northern Idaho on:

- Appliance and HVAC rebates
- Lighting upgrades
- Motors and motor control upgrades
- Energy efficient improvements to schools, businesses and industrial consumers

Northern Lights offers a variety of rebates to its customers for the purchase and installation of energy efficient appliances and measures. Since Northern Light’s energy saving conservation program began in April 2006, 1.96 million kilowatt hours have been saved each year by its members. Rebates are available on clothes washers, dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, water heaters, insulation, replacement windows, heat pumps and new manufactured homes. Duct sealing is also offered to customers free of charge.

Along with the federal, state and company specific energy incentives and programs, Kootenai Electric and Northern Lights provide energy audits for members. Their certified auditors have credentials through the Building Performance Institute, a national standards development and credentialing organization for residential energy efficiency retrofit work. North Idaho College offers this credential online. The standard will become a minimum requirement for field auditors in the near future.

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

As an investment, energy efficiency has on average about a 25 percent annual return compared to U.S. Treasury bills and long-term corporate bonds at less than 10 percent and a risk index level below 10 percent, slightly higher than Treasury bills and slightly lower than bonds, according to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.

It is not that difficult to make improvements to a house to create an average annual savings of approximately \$1,100 per year, which pays for the additional costs of the improvements in the first year. The improvements would create a savings of over \$12,000 in 10 years – a 96.5 percent return on investment. For further details or additional cost savings on remodels or new construction, go to [http://www.greenandsave.com/master\\_roi\\_table.html](http://www.greenandsave.com/master_roi_table.html).

Improvement	Payback Time in Years	Added Cost	Annual SAVINGS	10 Year SAVINGS	Return on Investment (ROI):
Programmable Thermostat	0.6	\$115	\$180	\$1,800	156.5%
Standby Power Reduction (smart power strips)	0.8	\$20	\$24	\$240	120.0%
Compact Fluorescent Lighting	0.8	\$60	\$80	\$800	133.3%
Hot Water Heater 'Blanket'	0.8	\$25	\$30	\$300	120.0%
Shower Heads	0.9	\$180	\$300	\$3,000	111.1%
Heating System Tune-up	1.1	\$200	\$180	\$1,800	90.0%
Seal Duct Leaks	1.5	\$450	\$300	\$3,000	66.7%
Dishwasher	1.5	\$20	\$13	\$130	65.0%
Water Filters	1.9	\$200	\$104	\$1,040	52.0%
Water Efficient Toilets	2	\$50	\$25	\$250	50.0%

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY JOBS**

About 3 percent of employment nationwide is green. Idaho and neighboring states have a similar composition. Approximately 10 percent of Idaho employers overall are green along with 3 percent of their jobs.

Savings from appliance standards created about 338,000 jobs nationwide in 2010. By 2020, that number is projected to grow by 15.4 percent to

390,000 jobs. And for every 100,000 net jobs created by energy efficiency gains, about 6,000 are in the broad manufacturing sector, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy and Appliance Standards Awareness Project.

The Idaho Department of Labor has identified heating, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers, construction laborers, plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters, roofers and electricians as high employment occupations in the field of energy efficiency in Idaho.

Other occupations in energy efficiency and conservation include:

- Floor, ceiling and wall insulation workers
- Technicians certified for Performance Tested Comfort Systems contractors or similar groups to install heat pumps
- Refrigeration mechanics and installers
- Weatherization installers and technicians
- Solar photovoltaic installers
- Energy auditors
- Helpers for installation, maintenance and repair workers
- Electrical, industrial, civil and mechanical engineers
- Environmental science and protection technicians, including health technicians
- Fabricators
- Welding fabricators
- Assemblers

Industries that generate energy efficient occupations:

- Hazardous material removal
- Solar manufacturing
- Biomass
- Professional and technical engineering services
- LED lighting manufacturing

Accounting for a third of all end-use energy in the United States, the industrial sector consumes more energy than any other. While its energy efficiency has increased steadily over the past three decades, there are still tremendous opportunities for energy savings as well as the potential to instill the beliefs of energy efficiency in a sector that employs and influences millions of people. The industrial sector, working constantly to increase shareholder value and reduce expenses, has found energy efficiency investments to be an attractive avenue to achieve those ends. As climate change awareness and mitigation strategies increase, it is likely that industry will further prioritize energy efficiency as a critical solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while increasing returns on investment.

A list of resources for federal, state and local financial incentives can be found on page 23.

[Alivia.Body@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Alivia.Body@labor.idaho.gov), *Regional Economist*  
(208) 769-1558 ext. 3486



## GREEN JOBS IN SOUTHWEST IDAHO

Southwestern Idaho, the state's business and political center, claims just a third of the state's green jobs, and they account for only a fraction of total employment in the region, according to an Idaho Department of Labor analysis of so-called green jobs across the state.

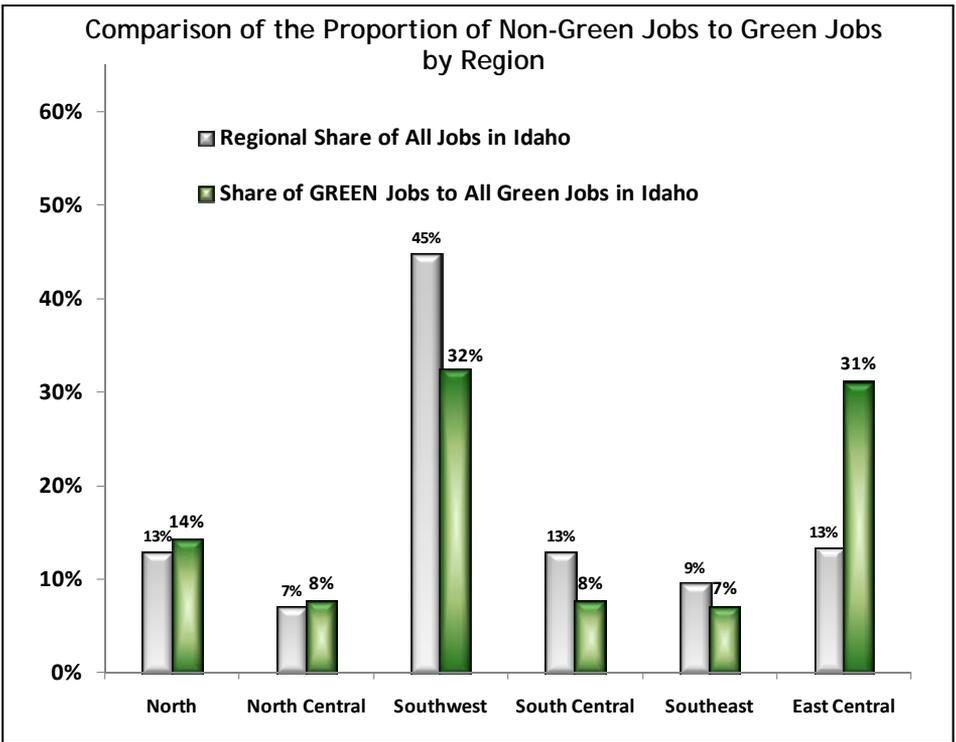
*Article continued on page 24.*

Federal	State and Local
<b>Financial Incentives (Corporate Deduction)</b>	<b>Financial Incentives</b>
<p><b>Corporate Deduction</b> Energy-Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction</p> <p><b>Corporate Depreciation</b> Modified Accelerated Cost-Recovery System plus Bonus Depreciation (2008-2012)</p> <p><b>Corporate Exemption</b> Residential Energy Conservation Subsidy Exclusion (Corporate)</p> <p><b>Corporate Tax Credit</b> Business Energy Investment Tax Credit Energy-Efficient New Homes Tax Credit for Home Builders Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit</p> <p><b>Federal Grant Program</b> Tribal Energy Program Grant U.S. Department of Treasury - Renewable Energy Grants USDA - High Energy Cost Grant Program USDA - Rural Energy for America Program Grants</p> <p><b>Federal Loan Program</b> Clean Renewable Energy Bonds Energy-Efficient Mortgages Qualified Energy Conservation Bonds U.S. Department of Energy - Loan Guarantee Program  USDA - Rural Energy for America Program Loan Guarantees</p> <p><b>Industry Recruitment/Support</b> Energy-Efficient Appliance Manufacturing Tax Credit  Qualifying Advanced Energy Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit</p> <p><b>Performance-Based Incentive</b>  Renewable Energy Production Incentive</p> <p><b>Personal Exemption</b>  Residential Energy Conservation Subsidy Exclusion (Personal)</p> <p><b>Personal Tax Credit</b>  Residential Energy Efficiency Tax Credit Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit</p>	<p><b>Non-Profit Grant Program</b> BEF - Solar 4R Schools</p> <p><b>Personal Deduction</b>  Insulation Income Tax Deduction Residential Alternative Energy Tax Deduction</p> <p><b>Property Tax Incentive</b> Property Tax Exemption for Wind and Geothermal Energy Producers</p> <p><b>Sales Tax Incentive</b> Renewable Energy Equipment Sales Tax Refund</p> <p><b>State Bond Program</b> Renewable Energy Project Bond Program</p> <p><b>State Loan Program</b> Low-Interest Energy Loan Programs</p> <p><b>State Rebate Program</b> Idaho - Residential Energy-Efficient Appliance Rebate Program</p> <p><b>Utility Loan Program</b>  Idaho Falls Power - Commercial Energy Conservation Program Idaho Falls Power - Energy Efficient Heat Pump Loan Program Idaho Falls Power - Residential Energy Efficient Appliance Program Idaho Falls Power - Residential Weatherization Loan Program</p> <p><b>Utility Rebate Program</b> Avista Utilities (Electric) - Commercial Energy Efficiency Incentives Program Avista Utilities (Electric) - Commercial Lighting Energy Efficiency Program Avista Utilities (Gas and Electric) - Commercial Food Equipment Rebates Avista Utilities (Gas) - Commercial Energy Efficiency Incentives Program Avista Utilities (Gas) - Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Programs Idaho Falls Power - Commercial Energy Conservation Program Idaho Falls Power - Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Program Idaho Power - Commercial Custom Efficiency Program Idaho Power - Easy Upgrades for Simple Retrofits Rebate Program Idaho Power - Irrigation Efficiency Rewards Rebate Program Idaho Power - New Building Efficiency Program Idaho Power - Rebate Advantage for New Manufactured Homes Idaho Power - Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Programs Intermountain Gas Company (IGC) - Gas Heating Rebate Program Kootenai Electric Cooperative - Residential Efficiency Rebate Program Northern Lights Inc. - Energy Conservation Rebate Program Rocky Mountain Power - Energy FinAnswer Rocky Mountain Power - FinAnswer Express Rocky Mountain Power - Residential Energy Efficiency Rebate Program</p>
<b>Rules, Regulations &amp; Policies</b>	<b>Rules, Regulations &amp; Policies</b>
<p><b>Appliance/Equipment Efficiency Standards</b> Federal Appliance Standards</p> <p><b>Energy Standards for Public Buildings</b> Energy Goals and Standards for Federal Government</p> <p><b>Green Power Purchasing</b> U.S. Federal Government - Green Power Purchasing Goal</p> <p><b>Interconnection</b> Interconnection Standards for Small Generators</p>	<p><b>Building Energy Code</b> Idaho Building Energy Code</p> <p><b>Energy Standards for Public Buildings</b> Energy Efficiency Standards for Public Buildings</p> <p><b>Net Metering</b> Avista Utilities - Net Metering Idaho Power - Net Metering Rocky Mountain Power - Net Metering</p> <p><b>Solar/Wind Access Policy</b> Solar Easements</p>

The study, financed by a federal stimulus grant, labeled as green jobs that are essential to products or services in:

- Renewable Energy and Alternative Fuels
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Conservation
- Pollution and Waste Prevention, Reduction and Management and Environmental Cleanup

Both north and north central Idaho, which covers everything from Idaho County north to the Canada border, have a marginally higher concentration of green jobs in the regional employment. Both south central Idaho and south-eastern Idaho have lower concentrations of green jobs than expected while east central Idaho, because of the Idaho National Laboratory, has the largest concentration at 6.5 percent and also accounting for nearly a third of all green jobs in Idaho.



Green Jobs By Region			
Region	All Jobs	Green Jobs	% of Total
North	78,094	2,408	3.1%
North Central	42679	1284	3.0%
Southwest	273,960	5,467	2.0%
South Central	78273	1287	1.6%
Southeast	57,968	1,193	2.1%
East Central	81325	5266	6.5%

**SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO**

Green jobs in southwestern Idaho totaled nearly 5,500. The majority were in government and construction. Together they accounted for nearly 60 percent of all green jobs in the region. Manufacturing – food, wood product and primary metal – accounted for 8 percent. Southwestern Idaho has 45 percent of total employment in the state and 32 percent of the state’s green jobs – proportionally less than it share of all jobs.

Green Jobs In Southwestern Idaho by Industry and Margin of Error		
Industry	Southwestern Idaho Green Jobs	Margin of Error*
<b>Construction</b>	1,545	+/- 12.2%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	441	18.8%
<i>Food</i>	278	14.1%
<i>Wood Product</i>	42	48.3%
<i>Primary Metal</i>	121	24.2%
<b>Government</b>	1,571	6.0%
<b>Region 3 Total</b>	<b>5,467</b>	<b>6.2%</b>

### *CONSTRUCTION*

The highest concentration of green jobs in southwestern Idaho was in construction at over 10.7 percent, or 1,545. Nearly four of every five green jobs in construction involve energy efficiency and conservation. Among the more common green construction jobs in the region were construction laborer, plumbers and heating, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers. Construction was second only to government in the number of green jobs.

### *MANUFACTURING*

Manufacturing supplies 8 percent of the 273,000 jobs in southwestern Idaho, but only a fraction of them – 1.8 percent – are green.

Food manufacturing has the highest concentration at 4.2 percent of all jobs in that industry – about 280 of more than 6,600 jobs, most involving fisheries under the category of sustainable agriculture.

There were fewer green jobs in wood products manufacturing – only about 40 – but these jobs accounted for 1.7 percent of total wood manufacturing jobs.

Primary metal manufacturing had the second highest number of green jobs but the lowest concentration in the three manufacturing sectors. Less than 1 percent of jobs in primary metal manufacturing were reported as green. Most involved energy efficiency.

### *GOVERNMENT*

Government provided the largest number of green jobs in the region – nearly 1,600. That 6 percent concentration is the second highest concentration of any industry. Most of the green jobs involved sustainable agriculture and included environmental engineers, wildlands firefighters and various fields of sciences such as zoologists and biologists.

*[John.VanDyke@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:John.VanDyke@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 332-3570 ext. 3199*



## Area and County Developments

The February county, metropolitan and labor market area employment data are scheduled for release on March 25 and will be available on our website at <http://lmi.idaho.gov/>. Each region has web page with labor market information that is available on a sub-state level. From <http://lmi.idaho.gov/> click on “Regional Labor Markets” menu item.

---

## NORTHERN IDAHO

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone counties

---

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce and the North Idaho Small Business Development Center joined forces to help regional businesses explore export markets. The seminar at the Coeur d'Alene Resort last month focused on the tools and resources small and micro businesses can use to expand through international trade. The Idaho Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Commerce also provided information to participants, who heard from Idaho's trade office directors Eddie Yen in Taiwan and Xu Fang in Shanghai. Yen and Fung discussed market opportunities in both Taiwan and China, that can help businesses become more profitable and grow during challenging economic times when domestic markets are sluggish.



The first phase of replacing the 54-year old heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system in Avista's Spokane headquarters has earned the company a LEED Gold Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Renovating the company's signature five-story headquarters over five years includes complete HVAC system upgrades, asbestos removal, controls improvements, installation of solar water heating and new ceilings and energy efficient lighting and windows. The redesigned interior layout ensures employees have access to natural light and existing windows. When completed, the work is expected to save more than 1.4 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and 66,000 of natural gas each year, reducing Avista's annual energy costs by \$149,000. The energy savings are enough to power 116 homes for a year and serve about 80 homes with natural gas. About 56 percent of all construction waste from the fifth-floor upgrade was recycled or salvaged, some of it processed through Avista's on-site Investment Recovery Center for additional cost savings.

- Nearly 1,200 people applied for the 200 to 250 seasonal jobs at Riverfront Park and other Spokane parks and pools this summer. The annual job fair typically attracts 500 to 600 people. Most of the applicants were students and either unemployed or looking for supplemental income.
- North Idaho College students are now able to earn a business degree in business from Walsh College in Michigan. Students can transfer up to 82 credits toward a bachelor's degree offered online by Walsh, which has 4,600 students on two Michigan campuses, three Detroit university centers and the Web. Students who meet grade-point requirements will be able to enroll in Walsh's Fast-Track program, which leads to a master's degree in business in five years.



More than 30 percent of all electric power is lost before it gets to its destination, but Spokane Valley-based Flyback Energy Inc. has developed flyback switch technology to capture that lost power and convert it into usable energy. The company claims the technology can improve the efficiency of electrical devices, motors and other power systems by using otherwise wasted energy. There is potential application in electric cars, consumer products, wireless communications and aerospace.

- Spokane-based Dry Fly Distilling is adding a second shift to produce more whiskey to meet a growing demand for aged products. The company will add three fermenters to boost production by 40 percent at its downtown distillery. Started in 2007, Dry Fly produces gin, vodka and all-wheat whiskey. It will release a bourbon whiskey this year. It also has another whiskey under wraps due to be released later this year. It sells gin and vodka in 30 states, but just four states carry Dry Fly whiskey.
- One of the largest contracts in military history — a \$35 billion deal to build 179 giant airborne refueling tankers— has been awarded to Boeing Co. Nearly 50,000 jobs are expected to be created from this contract. Negotiations are still under way on where the production will take place – Kansas, Washington or South Carolina. The amount could end up being a first installment on a \$100 billion deal if the Air Force decides to purchase more aircraft.
- Coeur d'Alene Mines Corp. had a record setting 2010. The company reported a 72 percent increase in metal sales to a record \$515 million, 199 percent jump in annual operating cash flow to a record \$183.9 million, adjusted earnings of \$34.3 million or 39 cents per share; 29 percent decline in capital expenditures to \$156 million and 118 percent increase in gold production to 157,062 ounces.
- Sandpoint-based Quest Aircraft has formed a partnership with nonprofit Spokane Turbine Center, a church-supported training center for mission aviators. Quest will now use Spokane Turbine Center's million-dollar flight simulator and its Quest Kodiak airplane to train customers buying one of the single-engine planes. The training center is next to Felts Field in Spokane Valley. That allows Quest's customers to train in Spokane when conditions are inclement in Sandpoint, Quest President Paul Schaller said. Quest's factory-trained mechanic-instructor in Spokane will help Spokane Turbine provide a full scope of technical training to the mission pilots coming before they leave on assignments worldwide.

#### ***BENEWAH COUNTY***

- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Sister's Building burned to the ground in early February. The building, which housed a girls boarding school from 1908 to 1974, was on the National Register of Historic Places. The three-story brick building was built in 1908 to replace the original boarding school that burned in 1905. In the late 1870s, tribal chiefs asked the Catholic Church to build a school on their reservation to educate tribal members in both worlds. The building also housed the Tribe's Education Department and sewing and cutting industries after the school was closed. Until it was destroyed, the building was used by the tribe for storage and the telecommunication equipment for wireless Internet services in the DeSmet area.

#### ***BONNER COUNTY***

- The city of Dover got a \$147,000 federal stimulus grant to buy a bus to transport residents to counter the demise of the North Idaho Community Express, which lost its federal funding late last year. The fixed-route system will be free to riders and should be running by early spring. In the in-

terim, an on-demand service will be provided for residents of Dover, Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai for \$2 per trip anywhere within the limits of those four cities.

### **BOUNDARY COUNTY**

- The Best Western Kootenai River Inn Casino and Spa, owned by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, has maintained steady growth in both jobs and profitability for 25 years. The complex started with 50 employees in a quaint hotel and restaurant with a magnificent view. Now it is one of the largest private employers in the area with 170 workers. The casino was added in 1996, offering 200 machines for play. Today, Best Western Kootenai River Inn Casino & Spa operates three gaming rooms with more than 500 gaming choices, 65 guest rooms and restaurant. The business has become a benefit for the 140 members of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, enabling the tribe to fund education and community projects in the region.

### **KOOTENAI COUNTY**

- Construction began on the Hagadone Events Center – a venue at the gated Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course that will combine an 11,000 square foot state-of-the-art meeting facility with an elaborate base for weddings and banquets, a swimming pool, a beach area and more.



ActiveWest Builders LLC, a Coeur d'Alene-based construction and development company, has applied green-building concepts beyond individual homes to encompass an entire neighborhood. The company's 80-home Meadow Ranch subdivision in northwest Coeur d'Alene became certified late last month under the LEED neighborhood development program. The company has incorporated low-impact, recycled and locally produced construction materials toward its goal of sustainability. Much of the lumber used in framing the homes, for example, was milled within 150 miles of Coeur d'Alene, and the sidewalk concrete was made with a significant amount of re-used materials. Meadow Ranch was one of five Idaho projects accepted into the council's LEED neighborhood development pilot program, and it is the second in the state to complete the certification process. LEED certification provides third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible and sustainable development. In addition to the neighborhood rating, the completed homes each have earned LEED ratings of gold or platinum – the two highest levels for individual structures.



Patano+Hafermann LLC, an architecture firm with offices in Coeur d'Alene and Seattle, is on a mission to push environmentally friendly architecture beyond conventional standards by incorporating “net-zero energy” into its design standards. One project the firm has designed as a “net-zero energy” building will house the Sustainable Engineering and Transportation Laboratory for the University of Idaho's Engineering Department. It is designed to produce all the energy it uses onsite. In addition to its public facilities and commercial work, Patano+Hafermann is looking to change the future of new-home design by introducing what's known as passive-house design to the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene area. Passive homes require only 10 percent of the energy needed to heat a traditional home.

### **SHOSHONE COUNTY**



Grants are available to help landowners improve water quality and aquatic habitats along the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River and its tributaries by reducing bank erosion and planting trees. The grants are available through the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and

the Benewah Soil and Water Conservation District and are partially supported by the Governor's Office of Species Conservation. The projects are part of ongoing water quality improvement plans led by the Department of Environmental Quality and the North Fork Coeur d'Alene River Watershed Advisory Group.

- The federal government has collected \$6.75 million from the Atlantic Richfield Co., also known as ARCO, to settlement pollution claims lodged by the federal government, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the state of Idaho. The settlement resolves allegations that Atlantic Richfield and its predecessor, Anaconda Co., were liable under the Superfund law for the natural resources damages caused by operation of the Bunker Hill Mining and Metallurgical Complex and the cost of cleaning up the mess. Hecla Mining Co. recently reached a tentative settlement of \$263.4 million for its role in the mining pollution.
- Hecla Mining Co. reported an increase of silver reserves to 142 million ounces while silver resources increased by 17 percent to 248 million ounces. A new resource was defined at the Noonday project in the Silver Valley, and exploration funding at the Lucky Friday in 2011 is about \$5 million.

#### **OPENINGS**

- River Catering by Darcie in Priest River
- Bonners Ferry's first official Community Theater for the Performing Arts
- The Wooden Shoe Restaurant serving European cuisine in Post Falls
- GBS LLC, an Alaska-based title and escrow company, in Coeur d'Alene
- Global Future Energy Holdings Inc, a company affiliated with Dutch energy-technology firm, in Spokane Valley, its first U.S. distribution facility
- Jimmy John's in Coeur d'Alene
- Good Pickins Thrift Store in Coeur d'Alene
- Coeur d'Alene Reporting, specializes in court reporting, in Coeur d'Alene
- U.S. Rep. Raul Labrador's office in Coeur d'Alene
- A new restaurant-martini bar in Coeur d'Alene
- A new tavern-brewery in Post Falls
- Hubby Bubbly Hookah Lounge in Coeur d'Alene
- Ex-Cell Property Management in Coeur d'Alene
- Kira's Kiss gourmet desserts in Coeur d'Alene
- Giggling Guest Childcare in Sandpoint
- Tully's Coffee in Hayden, its first North Idaho outlet
- Stick-It Gymnastics in St. Maries
- World of Wheels in St. Maries

#### **EXPANSIONS**

- Welco added a second shift at its mill in Naples

#### **CLOSURES/LAYOFFS**

- Sahara Pizza in Hayden
- Kentucky Fried Chicken in Coeur d'Alene

*[Alivia.Body@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Alivia.Body@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 769-1558 ext. 3486*

---

# NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce counties

---

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

### CLEARWATER COUNTY

- The U.S. Department of Defense has approved Pierce as the location of the Idaho National Guard's Youth Challenge, but \$300,000 is still needed to renovate the former elementary school for the program. The funding decision rests with the state Legislature. The Youth Challenge, currently offered in 28 states, teaches discipline and life skills to high school drop-outs 16 to 18 years old. At the boot camp-style program, students wear uniforms and perform community service as well as attend classes. When they complete the program, they receive a diploma from the local school district. The Pierce school would offer two 22-week classes for 100 to 120 students each year. If everything falls in place, the Pierce school should open in September 2012.
- Clearwater County is celebrating its centennial with several events this year. The first was a proclamation from the courthouse steps by the county commissioners commemorating the February 1911 legislation that created the county. What is now Clearwater County began as part of Shoshone County with Pierce as the county seat. In 1904, Shoshone County was made smaller and part of what is now Clearwater County became part of Nez Perce County. A year later, the North Idaho Sanitarium, which eventually became State Hospital North, was established in Orofino. The 1911 legislation carving out Clearwater County made Orofino the county seat. In the years following its establishment, Clearwater County became one of the largest producers of white pine lumber in the U.S. The Clearwater National Forest also became a major employer. When it was created, the county had a population of about 4,500. Today, it has about 8,000 residents.

### IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES

- Craigmont has been awarded a \$500,000 community development block grant for infrastructure improvement at its business park. The city plans to extend water, sewer, electricity, roads and other improvements in the park, whose first tenant is the Ende Foundry. Improvements will enable further development for new or expanding businesses.



Idaho County commissioners plan to create a \$1 million temporary jobs program for the next two summers to minimize fire hazards in campgrounds and around roads and trails. Funded by the county's allocation from the Resource Advisory Council, the program would create about 50 jobs at hourly wages around \$10.



Idaho County Recycling is expanding its offerings with a \$30,000 Department of Environmental Quality grant. The money will finance retrofitting of five commodity bins to be placed in the Grangeville and Kooskia areas. Since it was founded in October 2009, the recycling operation has diverted more than 258 tons of material from the waste stream in Idaho County, primarily from collection events held in Fenn and Kooskia. The program is designed to run at zero cost to the county. So far, it has actually made a profit. Over the next few years, it plans to start picking up recyclables in the Cottonwood and Salmon River areas.

- Idaho County is repairing roads damaged by last spring's flooding. In late January, construction crews began repairing Thorn Springs and Fort Misery roads near Kamiah. Cook & Sons of White Bird is the primary contractor.

To prevent future washouts caused by plugged culverts, an arched concrete frame is under construction. Most of the reconstruction of the Battle Ridge and Big Buck intersection is completed. The county plans to take the final step with resurfacing this summer. The Federal Emergency Management Agency agreed to pay 75 percent of the actual repair costs. The state is covering 15 percent and the county will cover the rest.

- The Kooskia Volunteer Fire Department received a \$277,875 grant that, with a 5 percent match from the city, will pay for a \$290,000 fire truck to replace a 1961 truck with less pumping capacity.
- Lewis-Clark State College Workforce Training is offering two 30-hour welding courses in the evenings at Kamiah High School this spring. Wirefeed instruction will take place Tuesday and Thursday evenings from March 8 to April 7. Aluminum welding instruction is set for Tuesday and Thursday evenings from April 19 through May 19. Course fees are \$599 for each class.
- Lewis County celebrated its centennial on March 3 at the courthouse in Nezperce. The county was formed in 1911 when the Legislature gave it permission to break away from Nez Perce County. The new county took its name to honor Meriwether Lewis of the Corps of Discovery and made Nezperce the county seat. At 479 square miles, it's the fourth smallest county in Idaho. With 3,747 residents, it is the fifth smallest of Idaho's 44 counties in terms of population. Known for its rich farmland and deep river valleys, its largest employers include Kamiah Mills, Blue North Forest Products, the Nez Perce Tribe, Hillco Technologies, Primeland Cooperative and the Flying B Ranch.

#### *LATAH COUNTY*

- Despite extreme winter weather and tight school budgets, this year's Lionel Hampton International Jazz Festival was a roaring success. The University of Idaho's jazz festival, which is the largest west of the Mississippi, hosted 15,000 elementary, high school and college students from throughout the Northwest. The students met great jazz performers, competed in vocal and instrumental performances and attended concerts and workshops at the four-day event, which has been held in Moscow since 1967. Thousands of other people came to listen to the performances. The economic downturn has reduced the number of school bands that can attend, but those that do are bringing more students and signing up for more activities. Heavy snowfall may also have kept some participants and spectators away this year.



The University of Idaho received a \$20 million federal grant, the largest grant it has ever received, to conduct research for the next five years on regional climate change. The majority of funding will stay at the school, but collaborators Washington State University will get \$8 million and Oregon State University \$4 million. Research will focus on how climate change could affect wheat and barley production in the Palouse and Columbia River Basin. Teams will monitor changes in soil carbon, nitrogen and greenhouse gas levels and their effect on crop production. Regional elementary and high schools also will benefit from the research, which will provide information about climate change and innovative agricultural approaches to dealing with it.

#### *NEZ PERCE AND ASOTIN, WA., COUNTIES*

- American Cowboy magazine ranked Lewiston one of the 20 best places to live in the West in its April issue. Towns were judged on their outdoor activities, cost of land and housing, history, tourism, proximity to ranching and events featuring Western lifestyles. Lewiston was listed as one of the

best cowboy towns in the Northwest along with Pocatello; Kennewick, Wash.; and Baker City, Ore. Lewiston scored points for its proximity to Hells Canyon, diverse outdoor recreational opportunities, its place in Lewis and Clark history and its rodeo. American Cowboy said, "September's Lewiston Round-Up has been celebrating the cowboy way since 1935, the spirit of which is on display in the Lewiston Historic Shopping District."

- Lewiston may have a record year for nonresidential construction. Projects valued at \$26 million are already in the pipeline. Work recently began on infrastructure for the Southside Industrial Airpark at the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport. Western Construction and Excavation of Lewiston started the \$526,000 pedestrian underpass beneath Snake River Avenue just north of Country Club Drive, a small amphitheater, additional sidewalks and paths connecting to Bryden Canyon Road and lighting improvements. Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories broke ground on a \$10 million, 105,800-square-foot manufacturing building at the new Port of Lewiston Business and Technology Park. K&G Construction has nearly completed work on the new façade of the Alexander Investments building downtown. When the remodeling is complete, the first floor will have retail space and the second floor apartments. The Lewiston Urban Renewal Agency board plans to spend \$5,500 on 13 directional signs for downtown that can be altered to reflect short-term events such as the Lewiston Roundup and Dogwood Festival. Lewis-Clark State College will begin filling in the ground floor of Clearwater Hall, a dormitory in downtown Lewiston. It will spend \$370,000 to improve the space and move its adult basic education program into the hall's east end. The center helps adults without high school diplomas increase their education and employment opportunities by offering basic education, English as a second language and GED programs.
- Clearwater Paper laid off about 200 employees for a week in mid-March while it performed maintenance on its Lewiston sawmill. "The company is basically balancing our lumber inventory with demand," Clearwater spokesman Matt Van Vleet said. The week-long shutdown did not affect workers that make paper. Clearwater Paper is the largest private employer in north central Idaho with about 1,600 workers.
- School bonds failed in February elections in the Clarkston and Asotin districts. A \$46.8 million bond to build a new Clarkston High School was rejected by 57 percent of voters. Almost 60 percent of the Asotin district's voters said no to a \$12.8 million bond to build a new elementary school and update the high school. In the state of Washington, bonds require approval from 60 percent of voters.
- The Snake River Boat Builders, who have been working together to introduce their jet boats into the European market, exhibited their boats in January at Europe's largest boat show in Dusseldorf, Germany. Europeans showed high interest in the boats, which are unlike any sold in Europe. This was the final phase of the initial boat builders export program, proposed by the Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers' Association, initiated and administered by the Clearwater Economic Development Administration and partially funded by a federal rural development grant. Other phases included a tour of valley boat builders by writers from a major German marine trade publication in June. Last summer, boat builders received training on how to develop export markets and earn the CE mark, the European Union's equivalent of the American UL that demonstrates a product meets consumer safety and environmental standards. In November, the valley hosted several German boat dealers, who were already in

the U.S. for a major boat show in Florida. The export program will continue with financial assistance from the Port of Clarkston. Expanding exports and an improved market in the United States have allowed boat builders to bring back most of the 120 jobs they shed in the previous three years. Their total employment is again nearing 240.

#### **OPENINGS**

- C&B Power Sports, a shop that repairs ATVs, motorcycles and lawn mowers in Grangeville
- Colonial Manor Retirement Home in Lewiston for up to 11 seniors who do not need help with day-to-day tasks. The home has five employees.
- HCG Diet and Health Clinic in Clarkson, selling a regimen of human chorionic gonadotropin for weight loss
- iSpa & Nails in Moscow, offering spa pedicure, waxing and manicures
- Pie Pedaler, which bakes pies and delivers them by bicycle or moped in Moscow
- Seasons, a full-service restaurant with free Wi-Fi in Grangeville
- Tokyo Seoul, a restaurant serving sushi and Korean barbecue in Moscow

*[Kathryn.Tacke@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Kathryn.Tacke@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 769-1558 ext. 3486*

---

## **SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO**

Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Valley & Washington counties

---

### **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **ADA COUNTY**

- Scentsy Inc., has extensive plans for expanding its footprint in Meridian over the next few years. Work has already begun on a warehouse with more than 100,000 square feet and renovation of existing commercial buildings. The master plan also includes a six-story office tower. Employment at Scentsy has exploded over the past few years to 629, and an additional 175 will be added as the expansion is completed. The Meridian-based company sells scented, wickless candle products through a direct sales business model.
- Walgreens has obtained approval from the city of Boise to construct a 14,000 square-foot store just southeast of the downtown core. The project is part of the larger 5.66 acre development that includes the long anticipated Whole Foods store. Construction is expected to begin within the next few months.
- Retailer Kohl's may move into the Boise Towne Square Mall. An application for a building permit was submitted in January, and bids for the remodeling the space vacated by Mervyn's have been solicited.

#### **BOISE COUNTY**

- The mining firm Mosquito Gold Corp. has secured U.S. Forest Service approval to begin exploratory drilling outside of Idaho City.

#### **CANYON COUNTY**

- In the next few months, a decision will be made on a \$40 million proposal from St. Alphonsus' parent network, Trinity Health, to expand the St. Alphonsus Health Plaza in Nampa.

### GEM COUNTY

- A bridge built in 1959 on Highway 16 near Emmett is scheduled to be replaced this summer. The new bridge will be wider and more structurally sound.

### OWYHEE COUNTY

- Owyhee County may lease space to the cellular phone carrier T-Mobile in the old city hall building. The five-year lease would generate about \$800 a month for the county.

### PAYETTE COUNTY

- St. Alphonsus is planning to build a \$10 million, 30,000-square-foot outpatient treatment center in Fruitland. The facility could open by the end of this year, employing 40. According to Economic Modeling Specialists Inc., construction will generate over 100 jobs.

[John.VanDyke@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:John.VanDyke@labor.idaho.gov), *Regional Economist*  
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3199

---

## SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka and Twin Falls counties

---

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

### BLAINE COUNTY

- Chilali luxury condos experienced only three sales over the last three years. Twenty-two units sat vacant in downtown Ketchum. But that changed dramatically when 11 condos were sold within an hour by a team of auctioneers. Approximately, \$8.5 million worth of property moved based on advertisements placed in the Wall Street Journal and other national media. In some cases, the price came in as 65 percent less than the asking price three years prior but still \$421 per square foot. A smaller unit saw a 37 percent decrease yielding a sale price of \$273 per square foot. Chilali is an Indian word meaning 'snow bird.'
- The consulting firm, Village Solutions of Kentucky, advised that "marketing the heck out of" the old airport site will yield results. Ideas ran the gamut during a recent public meeting – an educational institution, a world-class medical facility, corporate headquarters, a sewage treatment plant or a transportation hub to name a few. Half the airport parcel is owned by the Federal Aviation Association, which intends to sell it to generate income for the new airport. The other half of the parcel will revert back to the Friedman Family trust if not redeveloped as part of the airport relocation.
- The Sun Valley Center for the Arts did not meet the deadline for requesting a building permit that includes waiver of the community housing requirement. The executive director for the organization reported that donations have been slow and they are short of \$12 million needed to start work on the \$17 million, 22,500-square-foot building. The center currently has about \$6.2 million and still expects to meet its capital fundraising goal by 2012.

### GOODING COUNTY

- Wel Companies, a DePere, Wis.-based family owned contractor with cheese manufacturers and others, will be retrofitting the former Kiefer Built Trailer building in Gooding's Industrial Park. The company believes the infrastructure and location are a good fit for its warehousing, storage and logistics operation. The company estimates it will initially hire 15 truck drivers and five warehouse workers. The College of Southern Idaho will

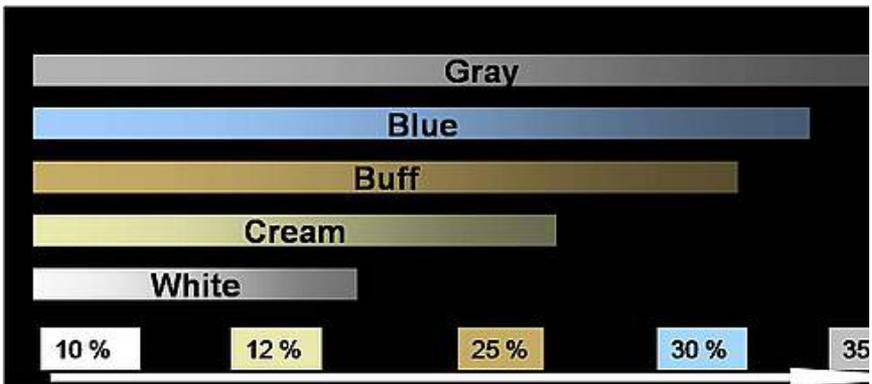
work with Wel to develop truck driving training courses. Wel Companies operates about 500 trucks in 48 states. It has a satellite operation in Idaho Falls employing 30 truck drivers.

**JEROME COUNTY**

- The College of Southern Idaho has approved financing for construction of a million dollar facility for the Jerome Head Start program, which currently serves 105 children and their families. The program has been operating from three different buildings in Jerome. The college will collect monthly rental payments from federally funded Head Start to recover its building costs. The college has been the fiscal agent for the South Central Head Start Program since 1991. A new Head Start facility opened last year in Hansen.



Hilex-Poly, a national plastic bag manufacturer, has initiated a “Bag-2-Bag” recycling program in conjunction with consumers. The company collects plastic bags, shrink wrap plastic bread wrappers and paper products plastic from recycling bins at participating grocery stores. The bags are recycled into resin pellets for making more plastic bags. It’s motto is “Grey is the New Green,” as referenced in the chart below with gray plastic bags consisting of the highest amount of recycled product – 35 percent.



**MINIDOKA AND CASSIA COUNTIES**

- The Rupert Town Square Historic District has added two more vintage buildings to its list. The district is on the National Register of Historic Places. The additions include the former Hanzel Chevrolet building, which is currently a towing business but was originally a livery stable in 1911 and a car dealership in 1940. The French Apartments had once housed a plumbing company with residences above, and from 1925 to 1939 part of the building was used as the Rupert Public Library. The Rupert Historic District was formed in 2000, and 34 of its buildings have received national historic designations.
- The National Park Service purchased 128 acres adjacent to the historic Hunt Japanese American internment camp from the Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund purchased the land in 2008 and provided some cleanup of hazardous waste as a prerequisite to the acquisition by the Park Service. The latest acquisition housed the camp’s fire station, water tower, military police headquarters and some barracks. The site now covers 300 acres of the 14,000-acre camp that once detained 9,500 Japanese American citizens during WW II.

## TWIN FALLS COUNTY

- The Magic Valley Mall, managed by Woodbury Corp., continues to add new shopping options for the greater Twin Falls market, estimated at close to a quarter of a million potential consumers. Mall Manager Brent White said the newest tenants include Kay Jewelers, Coldwater Creek, The Children's Place and America's Best Optical. The mall estimates 180 permanent jobs were created in the past year and nearly \$2 million in tenant improvements were made.
- The College of Southern Idaho estimates its dual credit enrollment at 1,400 to 1,500 students from 41 high schools and the Digital Learning Academy. This is about the same as last spring's count. Wendell High School reported that 90 percent of dual credit classes for its students are taught face-to-face rather than over the Internet. The college expects steady growth in dual enrollment because it is affordable and gives students a jumpstart on college.

## OPENINGS

- Four Peaks Flatbreads and Grill in Hailey
- Visions, a home health company, in Buhl
- McDonalds in Buhl, employing 48 full- and part-time workers
- Papa Bright's Take and Bake in Twin Falls, offering take-and-bake dessert pizzas, enchiladas and lasagna.
- Randy Hansen Automotive in Twin Falls, featuring used vehicles with low mileage
- Valley Agronomics, a part of Valley Coop with headquarters in Rexburg, in Hansen
- Mini-Cassia Lube & Wash in Burley
- Elite Health Club and Elite Physical Therapy & Health in Burley
- The Lloyd Cox Center, accommodating up to 225 for special occasion parties, weddings, flea markets, meetings and events, in Burley

## CLOSURES

- Tuesday Mornings, a discount retailer that has been operating for most of the past decade, in Twin Falls
- John's Market, a small, independent grocery store in Burley

*[Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Jan.Roeser@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 735-2500 ext. 3639*

---

## SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida & Power counties

---

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The Ifft Foundation Fund is seeking applications for projects to provide landscaping, beautification and public recreation in southeastern Idaho. Applicants must be nonprofit organizations, government agencies or organizations with a federally qualified tax-exempt partner. Requests will be accepted from Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida and Power counties. More information is available from the Idaho Community Foundation at (208) 342-3535 or (800) 657-5357 or on the Internet at [info@idcomfdn.org](mailto:info@idcomfdn.org).

## BANNOCK COUNTY

- The Greater Pocatello Convention and Visitors Bureau laid off its last paid employee, Executive Director Rebecca Satter, on Feb. 14. The financial stability of the Convention and Visitors Bureau had been adversely affected by lawsuits filed by AmeriTel Inns. Matt Hunter, executive director of

the Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce and a board member of the Greater Pocatello Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the bureau needs \$50,000 to \$60,000 to operate. Despite the bureau's best efforts, it was unable to raise the cash. Hunter said the bureau's board is committed to keeping the organization afloat – possibly through pending legislation allowing the bureau to draw funding from the Pocatello-Chubbuck Auditorium District.

- While progress at Hoku's Pocatello plant has been slow at times, the company reported reaching two major milestones in January. Hoku announced that by the end of 2011 its Pocatello operation will have produced 2,500 metric tons of polysilicon. Additionally, the company reported that it has \$1.9 billion in pending orders over the next decade for polysilicon. The Pocatello operation currently employs 112 which should increase to 250 when the plant is fully operational. The Idaho Department of Labor held a job fair for Hoku at its Pocatello office in January.

#### ***BEAR LAKE COUNTY***

- Fire swept through an empty three-story building in downtown Montpelier on Feb. 27, destroying the structure. But quick action by police officers who discovered the fire while checking on a water leak enabled the fire department to keep the blaze from spreading to businesses in the downtown area.
- The city of Georgetown has convinced the Environmental Protection Agency to drastically reduce a proposed fine for illegal sewage discharges. The city was first notified of the violations in May 2009 but failed to respond. Then last year it was notified by EPA that it was being fined \$12.7 million. City officials finally contacted EPA to provide information about the discharges, convincing the agency to reduce the fine to just \$1,200.
- Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter selected John Tippetts of Bennington to fill the unexpired term of state Sen. Robert Geddes, who left the Legislature to become chairman of the Idaho State Tax Commission. Tippetts is no stranger to the Legislature. He served from 1988-2000 in the Idaho House, becoming Republican Caucus chairman before he resigned in 2000 for personal reasons. He is the human resource manager at Agrium in Soda Springs.

#### ***BINGHAM COUNTY***

- The seventh annual career fair for Bingham County drew 800 high school students in mid-February. Over 50 employers and colleges participated in the fair sponsored by the Idaho Department of Labor at Snake River High School, giving students an idea of the quality employment and educational opportunities the region offers. The J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation provided a video of Idaho celebrities including the Boise State University football team presenting compelling statistic about why a college education is a good investment and encouraging students to pursue education beyond high school.

#### ***CARIBOU COUNTY***



Monsanto has announced a \$65 million upgrade to the air quality control system at its Soda Springs elemental phosphorus plant. The improvements include a state-of-the-art thermal oxidizer and associated air scrubber system. Monsanto hopes to break ground soon on the project that will create a number of permanent jobs once it is completed.

#### ***FRANKLIN COUNTY***

- Local residents have launched a multimillion-dollar fund-raising campaign to restore the historic Oneida Stake Academy in Preston. The academy

opened in 1888 to educate children of families belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Oneida, Franklin, Bear Lake, Caribou and Bannock counties and the Star Valley in Wyoming. Among its graduates were Ezra Taft Benson, former Mormon Church president and Secretary of Agriculture for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and former Mormon Church President Harold B. Lee. When the academy closed, it was turned over to the Preston School District, which used the building until abandoning it in 2002. That spawned the formation of the Oneida Stake Academy Foundation, which is spearheading the restoration effort. More information on the academy is at [www.oneidastakeacademy.blogspot.com](http://www.oneidastakeacademy.blogspot.com).

- The Preston School District is also considering placing a levy request of \$250,000 on the May 17 ballot to help reduce the impact of an estimated \$1 million budget shortfall.

#### ONEIDA COUNTY

- Lottery players are getting lucky in southeastern Idaho. Last December a winning million-dollar lottery ticket was sold in Franklin County to a Utah resident, and on Feb. 26 another million-dollar winning ticket was sold in Oneida County.
- Malad has a history of welcoming guests – but not all guests. On Feb. 9 a wolf chasing local livestock was killed by local authorities as permitted by federal law. Last summer another animal was killed, but genetic tests showed it was a hybrid between a wolf and a German Shepherd.

#### POWER COUNTY



Ridgeline Energy held a job fair at the Power County Annex on Feb. 23 to recruit employees for its Rockland wind farm. Construction on the wind farm is expected to begin this spring.

*[Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Dan.Cravens@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 236-6710 ext. 3713*

---

## EAST CENTRAL IDAHO

Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison & Teton counties

---

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Yellowstone National Park has a new superintendent. Daniel Wenk is taking over under difficult circumstances. Herds of diseased buffalo have wandered outside the park boundaries and have been the center of debate with surrounding states. The buffalo are set to be slaughtered. A record 3.6 million people visited the park in 2010.
- Targhee Regional Public Transport Authority is cutting some inter-city bus routes. Routes between Idaho Falls and Salmon as well as Idaho Falls and Rexburg have been terminated due to lack of funding and duplication of service by Salt Lake Express.

#### LEMHI COUNTY

- Lemhi County Airport officials presented a 20-year plan to county commissioners. The Federal Aviation Administration has invested close to \$6 million in the last 30 years. Under federal rules, the 20-year master plan was required to continue receiving money. The new plan includes extending and widening the runway and adding more area for hanger construction.
- ATV access to the Salmon-Challis National Forest may be reduced after a ruling by a federal judge. A coalition of environmental groups challenged a

motorized vehicle use plan for the forest. The court ruled that the federal plan failed to protect natural resources and comply with environmental laws.

#### **CLARK COUNTY**



A contract has been signed between the Eastern Idaho Regional Waste District and Dynamis Energy to build a 330-ton-per-day thermal oxidation waste to energy plant in Dubois. The plant, which has been in the planning stages for just over two years, will bring 32 permanent jobs to the smallest county labor force in Idaho while construction will create about 200 more jobs. Wages will range between \$14 and \$23 an hour. The plant will process municipal waste into steam and electricity, and recyclable material and steam will be sold for additional revenue. Counties will benefit from lower fees and reduction in the amount of waste at landfills. Emissions from the plan are 84 percent below required levels. The waste district is comprised of Clark, Fremont, Madison and Bonneville counties.

#### **BONNEVILLE COUNTY**

- Areva crossed another hurdle on the road to its Eagle Rock Nuclear Enrichment Facility in eastern Idaho. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission released an environmental impact statement on the plant. Safety and environmental review hearings come next. Then the commission will decide on granting a license. Construction could begin in August, generating up to 1,000 jobs. URS Corp. has been awarded the contract to build the plant and is currently recruiting local workers.
- Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corp. has selected Bob Everhart as its new executive director. Everhart brings a wealth of experience from serving as executive director of the Idaho Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Melaleuca announced record growth for 2010. Founder Frank VanderSloot said the company finished the year with \$948 million in gross sales – a 10 percent increase over 2009.



Ground has been broken for the new 91,000 square-foot Energy Systems Laboratory, which will research biofuels and renewable energy, energy storage and transportation systems and hybrid energy systems testing. The laboratory will open in August 2012.

- The new Radiological Environmental Sciences Laboratory is nearing operation. A local construction company, Ovard Construction, built the facility. Laboratory employees will monitor the dosimetry for Department of Energy employees, providing quality control for equipment that monitors radioactive material. Offices are open now. The laboratory will open in the fall.

*[Will.Jenson@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:Will.Jenson@labor.idaho.gov), Regional Economist  
(208) 557-2500 ext. 3077*

## State of Idaho Data – State Economic Indicators

	Feb 2011**	Jan 2011*	Feb 2010	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>IDAHO LABOR FORCE</b> (1)					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	760,900	759,600	756,400	0.2	0.6
Unemployment	74,100	73,800	67,748	0.4	9.4
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	9.7	9.7	9.0		
Total Employment	686,800	685,800	688,652	0.1	-0.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	757,900	754,900	747,300	0.4	1.4
Unemployment	80,800	82,100	68,400	-1.6	18.1
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	10.7	10.9	9.2		
Total Employment	677,100	672,800	678,900	0.6	-0.3

### U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE<sup>(2)</sup>

	Feb 2011	Jan 2011	Feb 2010
	8.9	9.0	9.7

### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

#### *Claims Activities*

Initial Claims <sup>(3)</sup>	11,706	18,054	12,982	-35.2	-9.8
Weeks Claimed <sup>(4)</sup>	128,144	158,314	174,235	-19.1	-26.5

#### *Benefit Payment Activities<sup>(5)</sup>*

Weeks Compensated	112,945	111,096	142,456	1.7	-20.7
Total Benefit \$ Paid	\$ 27,411,026.71	\$26,998,553.71	\$36,050,930.44	1.5	-24.0
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$242.69	\$243.02	\$253.07	-0.1	-4.1
Covered Employers	48,346	48,186	49,408	0.3	-2.1
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months <sup>(4)</sup>	\$295,226,351	\$303,866,255	\$349,253,167	-2.8	-15.5

### U. S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX<sup>(2)</sup>

	Feb 2011	Jan 2011	Feb 2010	% Change Month	% Change Year
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI- W)	217.5	216.4	215.2	.05	2.3
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	221.3	220.2	216.7	0.5	2.1

\*\*Forecast data

\* Preliminary estimate

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – CPI Index is released the 14th of each month.

(3) Includes all entitlements on intrastate and interstate agent, new and additional claims.

(4) Includes all entitlements, intrastate and interstate agent.

(5) Includes all entitlements, total liable activities.

# Glossary of Labor Market Terms

**Agriculture Employment:** Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

**Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours:** The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Average Weekly Earnings:** Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

**Civilian Labor Force:** A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

**Consumer Price Index (CPI):** A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

**Covered Employers:** Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

**Durable Goods:** Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

**Employed:** Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

**Initial Claim:** Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

**Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA):** A county or a combination of counties in which at least half the residents live in an urban center of 50,000 or more and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. Idaho has five MSAs: Boise MSA including Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties; Bonneville MSA including Bonneville and Jefferson counties; Pocatello MSA including Bannock and Power counties; Lewiston MSA including Nez Perce County and Asotin County, Wash.; Coeur d’Alene MSA including Kootenai County.

**Micropolitan Statistical Area (MicSA):** Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in urban centers totaling at least 10,000—or 5,000 living in a single urban center—and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MicSAs. Idaho has three MicSAs: Burley MicSA including Cassia and Minidoka counties; Rexburg MicSA including Madison and Fremont counties; Twin Falls MicSA including Twin Falls and Jerome counties.

## Glossary of Labor Market Terms (cont.)

**Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment:** Persons on nonfarm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

**Nondurable Goods:** Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

**Seasonally Adjusted:** Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

**Small Labor Market Areas (SLMA):** Combinations of counties with significant ties through commuting patterns but no urban centers with populations of 10,000 or more. The Office of Management and Budget designates the SLMAs. Idaho has two SLMAs: Hailey SLMA including Blaine and Camas counties; Grangeville SLMA including Lewis and Idaho counties.

**Unemployed:** Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

**Unemployment Insurance:** Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

**Unemployment Rate:** The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

**Weekly Benefit Amount:** The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

**Weeks Claimed:** The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

**Weeks Compensated:** The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.

---

*IDAHO EMPLOYMENT is published online monthly by the Idaho Department of Labor. All information is in the public domain and may be duplicated without permission; however, the Idaho Department of Labor should be cited as the source.*

*The source for all data tables and graphs is the Idaho Department of Labor, Communications & Research, except where noted.*

*IDAHO EMPLOYMENT is produced by the Idaho Department of Labor which is funded at least in part by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor. Costs associated with this online publication are available by contacting the Idaho Department of Labor. Questions and comments can be directed to Public Affairs by phoning (208) 332-3570, ext. 3220, or by e-mail to [janell.hyer@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:janell.hyer@labor.idaho.gov) or to the Regional Economists noted in each area news section.*

Editor: Bob Fick ([bob.fick@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:bob.fick@labor.idaho.gov))

Layout/Design: Jean Cullen  
([jean.cullen@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:jean.cullen@labor.idaho.gov))

**IDAHO**  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
C.L. “BUTCH” OTTER, GOVERNOR  
ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR  
42