

# Idaho Employment

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

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

*State and county labor force and nonfarm jobs tables will not appear in this issue of Idaho Employment due to annual benchmarking procedures. As of late February the revised numbers for all of 2009 as well as the January data is scheduled to be released March 12.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Wage Reductions Another Outcome of Recession, page 1
- 2nd Quarter 2009 Employment, Wages Show Small Advance, page 3
- North Central Idaho – Milestone: Women Hold Majority of Payroll Jobs, page 7
- Panhandle – Commuting Contributes to Stronger Region, page 14
- East Central Idaho – Process Impedes Putting People to Work, page 15
- South Central Idaho – Small Businesses Can Flourish in Recession, page 16
- Area and County Updates, page 20
- Idaho Economic Indicators, page 42

## WAGE REDUCTIONS ANOTHER OUTCOME OF RECESSION

The recession has not only stripped the Idaho economy of tens of thousands of jobs and the paychecks that went with them, but it also has slashed wages by hundreds of millions of dollars for many of the surviving workers.

For the year that ended on June 30, 2009, employers in 60 percent of Idaho's 307 specific industry subsectors reported to the state Department of Labor that they cut nearly 27,000 jobs from the previous year's average. That reduced those payrolls by 12 percent – more than \$1.2 billion.

During the same period, employers in 74 of those same subsectors – joined by employers in 41 others that had avoided net job reductions – pared back wages for the workers remaining on their payrolls. The reduction averaged 3.8 percent – either through actual cuts in hourly rates and salaries or cutbacks in working hours. That depleted payrolls by another \$300 million.

Those wage cuts were partially offset by both raises and payroll expansion in some sectors, most notably health care and education. Even so, total wages between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009, were over \$760 million lower than the previous 12 months. The decline to \$21.5 billion was 3.4 percent, and that occurred before job erosion in the Idaho economy peaked two months later when the monthly year-over-year losses approached 50,000 or 7.5 percent in August 2009.

Construction, primarily the subsectors directly involved in home building, was the hardest hit, shedding an average of nearly 10,000 jobs that carried paychecks totaling \$315 million. That was on top of 3,600 jobs lost between mid-2007 and mid-2008. The industry cut another \$93 million by lowering wage rates or reducing hours on some of the 40,000 remaining jobs.

Linked directly to the demise of the housing market was real estate, which dropped over 600 jobs and \$30 million in wages from mid-2008 to mid-2009, and the mortgage and credit sector, which lost 350 jobs and \$26 million in wages and salaries.

Durable manufacturing employers essentially held the line on wages and hours but cut payrolls during the 12 months by more than \$315 million, eliminating over 6,400 jobs that paid over \$900 a week.

- Almost 2,400 were in the high-tech technology sector, overwhelmingly in computer chip production, and those jobs averaged over \$1,400 a week.
- Another 1,900 were in the lumber and paper mills, which have been in decline for a quarter century. Primarily north of the Salmon River, those lost jobs averaged over \$700 a week.
- Over 750 mostly trailer production workers across southwestern and south central Idaho were laid off, losing paychecks that averaged over \$600 a week.

Siphoning off that kind of cash reverberated through the rest of the Idaho economy.

- Professional and businesses services cut 4,300 jobs with a wage loss of \$95 million.
- Retailers eliminated over 4,000 jobs and \$120 million in wages and salaries.
- Restaurants and bars cut 2,100 jobs and \$11 million in payroll while hotels cut 600 jobs and reduced payrolls by \$12 million.
- Wholesalers reduced payroll by more than 1,000 and wages by \$50 million.
- Trucking lost 400 jobs, cutting \$12 million in paychecks.

#### ***BRIGHT SPOTS FEW AND RELATIVELY MODEST***

Health care made the strongest showing, adding almost 1,500 jobs worth \$55 million in increased payrolls and boosting pay for the existing 50,000 jobs by \$76 million. Various care facilities added another 900 jobs, expanding their payrolls by \$25 million.

More than 800 new jobs in physical, engineering and life sciences research and development were generated in eastern Idaho, where dozens of new companies took advantage of the positive atmosphere created in that sector by activity at the Idaho National Laboratory. Between new paychecks and increases for existing ones, over \$83 million was added to the regional economy.

Education, both public and private, added nearly 800 jobs during the 12 months ending June 30, 2009, boosting that sector's payroll by nearly \$24 million while paychecks for the other 55,000 education jobs increased more than \$57 million.

Dairy continued expanding in the southern part of the state despite severe price pressures. The production sector added over 200 jobs and improved wages to boost that payroll by \$11 million, or 13 percent.

Government at all levels – local, state and federal – added nearly 900 jobs, a 2 percent increase, and payrolls rose \$62 million, or 3.5 percent.

The wage data on page 3 from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages uses a formula to allocate wage changes related to job loss or gain and wage changes related to increase or decrease in pay rates or hours worked. Changes due to job gain or loss were identified by multiplying the change in average employment from FY2008 to FY2009 by the average wage for FY2009. Changes due to increases or decreases in pay rates or hours worked were identified by multiplying average employment in FY2009 by the change in average wage between FY2008 and FY2009.

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## Net Jobs and Wage Changes, FY2008 to FY2009 (Earnings in millions)

Industry Sector	Average Employment FY2009	Average Change in Number of Jobs	Job Change Impact on Earnings	Wage Change Impact on Earnings
Agriculture	20,181	191	\$3.9	\$25.5
Logging	1,834	-318	-\$12.3	-\$0.5
Mining	2,433	-359	-\$16.0	-\$2.6
Utilities	2,924	111	\$7.9	\$9.8
Construction Nondurable	40,495	-9,693	-\$315.0	-\$93.5
Manufacturing Resource	16,957	151	\$5.3	\$22.0
Manufacturing Goods	14,295	-2,394	-\$83.4	\$1.4
Manufacturing Wholesale	27,520	-4,040	-\$232.1	-\$1.8
Wholesale Retail	27,075	-1,042	-\$51.4	\$4.7
Retail Transportation	80,306	-4,043	-\$123.1	-\$7.1
Transportation Warehousing	14,275	-283	-\$19.4	\$6.7
Warehousing Information	6,436	-168	\$1.7	-\$0.9
Information Finance, Insurance	11,807	10	-\$1.6	-\$0.4
Real Estate, Leasing, Rental	21,380	-517	-\$21.8	-\$21.0
Professional Services	7,984	-885	-\$26.2	-\$7.8
Management of Companies	33,152	-840	-\$14.8	\$16.4
Administrative, Support Services	6,977	-641	-\$47.2	\$6.1
Education	38,752	-2,866	-\$70.9	\$15.0
Health Care	55,921	771	\$23.9	\$57.0
Social Services	66,325	2,228	\$76.0	\$82.1
Arts & Entertainment	12,180	166	\$3.7	\$3.4
Hotels & Restaurants	10,499	-257	-\$4.3	-\$0.8
Other Services	52,842	-2,776	-\$35.9	\$12.4
Government	16,817	-354	-\$8.5	\$11.6
Government	44,165	888	\$36.9	\$25.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>633,532</b>	<b>-26,960</b>	<b>-\$924.6</b>	<b>\$163.0</b>

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Idaho Department of Labor

### 2ND QUARTER 2009 EMPLOYMENT, WAGES SHOW SMALL ADVANCE

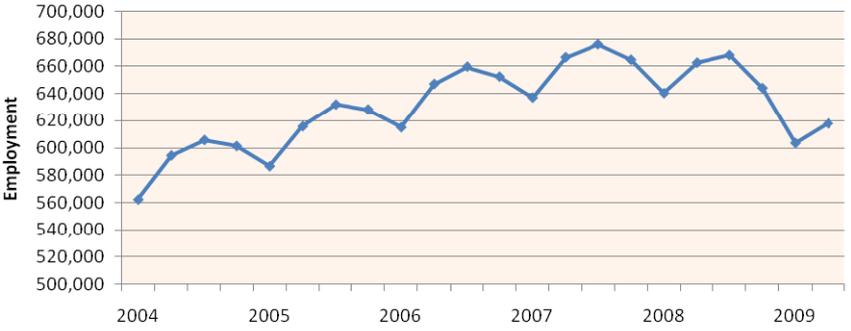
#### EMPLOYMENT

The second quarter of 2009 brought little relief to the recession-weakened Idaho economy. Total covered employment reported through the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages averaged 617,816 in the April-June quarter – up from 603,494 in the first quarter but 44,549 below year-ago levels in the second quarter of 2008. Additionally, although total wages paid out in the second quarter of 2009 exceeded the amount paid in first quarter by nearly \$71 million, wages paid fell short of second quarter 2008 levels by nearly \$400 million.

Industry subsectors experiencing gains in the second quarter outnumbered those experiencing losses, and gaining subsectors typically gained more jobs than losing subsectors lost. Some of the biggest gains, however, such as those in crop production and in food services and drinking places, were in line with a regular seasonal increase usually seen in these industries between April and June.

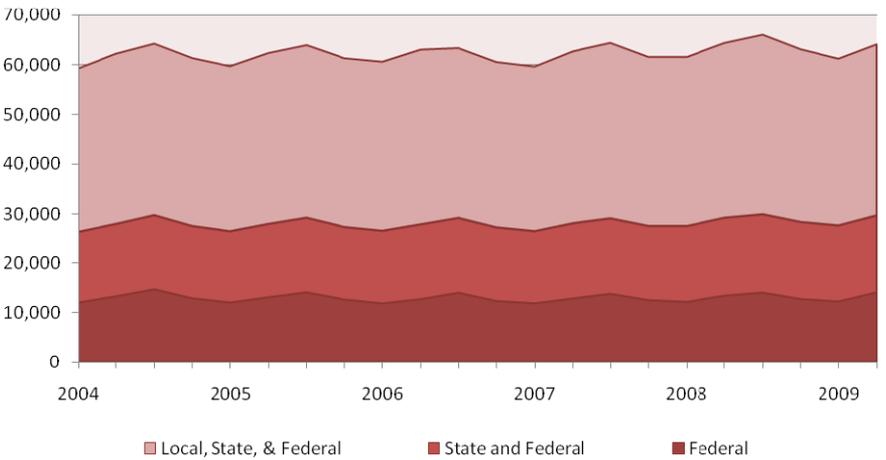
Private-sector jobs totaled 500,850 in the second quarter. Although this was down 45,354, or 8.3 percent, from the same quarter the prior year, sec-

**Fig 1: Idaho Average Quarterly Employment  
1Q 2004-2Q 2009**

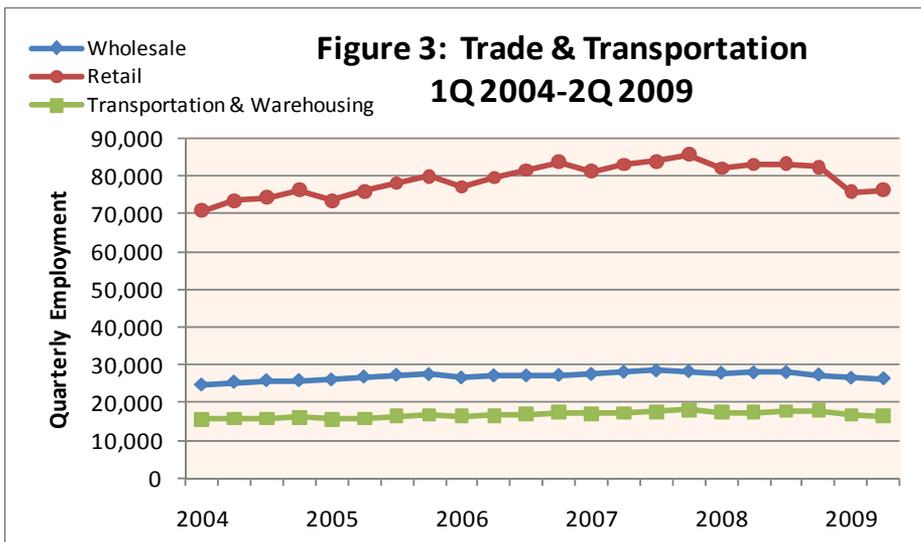


ond quarter employment represented an increase of 9,786, or 2.0 percent, from the first three months of 2009. Limited seasonal hiring in some sectors outpaced job loss, but not enough to bring the total number of jobs up to early 2008 levels. Government, including education, averaged 116,966 jobs in the second quarter, up by 4,536 from the first. The greatest part of this increase came from federal government, which employed intermittent workers in spring of 2009 to do preliminary work for the 2010 Census. This brought federal employment in Idaho up 1,834 from the previous quarter — a 4.9 percent increase over year-ago levels. Meanwhile, state and local governments added 1,236 and 1,466 jobs respectively from first quarter 2009, leaving their second quarter employment levels in 2009 nearly equal to those in 2008. See *figure 2*.

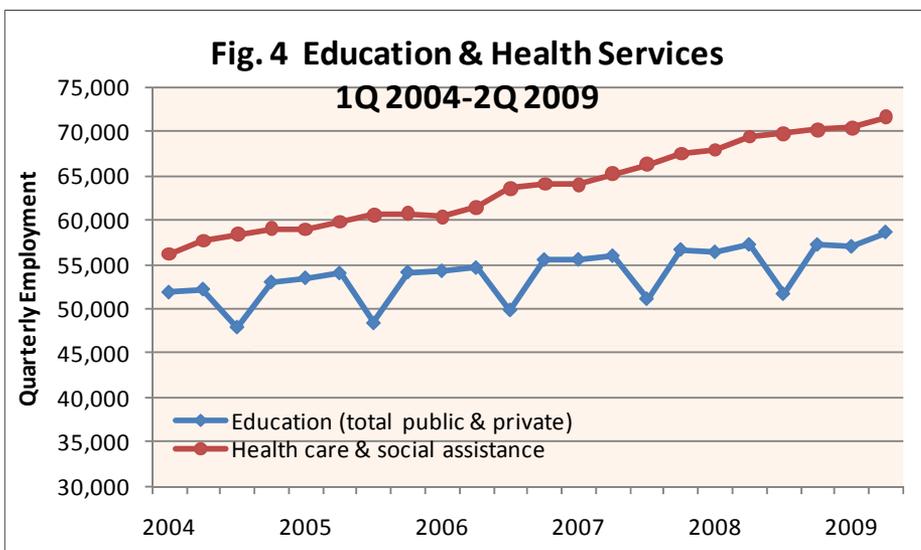
**Fig. 2: Public Administration  
1Q2004-2Q2009**



April, May and June of 2009 saw retail jobs increasing even less than they did during the same months in 2008, indicating that 2009 would be another difficult year for that sector. Retail made a modest gain of 484 jobs from the first to the second quarter, bringing the total number of jobs in the sector to 76,334 — 6,753 lower than year-ago levels. Clothing stores and home furnishings stores were the retail subsectors which lost the most jobs in the second quarter, but gains in building material and garden supply stores, nonstore retailers and gasoline stores were great enough to produce the net gain seen in retail as a whole. While retail fared moderately well, wholesale trade and transportation and warehousing each experienced modest losses totaling slightly over 550 jobs. See *figure 3 on page 5*.



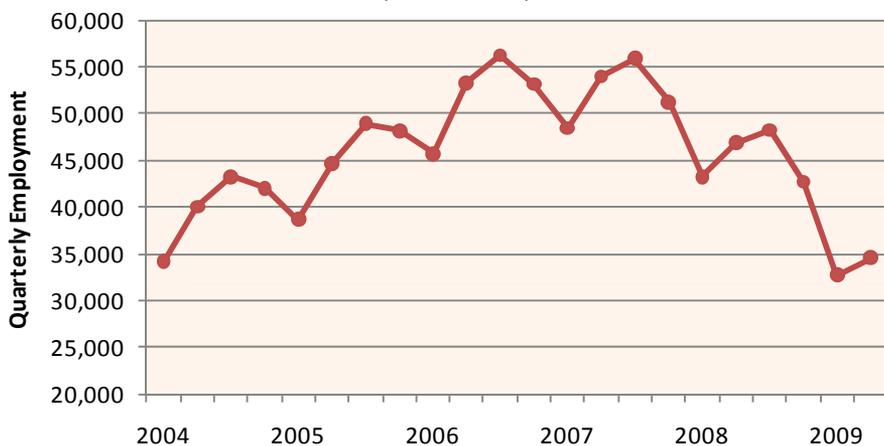
Health care employment broke its trend of flattening employment increases, gaining 1,230 jobs in the second quarter of 2009. This constituted a gain of 1.7 percent – a welcome change from the less than 0.1 percent gain rates of the past three quarters. Ambulatory care, social assistance and hospitals all made considerable gains of 634,361 and 253 jobs, respectively. Nursing and residential care facilities saw a minor decrease of less than 20 jobs. See figure 4.



Construction experienced its first positive change in employment in a year, gaining 1,842 jobs, or 5.6 percent, over the first quarter. However, this gain came in part from regular seasonal growth typically seen in construction in the spring and because of the large losses in construction since late 2007, employment levels in the sector remained near 2004 levels in spite of a 2009 second quarter gain. Construction’s 2009 first-to-second quarter gain in this sector was less than its 2008 gain of 8.5 percent, leaving the sector down 12,343 jobs from year-ago levels. Of construction’s subsectors, heavy and civil engineering construction fared the best gaining 27.9 percent in jobs from first quarter 2009 followed by specialty trade contractors’ gain of 3 percent and construction of buildings’ minimal gain of .3 percent. See figure 5 on page 6.

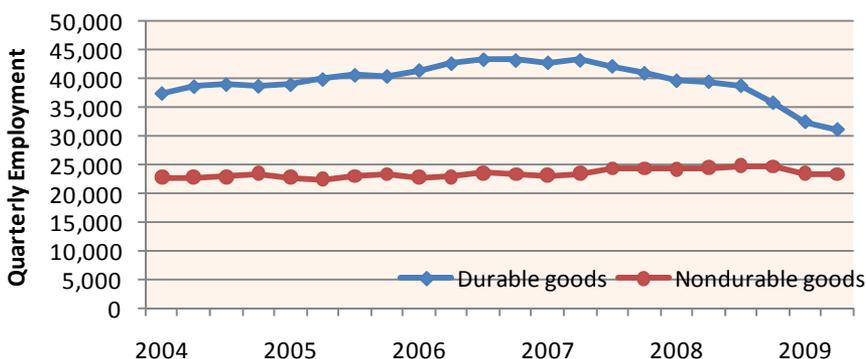
Manufacturing lost 1,408 jobs from first to second quarter 2009 – the fourth straight quarter of manufacturing job loss, going against a seasonal gain typically seen in the second quarter. Manufacturing has been one of the areas hit hardest by the recession, reflected in employment in the second

**Figure 5. Construction  
1Q 2004-2Q 2009**



quarter that was nearly 15 percent lower than year-ago levels. As in previous quarters, durable goods continued to suffer greater losses than nondurable goods, experiencing a second quarter year-over-year loss of 21.1 percent in contrast to the 4.4 percent loss experienced by the nondurable sector. Sectors that lost the most jobs from the first quarter were computer and electronic product manufacturing down 7.4 percent, machinery manufacturing down 5.2 percent and wood product manufacturing down 4 percent. Meanwhile, the non-durable goods manufacturing sector group did not escape entirely without losses — printing and related support activities lost 11.4 percent of its employment from first quarter to second quarter 2009, putting it 22.5 percent below the previous year’s employment level. See *figure 6*.

**Figure 6. Manufacturing  
1Q 2004-2Q 2009**



**WAGES**

During the second quarter of 2009, Idaho’s average weekly wage for all industries was \$632, down \$6 from the previous quarter. The lowest wages were reported in accommodations and food services at \$242, a \$2 increase from the third quarter, and leisure activities at \$283, a \$21 decrease. As usual, company management recorded the highest wage at \$1,422 a week. However this was \$131 lower than the previous quarter, the largest drop in wages of any industry. Utilities followed at \$1,123, down \$192 from the first quarter, and mining came in at \$1,074, a \$44 increase. See *figure 7 on page 7*.

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**Figure 7. Average Weekly Wages by Industry  
2nd Quarter 2009**



## North Central Idaho

### MILESTONE: WOMEN HOLD MAJORITY OF PAYROLL JOBS

The U.S. economy passed a milestone in January, when for the first time women held the majority of payroll jobs. In 1964, the year the government began collecting this data, less than a third of the nation's payroll jobs were held by women.

The U.S. was about a year and a half behind north central Idaho. Women have held the majority of payroll jobs in both regions since early 2008.

In 1991, the first year that statistic was compiled for Idaho, women held 45 percent of payroll jobs in north central Idaho. In every age group, females are a larger percentage of the labor force now than they were in 1991.

The age group showing the biggest jump in the percentage of females is the 45 to 64 age group. In 1991, females in their 50s and 60s came from a generation whose women did not expect to work once they married and had children, while today's females in their 50s and 60s have spent much more of their lives working outside of their homes.

### PAYROLL JOB HOLDERS IN NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

	2008			1991		
	Total	Female	Females as % of Total	Total	Female	Females as % of Total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42,371</b>	<b>21,154</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>24,712</b>	<b>11,180</b>	<b>45%</b>
14 to 18 Years	1,443	805	56%	969	495	51%
19 to 21 Years	2,730	1,464	54%	1,644	852	52%
22 to 24 Years	3,170	1,576	50%	1,775	834	47%
25 to 34 Years	8,455	4,019	48%	6,477	2,920	45%
35 to 44 Years	8,466	4,247	50%	6,868	3,087	45%
45 to 54 Years	10,077	5,104	51%	4,212	1,844	44%
55 to 64 Years	6,513	3,240	50%	2,253	920	41%
65 & over Years	1,514	697	46%	511	226	44%

In both the region and the nation, it was the recession that pushed women into majority status. Like most recessions, this recession has taken an especially hard toll on construction, heavy manufacturing, and especially wood products, logging and transportation — sectors dominated by men. Since the recession began in December 2007, American men have lost a net 7.4 million jobs while women have lost 3.9 million. Between the first quarter of 2007 and the first quarter of 2009, the number of payroll jobs held by men in north central Idaho fell 5.4 percent, from 20,552 to 19,437, while the number of payroll jobs held by women fell only 0.4 percent from 20,636 to 20,551. Men made up 68 percent of the unemployment insurance claimants in north central Idaho in November 2009.

The table below shows the sectors of the north central Idaho economy that lost the most jobs and those that added the most jobs between the third quarter of 2007 and the third quarter of 2009. Note the sectors with the heaviest job losses tend to be male-dominated jobs, while the sectors with significant job gains are female-dominated. On this table, the health care and social assistance sector and the education sector both include private- and public-sector jobs.

**NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO SECTORS LOSING AND ADDING THE MOST JOBS AND PERCENT OF PAYROLL JOBS HELD BY MALES**

	Jobs 3rd Quarter of 2009	Jobs 3rd Quarter of 2007	Jobs Added	% Change	Males as % of Total
<b>Sectors Losing the Most Jobs</b>					
Construction	1,852	2,281	-429	-19%	87%
Retail Trade	5,520	5,900	-381	-6%	52%
Manufacturing	3,727	4,090	-364	-9%	79%
Leisure & Hospitality	4,239	4,488	-249	-6%	87%
Financial Activities	2,101	2,308	-208	-9%	24%
Transportation & Warehousing	1,242	1,429	-186	-13%	83%
Mining & Logging	926	1,011	-84	-8%	91%
<b>Sectors Adding the Most Jobs</b>					
Health Care & Social Assistance	6,327	5,950	377	6%	18%
Education	7,584	7,095	489	7%	41%

A job recovery would likely reduce women’s share of payroll jobs slightly, but it won’t change the fact that women and men basically are at parity in the number of payroll jobs. Before the 1970s, such a possibility would never have occurred to most Americans.

Although women now hold the majority of payroll jobs, men still make up the majority — 53.1 percent — of the U.S. labor force, which includes the unemployed and the self-employed along with payroll workers.

**MORE NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO WOMEN 25 TO 64  
HAVE ADVANCED EDUCATION**

	North Central Idaho		United States	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Less than 9th Grade	0.8%	1.8%	4.4%	5.4%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	3.9%	6.3%	7.3%	9.0%
High School Diploma or GED	33.4%	32.6%	27.3%	29.5%
Some College, No Degree	23.8%	24.7%	21.8%	20.1%
Associate's Degree	10.5%	9.3%	9.3%	7.3%
Bachelor's Degree	18.5%	15.6%	19.4%	18.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.1%	9.7%	10.5%	10.4%

Source: American Community Survey, 2008

In recent decades, women have been graduating from high school and college in greater numbers than men. Nationwide, 60 percent of the college diplomas received last year were earned by women. This may explain some of their gains in payroll jobs. With more education, they have more skills to offer. In addition, their investment in education would make them more likely to want to stay in the labor force.

**BUT THEY STILL EARNED SUBSTANTIALLY LESS IN 2008**

	North Central Idaho		United States	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,789</b>	<b>\$34,034</b>	<b>\$28,104</b>	<b>\$41,298</b>
No High School Diploma	\$9,067	\$18,111	\$14,682	\$23,638
High School Graduate or GED	\$17,757	\$30,495	\$21,711	\$33,506
Some College & Associate Degree	\$21,043	\$35,739	\$27,663	\$41,861
Bachelor's Degree	\$27,536	\$36,174	\$39,571	\$59,079
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$44,188	\$52,676	\$52,301	\$79,276

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Even with higher levels of education, women typically earn less than men, as shown in the table on page 10. Women's lower earnings can be partly explained by their tendency to crowd into "pink collar" jobs, the lower numbers of hours they work and the tendency of some women to leave the labor force for a number of years to raise children.

## WOMEN GENERALLY ARE IN LOWER-PAYING OCCUPATIONS

	Female	Male	Females as % of Total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,959</b>	<b>24,821</b>	<b>46.9%</b>
Management	1,541	2,412	39.0%
Business & Financial Operations	703	556	55.8%
Computer & Mathematical	160	395	28.8%
Architecture & Engineering	80	564	12.4%
Life, Physical & Social Science	419	629	40.0%
Community & Social Services	321	467	40.7%
Legal	107	225	32.2%
Education, Training & Library	2,269	1,175	65.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	441	283	60.9%
Health Care Practitioner & Technical	1,593	509	75.8%
Healthcare Support	1,014	212	82.7%
Protective Service	231	757	23.4%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	1,602	1,056	60.3%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	1,001	1,112	47.4%
Personal Care & Service	1,022	206	83.2%
Sales & Related	2,142	2,329	47.9%
Office & Administrative Support	5,419	1,353	80.0%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	188	879	17.6%
Construction & Extraction	287	2,803	9.3%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	74	1,786	4.0%
Production	862	2,630	24.7%
Transportation & Material Moving	483	2,483	16.3%

Women are still less likely to be self-employed than men. In 2008, 1,217 men in north central Idaho owned their own businesses compared to 587 women.

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### APPLICANTS FLOOD DRIED-UP JOB MARKET IN NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

The recession and its aftereffects greatly reduced job creation in north central Idaho while dramatically increasing the number of people looking for work. Job openings listed with the Idaho Department of Labor offices in Grangeville, Lewiston, Moscow and Orofino fell 70 percent from 2,455 in the third and fourth quarters of 2007 to 742 in the third and fourth quarters of 2009. At the same time, job applicants grew 54 percent from 4,052 in the third quarter of 2007 to 6,243 in the third quarter of 2009.

Reflecting the heavy job losses in the male-dominated industries of construction, timber, heavy manufacturing and transportation – the number of male job applicants grew 72 percent from 2,144 in the third quarter of 2007 to 3,676 two years later. The number of female applicants grew more slowly – 35 percent – from 1,907 to 2,566.

## North Central Idaho Job Applicant Registration

	Q3 2009	Q3 2007	Change
<b>Females</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,566</b>	<b>1,907</b>	<b>34.6%</b>
14 to 21 years	306	236	29.7%
22 to 30 years	721	563	28.1%
31 to 55 years	1,269	934	35.9%
56 years & over	270	174	55.2%
<b>Males</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,676</b>	<b>2,144</b>	<b>71.5%</b>
14 to 21 years	410	270	51.9%
22 to 30 years	1,117	677	65.0%
31 to 55 years	1,664	977	70.3%
56 years & over	485	220	120.5%

People with lower levels of education are much more likely to be unemployed in good times or bad, but they are especially hard hit during the bad. In general, the lower their educational attainment, the more likely individuals were to lose jobs in the recession. The number of job applicants without high school diplomas more than doubled, 105 percent, while the number of people with bachelor's degrees or higher grew only 20 percent. The percentage of job applicants who are in the lower levels of educational attainment are much larger than their share of the north central Idaho population aged 25 to 64. See the table on page 12 for more information.

Every occupational category has seen an increase in job applicants and a decrease in job openings over the last two years. For example, restaurants and other food services decreased their job openings 88 percent, from 300 in the second half of 2007 to 35 in the second half of 2009, while the number of applicants grew 42 percent. Job openings and applicants for the major occupational categories are compared in the table on page 12.

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## North Central Idaho Job Applicants by Education

	Q3 2009 Applicants	Q3 2007 Applicants	% Growth	2009 % of Applicants	2008 % of Pop. 25 to 64 Years
<b>TOTAL</b>	6,243	4,052	54.1%	100.0%	100.0%
No High School Diploma	872	426	104.7%	10.7%	6.4%
High School Diploma or GED	2,704	1,671	61.8%	43.3%	33.0%
Some College	1,855	1,157	60.3%	29.7%	24.2%
Associate Degree	369	264	39.8%	5.9%	9.9%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	643	534	20.4%	10.3%	26.5%
<b>High School Diploma or Higher</b>	4,928	3,092	59.4%	78.9%	67.1%

## North Central Idaho Job Applicants, Openings

Occupations	Q3 2009 Applicants	Q3 2007 Applicants	% Growth Applicants	Q3-4		% Growth Openings
				2009 Openings	2007 Openings	
<b>TOTAL</b>	6,243	4,052	54.1%	742	2,455	-69.8%
Architecture & Engineering	90	63	42.9%	5	16	-68.8%
Arts, Media, Sports & Entertainment	174	123	41.5%	26	56	-53.6%
Building & Grounds Maintenance	618	419	47.5%	56	198	-71.7%
Business & Financial Operations	113	79	43.0%	12	41	-70.7%
Community & Social Services	117	116	0.9%	17	40	-57.5%
Computer, Science & Mathematical	102	85	20.0%	18	38	-52.6%
Construction & Building Trades	1,231	690	78.4%	39	156	-75.0%
Education, Training & Library	296	256	15.6%	49	91	-46.2%
Farming Fishing & Forestry	643	73	72.4%	19	44	-56.8%
Food Services	992	698	42.1%	35	300	-88.3%
Health Care Practitioner & Technician	107	92	16.3%	20	78	-74.4%
Health Care Support	372	272	36.8%	57	140	-59.3%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	452	269	68.0%	33	136	-75.7%
Legal	40	29	37.9%	0	4	-100.0%
Life, Physical & Social Science	103	69	49.3%	21	38	-44.7%
Managerial Positions	383	263	45.6%	39	67	-41.8%
Office & Administrative Support	1,583	1,149	37.8%	90	275	-67.3%
Personal Care & Services	444	304	46.1%	42	76	-44.7%
Produce & Manufacturing	998	672	48.5%	64	191	-66.5%
Protective Services	377	272	38.6%	20	53	-62.3%
Sales & Agent Representatives	797	607	31.3%	35	249	-85.9%
Transportation & Delivery	1,016	708	43.5%	45	168	-73.2%

## MANUFACTURING MAY BE TURNING CORNER

New orders for U.S. manufacturers, a signal of future production, soared to their highest point since 2004. Companies say their customers' inventories were still too low, so they foresee more production as customers restock.

Increased production won't necessarily translate into increased hiring. Most manufacturers still have excess capacity. Some that had reduced employees' work hours are returning to normal levels in response to increased orders. If new orders continue to roll in, some will begin using workers who are employees of employment agencies. Finally, they will begin hiring their own employees.

North central Idaho hasn't seen a surge in manufacturer hiring, but it has seen several offering their workers more hours. Temp agencies didn't see an increase in employment in the fourth quarter of 2009, but some are reporting orders appear to be picking up in the new year. Idaho Department of Labor offices in north central Idaho didn't see an increase in job openings from manufacturers in the second half of 2009, but they did see the major decreases that had occurred in the last couple of years come to an end. The table below shows manufacturer job openings listed with Idaho Labor.

### MANUFACTURING JOB OPENINGS LISTED WITH THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

	2006 1st Half	2006 2nd Half	2007 1st Half	2007 2nd Half	2008 1st Half	2008 2nd Half	2009 1st Half	2009 2nd Half
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>91</b>
Grangeville	17	20	20	24	11	21	8	14
Lewiston	132	106	134	141	108	29	23	59
Moscow	23	15	17	15	8	23	6	3
Orofino	30	20	14	36	39	26	26	15

Since the recession began in December 2007, north central Idaho has lost about 330 wood products manufacturing jobs – 31 percent of the jobs it had in the fourth quarter of 2007 – and gained about 50 other manufacturing jobs – a 2 percent gain. The remarkable job growth at ammunition maker ATK in Lewiston helped offset the job losses at some other manufacturing operations. Non-wood manufacturers in Clearwater, Lewis and Idaho counties also added a significant number of jobs during the period. The expansion of Nightforce Optics, a manufacturer of high-quality riflescopes, and the opening of SJX Boats, a jet boat manufacturer, created 30 additional manufacturing jobs, while a variety of operations – including farming equipment manufacturer Hillco Technologies in Nezperce and machine shops in the Cottonwood area – added 40 other manufacturing jobs. The region's success in growing and diversifying its manufacturing base clearer when compared to the nation's loss of 14 percent of its manufacturing jobs – about 1.9 million jobs during the same period.

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# Panhandle

## COMMUTING CONTRIBUTES TO STRONGER REGION

Kootenai County has been growing as a work place for its residences and neighbors, attracting new and diverse industries to the region. In 2008, 7,395 workers commuted from Kootenai County to Spokane County for work, down 10.8 percent from 8,190 in 2000. Nearly 2,150 of Spokane County residences commuted to Kootenai County daily in 2000. By 2008 this number had more than doubled to 4,335.

Total average employment has increased 82.6 percent in Kootenai County from 30,831 in 1993 to 56,302 in 2008. In 2008, Kootenai County was home to 5,258 employers – 62.7 percent of all employers in northern Idaho. Of those total employers, 20 percent were in the construction industry; 10.3 percent in professional, scientific and technical services; 8.7 percent in health care and social services. With average employment at an all-time high and the number of employers steadily migrating to northern Idaho, these commuting patterns will continue to flourish.

### 2008 Commuting Patterns—Northern Idaho

Area of Residence	Area of Workplace	Number of Workers	% Share of Total
Kootenai County, ID	Kootenai County, ID	39,954	73.2%
Kootenai County, ID	Spokane County, WA	7,395	13.6%
Kootenai County, ID	Bonner County, ID	1,315	2.4%
Spokane County, WA	Spokane County, WA	160,542	85.7%
Spokane County, WA	King County, WA	8,277	4.4%
Spokane County, WA	Kootenai County, ID	4,335	2.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, LED OnTheMap Origin-Destination Database 2008

Commuting vehicles and services helped make commuting more attractive and economically feasible for workers on both sides of the state line. Today, 15.9 percent of area workers commute over state lines. By pooling together both Kootenai and Spokane county work forces, the transportation management area continues to grow and surface transportation funds will become more available to the region.

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## WAGE AND MIGRATION

Since as early as 1910, wages in northern Idaho and around the West have been relatively high to compensate for the high cost of living. Employers were willing to pay high wages, too, because labor was scarce compared to the abundant supply of resources in the area, mainly timber and minerals. The high wages induced migration, gradually reducing the labor shortage and eroding the wage and cost of living premiums.

Five-Year Percent Change, Kootenai County		
Population	Average Wage	Entry Level Wage
17.5%	14.4%	12.6%

Advances in transportation and technology have further closed that gap in labor shortages and higher wages. From 2003 to 2008, the average wage increased 14.4 percent in Kootenai County – an annual rate of 2.9 percent – while population increased 17.5 percent – an annual rate of 3.5 percent. In 2009, the average wage in the Panhandle was \$17.09 per hour, and the average entry level wage was \$8.76 per hour.

## Total Wages Paid Out by Employers

	1993	1998	2003	2008
Panhandle	\$977,017,871	\$1,418,516,249	\$1,783,692,959	\$2,582,474,771
Benewah	\$64,651,792	\$83,660,496	\$92,349,222	\$112,879,771
Bonner	\$173,557,062	\$243,293,769	\$311,948,578	\$443,053,792
Boundary	\$52,485,349	\$74,330,640	\$86,439,686	\$105,595,113
Kootenai	\$609,040,245	\$899,267,192	\$1,190,444,787	\$1,763,324,649
Shoshone	\$77,283,423	\$117,964,152	\$102,510,686	\$157,621,446

	Wages Paid Out		Population	
	5-year Change	Avg Annual Rate	5-year Change	Avg Annual Rate
Panhandle	44.80%	9.00%	13.10%	2.60%
Benewah	22.20%	4.40%	5.10%	1.00%
Bonner	42.00%	8.40%	6.70%	1.30%
Boundary	22.20%	4.40%	9.50%	1.90%
Kootenai	48.10%	9.60%	17.50%	3.50%
Shoshone	53.80%	10.80%	0.70%	0.10%

Wages paid out by employers increased 48 percent — 9.6 percent annually — from \$609 million in 1993 to \$1.76 billion in 2008 in Kootenai County. During the same time period, Shoshone County showed the largest increase in wages paid out by employers, 53.8 percent, as population only grew 0.7 percent. These trends illustrated in Shoshone County share a similar resemblance to the experiences of the early 1900s, as mining and forestry industries continue to dictate the particular skill sets and labor force required.

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## East Central Idaho

### PROCESS IMPEDES PUTTING PEOPLE TO WORK

Setting up a new business can be tedious. The extreme detail is overloaded with forms — something many employers would call a necessary evil. But once the work has been completed and all the forms filled out, it entrepreneurs can get down to work.

For some entrepreneurs negotiating the maze of licensing and permitting seems to take forever. It especially seems that way for the workers who are waiting for a chance at the jobs these new enterprises offer. The challenges these businesses face in eastern Idaho can be an eye-opener.

Formation Capital Corp. is a case in point. Also known as Formation Metals Inc., the company owns the Idaho Cobalt Mine in the Salmon-Challis National Forest 40 miles southwest of Salmon. Until last December it was known as the Idaho Cobalt Project and had been for the 11 years since it was conceived. It will be the only cobalt mine in the country.

Project construction will be completed in three stages. Timber clearing operations, road work and topsoil stockpiling are slated for this winter. Construction and initial mine development should take place this spring with mine development below the water table completed by year's end so operations can begin in early 2011. The mine will employ up to 160 workers.

Because the mine is on public land and will likely have a substantial environmental impact, there are many regulatory agencies that get involved and require documentation during the entire process. The company spent over \$50 million for studies required to secure construction approval. The environmental impact statement, notice of intent and the company's plan of operations all had to be approved to get the green light to move ahead.

Areva Inc. is another company that has gotten eastern Idaho's attention. In December 2008 it submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission the application it had been working on for an extended period to license a uranium enrichment plant west of Idaho Falls. Commission review and approval can take 2½ years, pushing construction back years, and it will be 2014 before the state-of-the-art gas centrifuge enrichment plant called the Eagle Rock Enrichment Facility can be completed. The project was announced in early 2009 so it will be years before any of the estimated 5,000 direct and indirect jobs linked to construction and operation will be realities. A study done by the Regional Development Alliance found the project would provide \$5 billion in economic activity.

Simplon, FMC and Monsanto in southeastern Idaho have gone through extended and complex bidding processes and have since closed their operations. The end of existing contracts triggers the requirement for new contract proposals, which allow the risks and benefits to be identified clearly upfront. This can be frustrating for workers because the bidding process can cause temporary or permanent layoffs while a new operating deal is formalized. Washington Group held the operating contract with Agrium for the phosphorus mine in Soda Springs, but its contract expired late last year, and more than 100 workers were laid off while a decision was made whether to renew or to hire a new contractor. Agrium switched to Kiewit Corp., and workers are still idle, waiting for Kiewit to take over and decide whether it will keep them on or hire new workers.

The thousands of workers at the Idaho National Laboratory have experienced this exercise repeatedly over the years as the federal government periodically rebids the operating contract for the complex. Typically all but the top officials stay on the job with the new contractors.

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## South Central Idaho

### **SMALL BUSINESSES GROWTH CAN FLOURISH IN RECESSION**

With the economy flagging, policy makers are giving more and more attention to opportunities to encourage small business growth and development, spurred on by studies showing a majority of growth in the United States comes from small business. Of note is how large and small enterprises react during recessions versus how they handle expansions.

While there continues to be discussion about the definition of small business, making the break between small and larger at 100 employees seems reasonable. In manufacturing that would be three shifts of just 30 workers each.

The best historic data source is from the quarterly unemployment insurance tax reports submitted by employers. They list the number of employees and total wages for workers covered by the unemployment insurance system, which in Idaho represents more than 90 percent of the work force. Not included are the self-employed, railroad and certain agricultural workers, insurance and real estate agents, employees of certain religious and private educa-

tion organizations and college students on work study programs.

Economic developers typically direct their efforts toward larger businesses for several reasons, the most obvious being that large companies provide more jobs at one swipe. But they also are believed to provide higher wages than small ones and stronger benefit packages because of volume discounts not available to small entrepreneurs. Big businesses tends to possess the financial resources for relocation costs and time investment.

In south central Idaho, the emphasis on economic development for diversification has brought in larger companies needing a bigger labor pool. Also, the explosion of dairies prompted international companies such as Glanbia Foods to locate and expand in the region, taking advantage of vertical integration from the dairy cow and processing to marketing, distribution, research and development. Food processors that rely on local commodities such as potatoes, sugar, onions and corn continue to cluster in the region, requiring more and more workers even if some of that demand is seasonal.

Nationally and statewide small businesses outperform larger ones in their growth in wages, employment and number of employers throughout the business cycle. However, the opposite is the case in south central Idaho. Large businesses consistently experience higher growth in total wages, number of employers and average employment through both good times and bad. Food processing typically requires a sizeable work force with middle management responsible for higher average wages larger employers pay. Dairy accounts for a sizeable portion of gross agriculture receipts in Idaho, and 75 percent of the cow population is in south central Idaho.

#### ***BLAINE COUNTY***

Blaine County is a case in point. While the Wood River Valley's economy is driven by small business – over 99 percent employ fewer than 100 workers – the share of total wages paid by those small businesses is 76 percent and their average employment accounts for 78 percent of total employment. So a few large employers are contributing more per capita and per business. Over the past decade, small business saw average employment grow only 0.2 percent while large business jumped 64.3 percent. The downturn after the September 2001 terror attacks was not nearly as significant as the current recession. Since late 2007, small businesses lost nearly two thousand jobs, or 16 percent, while large businesses dropped only a half percent.

The resilience of these small businesses with fewer than 100 workers is reflected in the fact that their number declined just 1.2 percent during the current recession while the contraction was over 7 percent for larger employers. That decline hardly offsets the more than doubling in the number of large businesses over the last decade while small business numbers are up just 16 percent.

#### ***MINI-CASSIA AREA***

Minidoka and Cassia counties have been a hot bed of growth for medium to large companies over the last five years following the loss of J.R. Simplot's potato processing plant and hundreds of its jobs. In closing the plant, however, the company gave the facility to the area, providing a huge marketing asset to help lure larger operations.

The number of both large and small employers grew over the decade but not as dramatically as one might expect – each at around 11 percent. Cassia County got the lion's share of new companies, but even it has seen some ups and downs. Pacific Ethanol closed during 2009, and depressed dairy prices have weighed on the local economy. Wages grew dramatically in small businesses – nearly 41 percent in the last 10 years. But much of the growth was during the expansion after the 2001 recession, and that came on a very low wage base, magnifying the increases employers were forced to provide as un-

employment plunged to a record low and competition for qualified workers became intense.

Still the wage growth among small businesses lagged the 48 percent growth for businesses in the Twin Falls metropolitan area that includes Jerome County and the 50.5 percent posted statewide.

While the number of large and small employers in the Mini-Cassia area was essentially stable during the last decade, large businesses saw employment contract 23 percent during the years of expansion while small businesses came through with a 9.3 percent employment gain.

Overall, however, the trends of the nation and state did not hold true in rural south central Idaho and areas where economic development had been dormant in prior years. For the leaders of those areas, there is an opportunity to make a difference by focusing on the expansion and development of Main Street and existing industry clusters. *The table on page 19 provides data on wages and employment changes south central Idaho businesses for third quarter of select years.*

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United States  
**Census  
2010**

## **CENSUS BUREAU LAUNCHES ONLINE MAPPING TOOL**

The Census Bureau unveiled a [new online mapping tool](#) that allows communities nationwide to prepare for the 2010 Census by seeing how well they did mailing back their 2000 Census forms.

Visitors to the new Google-based map will be able to find the 2000 Census mail participation rates for states, counties and cities as well as smaller areas called “census tracts.” After the 2010 Census forms are mailed out in mid-March, the online map will be updated to include a tracking tool with daily updates of the 2010 Census mail participation rates for local areas across the nation. Users will be able to compare their 2010 Census progress using their 2000 Census rates as a benchmark.

“The future of your community starts with a look at its past,” said Census Bureau Director Robert M. Groves. “The 2000 Census map allows communities to see which areas need extra attention and reminders to improve mail participation. We will be challenging communities nationwide to take 10 minutes to fill out and mail back their 2010 Census forms in March.” The Census Bureau has also created an [online toolkit](#) with ideas that communities can use to inspire their residents to improve their mail participation rate.

In 2000, 72 percent of households that received a form mailed it back. The mail participation rate is a new measure designed to give a better picture of actual participation by factoring out census forms that the U.S. Postal Service was unable to deliver as addressed. It should be particularly useful in areas with seasonal populations or a large number of vacancies or foreclosures.

As required by the U.S. Constitution, the once-a-decade census must count every person living in the United States. Census data are the basis for our democratic system of government, ensuring that representation in government is equally distributed. The data also help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal funds are distributed to state, local and tribal governments every year. That includes money that could go toward roads, hospitals, schools and critical social services.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Feb. 25, 2010*

	TOTAL WAGE All Size ALL NAICS	TOTAL WAGE 100 and greater ALL NAICS	TOTAL WAGE Less than 100 ALL NAICS	Employers All ALL NAICS	Employers 100 and greater ALL NAICS	Employers Less than 100 ALL NAICS	Avg Employment All ALL NAICS	Avg Employment 100 and greater ALL NAICS	Avg Employment Less than 100 ALL NAICS
<b>State Q3-09</b>	<b>\$ 5,233,389,673</b>	<b>\$ 2,096,175,657</b>	<b>\$ 3,137,214,016</b>	<b>56,134</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>55,333</b>	<b>623,132</b>	<b>219,260</b>	<b>403,872</b>
YOY % Change	-6.3%	-6.7%	-6.1%	-1.1%	-8.5%	-0.9%	-6.7%	-7.9%	-6.0%
2000-2002 % Change	4.4%	0.9%	7.1%	2.7%	-2.9%	2.8%	1.4%	0.2%	2.1%
2002-2007 % Change	36.2%	30.6%	40.3%	20.6%	13.3%	20.8%	15.0%	12.0%	16.7%
2007-2009 % Change	-6.1%	-6.1%	-6.0%	-0.7%	-5.0%	-0.6%	-7.7%	-6.5%	-8.3%
<b>South Central Q3-09</b>	<b>\$585,474,055</b>	<b>\$170,023,068</b>	<b>\$ 415,450,987</b>	<b>7,574</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>7,470</b>	<b>80,265</b>	<b>22,360</b>	<b>57,905</b>
YOY % Change	-6.1%	-2.8%	-7.4%	0.0%	-1.0%	0.0%	-5.4%	-4.1%	-5.8%
2000-2002 % Change	7.8%	16.2%	5.1%	1.5%	12.5%	1.3%	4.6%	13.8%	1.7%
2002-2007 % Change	30.9%	32.6%	30.3%	10.3%	14.8%	10.3%	9.3%	7.6%	9.8%
2007-2009 % Change	-2.2%	6.7%	-5.5%	1.7%	11.8%	1.6%	-4.6%	3.0%	-7.2%
<b>Blaine County Q3-09</b>	<b>\$109,607,686</b>	<b>\$25,963,066</b>	<b>\$83,644,620</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,743</b>	<b>12,782</b>	<b>2,813</b>	<b>9,969</b>
YOY % Change	-17.5%	-15.1%	-18.2%	-1.8%	-13.3%	-1.7%	-13.0%	-12.9%	-13.1%
2000-2002 % Change	-0.4%	21.7%	-3.2%	5.2%	33.3%	5.1%	5.5%	5.3%	5.5%
2002-2007 % Change	37.4%	98.7%	27.6%	10.0%	75.0%	9.6%	14.3%	57.9%	7.3%
2007-2009 % Change	-14.7%	1.6%	-18.7%	-1.2%	-7.1%	-1.2%	-12.9%	-0.5%	-15.9%
<b>Minidoka Cassia counties Q3-09</b>	<b>\$118,089,385</b>	<b>\$30,374,560</b>	<b>\$87,714,825</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,396</b>	<b>16,685</b>	<b>3,668</b>	<b>13,017</b>
YOY % Change	-1.0%	-3.0%	-0.2%	1.4%	-4.8%	1.5%	-1.8%	-5.1%	-0.9%
2000-2002 % Change	9.6%	16.4%	6.8%	-2.1%	5.0%	-2.2%	1.7%	8.8%	-0.8%
2002-2007 % Change	19.8%	-4.1%	30.6%	6.8%	-14.3%	7.2%	0.4%	-23.2%	9.3%
2007-2009 % Change	1.8%	5.4%	0.6%	3.7%	11.1%	3.6%	-2.5%	2.4%	-3.8%
<b>Twin-Jerome Counties Q3-09</b>	<b>\$299,736,017</b>	<b>\$96,357,427</b>	<b>\$203,378,590</b>	<b>3,626</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>3,569</b>	<b>42,763</b>	<b>13,867</b>	<b>28,896</b>
YOY % Change	-3.7%	-1.5%	-4.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	-4.4%	-3.7%	-4.7%
2000-2002 % Change	9.5%	12.3%	8.3%	2.0%	7.0%	1.9%	5.3%	14.3%	1.6%
2002-2007 % Change	30.6%	31.4%	30.3%	10.4%	13.0%	10.4%	10.1%	9.1%	10.5%
2007-2009 % Change	1.0%	4.3%	-0.5%	2.7%	9.6%	2.6%	-2.8%	0.1%	-4.2%



## Area and County Developments

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### PANHANDLE

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone counties

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#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- North Idaho College's Small Business Development Center recently earned high marks from the Small Business Administration, which selected it as one of the top 10 regional offices in the nation for 2009. The college's small business center, headquartered in Post Falls, covers the five Panhandle counties.

In 2009, the college's Small Business Development Center helped save 109 jobs, create 144 new jobs and contribute \$9.7 million in increased revenue through its business coaching and training services to small businesses in the region. Demand for the center's services increased 25 percent during the year, serving 330 clients. A total of 75 percent of those clients were existing businesses and 25 percent were startups seeking assistance.

With one full-time and four part-time staff, NIC's small business center is among the smallest regional offices in the nation. A group of volunteer business coaches — all executives from large businesses or successful business owners themselves — augments the center's offerings.

- The Idaho Housing and Finance Association has awarded \$3.5 million in federal economic stimulus money to five low-income housing projects in the Panhandle. The projects that received assistance through the program include three Post Falls area developments: the 50-unit Tullamore Commons multifamily apartment project, which was awarded \$1.1 million; the planned Tullamore Senior Apartments, which was awarded \$590,000; and the Silver Creek Apartments, being developed by Community Development Inc., of Caldwell, Idaho, which was awarded \$750,000. The association was also awarded \$1 million in tax-credit assistance to the Canyonside Apartments in Wallace and \$100,000 in such funds to the Ridgeview Apartments in St. Maries. Additionally, pending approval by the Idaho Housing and Finance Association, Pacific West Communities is hoping to partner with the city of Coeur d'Alene to bring a 60-unit housing project on Howard Street for low- to moderate-income seniors.
- Boundary and Bonner counties may be closer to getting a \$43 million telecommunications grant, including improved broadband and high-speed Internet in both counties. The grant would cover 80 percent of the \$54 million infrastructure cost, providing the opportunity to solicit new businesses and create jobs for heavy equipment operators and laborers to build towers.
- Idaho's five northern counties banded together to cooperatively market the area as a travel and convention destination at the North Idaho Tourism Summit in late January. Vicki Isakson, Assistant Manager of the Coeur d'Alene Idaho Labor office is project manager for the Workforce Innovations Now federal grant, a \$250,000 award to develop a regional strategic plan that will define how to diversify the region's economy so it is less de-

pendent on natural resources. Expanding tourism in the region is part of the initiative. Roger Brooks, founder of Destination, Development International, was the keynote speaker discussing the tourism potential of Idaho communities. He stressed to the 250 attendees to “Sell the experience, not the place. It is specific, not generic.”

- The Coeur d’Alene Area Chamber of Commerce held its first ECO-nomics Expo in January. The expo focused on “going green” as an economic development tool. The chamber’s Natural Resource Committee is leading the project that is working to change the culture and tradition of various sectors of the community toward using green practices. Director of Communications for the Nature Conservancy of Idaho, Matt Miller, discussed opportunities to benefit wildlife, community and business using examples from the conservancy’s work with ranchers in Colombia faced with deteriorating habitat and intrusion of development. The chamber has created a tailored Sustainable and Green Business Best Management Practices handbook for both the tourism and retail sectors and subsectors with emphasis on the local business community.

## BENEWAH COUNTY

- The city of Tensed was awarded an interest-free \$500,000 drinking water loan issued by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, a savings of \$665,000 to the city over the life of the 30-year loan. Projects will include well pump upgrades, treatment enhancements for iron and manganese removal, chlorination, well house construction, a new generator, reservoir improvements, and distribution and flushing improvements. The improvements will bring Tensed into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Systems.
- Due to the rising cost of coverage, Potlatch Corporation cut medical and life insurance benefits, affecting 40 percent of current employees and retirees.
- Christina Crawford was appointed the new Benewah County Commissioner late last year. Crawford is the owner/operator of Seven Springs Country Inn near Tensed and has served in an elected position on the Benewah County Soil and Water Conservation Board, Treasurer of the Research Conservation and Development Group for the Panhandle Health Department and an original member of the Tensed Area Business Association.
- A new \$11.3 million K-6 school will be built in Plummer to replace Lakeside Elementary in Worley. Completion is expected in 2012.
- In December, the Save our School Advocate group’s school district annexation request was denied. The group wanted to annex the Kootenai County portion of the Plummer-Worley School District into the Coeur d’Alene district. The Coeur d’Alene School District made its decision based on the cost of maintaining the school in Worley for a limited number of students and the issues with busing some students as far as 30 miles a day. Kootenai County residents within the Plummer-Worley district would have seen school property taxes increase from six cents to \$1.10 per \$1,000 of taxable property.
- The Coeur d’Alene Tribe is making major improvements for the park at the trailhead of the 73-mile Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes. The tribe’s plans include playground equipment, picnic tables, a large covered area for community events and a veterans’ memorial. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe is seeking a \$19,500 grant from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation’s Recreation Trails Program. The veterans’ memorial has already been

funded and is expected to be completed in May or early June. The design will include two 8-foot high granite columns with an interpretation of the Steptoe Battle and a life-size statue of a tribal warrior riding a horse. Also, there will be several features including the names of over 100 Coeur d'Alene tribal members who have fought and died in battles and wars.

## **BONNER COUNTY**

- The Bonner County Consortium for a Regional Communiversity has been exploring expanded learning opportunities in the county. Using federal Workforce Investment Act dollars, the founder of the Featherbone Communiversity in Gainesville, Ga., was invited to a meeting in Sandpoint where he described the success of their program and how to bring the community's own vision to fruition. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion between the audience and representatives from North Idaho College, University of Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, Lake Pend Oreille School District, the Idaho Department of Labor, Bonner County Economic Development Corporation and Sandpoint's Mayor Gretchen Heller. Business leaders, educators and government officials hope a 77-acre parcel on Boyer Avenue will be the project site.
- Super 1 Foods broke ground in December on a 54,000-square-foot store in Sandpoint, celebrating the grocery chain's 11th store in the region. The store site is the property formerly occupied by the LP sawmill. This project, developed by Renova Partners, is expected to coincide with the installation of the city's first roundabout intersection at Boyer and Larch.
- The Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce is moving to the former Panhandle State Bank building downtown. The much anticipated move will help the chamber financially and bring visitors and business into the downtown area.
- Sandpoint firm GeoData provides high tech 3-D views to promote tourism for the Idaho Division of Tourism by virtually flying over the state, checking out attractions, lodging and scenery along the route, creating an online visual world. With only a \$3.5 million annual budget to promote tourism, this 3-D virtual touring program helps the Idaho Tourism Division market and boost the state's \$3 billion tourism industry.

## **BOUNDARY COUNTY**

- A new product for log trucks could mean jobs for Boundary County. A local Bonners Ferry company, Stockdale Steel and Northwest Industrial Manufacturing, has purchased a patent to manufacture Safe-T-Bunks, which are hands-free stake extensions that allow more logs to be loaded on trucks. If warranted, the manufacturer could employ up to 15 to 20 welders and assembly line workers, earning from \$9 to \$25 per hour. In addition, the state has agreed to offer 15 percent discounts on insurance for trucks equipped with Safe-T-Bunks. The manufacturer is hoping to expand into the national market.

## **KOOTENAI COUNTY**

- A new interchange on I-90 could spur business interest in the area. Future improvements include the Beck Road and Greensferry Road interchanges. Construction on the privately funded \$25 million Beck Road interchange project should start in 2010. The developer will receive reimbursement via the STAR – sales tax anticipation revenue – legislation that was passed three years ago. Construction of the proposed \$22 million Greensferry Road interchange project isn't anticipated to start until 2013 or 2014; however, preliminary engineering is in process. Each project is anticipated

to generate roughly 110-170 jobs. Businesses moving to the area in anticipation of the projects include Wal-Mart, which is under construction; Lowes, with construction set to start in spring; Red Robin restaurant and a Travel Center.

- Commercial real estate may be down, but demand for medical complexes is up in Post Falls. Several specialty hospitals, medical complexes and senior care facilities have opened in recent years, particularly on the north side of I-90. This “medical corridor” has become an anomaly in a depressed real estate market.
- The Spokane, Wash., chapter of Counselors to America’s Small Business is offering its Starting a Business Workshop free to all veterans. For more information, go to [www.scorespokane.org](http://www.scorespokane.org).
- The Coeur d’Alene Chamber of Commerce has a new president. In January, Todd Christensen replaced former president Jonathan Coe, who took a new position as president of the Santa Rosa, Calif., Chamber of Commerce. Christensen’s background includes economic development, the chamber and private enterprise.
- Post Falls School District purchased 45 acres on the west side of McGuire Road and north of Prairie Avenue that will eventually be the site of a second high school. The money for the purchase was included in the 2006 bond levy that also funded West Ridge Elementary – an eight-classroom addition at the current Post Falls High School – and a new transportation facility. It’s projected that the district may need a second high school in another five to seven years. There would be minimal hiring of new employees, as roughly one-third to one-half of the faculty will follow the students to the new school. However, positions such as janitorial services and maintenance would be needed.

#### *SHOSHONE COUNTY*

- U.S. Silver reports record production of silver and lead in 2009. The Galena Mine produced 650,841 ounces of silver, 2,462,707 pounds of lead and 254,955 pounds of copper last year – the best results since 2006. The mine increased its production of silver by 40.9 percent, lead by 54.2 percent and copper by 23 percent from 2008 to 2009.
- True Value returns to Pinehurst as a new addition to Barney’s Harvest Foods. The one-stop shop has expanded and renovated to accommodate the 6,000-square-foot store. Two full-time department heads are employed from the other True Value location. Customer count has been up since the store renovations were completed.
- Higher metals prices and better markets for raising capital give hope for 2010 to mining executives in northern Idaho. With silver prices nearly doubling since last year, mining corporations such as Hecla expect to produce roughly 89 percent more silver than last year – more than the 26 percent increase from 2008 to 2009 – mainly due to additional production from the recently purchased Greens Creek Mine in Alaska. Hecla also is expecting to complete a feasibility study within the next couple of months that could result in an additional shaft being constructed at the Lucky Friday Mine near Mullan, which could be a five-year project. New employment will be minimal although contractors will be hired to work in small teams for each area of expertise. Construction of the extra shaft is expected to produce 25 percent more silver than the current 3 million ounces being produced at Lucky Friday. The decision won’t be made to go ahead with the project until the company’s annual meeting in May.

Hecla reported a total of 10.9 million ounces for all entities in 2009. The company began 2009 with a fair amount of debt, but eventually repaid \$38.3 million and managed to generate cash in excess of \$100 million by year's end. The Lucky Friday Mine employs 250 people and has an additional \$3 million in exploration funding.

Millions of dollars will go toward correcting more than a century of mining pollution in the Coeur d'Alene Basin under the terms of an environmental damage settlement with Asarco, a North American mining conglomerate. The bankruptcy settlement, the largest for natural resource restoration in U.S. history, awards approximately \$79.4 million to partially restore natural resources in the basin, more often referred to as Silver Valley. In addition, \$28.9 million will be held by the Successor Coeur d'Alene Custodial and Work Trust to be used to perform work selected by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of its comprehensive remedy at the site.

- Sterling Mining Co., which controls the lease for the Sunshine Mine, filed for bankruptcy in March, less than two years after reopening the mine. Nearly 200 miners are now unemployed and scrambling for other work in Shoshone County. Some were forced to relocate to Nevada to find jobs. The bankrupt company is scheduled to auction off the historic mine June 4, expecting to raise at least \$12.5 million through the sale, enough to repay secured creditors, but leaving only about \$500,000 for dozens of vendors owed at least \$6 million. Sterling's secured creditors include Minco Silver — \$6.3 million for loans; the federal government and Coeur d'Alene Tribe — \$382,000 in royalty payments from the mine; Sunshine Precious Metals — \$80,000 in back rent for the Sunshine Mine and Shoshone County — \$70,000 for unpaid property taxes.

#### **OPENINGS**

- Old West Industrial Cleaning Systems opened for business in Bonner County offering new pressure washers, wash water recycling systems, car wash products and repair services.
- Jane Hoover, a family nurse practitioner opened her own practice, Pend Oreille Health Care, in Sandpoint. The business offers routine care, acute care, chronic disease management, minor procedures and physical exams for women, children and men.
- George Education/Training Services opened Dec. 11 in Coeur d'Alene. The business is focused on helping people build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as instruction on computer technology and wellness coaching.
- Joe Roope, owner of Castaway Fly Fishing Shop in Coeur d'Alene, and a small group of Northwest investors have created a new company, Nordic Fly Fishers USA, LLC. It is the exclusive U.S. distributor for Loop Tackle Design AB of Sweden's line of fishing equipment. Roope hopes to bring the packaging and shipping warehouse from Dallas, N. C. to Coeur d'Alene, creating one full-time position immediately.
- Kingston will be the new home of The North Idaho Motorcycle Museum at the Kwik Stop Exxon and Tor's Tavern. The opening is set for May 2010. Museum Director Cory Howland has acquired the eclectic collection the last eight years and continues looking for motorcycle-related donations.

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# NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

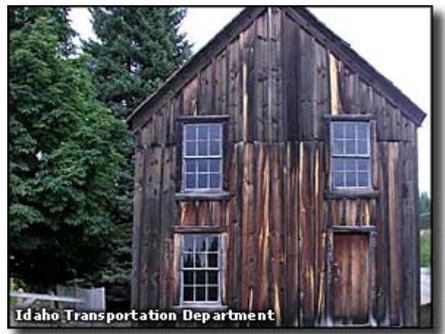
Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce counties

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## COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

### CLEARWATER COUNTY

- Clearwater County lost 50 of its 120 wood product manufacturing jobs in the last three years. Three years ago, Tri-Pro Forest in Konkolville employed 60 people working five days a week. Now it employs 20 people who work three days a week. Empire Lumber Co. in Weippe still employs 40 workers, the same as it did before a fire in November 2008, but it's doing so by running two shifts on equipment that processes small logs. Mill operators are waiting until April to decide if they will rebuild the large log side of the operation. Both mills are hoping to see some improvement this year.
- Clearwater County residents were happy to learn that Dworshak State Park will be open this summer after the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board re-examined its earlier decision to close the park. Clearwater County and the state will cooperate together to keep the park open this summer. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built and owns Dworshak Dam. The park generates about \$286,000 in user fees, but costs the state about \$436,000 to operate. Clearwater County commissioners estimate it provides about \$2.5 million in economic benefits, and they put a lot of effort into keeping the park open.
- The city of Pierce will celebrate its sesquicentennial this year — its 150th birthday. Pierce is where early pioneers discovered gold in Idaho for the first time. In 1860, a party of gold seekers, headed by Captain E. D. Pierce, was led by Jane, a daughter of the Nez Perce Chief Timothy, through mountains to Canal Creek, where a member of the party spied golden grains in the creek bed. The resulting gold rush brought as many as 6,000 people to Pierce in the next couple of years, before a large strike elsewhere drew people away. In 1861, Pierce became the first established town in Idaho. From 1860 to 1867, historians estimate that \$3.5 million dollars — about \$83 million in today's dollars — worth of placer gold was mined in the Pierce area. The Pierce courthouse, which was built in 1862, was Idaho's first government building and it still stands today. In the 1890s, hundreds of people moved into the area to log its large stand of white pine. The logging industry is still a large part of the local economy.



Pierce County Courthouse. *Photo: Idaho Transportation Department*

A scenic road, the Gold Rush Historic Byway, commemorates Pierce's early days. The 42.5 mile byway starts at the junctions of U.S. Highway 12 and State Highway 11 at Greer, which was a ferry station where the eager gold prospectors crossed the Clearwater River. The highway climbs 2,500 feet with spectacular views of the river's valley and ample opportunities to see whitetail deer, bald eagles and other wildlife. After the top of the Greer grade, the road passes through rolling fields of grains and grasses in the Fraser area backed by forested foothills. Then it travels to Weippe, where the Nez Perce Indians met and fed the starving Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805. After leaving the Weippe Prairie, the scenery becomes more for-

ested as it enters the Pierce district. A few miles later, the byway crosses French Mountain Road, which provides access to the Clearwater National Forest.

Pierce, located within the Clearwater National Forest, is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, offering big game hunting, fishing, hiking, ATV trails, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and camping.

Every August, Pierce celebrates “1860 Days” to recognize its contribution to the start of the Idaho Gold Rush. This year’s 1860 Days, Aug. 1-2, will provide a special opportunity to celebrate 150 years of history. A series of other special events are scheduled throughout the year to highlight Pierce’s role in the opening of the West.

- Joint School District No. 171 may lose \$137,000 in state funding this year, depending on the Idaho Legislature. The district most likely will close Orofino Junior High School and students in grades seven through 12 would transfer to Orofino High School. Shrinking enrollment, access to extracurricular activities at the high school and a reduced cost for personnel factored into the recommendation to close the junior high, which is in need of costly repairs.

The district’s enrollment has declined since the early 1970s, when it had more than 2,800 students. Today, it has about 1,140 students. Since the upper grades have more students than the primary grades, the decline is likely to continue.

#### *IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES*

- Leadership teams from the Clearwater and Nez Perce national forests are preparing a proposal to consolidate the two entities. The ultimate decision will be made in Washington D.C. by the chief of the Forest Service. The two forests have been sharing one supervisor for the past two years. That move was made to reduce administrative costs and direct more money to forest projects. Combining the forests would create more opportunities to save money. Commissioners of Idaho and Clearwater counties are concerned it could lead to a reduction in Forest Service jobs in either Orofino or Grangeville. The Clearwater Forest is headquartered in Orofino and the Nez Perce in Grangeville. Forest Service employment in 2008 averaged 140 in Clearwater County, where it made up 5 percent of all jobs and 300 in Idaho County where it made up 7 percent.
- Budget cuts and declining enrollment will force the Cottonwood School District to close its elementary school in Cottonwood in 2011. All of the districts’ students will be housed in the remaining two buildings that house the high school and middle school starting in the fall 2011 school year. The current middle school will become an elementary school for kindergartners through sixth graders, while the high school will become a junior-senior high school. The building facing closure has fewer classrooms occupied at this time, because the student population in the elementary grades is getting smaller. The district, which has total of 460 students this year, has 43 seniors and only 20 kindergartners. Some jobs may be eliminated by the closure. Last year, the district projected a \$400,000 deficit for this school year. To make ends meet, it ran a \$150,000 levy, transferred \$125,000 from federal Craig-Wyden forest funds and cut the remaining \$125,000 in staff and services.

The Craig/Wyden funds may be only one-time money, which could go away at some time, so the district must plan future budgets without depending on these funds. Currently, the district is using the forest funds to upgrade heating systems, windows and roofs at its facilities.

- Only two in five Lewis County residents who are employed work in Lewis County. Information about where Lewis County residents work and the characteristics of its resident workers is shown in the table below.

### Characteristics of Lewis County Residents Who Work in Payroll Jobs, 2008

	# Workers	Share
<b>Where Lewis County Residents Work</b>		
Lewis County	365	40.6%
Nez Perce County	142	15.8%
Idaho County	104	11.6%
Clearwater County	43	4.8%
Ada County	38	4.2%
Asotin County	29	3.2%
Whitman County	24	2.7%
All Other Locations	153	17.1%
<b>Workers by Age</b>		
Age 30 or younger	217	24.2%
Age 31 to 54	499	55.6%
Age 55 or older	182	20.3%
<b>Workers by Earnings in Primary Jobs</b>		
\$1,250 per month or less	319	35.5%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	400	44.5%
More than \$3,333 per month	179	19.9%
<b>Industries Where the Most Lewis County Residents Work</b>		
Retail Trade	143	15.9%
Educational Services	119	13.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	98	10.9%
Manufacturing	95	10.6%
Public Administration	69	7.7%
Wholesale Trade	66	7.3%

#### LATAH COUNTY

- Genesee, a town of 878 residents just off Highway 95 south of Moscow, experienced mild flooding in early January. Heavy rains on frozen ground and snow melt from nearby mountains caused Cow Creek, which runs through the town, to flood. The water created a temporary lake of about 600 acres and overflowed roads by more than a foot in several places. To protect homes and property, volunteers stacked hundreds of sandbags along the banks. Fortunately, no significant damage was reported. The last time Genesee experienced serious flooding was in 1996.
- Wal-Mart began construction of its new supercenter store near Pullman in December. The 155,000-square-foot store is expected to open in November. To appeal to students at Washington State University and other Pullman residents, the building will include skylights and earth-friendly flooring to reduce its carbon footprint. Wal-Mart plans to keep its store in Moscow open.
- The timber industry in Idaho hit bottom in the first half of 2008, when U.S. housing starts fell to their lowest level since the Depression. There are some signs that 2010 will give the region's mills some relief from the unre-

lenting pressures of extremely low prices. By mid-February, lumber prices had risen to \$314 per 1,000 board feet from a low of \$192 in March 2009. That's still far lower than the peak price of \$474 in August 2004, but it will help the mills that have survived the housing meltdown break even. A year ago Bennett Lumber was forced to eliminate the night shift at its Princeton, Idaho, facility, causing a layoff of more than 30 of the saw-mill's 150 employees. That was the last in a series of cutbacks Bennett has made to survive the housing slump. Idaho Cedar Sales, which produces split-rail fencing and fence pickets in Troy, cut production 30 percent over the last couple of years, eliminating 10 jobs. Since this time last year, both operations have managed to keep employment steady and are hopeful that things will improve a bit this year.

- The Latah Economic Development Council hired a new executive director in January as it tries to recover from reduced revenue. In June, budget problems forced the University of Idaho to withdraw its \$30,000 contribution to the economic development organization and to ask the council to move out of the university's business incubator where it paid no rent. Then the city of Moscow and Latah County cut annual contributions from \$30,000 each to \$10,000 each. The council scrambled to keep functioning. It raised \$17,000 from private contributors, including \$10,000 from Avista Corp, and the county offered the council free office space. Given the limited resources, the new director Aimee Shipman will work part-time.

Working with Latah County and its eight incorporated cities, Shipman will develop strategies to attract companies that will provide living-wage jobs. Part of her job will involve evaluating the county's existing infrastructure for business. She'll also help Moscow's economic development team create a new industrial park on the south side of the city.

- The city of Moscow is stepping up economic development efforts. Last summer, it hired its own economic development director and is currently rezoning some property to make it easier for businesses to move to Moscow. It also is working on a light industrial park and a large mixed-use development centered on a former grain elevator in the blighted area along the railroad between downtown Moscow and the University of Idaho campus. "Moscow is moving forward with efforts to diversify our economy by identifying a light industrial park, growing professional-technical training opportunities, developing in more energy-efficient sustainable ways, mixing compatible land uses and capitalizing on applied research and other advantages associated with the proximity of UI (University of Idaho) and WSU (Washington State University) in the Palouse knowledge corridor," Mayor Nancy Chaney said.
- The University of Idaho tallied spring enrollment on the Moscow campus at 10,283, a 2 percent gain over last spring. Its statewide enrollment rose 3 percent to 11,512. Part of the credit for the enrollment gain comes from improved retention of existing students as a result of an early intervention program adopted by the university this fall. The program identifies troubled students and gets them help early in the semester. It is expected to increase the number of students who come back each semester and eventually finish their degrees. Student retention, which had hovered around 89 percent for the past several years, climbed to 93 percent this year. Applications for next fall are running 14 percent ahead of a year ago, a rate officials expect to translate into a 4 percent or 5 percent enrollment gain.

The university soon will know how much more its budget will be cut, as Idaho legislators make budget decisions in the next few weeks. Over the last two years, budget cuts have totaled \$22 million. So far, the university

has eliminated 35 degreeed programs, cut 77 positions, deferred maintenance and equipment purchases and put freezes on travel and hiring. Further cuts are likely to lead to furloughs with the highest paid employees facing up to six unpaid days off and shorter furloughs for other workers before June 30.

Addressing the Idaho Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee in January, University of Idaho President Duane Nellis said the university contributes nearly \$1 billion to the state's economy. That number, which represents about 2 percent of the total state economy, comes from an economic impact study conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. of Moscow. The study found that the university is a sound investment from many perspectives: students benefit from improved lifestyles and increased earnings; taxpayers benefit from a larger economy and lower social costs; and the state as a whole benefits from increased job and investment opportunities, higher business revenues, greater availability of public funds and an eased tax burden. The following is a recap of its findings:

- Idaho's economy receives roughly \$182.2 million in added income each year due to the UI's payroll and to its spending on supplies and services.
- Research activity at UI generated more than \$89 million in funding and constituted about 74 percent of all research funding earned by Idaho public universities.
- UI graduates enjoy an 18 percent rate of return on their educational investment; they recover all costs – including wages foregone – in less than eight years.
- Thousands of University of Idaho alumni live and work in Idaho. Their accumulated contributions to the state's economy – as employees, business owners, consumers and in other roles – amounts to approximately \$715 million. This represents the sum of higher earnings to University of alumni, the increased output of businesses and associated multiplier effects as monies ripple through the state's economy.

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

- Lewiston is watching the end of an era, as the former Twin City Foods processing plant is being razed. The plant processed peas, lima beans and other frozen vegetables from 1947 until it closed in 2004. During the processing season, which usually ran from pea harvest in June through September, the plant employed about 300 people. The rest of the year it normally employed 50 people. Western Construction & Excavation of Lewiston is dismantling the plant and other buildings on the 10-acre site. Work is expected to end in late March. The company is recycling all the materials. Concrete and asphalt will be used as filler while some of the buildings have been sold. The land located in downtown Lewiston and near the Lewiston levee has enormous potential for businesses seeking an attractive and vibrant place to operate.
- The Port of Lewiston continues to make efforts to expand its docks and provide opportunities for businesses to develop around the port. It has awarded a \$220,000 contract to Berger-Abam, a firm in Federal Way, Wash., to design an extension of the port's container dock. The project would more than double the dock's length to 270 feet, enabling the port to load or unload two vessels at once. The extension is expected to cost about \$2.7 million. In addition, the port recently acquired 24 acres in north Lewiston that belong to Twin City Foods. The deal does not include the main processing facility in downtown Lewiston. The port has no immediate plans for the land north of Down River Road across from the Nez

Perce County jail and west of the Old Spiral Highway, which is adjacent to existing port holdings. The land could potentially accommodate businesses that may want to move to or expand near the port.

- Renaissance Marine Group, a Clarkston company that makes welded aluminum boats, expects to hire about six people to weld, paint and do rigging. The company, which recently acquired Northwest Jet Boats in Pasco, Wash., is moving its production to Clarkston. Before the recession, Renaissance Marine employed up to 90 people. The recession forced it to downsize. In the second half of 2009, the company began seeing signs of life returning to the industry and hired six workers. Now, it employs slightly more than 50 people. Northwest Jet Boats made about 50 to 100 boats annually, while Renaissance produces about 300 to 500 boats a year. The acquisition will benefit Renaissance Marine Group in a number of ways — introducing new styles to its line, expanding its network of dealers and increasing its efficiencies through economies of scale.
- Lewis-Clark State College set an enrollment record for the sixth straight semester this spring, enrolling 3,915 students on its Lewiston campus — 8.7 percent more than last spring. More students mean more tuition, helping a bottom line battered by state budget cuts.

Budgetary issues are impeding the state college from even greater enrollment increases. Some programs are at capacity and can't expand without buying more equipment. Diesel technology, for example, has a waiting list through 2012.

The college found a novel way to introduce a dental hygienist program. It worked with Lane Community College in Eugene, Ore., which formally offers the dental hygienist program on the Lewiston campus. Students must pay the full cost of the program, but at least the popular course now is available.

- The Idaho Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has given a Patriot Award to Paul Robinett and Micah Cope, who own Broemeling Steel and Machine in Lewiston, to recognize their “extraordinary” support for employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. Broemeling is a fabricated structural metal manufacturer that employs about 10 people.

#### **OPENINGS**

- A relatively new Orofino resident, Katherine Sell, plans to launch a worldwide Internet shopping enterprise called the Mall of Infinity this September with a call center in Orofino.  
Sell plans to hire and train workers at a starting pay of \$12.95 per hour. and will offer paid vacations and holidays, 401k plans, life insurance and medical and dental plans.
- The tiny town of Stites is celebrating the reopening of the Silver Dollar Bar and Grill. It opened in early February after being closed for over a year. The completely refurbished grill offers flat-screen televisions for watching sports and serves a wide variety of dishes.

#### **CLOSURES**

- Der Litten Haus, a well-known tavern in downtown Clarkston, closed its doors in January following foreclosure.

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## SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

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

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### AREA DEVELOPMENTS

- Southwestern Idaho farmers may get a break this summer from limited water supply, based on recent reservoir storage levels. Based on historical data, the snowpack level in early February can determine the outlook for the summer because there typically is not much precipitation between now and April 1. The Owyhee Basin has the best snowpack at 95 percent of average. Precipitation received in January helped the snowpack in the Weiser, Boise and Payette basins. The Weiser and Boise basins are at 83 percent of average while the Payette is 73 percent of average. The good reservoir storage will help irrigators and recreationists with sufficient water despite the lower than normal snow this winter.
- As part of a budget- saving effort, the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare started closing all 48 offices across the state every other Friday through June 11 with the hope of saving the department 3.7 percent in salaries. All personnel are required to take the time off. The other option was layoffs. Exceptions to the closures are the two hospitals in Orofino and Blackfoot, where 24-hour care is necessary. In southwestern Idaho this will impact just over 1,100 workers. With the exception of the state offices in Boise, the health and welfare offices in the cities provide services like food stamps, Medicaid and child support.

### ADA COUNTY

- VSA arts of Idaho is expanding its program with a \$153,500 Medicaid grant awarded through the Idaho State Independent Living Council. VSA arts of Idaho, run by Idaho Parents Unlimited, is part of an international nonprofit organization founded 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to provide arts experiences and opportunities for people with disabilities. The grant will fund the Creative Access Center for the Arts, housing the VSA arts programs, a resource library, a gallery, a dance program, a matting and framing business, artist teaching and workshop space and parent-services staff of Idaho Parents Unlimited. The organization has one year to get the center running. Officials hope to have the first exhibit ready this fall.
- The University of Idaho plans to offer third-year law classes in Boise starting this fall. While the legislature did not appropriate money for the expansion, alumni have committed to \$400,000 towards the expansion over a period of years. The first year will be financed by \$150,000 in alumni donations and student fees. The only remaining hurdle is approval from the American Bar Association to ensure that the Boise program will not detract from the law school currently located in Moscow. Originally, the law school was going to open a full three-year branch in Boise that would focus on business and commercial law, but the State Board of Education rejected the proposal as too expensive, giving the go ahead to offer the third-year classes.
- Boise State University retained its title as Idaho's largest university with 18,520 students enrolled for spring semester, an increase of 724 students, or 4.1 percent. BSU saw a marked increase in the number of both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in academic programs over last spring, with 472 new undergraduate students -- a 3 percent increase -- and 252 new graduate students, up 11.4 percent. In addition, the univer-

sity experienced a 16.3 percent increase in the number of students taking courses online. However, the overall enrollment was down 2 percent from last spring as approximately 1,200 students transferred from BSU's College of Applied Technology to the College of Western Idaho.

- Concordia University has tentatively agreed to purchase a building in Boise where it plans to start a law school in 2011. The school anticipates up to 95 students to enroll at first and hopes to expand to about 250. The school will be located on Front Street near the county, state and local government and law firms. Cathy Silak, a former Idaho Supreme Court justice, will be the school's dean. A proposed 30,000-square-foot building behind the main building could be added for additional classrooms and offices.

#### *ADAMS COUNTY*

- The Council Rural Fire Department fire trucks finally have shelter from the weather. After several years and private and county loans, the building is partially completed and approved for use. The fire department had been draining the vehicles to keep them from freezing, necessitating longer response times so they could be filled when a call would come in.
- Adams County Commissioners adopted a formal transportation plan that outlines safety and maintenance needs and priorities for the county road and bridge system over the next 20 years. With a plan in place, the county is eligible for most state and federal road and bridge grants. The road project priorities include Landore Road near Bear, Gray's Creek Road in Indian Valley, Smokey Boulder Road near New Meadows and Cemetery Road. High priority bridges are Bear Creek Bridge at Wildhorse, Hornet Creek Bridge on Council Cuprum Road and Beaver Creek Road.
- Nearly 400 properties in Adams County and Cambridge were listed for sale in the 2009 real estate year-end summary report. The average number of days on the market for these listings was 461. There were 56 reported sales with a total sold price of approximately \$9 million during the year. Those properties averaged 170 days on the market.
- Adams County received a \$508,000 stimulus grant towards weed control and fuels reduction. Nearly 70 percent of the grant will go for wages and benefits for staff, starting with five field positions and one administrative assistant. Another \$100,000 can be used for equipment and supplies. The weed department has \$25,000 to purchase a new spray truck and all-terrain vehicle with trailer and \$74,000 for supplies such as sprayers, GPS units and herbicides and grass seeds. The fuels reduction work will be conducted under the direction of Homeland Security to reduce the threat of wildfires on a private land corridor near Brundage Mountain Resort and in the highlands above MeadowCreek Resort.

#### *CANYON COUNTY*

- Canyon County foreclosure defaults rose 70 percent in January from December 2009. In the largest one-month increase in the past three years, 365 new foreclosure starts were filed in January. That number has risen by 518 percent since January 2007. Idaho Data Providers, a company that tracks area foreclosure listings, suggests a double-dip downturn in the housing market could occur this year. "Distressed properties could be in a state of 'limbo' for a few months until the ball gets rolling on the new government programs that the U.S. Treasury Department has created," said Charlie Nate, president of Idaho Data Providers. The programs include a new Home Affordable Foreclosure Alternatives Program that will be implemented by April 5. The other is the Home Affordable Modification Program. These programs will require that all distressed properties must first be

considered for a loan modification and then evaluated for a short sale before a foreclosure can be started. In January the Treasure Valley market had 4,084 distressed listings on the market. Distressed properties include short sales, in which a lender agrees to allow the owner to sell the home for less than what is owed, and bank-owned properties that have failed to sell at auction after foreclosure. Because of the new federal regulations, the number of new short sales in the coming months will increase. In spite of this news, existing home sales were up 45 percent, from 1,469 in 2008 to 2,135 in 2009 but new construction declined 44 percent, from 661 in 2008 to 368 in 2009. The housing market is not anticipated to begin a significant recovery for another year.

- The Nampa City Council voted 3-2 to lift the ban on liquor sales in bars, restaurants and other establishments on Sundays. Canyon County commissioners had voted to allow Sunday liquor sales by the bottle at state-run and contract stores in December 2008, but the city had added the ban.
- Caldwell School District will remodel the old Van Buren and Washington Elementary building to provide additional space for at-risk students. The Canyon Springs Alternative High School will move into the Van Buren building allowing the enrollment to expand from about 100 students to 300 students next year. The new facility will also add extracurricular activities and electives not previously available to the students. These include athletics, theater, music and art. The renovated Washington building will serve about 100 at-risk ninth-graders, an option that has not been previously available. The projects will cost about \$3 million set aside from a \$30 million general purpose bond passed in 2007.
- The Canyon County Prosecutor's Nampa City Annex has gone lean and green by replacing bulky paper files with laptops in an effort to become a paperless office. The move allows the three attorneys to shuffle less paper and practice more law. The attorneys handle about 600 misdemeanor and infraction charges a month which required thumbing through thousands of pages of documents. Now all the information, background about the defendant, evidence, lab reports, police statements and audio, video and photographs is readily available. Although the transition from paper to electronics is just beginning, the attorneys feel they are providing better victim services already because communication has improved. John Bujak, the Canyon County Prosecutor would like to see paper replaced by electronics in the Caldwell courthouse and believes the infrastructure could be in place by spring.
- Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa reported a strong spring enrollment, citing a 30 percent increase over the 10-year average in transfer students, and the graduate program increased 7 percent from spring 2009. Spring 2010 enrollment was 9,601 which included 1,261 degree-seeking undergraduates, 588 graduates and 7,752 continuing education and concurrent credit students.

#### *ELMORE COUNTY*

- Elmore Medical Center's first Nursing Assistant course started in mid-February. The course is limited to 10 students, and acceptance will be on a first-come first-served basis. The course provides students with skills necessary to take the Nurse Assistant Training and Competency Evaluation exam. Successful completion of the exam allows students to seek employment as a Certified Nursing Assistant. The classes will be held on Saturdays for 10 consecutive weeks followed by 40 hours of clinical training to be completed in an additional three weeks.

- The Veterans Administration plans to open an outreach clinic in Mountain Home by March. The question is whether they will build or lease the space within a three-mile radius of the Elmore County Medical Center. Initially, the clinic will include five full-time employees. Services provided by the new clinic would include primary care, a mental health care unit and a home-based primary care unit capable of providing health care to the veterans in their home. In an effort to put care closer to the veterans' home, the Veterans Administration has established clinics in Twin Falls, Caldwell and Salmon. Mountain Home's veteran pool is fueled by retirees from the base. Currently, there are more than 7,100 retirees and their families in the Mountain Home area.
- Efforts are in high gear to convince the United States Air Force that Mountain Home Air Force Base should be the location of the nation's first operational F-35 Lightning II unit. The Air Force is conducting environmental impact analysis at the proposed sites. The issues to be examined include land use, airspace and safety, air and water quality, noise, socioeconomics, biological and cultural resources and cumulative actions. The Air Force plans to put 200 to 300 of the F-35's in service through 2017. A decision on which bases will be selected for the squadrons and how many 24-jet squadrons will go to those bases will not be made until next spring, followed by a formal Record of Decision in 2011. The Idaho Air National Guard at Gowen Field is on a separate short list to serve as a potential F-35 training squadron.

#### *GEM COUNTY*

- Gem County will receive \$500,000 in stimulus dollars over the next four years to help eradicate noxious weeds. The county will be accepting applications from landowners for noxious or invasive weed control projects. Selected properties will be treated for three to four seasons at no cost to the landowner. As part of the agreement, the landowner must agree to continue any further treatments if necessary. The project will further benefit Gem County by providing a new spray truck and UTV spray rigs for the weed department, creating five new seasonal jobs in the community through 2013 and establishing wildfire buffers to several hazard areas.
- The Shadow Butte Development Corporation is helping Emmett complete its facelift. Bids were opened for renovation on the first two blocks in late January. Work should begin in the spring and will include a new street, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, landscaping and relocating power lines underground. The group is hoping to receive a grant to help pay for similar work on East Main Street.
- Emmett businesses now have local access to St. Luke's Occupational Health Services. A partnership with the Elmore Medical Center and St. Luke's Occupational Medicine will help employers keep their employees healthy, provide drug and alcohol screenings, conduct pre-employment physicals and treat work-related injuries. The service will be co-located with the Outpatient Service Clinic at Elmore Medical Center and available three days per week with after hour, non-clinic day and weekend medical coverage provided through Elmore Medical Center's Emergency Department.

#### *OWYHEE COUNTY*

- Homedale Chamber of Commerce held its first Business After Hours event in January. The networking event was hosted by RehabAuthority. The next event will be in March and the chamber is looking for a host.

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds are being used to acquire signposts and decals that delineate boundaries in the new 517,000-acre Owyhee Initiative Wilderness as defined by the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act. The money will provide jobs for an 11-person crew to place markers along the boundaries and cherry-stemmed roads. The 3,000 boundary markers are reflective posts purchased with ARRA funds. The team, working for the Bureau of Land Management, will feed the GPS coordinates that are being used to place the posts into a database that will be used for making the official maps of the wilderness area. Once the maps are complete, they will be printed in large format and placed in kiosks at key points around the wilderness areas. The mapmaking and kiosk construction will be funded by the bureau and not stimulus money. The signage should be completed in the spring of 2010.

**VALLEY COUNTY**

- The owners of Tamarack Resort missed the making the \$250,000 annual lease payment on Jan. 4 to the Idaho Department of Lands – the first missed payment since the resort’s financial trouble began in late 2007. The payment was for 2,100 acres of state-owned property the resort had used as skiing terrain. The developers of Tamarack signed a 10-year lease for the state land in 2002, which was upgraded to a 25-year lease with an option for an additional 24 years. The land board has options; they can use an \$800,000 bond to restore the hill to its former use or find someone else to lease the area. The resort is fighting a bankruptcy case in federal court and is also in the midst of a two-year state court foreclosure action. As a result the resort ceased operating in March 2009.
- The major event of the year in McCall, the McCall Ice Carnival, concluded the first weekend in February. The McCall Winter Carnival has been a tradition for over 30 years. Besides the many snow sculptures built around town, visitors come from all over Idaho and other states to take in many activities that go on during the week-long carnival. Pictured is the opening night fireworks display.



McCall Winter Carnival Fireworks.  
Photo by Connie Cleveland.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

- The Snake River Bridge on U.S. 95 Spur in Weiser is being replaced with a wider structure. The original bridge was built in 1903, with an additional span added in 1911. Traffic signals were added in 1949. That bridge was replaced in the 1950s and is being replaced by the new structure. The new bridge will be 16 feet wider and able to carry more traffic. The project will be completed in the spring of 2010. The contractor for the project is Sletten Construction of Boise and will cost about \$10 million.
- Repairs to the U.S. 95 Interchange Overpass in Weiser are set to start in March and last about two months. The two bridges, which were built in the late 1950s, will have deck joints replaced, some concrete repaired and repairs to metal railings on both structures. The project will cost about \$241,000 and the contractor is Record Steel & Concrete Inc of Meridian.

**OPENINGS**

- When the Rolling Hills Golf Course opens in Weiser this spring, it will have a new restaurant. The Beams are moving their restaurant from downtown Weiser to the golf course and renaming it The Loft at Rolling Hills. The golf course is also under new management. The clubhouse has been over-

hauled and given a facelift. Employment opportunities will be available for three or four part-time seasonal workers. Weather permitting the course will open in March.

- Metro Express car wash opened in Nampa Feb. 1. The car wash has a 215-foot-long tunnel, giving the machines more time to clean, rinse and dry vehicles, a high-level of automation and free vacuums. As with the other Metro Express's in the valley, the Nampa location includes underground surface runoff filtration and storage tanks and a custom-design filtration system allowing more water to be reused. Financing for the \$4 million project was largely financed with a combination of TARP bonds and Canyon County development bonds. It took four years to get the project completed.
- First National Pawn, one of the largest pawn businesses in the West, opened a new store in Caldwell. The shop currently has five employees and plans to hire more in the future.
- Fat Dog Comics and Collectibles opened in Karcher Mall, carrying more than 20,000 new and collectible comic books. The shop is the official regional distributor for Marvel Comics and DC Comics apparel lines.

#### **CLOSINGS**

- Hollywood Video, a subsidiary of Movie Gallery, is back in bankruptcy proceedings, affecting the Boise store, which closed in February, and the Emmett store, which is closing some time in the next two months. The closures will affect about 12 people.
- Elmer's Restaurants Inc. has put the Boise operation up for sale. The company is offering 10 of its franchises for sale. The company owns 11 restaurants and franchises another 17. The Boise restaurant currently has about 40 employees.

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## **SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO**

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

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### **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **BLAINE COUNTY**

- Ketchum held its third annual Pond Hockey Classic at Atkinson Park in January. The skating area is divided into three hockey arenas so that six teams can play simultaneously. The winner of the two divisions received the Golden Shovel award and bragging rights for another year. Proceeds provide scholarships for kids to attend the Blaine County Recreation District's summer camp held at Atkinson Park.
- An anonymous Washington grocer purchased the former Stock Building Supply located near the industrial park intending to provide Ketchum with a value-oriented grocery store, particularly for those residents working pay-check to paycheck. Construction could start this spring but besides the grocery store, the building plans include affordable housing on the 2.5 acre lot. Zoning, permitting, design and bids are all hurdles to a quick opening.
- Students in Hailey are part of a nationwide program the school district adopted in 2008 called "No Excuses U." Starting with kindergarten, the curriculum emphasizes planning for college as an achievable goal. Classrooms adopt a university, learn its fight song and wear their chosen school's sweatshirt. As they advance in grades, field trips are scheduled to

tour nearby universities.

- Ketchum Planning & Zoning members advised the Bald Mountain Lodge developers to review the exterior facades and architectural elements of their proposed five-story hotel before they will consider approving plans. Given that it will be the tallest hotel in town and will be in a prominent location – Main Street between First and River streets – it must have more than curb appeal. The commission believes this will require a fine tuning, rather than a redesign.

#### *CAMAS COUNTY*

- The end of January marked the belated start of Soldier Mountain’s ski season after last minute construction check lists were completed for the new lodge. Scant but sufficient snow brought 200 skiers for the first day on groomed runs. Soldier is known for its cat skiing, offering untouched powder with plenty of vertical drop, reaching up to 9,500 feet.

#### *CASSIA COUNTY*

- Idaho Power has asked the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to sell a feeder line to Raft River Rural Electric Company, currently the sole user of the line. Raft River provides service to customers in Idaho, Nevada and Utah. The system includes 1.45 miles of line and 30 power poles located in Owyhee County. The sale price was stipulated at \$44,000.

#### *GOODING COUNTY*

- The Idaho Supreme Court upheld a lower court’s ruling in support of Gooding County’s regulations regarding Confined Animal Feeding Operations. The Idaho Dairymen’s Association had appealed the lower court’s decision making the argument that the county had overstepped its boundaries and “regulated dairies and feedlots out of existence.”

#### *JEROME COUNTY*

- Leasing problems have preempted the completion of the Heritage Centre, a Spanish Colonial style office building estimated to cost \$2.7 million that broke ground in the summer of 2008. St. Benedict’s hospital construction plan has been delayed, and the effects of the recession have diluted leasing prospects. However, Dragt Construction Company, well-established dairy contractors in the area, believe that when construction is complete this June, the economy will have turned around and leasing prospects will be brighter for the three-story 11,000-square-foot project in Crossroads Pointe.

#### *MINI-CASSIA AREA*

- “Band-aids, Bones and Bucks,” was a full day of health care career education for students from the Cassia and Minidoka county high schools. Students spent the day exploring occupations in a hands-on fashion. Over the last five years, the health care industry has been one of high pay and rapid growth throughout the nation, garnering attention from high school counselors whose job it is to promote career decision-making and pathways with their students. Participating organizations included both local county hospitals, the College of Southern Idaho, the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce, the Idaho Department of Labor and the school districts.
- The Minidoka Dam, built in 1906, has outlived its integrity and must be replaced to the tune of \$50 million according to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Irrigation districts in both Minidoka and Burley have voted to fund their share of the enormous project, \$14.8 million and \$7.9 million, respectively. Other partners in the project include Bonneville Power Admini-

stration, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The project is scheduled for completion in April 2013 over a period of 31 months, so irrigation season will not be negatively impacted.

### TWIN FALLS COUNTY

- Buhl Boys & Girls Club is up and running, but without a physical structure due to financial pressure from the ongoing recession. The after-school club offers program to children ages 6 to 18 and will operate out of Buhl Middle School. For a \$25 annual fee, kids get a snack, assistance with homework during Power Hour and a variety of programs ranging from art projects to physical activities to board games.
- The College of Southern Idaho unveiled its new Health Science building to rave reviews. The expansion provided room for three new programs for the 700 health science students: medical coding, surgical first assist and dental hygiene. The \$21 million building provides approximately 72,000 square feet of classrooms, labs, lecture halls, study rooms and offices. The 2007 Legislature approved funding for the project when the state coffers were flush. The community college received an award from Idaho Power for its gold certified Leadership in Environmental Energy Design building garnering \$75,000 from the Idaho-based energy corporation. CSI plans to apply the monetary award toward construction costs. The energy efficiency window pictured in the photo uses natural lighting to cut back on electrical use. It is the beginning of a new era for the college with the first building to locate on the new loop located north of the main campus.



Inside the new Health Sciences building on the College of Southern Idaho campus in Twin Falls.

- The College of Southern Idaho announced it has reached another milestone with student enrollment exceeding 8,500 for the 2010 spring semester. Enrollment includes students taking academic, technical and dual credit enrollment through the high schools. The number of full-time equivalent students rose from 3,937 last spring semester to 4,712, an increase of 19.7 percent. Colleges and universities calculate their full-time equivalencies by dividing the total number of credits taken by all students by 15, the number of credits dividing part-time from full-time students. It is speculated that the economic conditions have paved the way for those without full-time jobs to fill their spare time with education and retraining. Spring semester typically has greater enrollment than the fall semester at CSI with students transferring for a variety of reasons such as financial difficulties. The college anticipates state budgetary cutbacks but the official stance is to avoid layoffs by upping student-teacher ratios, increasing enrollment through marketing and scholarship availability and as a final resort, raising fees.
- Dell has completed its third and final round of layoffs with all employees out of the building located close to the canyon rim and entrance to Twin Falls. The company relinquished the building to the Urban Renewal Agency, an arm of the City of Twin Falls, for about \$750,000 – the amount Dell had left to pay on the \$2.4 million note. The company has left behind

the infrastructure and equipment, valued at approximately half a million dollars, to assist in marketing the facility as a turn-key call center operation. The 48,000-square-foot building was insured for \$5.6 million by Dell. Ongoing issues and costs include renewing the parking agreement with nearby businesses, security and property management fees. Three companies looked at the site in 2009 with future site visits scheduled for 2010.

#### **OPENINGS**

- Anytime Fitness – 24-hour fitness club in Twin Falls.
- 5 Guys, Burger & Fries – fresh/fast food in Twin Falls – 44 employees.
- That One Place – restaurant in Buhl.
- Clover Creek Realty, Property Management and Trading Company – Gooding.
- Zions Bank – financial services in Hailey.
- Zenergy – sports clothing boutique in Ketchum.

#### **CLOSURES**

- Blockbuster, video store in Twin Falls.
- Keifer Built, horse trailer manufacturer in Gooding.

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## **SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO**

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

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### **COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **BANNOCK COUNTY**

- A new 1-million-gallon water tank on South Fifth Avenue in Pocatello should increase flow and help facilitate new development expected in the area. It will be the city's only entirely buried water tank and will have the capability to "speak" or electronically communicate with the city's other water systems, and city employees can monitor it from their offices. A federal grant financed 55 percent of the \$1.8 million project. The Southern Hills Development, now on hold, has plans to build 960 homes over 460 acres in that area.
- Idaho State University and Eastern Idaho Technical College together were awarded more than \$1.6 million in stimulus money from the U.S. Department of Labor to prepare students for jobs in renewable energy industries. ISU will use \$1.5 million to build up existing programs and to start a renewable energy technician program that would certify students for such jobs as wind turbine technicians. The university wants to offer online courses and provide labs at night and on weekends so more students can participate. EITC will use \$133,000 to develop a one-year electronics certificate program that will feed students to ISU for continued training.

#### **BINGHAM COUNTY**

- Blackfoot's Jensen Grove Park had some facelifts during 2009, outlined during Mayor Mike Virtue's state of the city address in January. Improvements include new paint, lighting and a roof for the picnic shelter, a new playground and a new shelter for Blackfoot Police Department's jet skis used to patrol the waters. The park may soon be named a state aquifer recharge location, giving upstream water rights holders the ability to divert unused portions of their rights into the lake at Jensen Grove. Tests conducted last year showed that water in the Grove is seeping into the aquifer and helping to recharge it.

## CARIBOU COUNTY

- The Dry Valley Mine near Soda Springs may soon be up and running again. The new bid for the operation of the phosphate mine was awarded to Kiewit, a construction and mining organization. Approximately 150 employees are awaiting word for rehire to the new contractor.

## OPENING

- Mountain High Freeride in Pocatello offers clinics in extreme sports such as biking, skiing and snowboarding along with proper techniques and safety awareness. They will also be putting together teams for competition.

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## EAST CENTRAL IDAHO

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

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## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY

Idaho National Laboratory's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project may end up under new management soon. The U.S. Department of Energy hopes to award the bid soon for a contract period of this spring until September 2015 worth \$500 million to \$1 billion. The current contractor, Bechtel BWXT-Idaho, will continue to manage the facility through at least March to allow a 45-day transition period between contractors. Bechtel has been managing the facility since 2005 and was the main contractor for INL between 1999 and 2005.

A team of scientists from INL is considering using graphite inside the next generation of nuclear reactors for its extreme resistance to heat. Temperatures in these reactors would be as high as 1,000 degrees Celsius, three times the heat of today's commercial nuclear reactors. Graphite also is a good heat conductor and has the ability to moderate or slow the flight of neutrons. These are all advantages for the next-generation reactors. A graphite sample was placed in INL's Advanced Test Reactor in September to put it through conditions similar to a next-generation reactor. The sample will be removed and evaluated in May 2011. The concept is not untested. Great Britain has been using similar reactors since the 1950s and the U.S. studied it but stopped in the 1980s when oil prices were reasonable and enthusiasm for nuclear power was low.

### BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- The Museum of Idaho hosted nearly 141,000 visitors last year, 22,000 more than in 2008, setting an attendance record for the Idaho Falls museum. Director Kelsey Salsbery said most museums throughout the nation saw a decline in attendance in 2009. Four exhibits that attracted visitors in 2009 included "Titanic, the Artifact Exhibition," "Lincoln: Preservation of a Nation," and two locally-generated shows "Wheels: Are We There Yet?" and "Olde Fashioned Christmas and Winter Festivals." Titanic alone drew 102,000 or 73 percent of the people. The slow economy most likely helped draw local visitors to the nonprofit museum since many people have reduced long-distance vacations. "Wolf to Woof" touting the history of dogs is the newest exhibit that opened in January and runs through Sept. 11.
- Snake River Landing in Idaho Falls was the site chosen for the proposed Idaho Falls event center. The 5,000-to-6,000 seat center, to be located on

a 25-acre lot on the west side of the 400-acre riverside development near Interstate 15 and off Pioneer Road, will be able to accommodate a new sports franchise, concerts and large trade shows or conventions. During the next six months the local advisory committee will commission architectural renderings of the center to determine costs and consider funding options. The site selection was a combined effort between the Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce and the Idaho Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau.

- A new sheriff's patrol was recently set up in Ammon consisting of four patrolmen and one sergeant. While they are still part of the Bonneville County Sheriff's Office, the Ammon Division or "patrol" was permanently assigned to the city, and two more officers will be added later in the year. Though the deputies are under the jurisdiction of the Bonneville County Sheriff's Department, the arrangement provides a closer relationship with the city of Ammon and its ability to respond faster without jurisdictional problems.
- Mayor Fuhrman of Idaho Falls is hosting a "Mayor's Business Day in Idaho Falls" event on March 8 in coordination with the Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce and the Idaho Department of Labor. The event will take place at the Idaho Falls High School. The mayor intends to address needs and concerns within the business sector and discuss surviving the current difficult economy. The event will kick off at 8 a.m. with nationally-known economist Jeff Thredgold, followed by panel discussions including Roger B. Madsen, Director of the Idaho Department of Labor, Don Dietrich, Director of the Idaho Department of Commerce and banking and business leaders. Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter has been invited to speak during lunch. In the large gym from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. the chamber will hold its annual Area Business Connections where local vendors and businesses can display their products and services. A job fair will take place in the small gym from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. for job seekers. For more information, contact Kerry Huggins of the chamber at (208) 523-1010, [khuggins@idahofallschamber.com](mailto:khuggins@idahofallschamber.com) or Windy Melgaard of the Department of Labor at (208)557-2500 ext. 3053, [windy.melgaard@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:windy.melgaard@labor.idaho.gov).
- Mountain View Hospital of Idaho Falls just unveiled its new \$2 million da Vinci SI robotic surgery system, the first one in Idaho. This robot allows surgeons to make smaller incisions and reduce patients' blood loss, lessening recovery time. The robot is under the surgeon's control at all times with a magnified view of operating areas requiring extreme precision. Previously, between 100 and 200 patients were leaving the state to have the surgeries performed with the robot. The machine will be put into use this month. The unit is used in approximately 1,000 medical facilities across the nation.

#### ***REXBURG MICROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MADISON AND FREMONT COUNTIES)***

- Winter enrollment at Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg increased 5.6 percent to 13,375 from the previous semester. That's an increase of over 57 percent from 2000 when the transition to a four-year university was announced. Married students now comprise 29 percent of the student body. The university also includes 394 international students from 58 different countries.
- Madison and Fremont counties qualified for grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Food and Shelter Program. The money helps nonprofit and local government organizations feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. Madison County will use \$11,230 towards the Senior Citizens Center, the Women's Crisis Center and among other

small groups. Fremont will use \$6,201 to help qualifying people pay rent and utilities.

- Renovations have been approved for the north bridge at Twin Bridges, located at the Archer-Lyman Highway’s crossing of the Snake River. Forsgren Associated and Jerome Bowen Construction, both of Rexburg were chosen to work on the project. A \$100,000 grant from the Idaho Local Highway Assistance Council will fund most of the work with the balance from the county’s road and bridge fund.
- Jimmy Johns and Pickett’s Bambino’s are two fast food locations that will be the first to open in the Hemming Properties office/retail development that has been in the works for several years. The roof is on and the inside is nearly finished. Each of the building’s three stories is 106,000 square feet.

**OPENINGS**

- The Madison Memorial Ear Nose and Throat Clinic in Rigby opened under the direction of Madison Memorial Hospital in December. The clinic is an expansion of the a Rexburg clinic, staffed with doctors Jay McMaster and Barry Peterson who specialize in the medical and surgical treatment of ears, nose and throat regions such as thyroid, sinus, allergy, hearing and sleep problems, skin cancer and facial plastic and reconstructive surgeries. This is a first for that part of the Upper Valley.

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**State of Idaho Data – State Economic Indicators**

	Jan 2010*	Dec 2009	Jan 2009	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE</b>					
<b>Claims Activities</b>					
Initial Claims <sup>(3)</sup>	17,804	24,667	21,277	-27.8	-16.3
Weeks Claimed <sup>(4)</sup>	164,365	148,680	175,351	10.5	-6.3
<b>Benefit Payment Activities<sup>(5)</sup></b>					
Weeks Compensated	139,552	146,179	149,390	-4.5	-6.6
Total Benefit \$ Paid	35,553,365	37,263,974	40,386,295	-4.6	-12.0
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$254.77	\$254.92	\$270.34	-0.1	-5.8
Covered Employers	49,439	49,232	51,113	0.4	-3.3
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months <sup>(4)</sup>	\$396,651,147	\$401,484,077	\$216,228,562	-1.2	83.4
<b>U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX<sup>(2)</sup></b>					
	<b>Jan 2010</b>	<b>Dec 2009</b>	<b>Jan 2009</b>	<b>% Change Month</b>	<b>% Change Year</b>
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	212.6	211.7	205.7	0.4%	3.2%
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	216.7	216.0	211.1	0.3%	2.6%

(1) Preliminary estimate. (2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — CPI Index is released the 14th of each month. (3) Includes all entitlements/programs on intrastate and interstate agent, new and additional claims. (4) Includes all entitlements/programs, intrastate and interstate agent. (5) Includes all entitlements/programs, total liable activities.

# Glossary of Labor Market Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Glossary of Labor Market Terms (cont.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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