

Idaho Employment

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

IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Volume 24.4

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, GOVERNOR

April 2012 Issue

ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- How Deep has Construction Slumped?, page 4
- More Minimum Wage Workers in Idaho Since Recession, page 6
- Alternative Measures of Unemployment: A Seven-State Comparison, page 8
- Fed Indexes Point to Positive News for Idaho, page 15
- Rising Gas Prices Especially Tough on Rural Areas, page 18
- Food Processing — An Overlooked Industry for Careers, page 21
- Area Developments, page 25

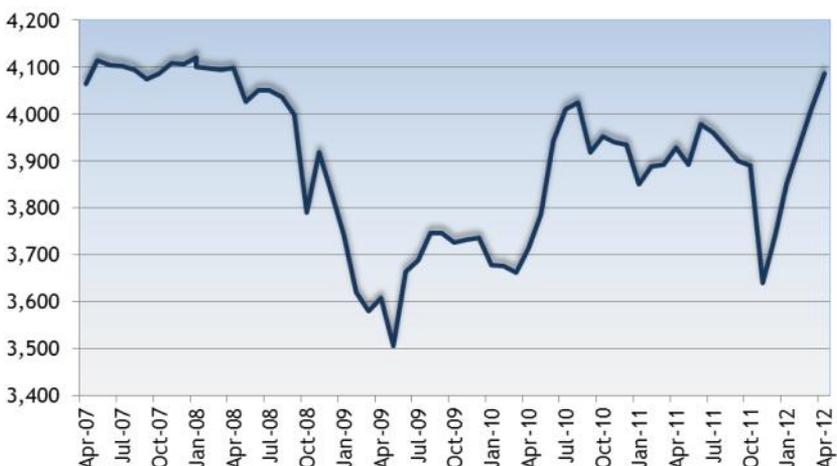
NC IDAHO MANUFACTURERS RECOVER JOBS LOST IN RECESSION

Manufacturers throughout north central Idaho report a growing number of orders, and many have been hiring during the last couple of years with several expected to add more workers in the next few months.

Manufacturing employment in north central Idaho was about 120 jobs higher in April than it was in September. In Lewiston, the opening of the Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories plant, which soon will employ 250, and the expansion of Howell's ammunition operations more than offset the net loss of 130 jobs after Clearwater Paper sold its Lewiston lumber mill to Idaho Forest Group.

The job growth helped north central Idaho pass a milestone – manufacturing employment passed its prerecession level. Despite strong manufacturing growth in the last two years, U.S. manufacturing is still 2.1 million jobs, about 15 percent lower than it was in 2007 and is not likely to return to that level until at least 2014.

Manufacturing Jobs in North Central Idaho



Manufacturing employment statistics do not reflect all the jobs added at manufacturing operations because some manufacturers are hiring people through temporary help agencies, and that employment is recorded in the business services sector. Hiring through temporary agencies is becoming increasingly common because it helps manufacturers respond to surges in orders without the risk of hiring permanent employees that might have to be laid off. In the uncertain business climate of the last two years, manufacturers have increased their use of temp agencies. Employment at temporary help agencies in north central Idaho rose 42 percent from 142 in the third quarter of 2010 to 203 in the third quarter of 2011.

In addition to hiring new workers, manufacturers have increased the hours for their existing employees. During the recession, the hours of many manufacturing workers were cut, and now most have been restored to full time. And the number of workers earning overtime has soared in recent months, according to industry observers. The average manufacturing worker in north central Idaho earned \$12,679 in the third quarter of 2011, up 8.9 percent from \$11,640 in the same quarter the year before. That large jump reflects both rising hourly wage and the surge in hours worked, including hours with an overtime premium. That suggests there will be lots of hiring in the next few months.

WHY MANUFACTURING JOBS WILL GROW HERE

Several factors have constrained manufacturing employment during the recovery, but some of them appear to be changing.

Productivity. A surge in productivity has restrained manufacturing job growth in the region, as well as the nation. U.S. manufacturing output per hour worked grew 6 percent during the recovery, as workers became more productive. Increased automation, the adoption of LEAN technologies and higher skills levels explain much of the increased productivity. In addition, during the recession manufacturers shed some of the least productive workers.

In the last couple of years as orders have picked up, many manufacturers have chosen to add machines rather than workers. The declining cost of industrial robots makes it possible for smaller manufacturing operations to add them. Orders for new robotics were up 41 percent in 2011.

Productivity growth has slowed in recent months, suggesting that U.S. manufacturers will need to start adding jobs to increase production.

Uncertainty. Uncertainty about the strength and durability of the recovery prevented many manufacturers from hiring during the last couple of years. In the last few months, businesses have become more confident about economic conditions. That could lead to increased hiring.

Developing countries. In the last decade, American companies have bought more supplies from and moved many manufacturing operations to China and other developing countries. In the last year or two, rising fuel prices have made relying on foreign suppliers more expensive. The depreciation of the dollar also has increased the cost of importing parts from overseas. Wages have soared in China, Brazil and several other developing countries during the last three years while U.S. wages have been fairly flat. Logistical snarls and dissatisfaction with the quality of products made in China also have caused some companies to turn to American suppliers.

WOOD PRODUCTS SHOW SLIGHT RECOVERY

In past recoveries, the wood products sector has been one of the sectors leading the recovery. That was because lumber and many other wood products tend to follow U.S. housing starts closely, and U.S. housing starts are usually an engine of growth in a recovery. This time because the aftermath of the housing bubble’s collapse has kept housing starts below half their normal level of the past, housing starts have not snapped back quickly and are likely to be sluggish for a few more years. Lumber did see a bit of an increase over the last two years, when housing starts rose slightly from their lowest level since World War II. But even the current pace would produce just 700,000 units a year. In an average year during the last 40, there were about 1.5 million housing starts. Wood products got a larger boost from a surge in foreign demand resulting from high construction activity in China and other Asian countries and from the depreciation of the dollar. That was enough to restore about 150 of the 370 wood product jobs lost in north central Idaho by September. Unfortunately, those gains were wiped out by the downsizing of the Lewiston lumber mill now owned by Idaho Forest Group. Wood products employment is likely to stay at its current level of 780 jobs this year.

STRONG GROWTH FOR OTHER MANUFACTURING SECTORS

Given that wood products employment remains 30 percent below its 2006 level, the fact that manufacturing employment is back to its prerecession level is even more impressive. Since 2006, the region has added nearly 600 jobs in all other manufacturing sectors. The biggest gains – about 400 jobs – have come from recreational technology firms including ATK, other ammunition makers and rifle parts makers including Nightforce Optics. A variety of equipment makers and metal fabricators also have added jobs.

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

April Manufacturing Employment				
	2012	2011	2010	2007
Wood Products Manufacturing				
North Central Idaho	749	877	734	1,097
Clearwater County	67	56	47	96
Idaho County	183	159	144	299
Latah County	196	196	158	182
Lewis County	176	171	112	107
Nez Perce County	127	295	273	413
All Other Manufacturing				
North Central Idaho	3,338	3,052	2,981	2,967
Clearwater County	196	173	150	122
Idaho County	197	201	211	181
Latah County	214	202	184	249
Lewis County	62	59	51	27
Nez Perce County	2,669	2,475	2,385	2,388

HOW DEEP HAS CONSTRUCTION SLUMPED? . . . REALLY DEEP!

To say construction was the victim of the bursting housing bubble is an understatement.

Nearly half of the people working in construction in Idaho lost their jobs in the recession. Only heavy and civil engineering construction escaped with the assistance of many stimulus-funded projects. Employment levels in this subsector experienced a significantly smaller decline than all other subsectors – 18 percent compared to an average of 43 percent in all other construction sectors.

Heavy construction will continue at this rate statewide as Idaho’s GARVEE bond highway construction program is closing in on the end of the \$998 million authorized by the Legislature in 2005. Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle bonds are used to fund critical improvements throughout the state’s six transportation corridors. But as projects start wrapping up over the next couple of years, heavy construction will begin feeling the pressures until additional federal dollars are made available.

Percent of Jobs Lost by Construction Subsector	
Subsectors of Construction	2007-2010
Overall Construction	-40%
Construction of Buildings	-46%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	-18%
Specialty Trade Contractors	-42%
Building Foundation and Exterior Contractors	-52%
Building Equipment Contractors	-31%
Building Finishing Contractors	-52%
Other Specialty Trade Contractors	-38%

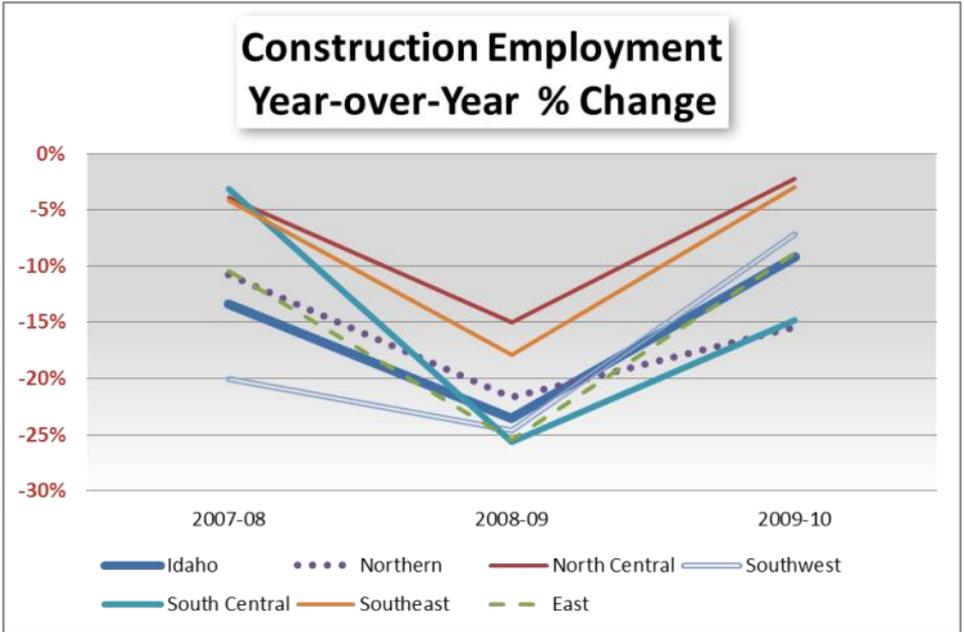
Residential construction took the brunt of the recession. The housing collapse produced an excess supply of homes coupled with a flood of foreclosures, and residential construction withered. Total residential building permits declined nearly 66 percent in Idaho from 12,110 in 2007 to 4,150 in 2010. From 2005 to 2011, the number of foreclosures throughout Idaho increased 139 percent from 52 in 2005 to 776 in 2011.

IS CONSTRUCTION ON THE REBOUND?

Despite low employment levels, the construction industry is slowly digging its way out of the depths of the recession. While construction employment is still down overall in Idaho, the Idaho Department of Labor saw 1,000 more construction jobs posted through its IdahoWorks job listing system in 2011 than 2010 and nearly 700 job openings just within the past three months. Since hitting bottom in 2009, the data suggest construction employment is still declining in the state year over year but at a much slower rate. Employment levels dropped 24 percent in 2009. The erosion slowed to 9 percent in 2010 and then to just 6 percent in 2011.

Much the same is true regionally. From 2000 to 2007, significant population growth in the southwestern, northern and eastern regions of the state spurred more construction workers to settle in these larger metropolitan areas. High employment and population levels were soon followed by grim declines in employment and slower population growth.

North central Idaho’s construction industry did not grow as fast as other regions and therefore lost fewer construction workers after the housing bubble burst. That same pattern occurred in southeastern and south central Idaho.



Where it stands, employment is near the levels of the mid-1990s and well below the peak at the height of the housing boom in 2006-2007.

Construction Employment				Percent Change	
Region	2000	2007	2010	2000-2007	2007-2010
Idaho	37,303	53,254	32,056	43%	-40%
Northern	4,762	8,126	4,806	71%	-41%
North Central	1,706	2,165	1,727	27%	-20%
Southwestern	18,140	25,075	14,040	38%	-44%
South Central	4,752	6,371	3,906	34%	-39%
Southeastern	3,051	3,973	3,030	30%	-24%
Eastern	4,303	6,984	4,253	62%	-39%

However, the silver lining through this construction catastrophe is the upward pressure on the rental market. The high rate of home foreclosures has resulted in a rise in multi-family building permits. Furthermore, preliminary data indicate building permits issued in the first two months of the year are up 47 percent statewide from the same months in 2011.

As the market perseveres, contractors working in a demand niche stand a better chance of survival since fewer contractors are withstanding this depressed market.

Alivia.Metts@labor.idaho.gov, Regional Economist
 (208) 457-8789 ext. 3486

MORE MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS IN IDAHO SINCE RECESSION

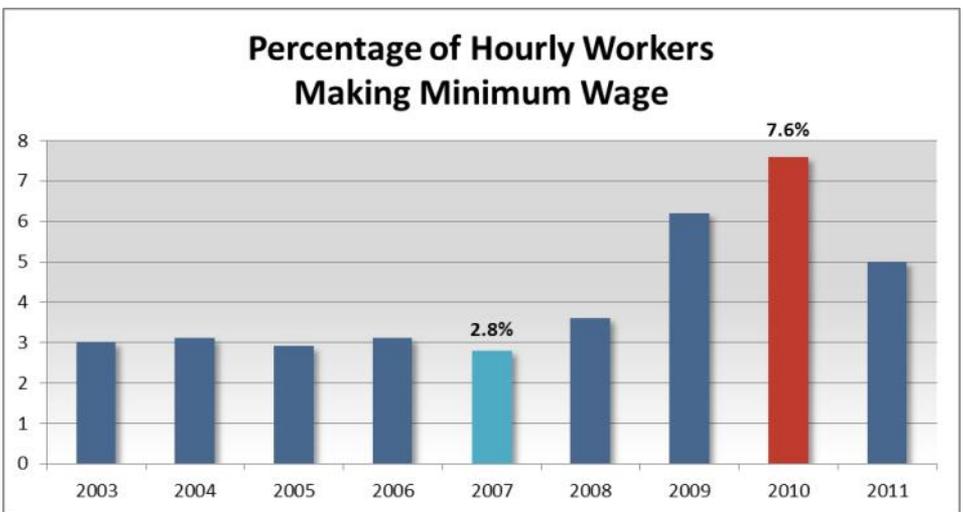
The recession that began in December 2007 drove thousands of Idaho workers into minimum wage jobs.

Estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that about 12,000 of Idaho's 424,000 hourly workers – 2.8 percent – were making the minimum wage of \$5.85 an hour in 2007 during the peak of the state's economic expansion.

By 2010, the number making the new minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour had risen to 30,000 while the total number of hourly workers in Idaho had dropped to 396,000.

The number of workers earning the minimum wage dropped significantly in 2011 to 19,000, but that was still over 5 percent of the state's hourly workforce.

That dramatic increase from 2007 to 2010 translated into 7.6 percent of the state's hourly workers in 2010 making no more than the minimum wage – which is the same under state and federal laws in Idaho.



Only 15 states had higher percentages of their workforces being paid the federal minimum wage or less in 2010. Four states – Mississippi, Louisiana and South Carolina, which have no state minimum wage laws, and Georgia, where the state minimum wage is only \$5.15 an hour – had smaller percentages of their workforces being paid the federal minimum wage or less.

In addition, another 118,000 workers were making between the minimum wage and \$10 an hour in 2010. While sufficient to keep a single person above the federal poverty level, the vast majority of those 148,000 workers would qualify for food stamps if theirs was the only household income and more than one person was in the household. A family of three with the standard expenses of renters would get about \$310 a month in food stamps if their income was limited to one minimum wage job.

The median wage in Idaho in 2010 was \$14.54 an hour, meaning half the workers made more and half made less. The average wage was \$18.56 an hour, and the \$4 difference indicates that there were a substantial number of workers making well over the median wage to pull the average up that much above the median wage.

Minimum Wage Earnings By State, 2011, 2010, Change from 2007

	2011		2010		Change from 2007	
	Number of Minimum Wage Workers	% of All Hourly Workers	Number of Minimum Wage Workers	% of All Hourly Workers	Number of Minimum Wage Workers	% of All Hourly Workers
United States	3,829,000	5.2%	4,361,000	6.0%	2,632,000	152.2%
Alabama	74,000	6.5%	106,000	9.3%	69,000	186.5%
Alaska	4,000	1.9%	4,000	1.9%	2,000	100.0%
Arizona	85,000	5.6%	83,000	5.6%	55,000	196.4%
Arkansas	49,000	6.6%	56,000	7.9%	39,000	229.4%
California	139,000	1.6%	174,000	2.0%	100,000	135.1%
Colorado	49,000	4.0%	55,000	4.8%	30,000	120.0%
Connecticut	25,000	2.9%	35,000	4.0%	21,000	150.0%
Delaware	11,000	5.2%	14,000	6.9%	9,000	180.0%
District of Columbia	4,000	4.3%	5,000	5.2%	2,000	66.7%
Florida	246,000	6.3%	253,000	6.7%	139,000	121.9%
Georgia	196,000	9.6%	163,000	8.5%	93,000	132.9%
Hawaii	15,000	4.7%	15,000	4.7%	11,000	275.0%
Idaho	19,000	5.0%	30,000	7.6%	18,000	150.0%
Illinois	109,000	3.5%	126,000	4.0%	52,000	70.3%
Indiana	108,000	6.2%	126,000	7.8%	90,000	250.0%
Iowa	53,000	5.6%	61,000	6.4%	37,000	154.2%
Kansas	56,000	7.0%	59,000	7.7%	34,000	136.0%
Kentucky	63,000	5.8%	91,000	8.1%	56,000	160.0%
Louisiana	75,000	7.4%	87,000	8.9%	47,000	117.5%
Maine	14,000	3.7%	14,000	3.8%	5,000	55.6%
Maryland	65,000	5.1%	77,000	5.9%	50,000	185.2%
Massachusetts	60,000	3.9%	45,000	3.0%	-15,000	-25.0%
Michigan	117,000	4.6%	137,000	5.5%	79,000	136.2%
Minnesota	78,000	5.1%	90,000	6.0%	69,000	328.6%
Mississippi	58,000	8.5%	63,000	9.5%	32,000	103.2%
Missouri	109,000	7.1%	123,000	8.0%	90,000	272.7%
Montana	10,000	3.7%	17,000	6.7%	16,000	1600.0%
Nebraska	29,000	5.5%	30,000	5.6%	13,000	76.5%
Nevada	22,000	3.3%	23,000	3.5%	11,000	91.7%
New Hampshire	14,000	3.8%	19,000	5.3%	10,000	111.1%
New Jersey	99,000	5.5%	113,000	7.0%	84,000	289.7%
New Mexico	20,000	4.4%	26,000	5.5%	15,000	136.4%
New York	199,000	5.1%	264,000	6.4%	176,000	200.0%
North Carolina	140,000	6.8%	168,000	7.9%	122,000	265.2%
North Dakota	11,000	5.3%	13,000	6.5%	8,000	160.0%
Ohio	150,000	4.7%	172,000	5.4%	93,000	117.7%
Oklahoma	56,000	6.8%	72,000	8.6%	47,000	188.0%
Oregon	12,000	1.2%	16,000	1.6%	7,000	77.8%
Pennsylvania	193,000	5.7%	206,000	6.3%	137,000	198.6%
Rhode Island	11,000	3.8%	14,000	4.8%	7,000	100.0%
South Carolina	79,000	7.3%	78,000	7.4%	31,000	66.0%
South Dakota	13,000	5.1%	15,000	5.8%	9,000	150.0%
Tennessee	101,000	6.9%	124,000	8.3%	85,000	217.9%
Texas	473,000	8.0%	550,000	9.5%	329,000	148.9%
Utah	35,000	4.6%	45,000	6.1%	34,000	309.1%
Vermont	4,000	2.2%	6,000	3.3%	2,000	50.0%
Virginia	121,000	7.1%	136,000	7.9%	90,000	195.7%
Washington	31,000	1.8%	19,000	1.1%	2,000	11.8%
West Virginia	34,000	7.4%	40,000	9.3%	24,000	150.0%
Wisconsin	78,000	4.6%	91,000	5.5%	59,000	184.4%
Wyoming	10,000	6.0%	12,000	7.4%	8,000	200.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The federal minimum wage must be paid to workers involved in interstate commerce or employed by businesses with gross annual revenues over \$500,000. Since Idaho's minimum wage law is tied directly to the federal law the wage requirements are the same for all employers regardless of revenues or interstate commerce involvement.

Since Idaho began seeing some modest job growth through 2011, the percentage of the state's hourly workers making just the minimum wage has declined to 5 percent to rank 30th among the states.

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

2011 ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF UNEMPLOYMENT: A SEVEN-STATE COMPARISON

Of Idaho's six bordering states three had higher unemployment rates in 2011, and three had lower rates. All seven showed improvement between 2010 and 2011. But there are several rates that should be compared. The six alternative measures of unemployment produced by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shed some light on the hidden pockets of unemployed that do not often get publicized. These alternative measures are also an important economic indicator. When compared to neighboring states, Idaho has shown the least improvement across the six measures between 2010 and 2011.

The U-1 rate shows the percentage of a workforce that has been out of work 15 weeks or more. Compared to neighboring states, Idaho was the only state to see an increasing U-1 rate between 2010 and 2011. It rose from 4.1 percent to 4.4 percent. Idaho was the only state to see its number of long-term unemployed increase. It grew by 3,100. In Utah the number of long-term unemployed decreased by over 24 percent. Utah and Oregon showed the most improvement in both percentage and net change.

Idaho and its neighbors all showed declining U-2 rates. The U-2 rate measures the percentage of the labor force that has lost jobs or completed work without finding new work – often called displaced workers. Idaho was second to last in this measure. The number of Idaho workers counted by U-2 decreased 8 percent. In Oregon it decreased by over 25 percent.

The U-3 rate is similar to what is released each month as the official unemployment rate. Idaho's U-3 rate for 2011 only decreased 0.3 percentage points from 9 percent to 8.7 percent – the smallest in the seven-state region. Again, Utah's decrease of 1.2 percentage points and Oregon's of 1.6 percentage points led the region.

The number of discouraged workers measured under U-4 increased in Idaho by almost 10 percent – the third highest of the seven states. Wyoming saw the number of discouraged workers cut in half and Utah saw a 40 percent reduction. The 0.3 percentage point decrease in Idaho's U-3 rate masked the increase in the rate of discouraged workers. While the U-4 rate declined from 9.3 percent to 9.1 percent the discouraged-worker component actually rose a tenth from 2010 to 2011.

The number of marginally attached workers reflected in the U-5 rate increased in five of the seven states. Only Utah and Wyoming showed relief. Idaho and Montana's small declines in the U-3 rate were not enough to make

any improvement in the U-5 rate. Utah and Oregon led the seven-state region in U-5 declines, Utah dropping 1.4 percentage points and Oregon 1.6 percentage points.

The final measure of unemployment adds involuntary part-time workers to create the U-6 rate. Montana was the only state in the region to show an increase – Idaho followed with a 0.2 percentage point reduction. The total number of involuntary part-time workers increased by 8.3 percent in Montana and decreased by 3.4 percent in Idaho. Oregon showed the most improvement with a 13 percent decline. *See Table 1 on page 10.*

Comparing across states and measures affords a comprehensive comparison. Comparing the percent change in the number of unemployed workers show Idaho has fallen behind its neighboring states on the path to recovery. Increases in the percentage of workers under the alternative measures of unemployment are considered negative in regard to economic recovery. A growing labor force and employment count is considered positive. Under this framework Idaho was ranked in a comparison with other states. A ranking of 1 would show the most improvement and a ranking of 7 showing the least. Each state's ranking was summed to create a combined score. Idaho had the highest combined score indicating the lowest improvement when compared to neighboring states. *See Table 2 on page 10.*

A similar approach was used to compare the net change in the U-1 through U-6 rates themselves. Using this comparison Idaho and Montana were tied for showing the lowest improvement. Utah and Oregon were once again leading the seven-state region with improvement. *See Table 3 on page 11.*

Some states have higher alternative measure rates than others and could achieve a large net change more easily than others. Another ranking and combined score was created using the percent change in the alternative measure rate. Idaho still showed the least improvement compared to the seven-state region. By this measure Utah outperformed the other states. *See Table 4 on page 11.*

Idaho was slow to feel the impact of the recession's onset. But the industry composition of Idaho is also different from many of its surrounding states. The lagging effect of federal budget cuts and decreased state tax revenues could be a reason for slower signs of improvement. The positive side of comparing unemployment rates does show that Idaho didn't see rates reach the levels observed in states like Nevada. Hopefully there will be additional improvement as 2012 presses on. *See Table 5 on page 11.*

All related tables on are on pages 10-11.

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

Table 1: Percent Change in Number of Workers								
State	Unemployed 15+ Weeks	Displaced Workers	Discouraged Workers	Marginally Attached	Involuntary Part-Time Workers	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed
Idaho	10.1%	-8.0%	9.7%	38.7%	-3.4%	1.0%	1.3%	-1.9%
Montana	-6.6%	-5.0%	18.8%	50.0%	8.3%	1.7%	2.2%	-3.4%
Nevada	-5.5%	-15.8%	19.7%	56.4%	-3.1%	0.5%	2.1%	-9.2%
Oregon	-21.2%	-25.5%	-27.0%	8.6%	-13.3%	0.1%	2.0%	-15.2%
Utah	-24.3%	-17.3%	-40.7%	-15.4%	-8.4%	-1.3%	0.0%	-16.4%
Washington	-7.1%	-12.3%	-10.9%	18.3%	-4.1%	-2.7%	-1.8%	-10.1%
Wyoming	-22.0%	-18.5%	-50.0%	-25.7%	-2.5%	-0.5%	0.2%	-10.2%

Table 2: Alternative Measure Workers – Percent Change Ranking									
State	Unemployed 15+ weeks	Displaced Workers	Discouraged workers	Marginally Attached	Involuntary Part-Time Workers	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Combined Score
Idaho	7	6	5	5	4	2	4	7	40
Montana	5	7	6	6	7	1	1	6	39
Nevada	6	4	7	7	5	3	2	5	39
Oregon	3	1	3	3	1	4	3	2	20
Utah	1	3	2	2	2	6	6	1	23
Washington	4	5	4	4	3	7	7	4	38
Wyoming	2	2	1	1	6	5	5	3	25

Improvement Ranking: 1=Most Improvement 7=Least Improvement

Table 3: Alternative Measure Net Change Ranking							
State	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6	Score
Idaho	7	5	7	7	6	6	38
Montana	6	7	6	6	6	7	38
Nevada	4	2	2	3	4	3	18
Oregon	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Utah	2	3	3	2	2	2	14
Washington	5	5	4	5	4	5	28
Wyoming	3	4	5	4	3	4	23

Improvement Ranking: 1=Most Improvement 7=Least Improvement

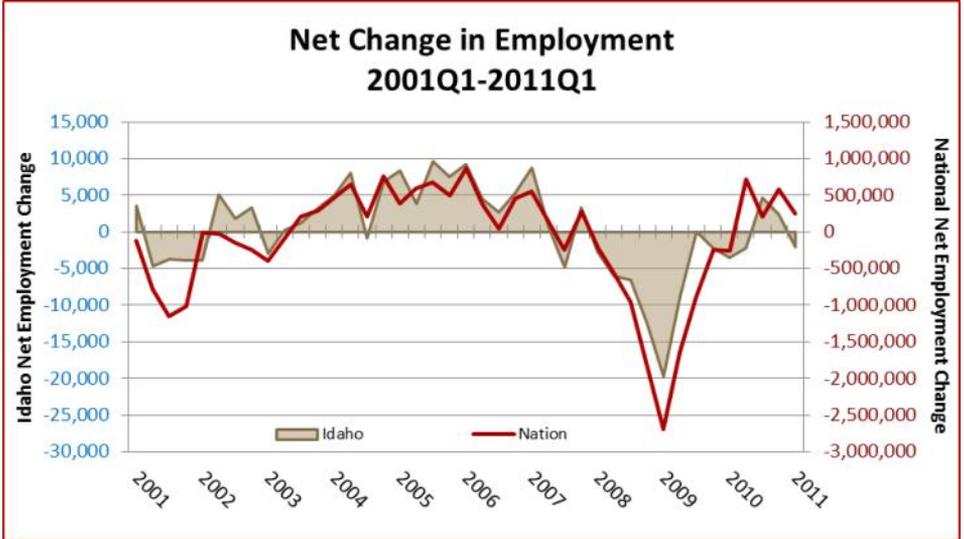
Table 4: Alternative Measure Percent Change Ranking							
State	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6	Score
Idaho	7	5	7	7	6	6	38
Montana	4	7	6	6	6	7	36
Nevada	6	4	4	4	5	4	27
Oregon	2	1	2	2	2	1	10
Utah	1	3	1	1	1	2	9
Washington	5	6	5	5	4	5	30
Wyoming	3	2	3	3	3	3	17

Improvement Ranking: 1=Most Improvement 7=Least Improvement

Table 5: Alternative Measures of Unemployment (Percent of Labor Force)												
State	U-1		U-2		U-3		U-4		U-5		U-6	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Idaho	4.1	4.4	5.4	4.9	9.0	8.7	9.3	9.1	9.9	9.9	16.3	16.1
Montana	3.4	3.1	5.0	4.6	7.7	7.3	8.0	7.7	8.6	8.6	14.9	15.3
Nevada	9.2	8.7	10.1	8.5	14.4	13.1	15.2	14.0	16.0	15.5	23.6	22.7
Oregon	6.7	5.3	7.8	5.8	11.0	9.4	11.6	9.8	12.5	10.9	20.0	17.5
Utah	4.2	3.2	4.8	4.0	8.2	7.0	8.8	7.3	9.5	8.1	15.1	13.3
Washington	5.4	5.1	5.9	5.4	10.2	9.4	10.7	9.9	11.7	11.2	18.4	17.8
Wyoming	3.0	2.4	3.6	2.9	6.6	5.9	7.1	6.2	7.6	6.7	11.5	10.6

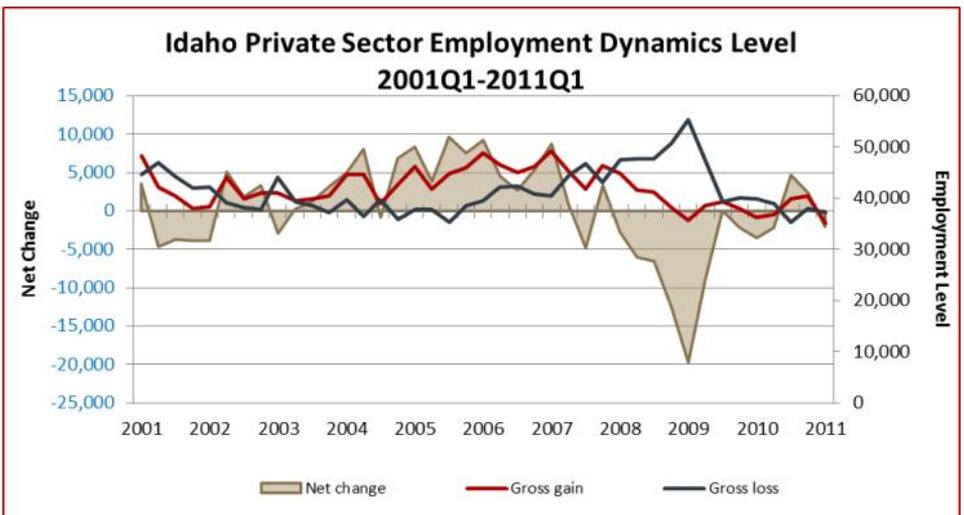
IDAHO'S PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS DROPPED 1ST QUARTER 2011

Idaho experienced a net loss of 2,053 private sector jobs during the first quarter of 2011 on a seasonally adjusted basis after posting job gains during the final two quarters of 2010, according to the Business Employment Dynamics program of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This was counter to the national trend; most states posted net job gains.



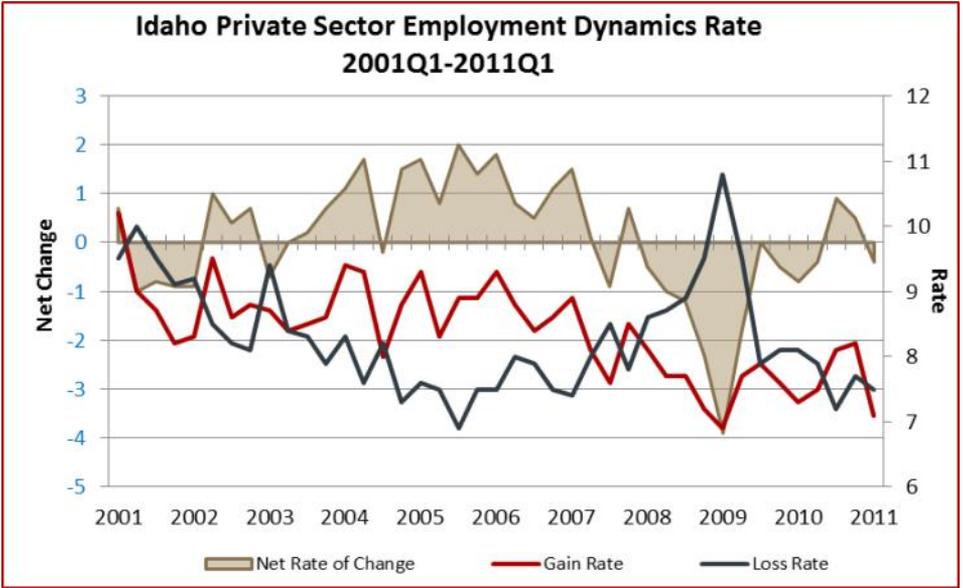
From January to March 2011, Idaho's opening and expanding businesses added 35,101 jobs while those closing or downsizing cut 37,154. This was a return to the net job losses that have weakened the Idaho economy since the first quarter of 2008 except for the six-month break in the second half of 2010.

Contracting businesses in Idaho cut about 1,100 more jobs than expanding businesses created during the first quarter of 2011. Meanwhile, closing businesses eliminated nearly 1,000 more jobs than opening businesses created.



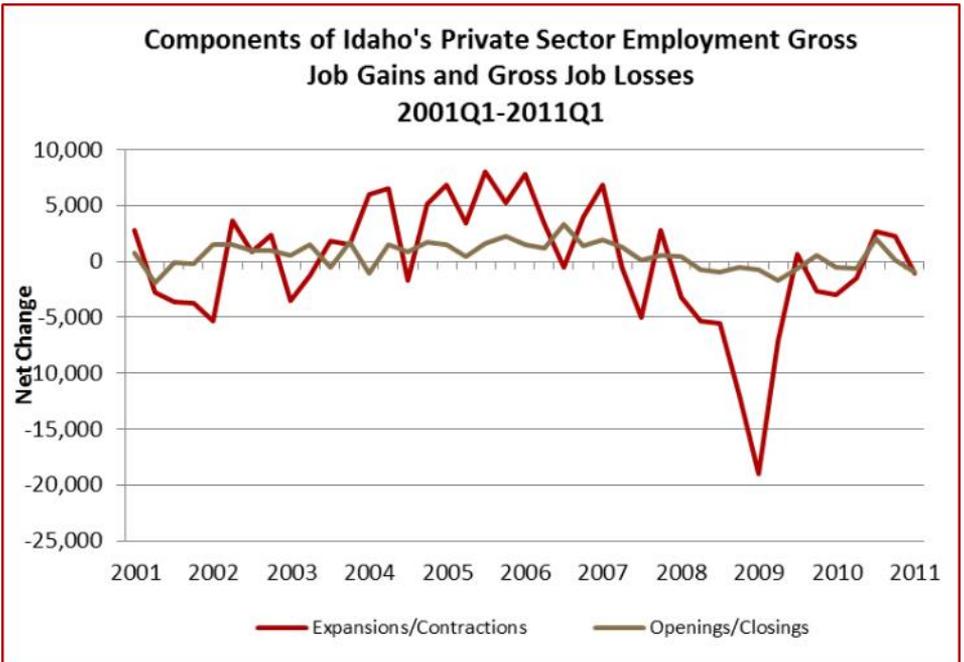
The National Bureau of Economic Research marks the beginning of the recession in December 2007 although Idaho began to see evidence of a slowdown during the second quarter of 2007. In the 15 quarters that followed, Idaho lost jobs in all but four quarters. Even with these slight gains,

net job loss since the downward trend began totaled just under 60,000 by the end of first quarter 2011. That was a larger number of jobs lost to the recession than was recorded at the end of 2010, but it was still below the peak of over 62,000 in the second quarter of 2010 due to the job gains during the second half of 2010.



The rate of job gains in the first quarter of 2011 fell to 7.1 percent. This was the first decrease in the gain rate after three straight quarterly increases. The economy shed jobs at a 7.5 percent rate. While below the loss rate in the final three months of 2010, it was four-tenths of a percent higher than the gain rate in the first quarter of 2011.

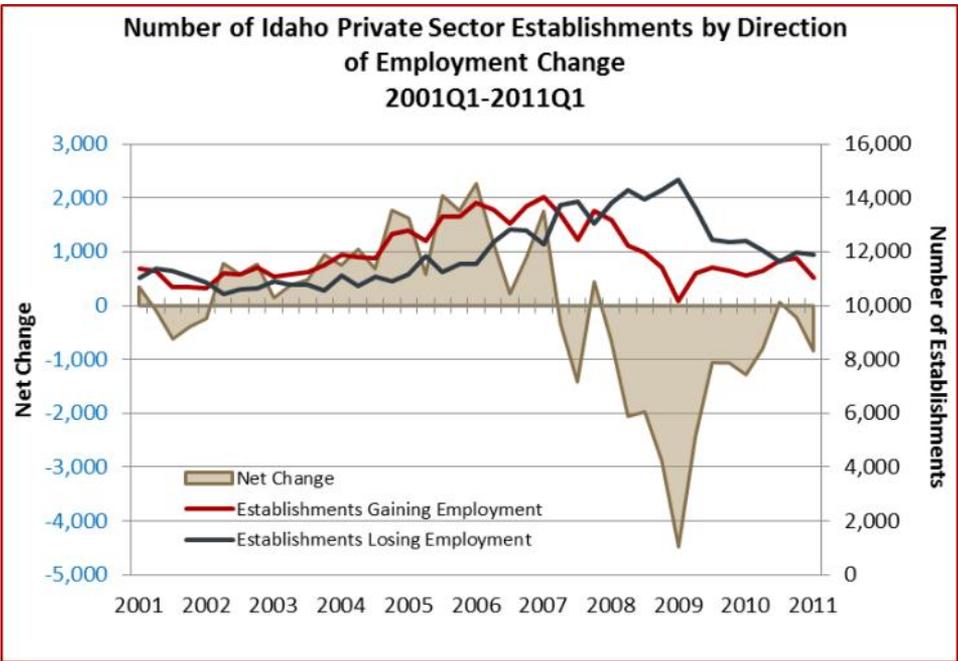
Idaho’s job loss rate was one of the highest in the nation. As in past quarters, the highest job gain and job loss rates were found in the western states, indicating more job churning here than in other parts of the country. However, gain and loss rates across the board were lower than they had been since the beginning of the recession. Alaska’s 10.1 percent gain rate and 8.8



percent loss rate were the highest rates in the nation, followed by Wyoming's 8.0 percent gain rate and 8.5 percent loss rate. North Dakota had the third highest gain rate at 7.7 percent, and Idaho's loss rate of 7.5 percent was the third highest in the nation. Idaho was one of 14 states plus Puerto Rico to experience net job loss in the first quarter. Three states had no net change, and the remaining 33 states plus the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands all began 2011 with net job gains.

The BED program also tracks changes at the establishment level. More than 11,000 of Idaho's 50,000 businesses added jobs during the first quarter of 2011 – 8,500 through expansion and 2,500 opening for the first time. But nearly 11,900 establishments eliminated jobs – 9,000 downsized and 2,900 closed altogether.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics began releasing sector-level BED data for Idaho in 2011. The new seasonally-adjusted sector data showed that the majority of industry sectors, like the state as a whole, experienced a slight net loss in the first quarter. Sectors experiencing the greatest net losses were construction at 3.1 percent and leisure and hospitality at 2.3 percent. Manufacturing posted a 1.7 percent first quarter gain while education and health services increased 1.1 percent



Nationally, first quarter 2011 saw a net job gain of 252,000. This was the fourth consecutive quarter of net gain on the national level. New and expanding businesses created 6.3 million jobs, roughly 670,000 fewer than in the fourth quarter of 2010. Meanwhile, the nation experienced a loss of 6.1 million jobs as more businesses closed or pared payrolls. This loss was 340,000 lower than the loss in the fourth quarter of 2010.

Many industry sectors experienced small net job gains or moderate net losses in the first quarter at the national level. However, large net gains in professional and business services, education and health services, manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality were significant enough to result in the overall national net gain. Professional and business services added 85,000

jobs, education and health services added 65,000 jobs and manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality each contributed a net gain of 52,000 jobs.

The economic recovery in Idaho faltered at the beginning of 2011 as evidenced by the state’s net job loss in the first quarter. However, the national economy continued to improve slowly but steadily with most states and economic sectors experiencing some net job gain. This gave hope that Idaho’s first quarter losses were minor bumps on the road to recovery.

**The Business Employment Dynamics data series includes job gains and losses at private sector establishments. The data represent the change in the number of jobs over time, which is the net result of increases and decreases in employment that occur at all businesses in the economy. More information on Business Employment Dynamics series is on the Web at www.bls.gov/bdm/.*

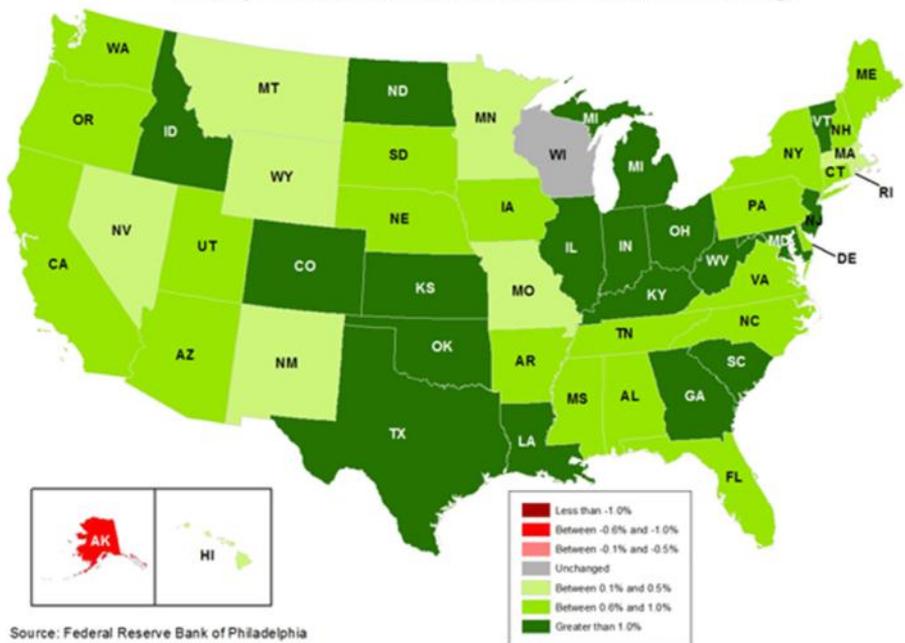
**Karen.JarboeSingletary@labor.idaho.gov, Senior Research Analyst
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3215**

FED RESERVE INDEXES POINT TO POSITIVE NEWS FOR IDAHO

Positive news for Idaho’s economy is becoming easier to find. With the steadily decreasing unemployment rate, increases to nonfarm payroll and improving housing markets, things have been looking up. Recently another gauge of the health of the economy shows Idaho is not only doing well, but is near the front of the pack compared to the other states.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia releases monthly data on the health of each state economy. This State Coincidence Indexes are comprised of nonfarm employment, average hours worked in manufacturing, the unemployment rate and inflation-adjusted wages. The trend of each state’s index follows the same trend as gross product so long-term growth in the index matches long-term growth in gross product. Since the same model is used for each state, the indexes are comparable.

January 2012 State Coincident Indexes: Three-Month Change



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

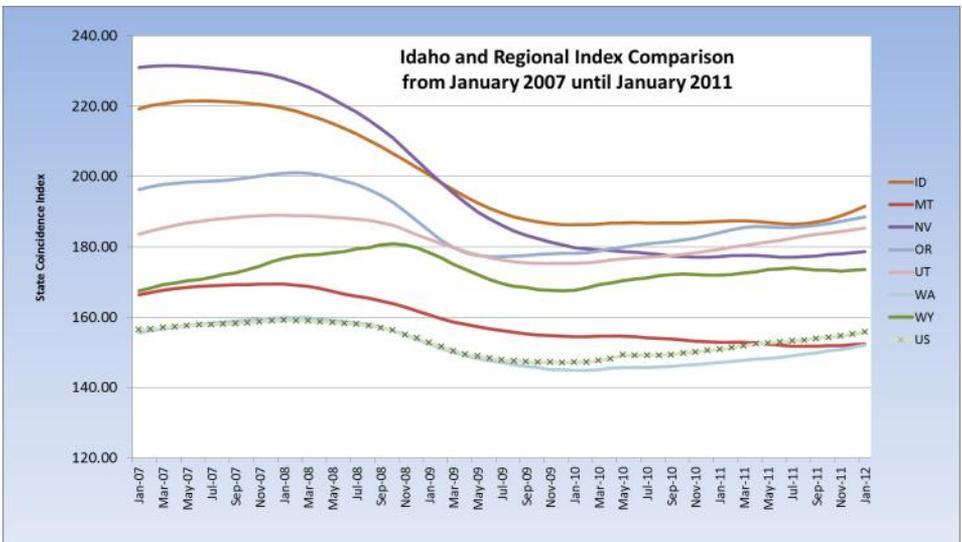
The most recent indexes show Idaho as one of the top performers in the country. The map puts Idaho with 18 other states that have had greater than 1 percent increases the past three months. For comparison, the nation rose at 1 percent during the same period.

Based on month-to-month changes, Idaho has the third highest increase for January at 0.78 percent behind North Dakota and West Virginia. Idaho's neighboring states also have positive increases, but all fall below the national percentage increase of 0.4 percent.

Since the recession began, Idaho and its neighboring states have shown stronger growth than the nation as a whole. Figure 2 compares the coincidence indexes for Idaho and the neighboring states and the nation. At this point only Montana and Washington have a lower index than the United States. Idaho is leading the region since it fell less sharply than Nevada, which was severely hit by the recession. But both Oregon and Utah are also showing strong growth.

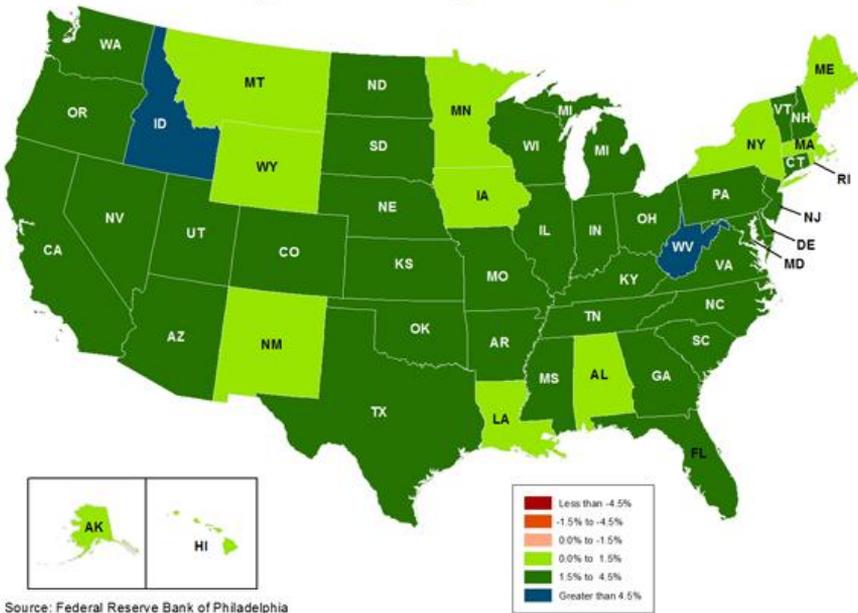
One Month Percent Change from December to January for the State Coincidence Index	
Region	Percent Increase
West Virginia	1.89%
North Dakota	0.88%
Idaho	0.78%
Michigan	0.74%
Kansas	0.68%
Indiana	0.60%
Oklahoma	0.59%
Illinois	0.58%
Louisiana	0.56%
Ohio	0.56%
Colorado	0.52%
South Carolina	0.50%
Vermont	0.50%
Texas	0.46%
Georgia	0.45%
Arizona	0.45%
Kentucky	0.44%
Nebraskas	0.44%
United States	0.40%
Oregon	0.39%
Washington	0.32%
Utah	0.31%
Nevada	0.22%
Wyoming	0.12%

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia



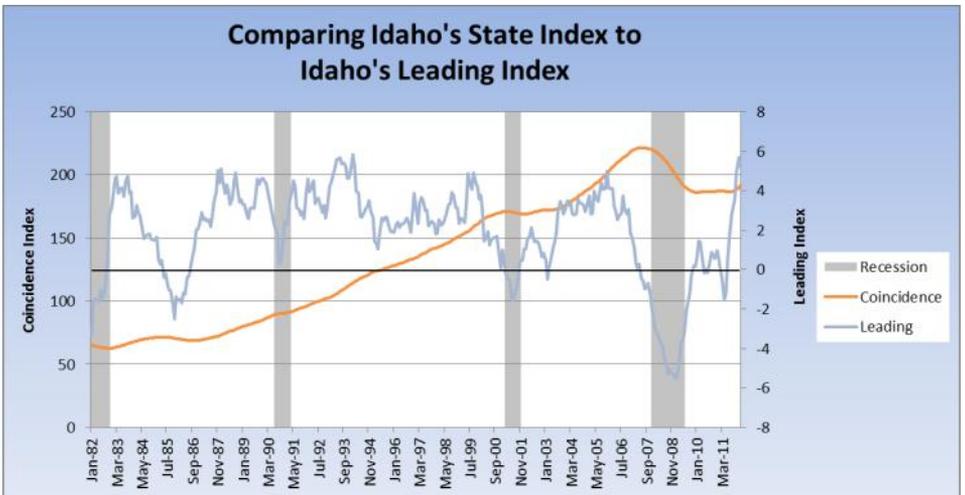
Along with the State Coincidence Indexes, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia also produces a State Leading Indexes report. This report predicts the six month growth rate of each state's coincidence index. Along with the same data used in the coincidence index, this model includes data like housing permits and interest rates.

January 2012 State Leading Indexes: 6-Month Forecast



Idaho shines even more, based on this report. It is one of only two states that are predicted to grow more than 4.5 percent over the next six months. The map above shows both Idaho and West Virginia as the two states with the highest predicted index growth rates in January. The bank predicts growth rate of 5.2 percent for Idaho’s index and 6.39 percent for West Virginia’s.

The relative strength of the leading index is good as well. Figure 4 shows both Idaho indexes together. The leading index is not a perfect crystal ball, but it has had success in catching downturns as well as times of growth for Idaho’s coincidence index. Even the most recent recession was picked up early.

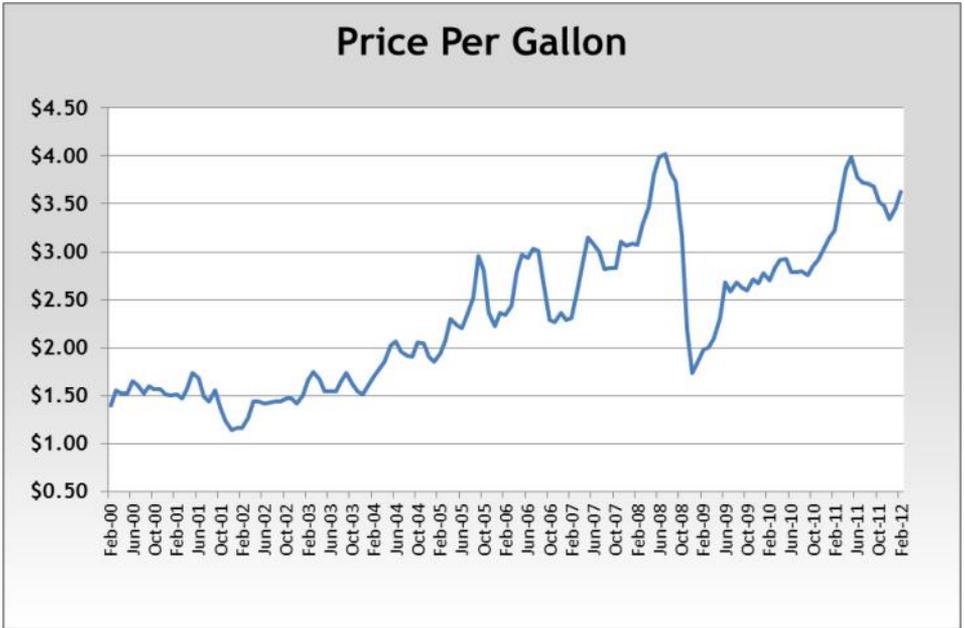


The State Coincidence Indexes and the State Leading Indexes are two more in a series of data sets that are pointing to a brighter future for Idaho in the near term. While no one is excited by the pace of this recovery, the evidence is getting stronger that better times are ahead.

Andrew.Townsend@labor.idaho.gov, Regional Economist
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3455

RISING GAS PRICES ESPECIALLY TOUGH ON RURAL AREAS

Gas prices increased 20 percent from \$3.27 per gallon at the beginning of the year to \$3.92 in the first week of April. Experts expect it to rise above \$4 by the end of April. Rising prices are putting pressures on Idaho consumers and producers, especially in rural communities.



For the typical American driver who pumps 60 gallons a month of regular unleaded gasoline, the 65-cent increase in price means an extra expense of \$39 a month. For rural Americans who use more gas, it can cost a lot more, and their lower incomes make it harder to handle.

While Americans spent 2.8 percent of their disposable income on motor gasoline in 2009, Idahoans spent 3.3 percent.

The problems caused by rising gas prices are most acute in rural areas that are remote from major markets and have to truck in a high portion of their supplies. In sparsely populated areas, many people travel miles to go to school, work, church and community events. In addition, the most important industries in many rural Idaho communities – agriculture and logging – rely heavily on fuels. Rural residents tend to use vehicles such as SUVs and pickups with relatively low miles per gallon.

Rising gasoline prices especially hard on areas like north central Idaho because:

- Higher gasoline prices could keep tourists away. In past gasoline run-ups, inns and RV parks have had to lure customers with discounts and gas cards. That's already started to happen again.
- North central Idaho residents have relatively low incomes so an increase in gasoline prices reduces their spending power to a much greater degree. The region's per capita income typically runs about three-quarters of the nation's per capita income.
- Agriculture and logging, mainstays of many rural communities, are especially vulnerable to higher gasoline prices. In 2007, the Census of Agriculture found that gasoline, fuels and oils accounted for 8.4 percent

of farmers' expenses in north central Idaho, compared to 5.4 percent of American farmers' expenses. The price of gasoline averaged \$2.76 per gallon in 2007. If it had been \$3.76, all other things being equal, farmers in north central Idaho would have paid an additional \$5.8 million for gasoline, fuels and oils.

- Trucking, an industry especially sensitive to gasoline prices, plays a larger role in the region's economy than the nation's. In 2011, trucking jobs made up 1 percent of American nonfarm payroll jobs while they accounted for up 1.8 percent in north central Idaho.
- Rural residents often travel 30 or more miles to work, shop and attend community events. About 12 percent of the region's workers have commutes lasting 45 minutes or more one way, according to the Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey.
- School districts, already strapped, will have to stretch their budgets even further just to get their students to the classrooms. Busing students is an especially high expense for sparsely populated districts like those on the Camas Prairie.

Higher gasoline prices could slow economic growth and cause spiraling inflation. Every 10-cent rise per gallon in gas prices shaves \$11 billion from U.S. gross domestic product. The prospects are reminiscent of the stagflation of the 1970s – a stagnant economy with escalating cost-push inflation caused by oil shocks. The recent oil shocks are much smaller ones than the ones in the 1970s. On April 4, crude oil cost \$101.47 a barrel. When adjusted for total disposable income, oil peaked at \$213.44 in January 1981. That year, oil consumption made up 9.7 percent of Americans' income, compared to 4.8 percent in 2010.

Middle- and lower-income families are feeling the brunt of the increase. For low-income families, gasoline costs represent more than 10 percent of income. Middle-income families spent about 4.8 percent of their budgets on gasoline in 2010. They also saw their purchasing power drop during most of the economic recovery. Inflation-adjusted median income bottomed out in August and rose slightly in recent months but still was 4.8 percent lower in February than at the start of the recovery in mid-2010. Now higher gasoline prices are cutting into their spending power.

**Kathryn.Tacke@labor.idaho.gov, Regional Economist
(208) 799-5000 ext. 3984**

ISU COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY SEEKS TO IMPROVE JOB SEEKING SKILLS

Idaho State University's College of Technology is one of the nation's leaders in collegiate level professional and technical education. The college in Pocatello has over 40 programs awarding certificates and degrees at the associate, bachelor's and master's levels.

The college is well recognized for its ability to work with local industry, the Idaho Department of Labor, and the Regional Workforce Innovation Team to provide students with learning opportunities directly related to the increasing number of lucrative high technology jobs.

The College of Technology requires students to obtain hands-on experience. Each week students spend many hours in laboratory sessions learning the ins and outs of their respective fields of endeavor. This applied training is highly valued by employers and has helped make the school's graduates highly prized nationwide.

According to the university, 90 percent of the College of Technology's graduates find employment by graduation – an impressive job placement statistic. A recent study by the human resource firm Adecco found that in the tight post-recession job market 60 percent of college students cannot find work in their fields on graduation.

But there is a secret behind the success of the College of Technology. While the school's ability to teach its students the latest technology is impressive, its courses on employment strategies and workplace relations are giving students a real competitive edge.

Students in associate degree programs are required to take a course called Employment Strategies, which is part of the general education program at the school. According to program coordinator and instructor Clayn Lambert, the course is designed to teach students:

- An understanding of the process involved in an effective jobs search
- The ability to find, understand and use job search tools
- How to develop their own job search tools

According to Carol Mundt, an instructor at the college, an important resource students leave the class with is a portfolio.

"In today's job market, you need more than a résumé to say that you have a skill," Mundt said. "A portfolio of your past work provides the employer evidence."

Lambert said examples of what students include in portfolio vary according to their fields.

"Diesel technology students might provide prospective employers videos of themselves performing a complex repair," Lambert said. "Computer programming students might provide employers with copies of source codes they wrote. Lab notes might be provided by a student in energy systems."

Students are also taught some of the basics of today's job search.

"Many students who are older and have worked for several years before coming back to school are surprised to see how the process of applying for a job has changed," he said. "Today everything is computer based including applications and many job search tools."

Mundt maintains that the college's students "are computer savvy, but that doesn't mean they know how to use Microsoft Word's features related to résumés and cover letters."

A great deal of class time is spent on the basics. Instructors work with students to develop effective cover letters and résumés. Many of the students are younger, according to Lambert, and "they are encouraged to develop a skills-based résumé, which focuses on skills rather than past job experience."

Mundt says students with a good deal of job experience are shown how to express that effectively in their résumés, and Lambert says instructors work with students who have been out of the workplace for some time.

“One group that falls into this area is stay-at-home mothers,” he said. “We show them how to document their talents.”

Students are also required to set up mock interviews with employers in their area of study.

“The interviews provide a real-life learning experience and are great practice for our students,” Mundt said.

The interview process brings together all the skills taught in class – how to write a résumé and cover letter, how to dress and how to search for employers, Lambert said.

And it works.

“I was working with a student on his cover letter,” he recalled. “By the end of class, he had put together a great looking letter. During the noon hour he took a copy of his new cover letter and a résumé to a local employer, by 5 p.m. that same day he was interviewed and offered a great job in his field.”

And that is not unusual.

“Every semester during the mock interview portion of our class I will have at least one student come away with a job offer,” Lambert said. “Sometimes our mock interviews become the doorway to a great career.”

But, he added, “this program is not about finding a job, it’s about developing careers.”

A second class the College of Technology offers is called Workplace Relations, which was developed from feedback the college received from its advisory committee of local companies.

“Our local employers saw a need for us to help transition students from the classroom to the workplace better,” Lambert said. “This course is designed to help that process.”

A major focus of the course is helping students learn soft skills including how to work with others effectively in a team and develop basic project management skills.

“Students learn a lot of the basics about human relations in the workplace and time management,” Mundt said, “and ultimately how to be great employees.”

“As a teacher, it is very exciting to watch a student develop abilities as a person and a future professional,” she said.

The college’s career skills and employment courses are providing a needed link between the classroom and careers.

More information on the programs offered at ISU’s College of Technology is at <http://www.isu.edu/ctech/>

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

FOOD PROCESSING – AN OVERLOOKED INDUSTRY FOR CAREERS

FACTORY DIS-INFORMATION

In this age of high technology and advanced everything, factory work is getting short shrift. Factories still bear the unfavorable marks of the Industrial Revolution – black smoke billowing from tall stacks and foul odors emanating from everywhere.

But the fact is factory work has advantages. It can be fulfilling to work at a plant that makes something – an item that shows up in inventory that can be counted instead of an idea or concept that is billed as intellectual property or a great job of market branding listed as “good will” on a financial statement.

An actual product also creates pride in knowing it is being used and appreciated by consumers.

Food processing definitely delivers finished products by adding value to raw materials. It may not have the duration of a piece of furniture, but it keeps our bodies fueled, providing nutrition and often enjoyment.

Food processing plants in south central Idaho range widely in employment – anywhere from 25 or 50 workers to payrolls of 400 at times. The majority of food processors are national companies, which have rigorous training and provide continuing education and training to upgrade skills, an especially big plus for a young worker looking at a career.

New workers can cut their teeth in the job market, learning soft skills such as arriving at work on time, working well with teammates and caring about the quality of their work. They can get immersed in safety regulations that protect workers from injury and develop problem-solving techniques that forever augment their other skills.

Technology and lean manufacturing have also become a part of life on the plant floor, offering the opportunity to develop new skills that companies are scouting for – skills that can even be transferred to other industries.

Manufacturing also offers career paths and lattices that provide opportunities to move up or into different jobs with better pay and benefits, and food processing seems to provide more opportunities than most because of the number of people needed to get a value-added product out the door.

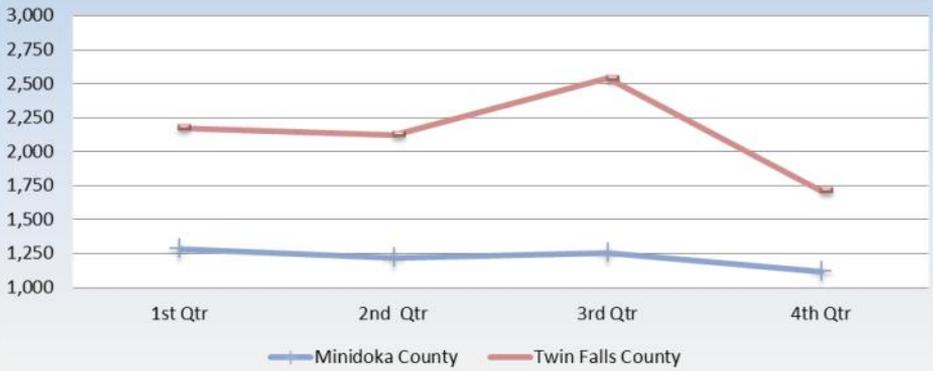
Benefits packages are available, and employee stock offering programs can be found at many processors, making their jobs even more attractive financially. There are workers in Jerome who travel more than 40 miles to jobs in Minidoka and Cassia counties, passing up opportunities to relocate with the same company in Twin Falls. They enjoy their coworkers, have worked their way up to shifts that meet their lifestyle and are loyal to the plant.

As new companies enter the market, the labor pool is reviewed to ensure there is an ample supply of workers when they are needed. Experience and education are important since manufacturing overall and food processors in particular are requiring increasingly advanced skills among their workers.

In south central Idaho, there are 61 food processors. But about 8 percent of them employ 80 percent of the workers, meaning more than half have payrolls of 20 or less. The Sun Valley area has an array of businesses where just a handful of workers – sometimes just one – bake or create specialty goods for local restaurants, coffee shops and grocery stores that support the tourism industry.

Minidoka and Twin Falls counties have the highest levels of seasonal employment in food processing. Minidoka has a comparatively high level because of its agricultural base. But it is relatively flat when matched with Twin Falls, where big swings in its food processing workforce occur each year. Harvest must be handled expeditiously in certain industries, and Twin Falls responds with a big surge in the third quarter.

Average Seasonal Swings in the Labor Force 1991-2011



Gooding, Jerome and Lincoln counties maintain high food processing workforces because of dairies. The large supply of milk leads dairies to join forces and vertically integrate to increase efficiency. Milk processors, while larger employers, are more stable than many other food processors that must deal with harvest peaks. Milk production is day-in and day-out.

Twin Falls has a well-diversified group of food processors in sugar, potatoes, meat, cheese and other dairy products. The non-dairy food processors have harvests and holidays that affect commodity supply and demand for their value-added product, although some marketers maintain yogurt has a greater demand after the holidays in anticipation of summer and bikinis while cheese experiences higher demand in anticipation of and during the holidays.

But milk supply is steady, and the export market continues to open up new opportunities for dairy products, providing even more stability for its workforce.

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

IDAHO INNOVATORS LOOK TO iGEM

The Legislature has handed Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter what has been called a down payment on Idaho’s future – the Idaho Global Entrepreneurial Mission or iGEM.

iGEM is based on the notion that Idaho’s next big business success story will come from a homegrown startup company. Otter has worked with the Idaho Technology Council to put the idea together.

The point is to encourage innovators throughout the state – in the private sector, in the universities and anywhere else – to collaborate and leverage resources to increase the state’s knowledge-based economy. Successful implementation of iGem strategies will increase the research capacity of Idaho’s universities in strategic areas and develop a world-class talent pool and a dynamic consortium of industry, university and government leaders. These economic drivers will generate globally competitive technologies, high-paying jobs at new startups and an expanded tax base. They believe iGem will create an innovative ecosystem to sustain a thriving and top-performing economy.

It is an ambitious program modeled on Utah's effort to promote young companies and technology transfer from that state's universities. To understand iGEM's potential for Idaho a look at the Utah program is worthwhile.

Called USTAR, the program was created by the Utah legislature in 2006 to strengthen Utah's "knowledge economy." The program works with the state's research universities – Utah State and the University of Utah – to promote their strengths and move their research from the laboratory to high technology companies. The focus has been on nanotechnology, energy, imaging technology and biomedical in terms of bio-devices, bio-pharma, medical imaging and brain medicine media.

iGEM, like USTAR, focuses on the role of universities in technology transfer to high-tech companies. However, the focus of iGEM is more general. Idaho's program will work with a wide array of emerging technologies.

In six years USTAR is beginning to have an impact on Utah's economic potential. Between 2008 and 2010, according to the Milken Institute, Utah moved from 16th to fifth among the states in the level of risk capital and entrepreneurial infrastructure.

Additionally, several university researchers affiliated with USTAR have been awarded grants and other funding to pursue projects that may lead to commercially viable products. As of 2011 USTAR researchers had procured \$137 million in grants, a 187 percent return the state of Utah's \$73.5 million investment. USTAR researchers have produced over 120 invention disclosures and 46 provisional patent applications. So far four new companies have been formed by USTAR researchers, and 20 more potential ventures are in the works.

USTAR offers Utah an opportunity to develop its high-tech economy. Likewise iGEM holds great promise for Idaho. The program may provide a valuable source of funding for university research that can be converted into products and new high-tech firms for the state. iGEM is a proactive step forward in the state's economic development efforts.

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

NORTHERN IDAHO

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone counties

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- The Health Sciences & Services Authority of Spokane County has awarded \$1.7 million for local health sciences research. Four grants totaling \$1.2 million were given to Washington State University Spokane and a \$500,000 grant to Iasis Molecular Sciences of Spokane. The university will hire two nationally renowned health sciences researchers and fund core laboratory equipment at the Spokane campus. Iasis is expected to fund research to expedite commercialization of a product intended to prevent or minimize health care-acquired infections.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BENEWAH COUNTY

- More than 600 people attended the grand opening of the Benewah Community Hospital's new east tower in late March. The tower was a major portion of the \$28.5 million hospital remodeling project. The rest of the project is not expected to be complete for another year. Up next is remodeling the original building, replacing the clinic area and adding a parking lot.
- Thirty-three teams registered for the 2012 Toyota Weaver Seed World Jet Boat Marathon Championship, which starts in St. Maries and ends in Riggin's a week later on April 21 after traveling through Lewiston and Orofino. Each team consists of a driver, navigator and racing crew varying in size from four to as many as 20 people. At the 2011 World Jet Boat Marathon race hosted by Canada, the number of fans watching along riverbanks ranged from 400 to 5,000, according to the Canadian World Race Committee. Each race team spent an estimated \$1,000 per day on food, lodging and other items. Racers began arriving in St. Maries in late March for a river preview and pre-run. On the extreme end of the scale, the New Zealand race team expects to spend close to \$70,000. The team put its boats and trailers on container ships in December.
- The St. Maries Foundation for Education awarded a \$3,000 grant to purchase a SawStop Safety Saw for the St. Maries Middle School shop class. The foundation had previously granted a donation for a SawStop saw at the high school last year. The foundation relies on contributions from businesses and individuals to support educational opportunities in the St. Maries School District. Since it reformed last year, the foundation has awarded a total of \$7,850 in grants to teachers.

BONNER COUNTY

- A sixth straight quarterly loss for Coldwater Creek totaled \$12.8 million in the fourth quarter of 2011. That compared to a \$37 million loss a year

earlier. Revenue of \$224.4 million, however, was up 11 percent from the same quarter 2010.

- The Sagle Flea Market has come to an end after 34 years, the victim of financial problems, the recession and changes in consumer preferences. The market tracked the heyday of the timber industry where loggers and farmers could search for tools or machine and vehicle parts in an era before discount chain stores.



BOUNDARY COUNTY

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service extended the public comment period by 60 days until May 21 on a proposal to designate critical habitat for woodland caribou in the Selkirk Mountains. Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter, local governments and the Kootenai Tribe had sought the extension. Biologists have proposed designating 375,565 acres of high-elevation critical habitat in Idaho and Washington for the caribou.

KOOTENAI COUNTY

- Kootenai Technical Education Center enrollment is at 900 students, exceeding capacity and requiring more certified instructors. Industry experts will be hired for all programs and the University of Idaho will provide teacher training. The university will provide courses in Coeur d'Alene for center faculty seeking professional-technical teacher certification.
- The Museum of North Idaho opened for the season at the end of March.

SHOSHONE COUNTY

- A 250-acre zipline tour business, Silver Streak, is being built north of Wallace. There are two courses with nine total zips ranging from 350 feet to 1,800 feet long. Around 30 guides will be hired. Some will be local students, and the job requires between 40 and 60 hours of training. Geronimo Construction, which specializes in tree-based canopy tours, is building the course. The project is expected to be complete in late May.



Shoshone County commissioners received a \$65,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Lands to conduct two feasibility studies for constructing a woody biomass plant. The first study will provide the commissioners with business plans for two potential businesses, one being the woody biomass plant. The second study will gauge the interest of landowners to determine what type of market the county has for raw fuels. The studies are expected to be completed in June.

- United Silver Corp. started on a four-year, \$23 million plan to explore and develop existing silver resources at the Crescent Mine and identify additional resources. Crews for the Crescent were transferred from the Galena Mine, also owned by U.S Silver, where United Silver Corp. had been providing contract mining services. The Galena contract was recently terminated.
- Another resource fair was held by the Idaho Department of Labor’s Silver Valley office to help workers laid off because of the closure of the Lucky Friday mine. Community resource representatives and 21 employers from Nevada, California and northern Idaho participated, hiring nine people.

OPENINGS

- A Life Flight base in Sandpoint with 15 employees
- Joey T's Taste of Chicago in Rathdrum
- Alice's Grill in Coeur d'Alene
- Kathryn's Portraits in Dalton Gardens
- Eyeguys Optical in Hayden
- Flirt Salon in Post Falls
- Video Game Entertainment in Rathdrum

CLOSURES

- Center Partners in Post Falls with all employees transferred to the Coeur d'Alene location

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

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce counties

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

CLEARWATER COUNTY

- The National Guard Youth Challenge in Pierce leapt a major hurdle, winning last-minute legislative approval. That legislation, already signed by the governor, allows the program to qualify as an alternative school for funding through the Average Daily Attendance formula. Backers determined the project did not need legislative budget committee approval to spend federal and private money to renovate the old elementary school in Pierce. The Youth Challenge now is seeking federal approval and getting ready to prepare housing. If all goes smoothly, the first class of 100 students will begin in January 2013. The boot-camp-style school, which will handle two classes per year, will employ 50 to 60 people. Students in danger of dropping out will come from all over the state. The program is expected to cost about \$4 million a year with the federal government paying three-fourths of the costs and the state the rest.
- Inland Cellular has invested more than \$1 million to upgrade cellphone service in Clearwater County. It recently completed construction of a tower that doubled data speeds and extended service to Riverside and Peck. Another project later this year will double data speeds a second time in Orofino, Kamiah and Kooskia. The company also opened a new store in downtown Orofino with two employees. Its first store in the Orofino area opened inside Camp, Cabin and Home on Highway 12 about 18 months ago with one employee. Inland Cellular serves rural sections of northern Idaho and eastern Washington. Its corporate headquarters are in Roslyn, Wash., but its largest employment is in Lewiston, where 80 people work.

IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES

- Voters in the Highland School District passed two separate levies in March. Nearly 69 percent of voters approved a five-year plant facilities levy for improvements at Highland School in Craigmont while 62 percent approved a one-year supplemental levy for \$429,000. About \$80,000 will cover state revenue shortfalls, and \$30,000 will pay for a half-time family and consumer sciences teacher.

- Idaho County was added to the state's list of disaster areas in late March after a landslide near Kooskia dumped 25,000 cubic yards of debris on a roadway. Soil saturated by heavy rains buried a section of Leitch Creek Road beneath 20 feet of mud and rock. Repairs are expected to cost about \$300,000. Debco Construction began removing the dirt and debris within a couple of days, but the road was not passable for nearly two weeks. An alternative route took more than 25 minutes. The county roads department is watching carefully because more cracking and bulging has appeared upstream and could lead to another slide.
- Tourist businesses are getting ready for a busy time of the year. The 64th Annual Riggins Rodeo, which kicks off summer tourism, is May 5-6. In the Lowell/Syringa area along the Lochsa River, whitewater fun began in April, and kayakers started renting cabins. The Wilderness Inn, Three Rivers Bar and Grill, Lochsa Louies and Cougar Canyon Station have opened for the season.



Retired Forest Service employees have volunteered to manage the Lochsa Historic Ranger Station so it can open this summer. Deep budget cuts prompted the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest to announce in January the station would not open this summer. The log structure built in 1921 was a remote outpost accessible only by pack trail for a few decades. It was used as a working station until 1976 when it was transformed to depict life at a ranger station in the 1920s. It has been open every summer since.

- Rural Idaho Outreach Partners recently formed to help local businesses find skilled workers and keep graduates in the area. Idaho County Commissioner James Rockwell had seen a similar effort in Salmon and with the help of Ida-Lew Economic Development specialist Melisa Bryant brought the concept to Idaho County. More than 35 people attended the first meeting in February, and even more came for the second meeting in March. Attendees included representatives from economic development organizations, local governments and school districts as well as businesses. The partnership plans to create a job fair, allow business owners to teach youth about needed job skills and encourage youth to follow paths that lead to good careers in the community. It also will promote networking between the businesses that will help them run more efficiently. One possibility is having businesses purchase items together to save shipping costs.

LATAH COUNTY

- The Moscow City Council accepted a bid of \$1.69 million for construction of an intermodal transit center from Ginno Construction of Coeur d'Alene. Much of the cost is covered by a \$1.5-million TIGER grant. The contractor must complete the center within 150 days from the day construction begins, which is expected to occur soon after the university's May 12 commencement. The transit hub will be built on the University of Idaho campus on College Street. Under a 40-year lease agreement, the university will retain ownership of the land and the city will own the facility. The two will share maintenance and operation costs. The 6,300-square-foot building will house garage and office space for mass transportation providers:

- Moscow Valley Transit, running the city bus system and dial-a-ride services
- Northwest Trailways, running intercity buses in Idaho that connect to Greyhound
- Wheatland Express, offering shuttle service to Spokane
- The university's Vandal Shuttle

It also will include bicycle lockers and parking areas. In a separate project, the school will set up information technology services in the building for its parking and transportation services.

- Latah County commissioners issued an emergency disaster declaration following flooding in late March. On April 9, they extended the declaration for 30 days because of depleted local resources to handle flood damage in Kendrick, Juliaetta and the south highway district. Flood water from the Potlatch River plugged up culverts, washed out roadway shoulders, caused ditch erosion, led to a mudslide on Cedar Ridge Road and were undermining sections of the Ed Corkhill Trail between Juliaetta and Kendrick.
- Moscow Family Medicine closed its Troy clinic in late March because a physician shortage is forcing it to consolidate operations in Moscow. Idaho ranks 50th in the nation for doctors per population, according to the latest report by the Association of American Medical Colleges. The Moscow community lost eight primary care physicians during the last two years. Three of those positions will be filled this year. A new physician just joined Moscow Family Medicine's staff, a physician assistant will join in May and another physician in September. Moscow Family Medicine had leased the clinic building in Troy from Gritman Medical Center for 22 years. The Moscow hospital's board of directors has committed to reopening the Troy clinic. The hospital currently operates clinics in Potlatch and Kendrick. Gritman has also been working to reopen the Palouse Medical clinic in Moscow that closed last fall, primarily because of the shortage of care providers. The Troy clinic, which may reopen as early as April 30, served residents in Troy, Deary, Bovill and Elk River.
- Latah County held its first economic roundtable in late March. Hosted by the Latah Economic Development Council in partnership with Frontier Communications and Avista Utilities, the roundtable brought together community leaders from across the county to talk about cooperating to achieve economic development goals. Tom Hudson, a principal at The Hudson Co. specializing in community-based economic development, emphasized the importance of teamwork. He said a common problem is when communities compete against each other over common interests. He pointed out the Palouse Knowledge Corridor is an example of collaboration that can be enhanced. Following Hudson's presentation, Latah Economic Development Director B.J. Swanson asked for feedback from community representatives, who said they want to participate in continuing discussions about how to pool resources and provide for better cohesion in the county.
- Genesee Joint School District voters approved a \$935,000 supplemental maintenance and operations levy for the 2012-13 school year. Voters approved an annual \$700,000 levy in both 2010 and 2011 for maintenance

and operations. This year's larger levy was required to continue to finance existing programs.



Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative, based in Genesee, recently earned Food Alliance certification for sustainable agriculture and food handling practices. The coop, which has 750 members, employs more than 40 people in Genesee and another 40 at 26 storage and processing facilities throughout the Palouse. Its Genesee plant makes six specialty foods from garbanzos, dry peas and lentils, which have the Food Alliance non-genetically modified certification and kosher certification.

NEZ PERCE AND ASOTIN, WASH., COUNTIES

- The Culdesac School District, whose continued existence was on shaky ground after voters twice rejected supplemental levies in 2011, received 61.7 percent of the votes for a two-year \$250,000 annual supplemental levy. Educational spending cuts and declining enrollment caused the loss of \$750,000 in state funding over the past three years. The district's enrollment last fall was 102, half of what it was eight years ago. To save money, the district switched to a four-day week, cut all field trips and extracurricular activities and contracted with the Lewiston School District for counseling, food and school bus maintenance services.



The Nez Perce County commissioners recently approved an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to repair the levee near Sweetwater and U.S. Highway 95 that was damaged by high water from Lapwai Creek flooding in April 2011. The county will haul material to repair the level with county vehicles and provide \$39,000 in cash so the corps can repair up to 300 linear feet of the levee embankment. The project is expected to begin in early May.

- Bateaux Strategies LLC, formed early this year to help businesses develop and implement growth strategies, has a contract with the Clearwater Economic Development Association to develop a turn-key operation for the American Manufacturer Network. Owner John Currin, a retired land and property tax manager at Potlatch Corp., worked with the association in 2010 and 2011 to create Craig Mountain Business Park and restore the old mill building so it could house Ende Foundry and Machine. The firm assists with consulting offers, new ventures, business deals and reference requests.

OPENINGS

- From the Forest, a store selling natural medicines, in Lucile
- Gentle Event, a "community mall" with space for vendors including crafters, artists, and antique and collectible shops, in Orofino
- Psalm 40 Feed, offering a wide range of products for pets and livestock, in Weippe
- Second Hand Treasures, a thrift store, in Fenn
- Vlad's, a walk-up restaurant serving Greek and Mediterranean food, in Moscow with four employees

CLOSURES

- La Boheme, a restaurant with a wine and beer bar, in downtown Lewiston

**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



The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has refused to let Idaho Power Co. stop buying power from alternative energy providers. But the commission has agreed to review the method used to determine the price Idaho Power must pay for that electricity. Under the federal Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act, utilities like Idaho Power are required to purchase power from small generators at a price equal to the cost the utility avoids by not having to build additional generating units to provide the same amount of power. Idaho Power has argued that the current methodology leads to higher rates than what should be allowed. But owners of small alternative energy projects are concerned that the new rates could be lower than the cost of production, reducing the number of projects that will come online.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

ADA COUNTY

- Sorenson Communications has hired 150 employees for its new operation in Meridian. The Salt Lake City-based company provides video relay and phone-call capturing services for people who are hard of hearing. The company leased a 26,000-square-foot building in the Silverstone Plaza and would like to expand to as many as 400 employees by year's end.
- Work began early last month to transform the historic Eagle Hotel into the Ye Olde Sweet Shop. The 1,200-square-foot store will sell local, national and global treats and hopes to open in time for Eagle Fun Days in early June.
- Phototronics, a Connecticut-based manufacturing firm, has purchased the building it was leasing from Micron for \$35 million. The company has a partnership with Micron and had been leasing the building since 2008.
- Wal-Mart is planning to build a Neighborhood Market store in Boise. The 44,000-square-foot store has received approval from the Boise City Planning and Development Services Department but still must obtain a building permit for the renovation. The store is expected to open in spring 2013.
- Utah-based Gardner Co. has announced that more than half of the new Zions Bank Building has been leased. Ruth's Chris Steak House, the Holland & Hart law firm, the Idaho Technology Council, First American Title and CTA Architects Engineers have all been named as tenants in the new 16-floor downtown Boise building. Construction on the \$60 million project started this month and will take two years to complete at a long-abandoned construction site in downtown Boise.
- Hewlett-Packard Co. has announced plans to consolidate its Imaging and Printing and Personal Systems groups to cut costs. The company plans to streamline processes. Nothing has been announced as to whether the changes will affect the company's Boise campus. The Imaging and Printing Group make up a large portion of the Boise location.

- The Eagle City Council has approved the planned Spring Valley development as an independent community. The decision means that only those who live in the 600-home community will be taxed to support its infrastructure.
- Ross Dress For Less announced plans to open a new store in Garden City. The 25,000-square-foot store will be located in the Plantation Shopping Center and is scheduled to open this fall.

BOISE COUNTY

- Legislation allowing Boise County to ask voters to approve a five-year bond to pay its legal debts was approved by lawmakers at the end of the legislative session. Boise County has been trying to come up with ways to pay a \$5.4 million judgment after a federal judge ruled against its planning and zoning commission's decision to reject a residential treatment facility. If the bond fails to get a voter majority, the county could either sue the state Tax Commission to raise property tax rates over the state's property tax cap or be forced to make further cuts.
- Bogus Basin took a big financial hit this winter. The nonprofit resort reported revenue dropped from \$9.5 million last year to \$7 million this year. The resort had its latest opening ever, Jan. 19 and was only able to operate for 70 days compared to 126 last year. Fallout from decreased revenues will effect purchasing of new equipment, and the resort may need to cut budgets for next season. On a positive note, next year's season ticket sales have been strong, totaling around \$4 million. The resort closed for the season April 15.

CANYON COUNTY

- The owners of the Village Centre, a downtown shopping center in Middleton, are planning a \$1 million renovation. The center, which will now be called the Middleton Village, will add three new building pads and improvements to the exterior façade, parking lot and landscaping.
- St. Paul's Catholic Church is building a new 22,300-square-foot church in Nampa. The \$5.17 million church will allow for more seating and room for expansion. The money needed for construction was raised over the past 10 years. Proceeds from the sale of the old church will be used to build a new school.

ELMORE COUNTY

- Sage Stores announced last month it will bring a Bealls department store to Mountain Home. The chain store will carry name-brand merchandise from apparel to home accessories. It will occupy the former Kings building in the downtown area that is being renovated by the Mountain Home Urban Renewal Agency. The store is due to open this October.

VALLEY COUNTY

- Tamarack Resort's convention center has reopened. The Arling Center has been acquired by Gateway Capital Partners in a post-foreclosure trustee sale on March 6. It will be open by appointment.

EXPANSIONS

- Treasure Valley Hospital is adding 30 employees to meet added demand for surgical procedures

OPENINGS

- Costa Vida, a fresh-Mex restaurant, in Boise
- Wiseguy Pizza Pie in Boise
- Shanaz Home Kitchen in Meridian
- Barnucopia Natural Food Market in Eagle
- My Fit Foods in Meridian with 20 employees
- 22 Touch, a software company, in Boise
- Dog N Cat Wellness Clinic in Weiser
- Gordmans, an apparel and home fashions department store, in Nampa
- Rosauers, a grocery store, in Meridian with 130 employees
- Drizzle, a specialty vinegar and olive oil store, in Garden City
- Steve's Café in Meridian

CLOSINGS

- Gandolfo's Deli in Boise

Andrew.Townsend@labor.idaho.gov, *Regional Economist*
(208) 332-3570, ext. 3455

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO

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

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BLAINE COUNTY

- Blaine County is the healthiest in Idaho, based on the 2012 results of a study by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The study looked at the rate of people dying before age 75, the percentage who report being in fair or poor health, the numbers of days that people report poor physical or mental health and the rate of low birth-weight infants. The rankings also considered health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment. Healthier counties have lower rates of smoking, physical inactivity, teen births, unemployment, children in poverty and violent crime. They have higher levels of education, social support and access to primary care physicians. Madison, Latah, Franklin and Valley counties also were selected to round out the top five healthiest Idaho counties. This is the third year of the study, and Blaine County placed fourth and third in the previous two.
- The first annual Sun Valley Film Festival showed 60 different productions. An Idaho production filmed in Buhl and directed and written by Buhl native Jaffe Zinn, "Magic Valley," won the \$1,000 Gem State Award presented by Zion's Bank and also took the Vision Award given to producer Heather Rae. Another Idaho winner was "Soda Springs," which won the Sun Valley Film Festival Audience Award and starred Jay Pickett who grew up in Canyon County and starred in a daytime drama.

JEROME COUNTY

- Crossroads Point will host a Farmers' Market this summer, and many non-profits and service businesses are expected to participate. The market is at the U.S. Highway 93 exit from Interstate 84, reportedly the second busiest intersection in Idaho.

MINI-CASSIA

- Pickett Equipment will be participating in the trade mission to China. The company wants to educate the Chinese about its vanguard product, the all-in-one bean harvester. It did the same thing on the last trade mission to Mexico. The group which includes Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter, Commerce Director Jeff Sayer and other Idaho businesses will tour areas of Shanghai, Chengdu and Beijing.



Chengdu Panda Preserve



The Heyburn City Council voted to increase its electrical rates by 8.6 percent to cover price increases being passed on by Bonneville Power Administration. Costs to the municipality increased 14 percent, and \$173,000 in upgrades to the power station will be completed.

TWIN FALLS COUNTY

- A state agency will soon move into 12,000 square feet of the 270,000-square-foot former St. Luke's Hospital in Twin Falls. The Department of Correction is moving Parole and Probation Services into the space in July after \$439,000 in renovations are completed. The county commissioners have also decided to move the county's operations other than judicial such as the commissioners offices, the Department of Motor Vehicles and Planning and Zoning into the facility, giving them room for growth.
- Solo Cup was purchased for \$1 billion by Dart Co., a privately held company with over 7,800 employees nationwide. Dart intends to maintain current operations but believes consolidating products will provide a higher level of service and convenience to customers. The Twin Falls plant produces about 2 million plastic utensils and straws daily. Its largest client is Costco, which purchases about 85 percent of items made in Twin Falls. The plant opened in 1998.
- Zion's Bank donated \$100,000 to the College of Southern Idaho's Foundation for scholarships at the community college.
- Twin Falls City Council approved the site plan for the new strip mall on the other side of the Perrine Bridge.

OPENINGS

- Riverview Urgent Care and Medical Center, a for-profit facility in Burley in June
- Boca, a Latin freestyle restaurant in Ketchum, complete with a liquor license
- Little India, an East Indian restaurant, in Twin Falls

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

SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

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

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BANNOCK COUNTY

- Idaho State University's College of Technology hosted its 11th annual Tech Expo at Holt Arena in mid-March, cosponsored by the Pocatello School District and several local businesses. Over 75 booths greeted 2,500 students from 23 area high schools. The expo exposes students to the different technology based careers the university's College of Technology and other schools offer.



Alberta-based ATCO Logistics and Structure will be locating a new manufacturing plant in Pocatello at the Gateway West Industrial Center. The new plant will make modular buildings for the energy and mining industries, which use them for housing and offices in remote areas. ATCO is expected to hire about 150 workers, many from the construction industry who have been out of work for some time.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY

- The Idaho and Utah communities that surround Bear Lake are taking advantage of their cooperation in tourism promotion to join forces to build a 50-mile walkway around the lake. The effort currently involves Bear Lake County and the cities of St. Charles and Montpelier in Idaho and Garden City and Laketown in Utah. Last month the project made significant progress when the Garden City Council approved funding.

BINGHAM COUNTY

- Erstwhile inventors in the first through eighth grades in southeastern Idaho came to Snake River Middle School just outside Blackfoot last month to compete in a regional contest. Invent Idaho is designed to inspire the state's youth to become interested in science and math careers. The winning young inventors advance to the statewide contest at the University of Idaho in Moscow.

CARIBOU COUNTY

- The Senior Citizen's Center, an important facility for the Soda Springs community, has received \$1,500 from Rocky Mountain Power. The center, used for a wide variety of events, will use the donation to upgrade lighting in the basement in the kitchen area.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

- The Horse Station at Cache Valley, a proposed equine and entertainment complex that could generate over 100 new jobs to the southeastern corner of Idaho, has passed another major milestone. The Franklin City Planning and Zoning Commission provided the zoning change needed to move construction forward. The zoning change still needs to be approved by the Franklin City Council. The proposed complex is being developed and built by Strategy 5 LLC.

POWER COUNTY



The city of American Falls broke ground recently for a \$12.4 million wastewater treatment plant. The plant will accommodate future popu-

lation growth and new businesses. The current wastewater plant is at 85 percent capacity, and the lack of additional capacity has limited the community's economic development opportunities.

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

EASTERN IDAHO

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

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY



Idaho's Leadership in Nuclear Energy Committee has met for the first time in Idaho Falls. Committee Chairman Jeff Sayer, the state commerce director, outlined the committee's goals including preparing a comprehensive recommendation for Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter by January. Idaho National Laboratory Director John Grossenbacher, Department of Energy Manager Rick Provencher, INL Oversight Coordinator Susan Burk and John Kotek, a consultant and former staff director for the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, made presentations to the panel.

- The long awaited opening of the Idaho Falls Marriott Residence Inn could come in May. Work on the hotel stalled in 2008 as financial trouble effected the project. Woodbury Corp., a Utah-based developer, acquired the project last year.
- The College of Southern Idaho will partner with Eastern Idaho Technical College to offer classes in Idaho Falls. The partnership will offer more general education classes and classes in physics, cultural anthropology, microeconomics, U.S. history, college algebra and music appreciation.



The Idaho National Laboratory is partnering with the state of Wyoming to study how energy resources can be better used. Robert Cherry, the INL's principal investigator on the project, will be looking at ways to use wind, fossil and nuclear sources for a steady supply of electricity. The study will also look at ways to make synthetic fuel to replace petroleum imports. The work should be completed in a year.

- The Idaho Falls Airport has seen a rebound in the number of boardings. The first quarter of 2012 showed a 1,621 passenger increase over the same quarter in 2011. That's a 4.8 percent increase. Between January and March, 35,334 passengers boarded planes in Idaho Falls – the highest quarterly number since 2008 at 40,130.

CUSTER COUNTY

- Groundbreaking for a Family Dollar Store in Challis is expected in mid-April. The construction cost is estimated at \$500,000. Operators hope to have the store open sometime in July when it will have half a dozen employees and a store manager.

MADISON COUNTY

- Brigham Young University-Idaho held its winter semester graduation with 1,674 graduates – the largest number of graduates to date. The number

of graduates has risen over 6 percent in the last year. There were 1,533 graduates this past fall.

- Madison Memorial Hospital has appointed Rachel Gonzales as the new chief executive officer. Gonzales had been interim chief executive since David Rowe resigned last May. Gonzales is a former nurse.

LEMHI COUNTY

- Detailed engineering at Formation Capital's cobalt mine in Salmon is 95 percent complete. In February construction crews made safety improvements along the transportation route. Two requests for proposal have been issued for construction and to design and build the tram foundation. Additional progress at the cobalt production facility included the relocation of gas lines, pad preparation for concrete pouring, power line, phone and Internet connections to the construction offices, construction of the parking lot, refurbishing the ball mill including rebuilding the motor, relining of the copper electrolyte circulation tanks and electrowinning cells, development of an improved cobalt cathode handling and treatment process and installation and repair of new and existing gates, fences, ditches and sumps.

TETON COUNTY

- The county run Teton Valley Hospital recently submitted paperwork to the Internal Revenue Service to operate as a nonprofit. Negotiations are still under way for a Healthcare Services and Management Agreement with Bingham Memorial Hospital in Blackfoot.

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



The Census Bureau's website has a great link — QuickFacts - <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>. QuickFacts provides the latest census data for the state, counties or cities. From there you can access more detailed information. Click on the link above, pick a state, then select a county or city and find the latest data quickly and easily.

CENSUS FUN FACTS: May: Older Americans Month

A meeting with the National Council of Senior Citizens resulted in President John F. Kennedy designating May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month, encouraging the nation to pay tribute in some way to older people across the country. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter's proclamation changed the name to Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate those 65 and older through ceremonies, events and public recognition.

- **40.3 MILLION** — The number of people who were 65 and older in the United States on April 1, 2010, accounting for 13 percent of the total population. In 2010, this age group was larger than in any other decennial census, up from 31.2 million in 1990 and 35.0 million in 2000.
- **88.5 MILLION** — Projected population of people 65 and older in 2050. People in this age group would comprise 20 percent of the total population at that time.

More Census Fun Facts — http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff07.html.

March labor force data for Idaho, counties and cities will be released April 20. The data will be published online when they are released. See lmi.idaho.gov for most current information.

State of Idaho Data — State Economic Indicators

	Feb 2012**	Jan 2012*	Feb 2011	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	777,200	775,500	768,300	0.2	1.2
Unemployment	62,500	62,900	67,300	-0.6	-7.1
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	8.0	8.1	8.8		
Total Employment	714,700	712,600	701,000	0.3	2.0
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	774,200	768,100	763,400	0.8	1.4
Unemployment	70,000	69,400	74,300	0.9	-5.8
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	9.0	9.0	9.7		
Total Employment	704,200	698,700	689,100	0.8	2.2
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁽²⁾					
	Feb 2012	Jan 2012	Feb 2011		
	8.3	8.3	9.0		
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
	Feb 2012**	Jan 2012*	Feb 2011		
<i>Claims Activities</i>					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	9,795	10,512	12,593	-6.8	-22.2
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	99,655	113,107	121,795	-11.9	-18.2
<i>Benefit Payment Activities</i> ⁽⁵⁾					
Weeks Compensated	86,141	96,486	129,197	-10.7	-33.3
Total Benefit \$ Paid	\$21,133,093.99	\$23,650,147.87	\$31,331,666.74	-10.6	-32.6
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$245.33	\$245.11	\$242.51	0.1	1.2
Covered Employers	47,074	47,473	47,743	-0.8	-1.4
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$209,396,085	\$219,594,658	\$286,962,649	-4.6	-27.0
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ⁽²⁾					
	Mar 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2011	% Change Month	% Change Year
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	226.3	224.3	222.0	0.9	2.9
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	229.3	227.6	223.4	0.8	2.7

**Forecast data

* Preliminary estimate

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(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 12th 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 12th 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 12th 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 12th 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 email to janell.hyer@labor.idaho.gov or to the Regional Economists noted in each area news section.

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

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

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