

Idaho Employment

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

IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER, GOVERNOR

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ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR

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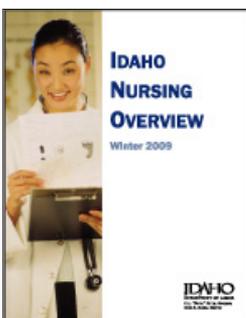
NURSING STUDY ANALYZES SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Idaho's aging population is intensifying the pressure on the health care delivery system, raising concerns about an adequate number of medical professionals to meet this ever-growing demand.

Just since the 2000 census, the Census Bureau estimates the number of Idahoans 55 and older rose over 31 percent while the population overall was up less than 18 percent, and in the next eight years – through 2016 – Idaho's population 55 and over will increase another 30 percent while the general population rises just 12 percent.

That makes health care the state's fastest growing and highest paying industry through 2016. But making sure Idaho can meet this growing demand requires an adequate corps of health care professionals.

In its 2009 Statistical Abstract, the Census Bureau estimated that Idaho had the fewest doctors per capita of any state and the fourth fewest nurses per capita. The debate has been joined over how Idaho can attract more doctors, focusing on the costly enterprise of operating a medical school. But in recent years, policy makers have reached consensus on expanding the state's capacity to train nurses – a crucial link in the health care system.



The full report and an executive summary are on the Department of Labor Web site at http://labor.idaho.gov/publications/Nursing_Full_Report.pdf.

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Unlike Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico, where the per capita nurse ratio is lower than Idaho's, Idaho's population is dispersed. That requires a larger number of health care professionals to meet public needs than in states where the population is heavily concentrated in a few areas.

An analysis by the Idaho Department of Labor found that the state's current investments in nurse education facilities and programs will help fill vacant nursing positions and meet a projected demand for nurses over the next eight years. But there will continue to be a shortage of nurse educators and practitioners with post-graduate or advanced practice certificates.

Idaho had 11,200 registered and 2,700 licensed practical nurses with active licenses in 2008. The Labor Department report found that the state will need over 7,400 more nurses to fill chronic vacancies, meet the demands of growth and replace retirees and others who leave the profession. Nearly 70 percent of the increased demand — 5,100 — will be for registered nurses, a rate higher than the one nationally. Idaho's health care system will need another 1,600 licensed practical nurses and over 700 nurses with advanced degrees or advanced practice certificates.

There is no lack of interest in pursuing nursing as a career. Over 2,000 people sought admittance to Idaho nursing programs for the 2007-2008 school year and over 900 were turned away because the schools lacked the capacity to teach them. Boise State University alone turned away more than 300, and Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg turned away over 250 more. The College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls deferred enrollment for more than 100 students for up to a year.

Based on existing investments, the number of nursing graduates will increase an average of 5.9 percent a year, producing 9,400 trained nurses by 2013. Only about 65 percent are expected to work as Idaho nurses, however. Some will leave the state and others will take up different careers.

The more than 6,100 graduates who join Idaho's nursing corps over the next five years, however, are expected to be sufficient to meet the demand for those skills. The shortage of licensed practical nurses has already disappeared, and the report expects the forecasted supply and demand for registered nurses to be in balance by 2012.

The importance of maintaining a steady flow of new entrants into nursing is underscored by the aging of the existing corps. The analysis found that one in four registered nurses and one in three licensed practical nurses and nurses with post-graduate training are 55 or older. About 60 percent of all nurses with active licenses are 45 or older.

But a lack of post-graduate educational programs, aggravated by limited faculty and inadequate sites for clinical rotations, means the shortage of nurses with master's degrees, doctorates or advanced

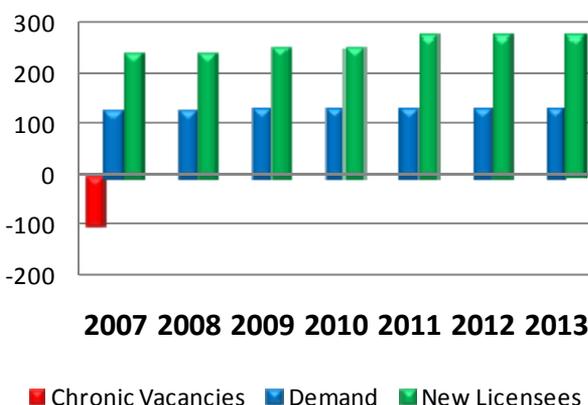
practice certificates will continue to grow. The educational limitations are aggravated by comparatively low pay on university campuses.

Idaho currently lacks doctoral programs to prepare advanced faculty and has only limited capacity to offer master's-level programs. Idaho State University is proposing an eight-seat doctoral program, and masters' programs at both ISU and Boise State University are limited.

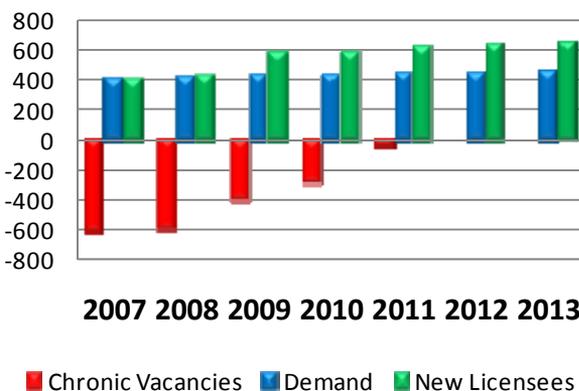
In 2007, Idaho nursing schools had 166 full-time and 72 part-time or adjunct faculty members, and on average the schools drew fewer than two applicants for every faculty opening. More than half the instructors are over 50, and half of them plan to retire in the next five years. Just 10 percent of all faculty are under age 40. A complicating factor is only one in five faculty members has a doctorate while one in four is teaching with only a bachelor's degree.

In 2007, a registered nurse with a bachelor's degree averaged \$59,000 a year, nearly twice the average annual wage in Idaho, while a nursing program educator averaged less than \$49,000, according to the department's Occupational Wage Survey.

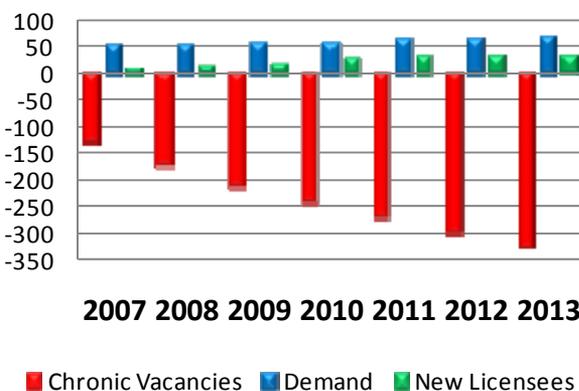
Licensed Practical Nurses Supply and Demand



Registered Nurses Supply and Demand



Post-Graduate Nurses Supply and Demand



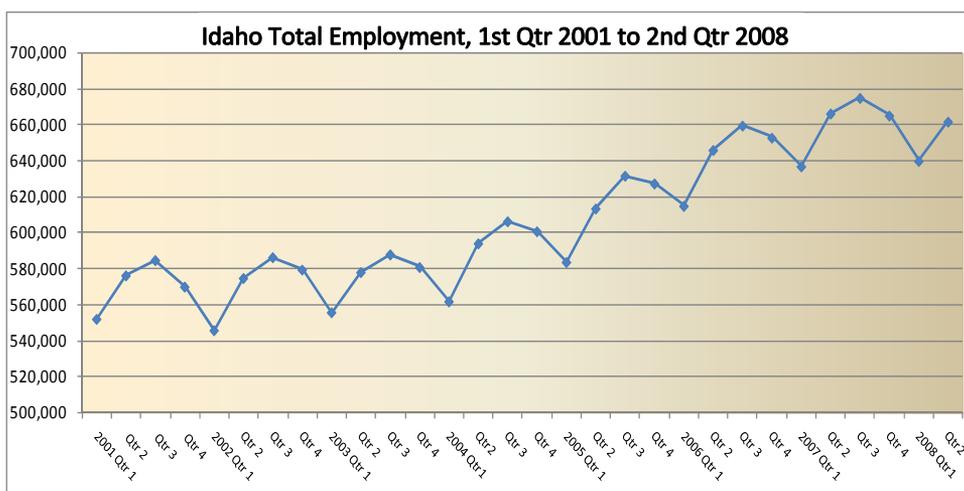
The biggest discrepancy between faculty and private sector salaries involves nurses with Advanced Practice Professional Nursing certificates. These are the nurses needed to teach the post-graduate curricula. As educators they earn only 57 percent of what they could earn in health care. Nurse educators with master's degrees find their situation nearly as bad – 65 percent of what they could make in health care practice. Nurses with bachelor's degrees who stay in the classroom earn 79 percent of their health care practice counterparts. Nurses with doctorates are the only exception because on average, they make the same in the classroom and in health care settings.

The full report is on the Department of Labor Web site at http://labor.idaho.gov/publications/Nursing_Full_Report.pdf.

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2ND QUARTER 2008 EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES EXAMINED, COMPARED

Employment increased to 661,900 from the first to the second quarter in 2008. But at just 21,800 jobs, or 3.4 percent, it was the smallest increase since 2003 when the Idaho economy was hit by mass closings and layoffs in the manufacturing sector. Compared to the second quarter in 2007, job growth was off 4,400, nearly 0.7 percent. The last time year-over-year second quarter job growth was lower was in 2002 when new jobs fell 0.25 percent below the year-earlier mark. The seasonal decline in the first quarter from the fourth quarter 2007 was also the sharpest since 2003, showing 24,400 jobs lost. During the first half of 2008 Idaho's economy performed worse than in early 2000s recessionary period.



Average private employment for the April-June quarter was up by 7,600 jobs, or 1.4 percent, from the previous quarter but down by 9,200 jobs, or 1.6 percent, from spring quarter 2007. There was an increase in employment across the board, but they failed to match the first-to-second-quarter increases of over 29,000 the previous four years. The government sector, including educational services, averaged 116,066 jobs in the second quarter, up 3,600 or 3.2 percent. That is an average second quarter increase for the government sector.

Retail trade posted its lowest second quarter job gain since before the 2001 recession. The sector averaged 83,100 jobs, only 1,000 more than in the first quarter. Retailers increased jobs by 1,900 between the first and second quar-

Figure 1. Public Administration Employment by Quarter, 4th Qtr 2006 to 2nd Qtr 2008

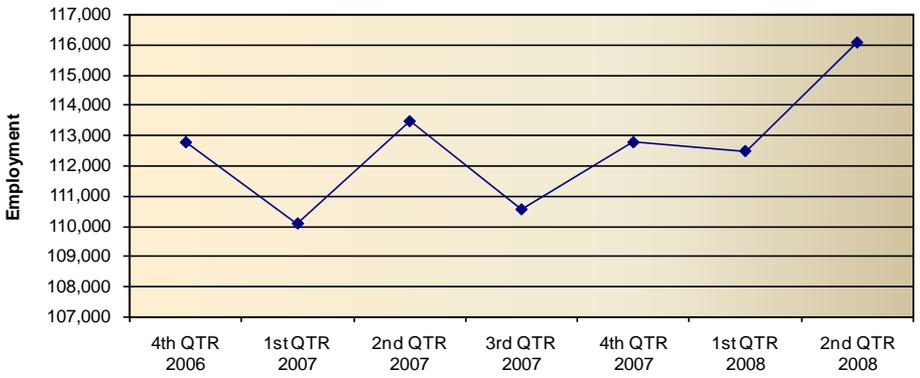
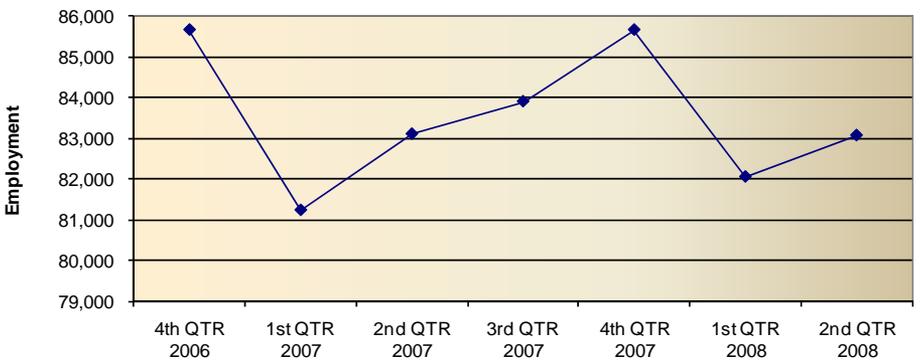


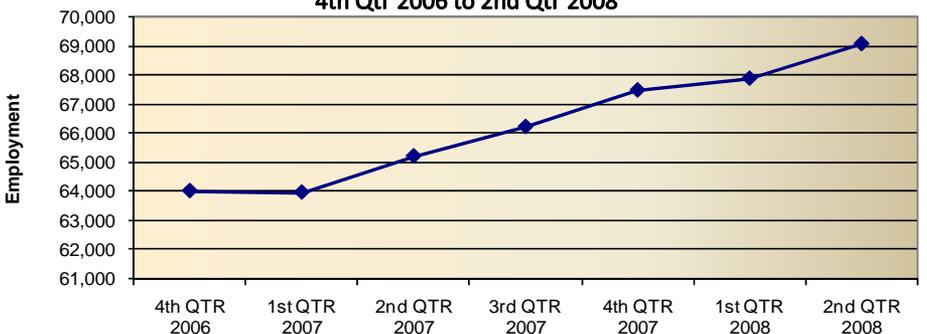
Figure 2. Retail Trade Employment by Quarter, 4th Qtr 2006 to 2nd Qtr 2008



ters in 2001. In addition, total retail jobs were essentially the same as in the second quarter 2007. That was fractionally better than in 2001.

Health care remained the strongest performer in the state economy. Despite the recession, the sector added 1,200 jobs between the first and second quarters and 3,900 from the second quarter 2007. That was the largest year-to-year job gain of any sector. Home health care services added 260 jobs while another 240 were added to the payrolls of physicians' offices. Nursing and residential care facilities were the only areas that have lost jobs, mainly in community care facilities for the elderly.

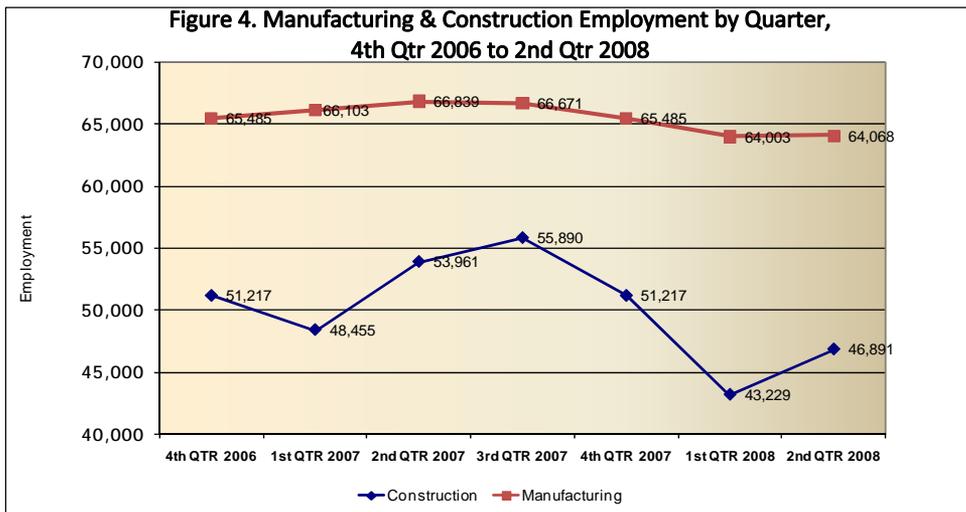
Figure 3. Health Care & Social Assistance Employment by Quarter, 4th Qtr 2006 to 2nd Qtr 2008



There were 64,100 jobs in manufacturing during the second quarter, a fractional increase from the previous quarter and a year-over-year loss of 2,800, all in durable goods. Fruits and vegetable processing posted the largest quarterly job gain in nondurable manufacturing at just under 200 from the first quarter,

offsetting a similar loss in durable manufacturing. But durable goods, primarily computer products, dropped over 3,700 jobs from the second quarter 2007.

Construction jobs posted a seasonal increase of 3,700 moving from winter to spring, but that was the smallest second quarter increase in recent history. And year-over-year, construction lost a record 7,100 jobs.



Finance and insurance reduced 100 jobs from the first quarter, which also showed a job loss from the fourth quarter 2007. Year-over-year, the sector lost 300 jobs.

The ripple effect from the recession showed up in professional and business services. While job losses from the first quarter totaled 400, the sector was only 200 jobs below the second quarter of 2007.

Idaho's average weekly wage for all industries was \$636 during the second quarter. The lowest wages were reported in accommodations and food services at \$238 and leisure activities at \$302. Company management recorded the highest wage at \$1,450 a week, followed by utilities at \$1,061 and mining at \$1,060. (See average weekly wages by industry for the quarter on page 7.)

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BOISE SENIOR WINS NATIONAL INVESTMENT ESSAY CONTEST

Boise senior Dylan Jones, 18, will be taking a trip to New York City as part of his award for placing first in a national investment essay contest.

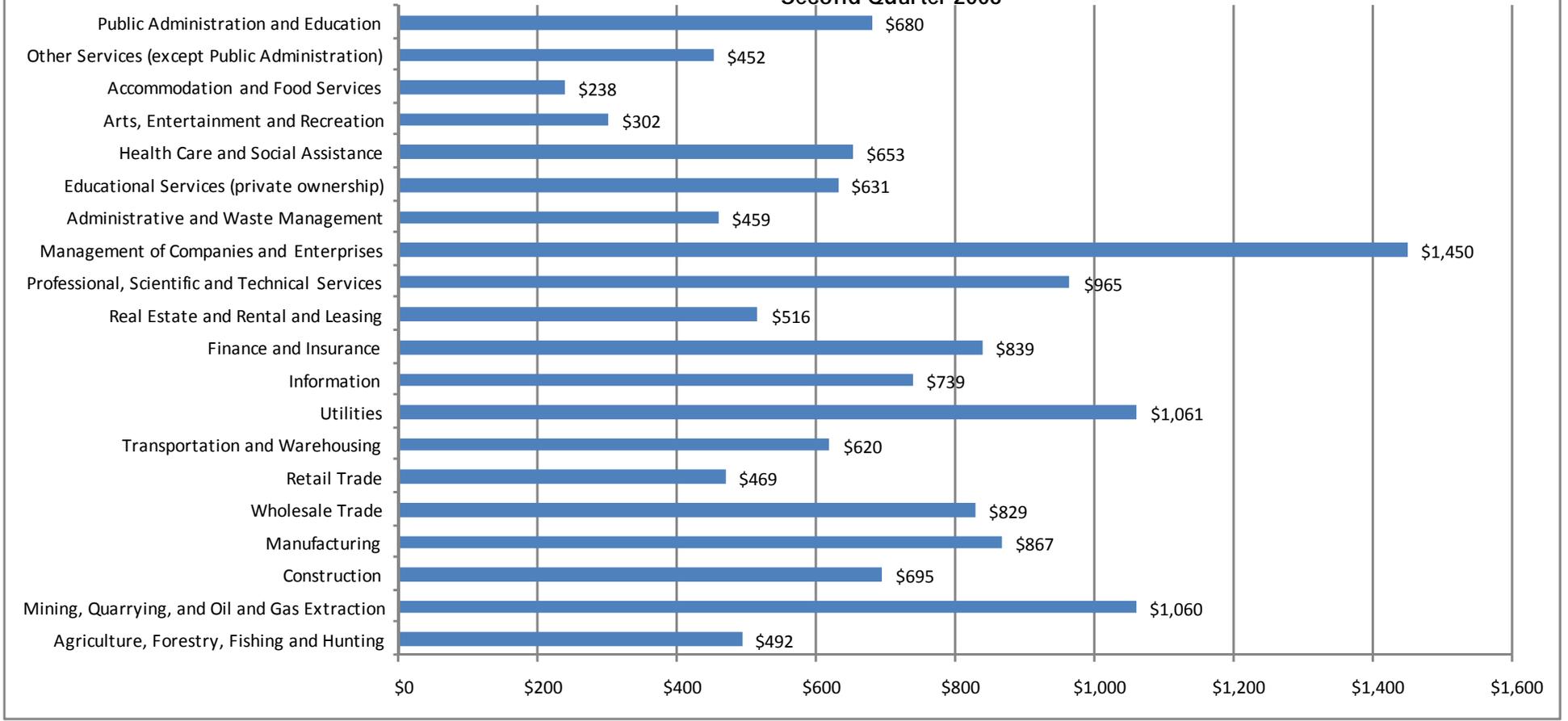
Jones, of Bishop Kelly High School, was one of 7,000 Idaho students competing among 740,000 nationwide last semester in an investment simulation called the Stock Market Game. Many of those students wrote essays on a hypothetical situation: how their parents should invest a \$100,000 inheritance from a long-lost aunt.

In addition to the New York trip, Jones has won a laptop and his entire school was treated to a pizza party after his award was announced. His economics teacher, Marta Watson, will also receive a laptop computer and trip to New York City.

Kunal Madan, John Liposchak and Meredith Metsker - a team from Watson's class - also won a plaque for placing third in the state by growing \$100,000 in investment funds to about \$111,000.

The Idaho Council on Economic Education at Boise State University provides these and other programs as part of its mission to increase economic and financial literacy statewide. The Idaho Department of Finance and Wells Fargo Bank were co-sponsors of last semester's competitions. Teachers are encouraged to offer students the opportunity to participate in both of these programs in classrooms ranging from fourth grade through high school.

Figure 5. Idaho Weekly Average Wage by Industry
Second Quarter 2008





Area and County Developments

PANHANDLE

Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone counties

REGIONAL AND COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

- Washington state's minimum wage rose to \$8.55 an hour from \$8.07 on Jan. 1, maintaining Washington as the highest minimum wage state in the nation. Oregon follows with a minimum wage of \$8.40. Washington's minimum wage is \$2 an hour higher than Idaho's, which is tied to the federal minimum wage. The federal and Idaho minimum wages will rise to \$7.25 on July 22. No further raises are slated. The Washington minimum wage rises every Jan. 1 based on increases in the consumer price index. In recent years, the high level of the Washington minimum wage has put upward pressure on wages in the Coeur d'Alene-Post Falls and Priest River-Oldtown areas along the Idaho-Washington border. But with unemployment rates reaching above 7 percent in Kootenai, Bonner and Spokane counties, the upward wage pressure has abated.
- Idaho Forest Group workers in the Panhandle are proud of their role in the inauguration. High-quality fir and larch milled by Riley Creek was used to make the platform on which Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. Using more than 10,000 board feet of Riley Creek lumber, the platform held about 1,600 people, including the president-elect, Supreme Court justices and members of the Senate and House. Photographs, a slideshow and video of the platform's construction show stacks of lumber draped with Riley Creek's emblem on its white-and-blue bagging. It's not known whether the lumber came from Moyie Springs, Laclede or Chilco. It was milled before the company merged with Bennett Forest Industries last summer to become Idaho Forest Group.

BENEWAH COUNTY

- Workers at the Potlatch complex in St. Maries have been cut to three days a week. The change started in late January and affected both the lumber mill and plywood mill at the county's largest private employer. The three-day workweek will end as soon as the lumber and plywood markets show signs of improvement.
- WGI Heavy Minerals shut down its Emerald Creek Garnet mine near Fernwood in early January. Record snowfall in December and recent lower grades of garnet were cited in closing the mining operation until April. If weather conditions allow, the mine will continue reclamation work, but all other workers except essential personnel will be laid off. About 40 people work at the mine, which is the U.S.'s largest producer of industrial garnets used for filtration, abrasives and sandblasting.
- Floods threatened parts of Benewah, Shoshone and Kootenai counties in early January when heavy rains began melting the record snows that December heaped on the area. Benewah County was declared a disaster so it could hire North Idaho Maritime to break up ice jams on the St. Joe River that threatened to back up water and flood low lying areas that included the town of Calder and parts of St. Maries.
- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe will launch a radio station in the next three years. The Federal Communications Commission granted approval for an FM station to broadcast from Heyburn State Park as far north as Post Falls and

south into St. Maries. KWIS FM 88.3 will be the first radio station owned by a tribe in Idaho. Nationwide, only 33 of the 562 federally recognized tribes operate radio stations. The station will feature Native American content and provide public safety information.

- After a brush with bankruptcy three years ago, Benewah Community Hospital posted a \$1.1 million profit in 2008 and soon will pay off a large chunk of debt it incurred 14 years ago. After trimming some services, starting to bill internally and increasing patients, the hospital moved into the black in 2007, the first profitable year in six. By the end of 2008, the hospital had paid off the debt on its surgery area, which it renovated in 2003. Now, the hospital is considering how best to serve the community while remaining solvent.

One way to generate revenue is to add needed services. Benewah County Hospital soon will add a pain management clinic. With so many farmers, loggers and sawmill workers living in the area, it has a high number of people suffering from chronic back pain and other industrial injuries. Its aging population also struggles with pain from arthritis and degenerative disorders. Currently, county residents have to commute to Coeur d'Alene or Spokane for treatment. Treatment will include x-ray guided epidural injections and other pain management techniques done on an outpatient basis.

BONNER COUNTY

- Ken and Lisa Larson, who own Pedro's Pride Fashions in Sandpoint, recently opened Pedro's North Idaho Chocolate. The new venture in the Cedar Street Bridge Market sells a wide array of fruits and nuts, chocolates, hard candy and stuffed animals made from genuine Alpaca wool.

BOUNDARY COUNTY

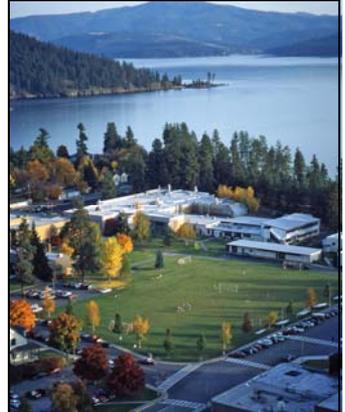
- The growth of North Idaho College's Bonners Ferry Center testifies to the local interest in education. When the college opened the satellite campus in 2006, it offered six classes, and there was virtually no technology. Today, there is a computer lab, an interactive video classroom and a full schedule of nearly 20 different classes. Classes average 12 students each. The Kootenai Tribe was instrumental in getting the center established and provided much of the funding for the technology enhancements.
- Boundary County's second bed and breakfast recently opened in a log home on 32 acres in the foothills of the Cabinet Mountains. It offers visitors easy access to snowmobiling and cross-country skiing in the winter and white water rafting and horseback trail riding in the summer along with dozens of wildlife and recreation areas. Mary Cook's Little Bear Bed & Breakfast offers four guest rooms and serves gourmet breakfasts.
- The extremely low level of housing construction forced Truss Tek to lay off 10 workers in December. Truss Tek makes engineered roof and floor trusses north of Bonners Ferry. Boundary County's wood product manufacturers employed 330 people two years ago. Payrolls now total 185.

KOOTENAI COUNTY

- ALK Abello Source Materials Inc. will move into the Riverbend Industrial Park in Post Falls this spring. When the plant is completed, it will be the world's largest allergen material source. A subsidiary of Denmark-based ALK Abello, the company cultivates, collects and processes the allergens needed to develop vaccines and allergy medications manufactured by the parent company. Almost 50 workers from Spokane's former Biopol Laboratories would begin moving in phases to the Post Falls location as early as April. Currently the company is operating out of three leased spaces in Spokane. ALK Abello will raise dust mites on site as well as process the aller-

gens from cat and dog hair. The company also maintains a 650-acre orchard in Plummer where 14 to 15 species of pollen-producing trees are cultivated, and it produces Timothy, a grass that is a common allergen. Allergens that can't be cultivated locally will be collected worldwide from arboreta, fields and ornamental trees.

- Spring semester enrollment at North Idaho College rose to a record 4,860, up 10.2 percent from 4,408 in the spring of 2008. Enrollment was up in all categories. The number of high school students dual enrolled — earning high school and college credits concurrently — showed the greatest growth, jumping 14.6 percent from 444 last spring to 509.
- Facing holdbacks caused by state government shortfalls, North Idaho College is in the midst of trimming costs and implementing zero-based budgeting. Capital equipment purchases or maintenance projects are going to be delayed or canceled. The school receives about \$11.5 million a year in state funds, \$11.7 million in local property taxes and \$9 million in student tuition and fees. The other funding sources moderated the impact of state budget cuts. The 4 percent holdback was, in effect, a 1.28 percent reduction in North Idaho's instructional programs. Next year's proposed 7 percent budget cut will effectively reduce the college's total funds 2.25 percent.
- Idaho Veneer laid off 32 employees at its plant in Post Falls in January, the largest layoff in the 55-year history of the family-owned company. The company, which sells veneer to window, door and furniture manufacturers in the U.S. and abroad, had managed to keep its employment up as most other wood product manufacturers shed jobs. The layoff is expected to last at least a month.
- The U.S. recession is slowing progress at the Riverstone mixed-use development in Coeur d'Alene, which has been one of the brightest spots in the region's construction sector. Plans to build a Hapa Fish Co. restaurant have been put on hold although a Spokane-based developer has obtained a permit for the proposed \$1.4 million building.
- The troubled economy forced the owner of Peak Health and Wellness fitness centers to postpone building an 88,000-square-foot club at Riverstone that was to replace its existing facility on Ironwood Drive near Kootenai Health. The club, originally slated for completion this summer, will be adjacent to the Centennial Trail on the west side of Riverstone Development.
- The Village at Riverstone lost one of its retail anchors when Barnes & Noble Inc. announced it would not open a 28,000-square-foot bookstore this spring on the village's Main Street. Riverstone's developers have filed suit against Barnes & Noble, claiming it failed to live up to an agreement to occupy the space. In a letter dated Nov. 17, 2008, the company terminated the lease, claiming some conditions had not been met by the developer. But, according to the lawsuit, Barnes & Noble said the real reason is the national economy and poor sales.
- The 36-foot boat a Post Falls company built for former Denver Broncos quarterback John Elway graced the cover of January's Powerboat magazine. A six-page spread details the making of the boat and the history of Stan-



Aerial view of North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene. Photo by North Idaho College Relations.

Craft, the 75-year-old company that built Elway's boat. StanCraft currently builds between seven and 10 custom-designed boats a year.

- In November, Coldwell Banker Schneidmiller Realty merged its Post Falls office into its Coeur d'Alene office and laid off its part-time employees. GMAC Real Estate Northwest, a realty firm that has served northern Idaho since 1984, closed in January, putting about 60 people out of work. It was a subsidiary of GMAC Home Services. Century 21 Beutler & Associates announced in January the consolidation of its Post Falls office with its office in Coeur d'Alene.
- MacKenzie River Pizza recently opened in the old America's Cheesecake Cafe in Coeur d'Alene. The restaurant serves pizzas, pastas, salads and sandwiches and contains a full bar. It can seat 200 people inside and 50 on the patio. It hired 73 people.
- KC's Breakfast Club opened in Post Falls last month. Owned by Ken and Carolyn Jackson, the restaurant is open from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and employs 10 people.
- Teriyaki Tiki, a take-out restaurant serving Hawaiian barbecue dishes, opened in late November in Coeur d'Alene.
- Scott Kennedy recently opened Scott's Garage, a new auto shop in Rathdrum.

SHOSHONE COUNTY

- Dave Smith Motors, headquartered in Kellogg, was the world's largest Dodge dealer in 2008 for the seventh year in a row, selling over 600 new and used vehicles every month. It also was the Northwest's largest GM dealer for the 11th consecutive year. It employs nearly 300 people in Kellogg.
- A fire on Jan. 5 destroyed much of the Whiteman Lumber Co. mill near Cataldo. The dry kiln and planer were undamaged. Owner Brad Corkill vowed to restore the sawmill as quickly as possible. It's been in business since 1929, making it Idaho's longest continuously-running mill. The mill originally supplied timber to frame Silver Valley mines. As mining declined, the business diversified into supplying high-grade materials for homes and commercial buildings. By the end of January, most of the clean-up was done and seven of the mill's 11 workers had returned to work. Corkill hopes to complete construction of the new mill by April.
- Pressed by creditors, Sterling Mining laid off 11 more employees at the Sunshine Mine near Kellogg in late January. Sterling restored the mine to ore production at the beginning of 2008, after the mine had been closed for seven years. Financial troubles forced it to lay off most of the 180 miners in September. Now, only 19 people continue to work at the Sunshine. They are maintaining the ventilation system to ensure the ongoing care and safety of mine equipment. Underground operations have ceased. Employment in Shoshone County mines peaked at 789 in August and now is hovering just above 500 — the same level as in April 2007. It remains above the mining industry's all-time low of 350 four years ago.
- U.S. Silver Corp. cut pay 10 percent for all its employees including 199 at the Galena mine and other Silver Valley locations. The pay cut will be reviewed in 90 days, at which point it could be lifted if silver prices start rising again or the general climate for mining improves.

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NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO

Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce counties

REGIONAL AND COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

- The North Central Idaho Travel Association is producing a series of five videos to promote tourism. Each six-minute video highlights a different area — the Camas Prairie, Salmon River-Hells Canyon, Lewis Clark Valley, the Clearwater Region and the Palouse. When the videos are completed they will be featured on the association's Web site at www.northcentralidaho.info.
- Washington state's minimum wage rose to \$8.55 an hour from \$8.07 on Jan. 1 to remain the highest in the nation. Oregon is second at \$8.40. Washington's minimum wage is \$2 an hour higher than Idaho's, which is tied to the federal minimum wage. The federal and Idaho minimum wages will rise to \$7.25 on July 22. No further raises are slated. The Washington minimum wage is increased every January in response to increases in the consumer price index. The higher minimum wage across the border has put upward pressure on wages in Idaho. But this year with unemployment rates having doubled, there is less upward pressure on wages. Amid the recession, the large increase in the Washington minimum wage is making it difficult for some small employers, especially restaurants.

CLEARWATER COUNTY

- The Idaho Office of Rural Health recently gave Clearwater Valley Hospital and Clinics a \$25,000 grant to create a certified nursing assistant and psychiatric technician training program in partnership with Clearwater County Emergency Medical Service, State Hospital North, Region 2 Professional/Technical Academy, Joint School District 171 and Lewis-Clark State College Workforce Training program. Training will be available to high school students in Clearwater County and to adults in Clearwater and neighboring Lewis, Idaho and Nez Perce counties. Activities during the grant year include establishing a joint training facility, developing and offering training for certified nursing assistants and psychiatric technicians and encouraging high school students to explore health care careers. Because of its location near State Hospital North and the state prison in Orofino, Clearwater Valley Hospital often provides medical care to patients with special psychiatric needs. The program will provide certified nursing assistants more training on psychiatric patients. The Clearwater County Emergency Medical Services training room will be used as a skills lab for these classes. Skilled nurses from both hospitals will serve as instructors and advisers. Adults who are certified nursing assistants will be encouraged to take the psychiatric technician class. The Region 2 Professional/Technical Academy and Lewis-Clark State College Workforce Training program will help train the instructors and the students. Grant funds will also be used to establish Clearwater Valley Hospital as a clinical site for students. The program will last beyond the funding cycle so it will continue to provide opportunities for training locally and ensure local health care facilities a more highly trained work force.
- Clearwater County's business-friendly environment is nurturing light manufacturers such as Nightforce Optics. Located two miles outside of Orofino on U.S. Highway 12, Nightforce makes high-quality rifle scopes for hunters, police and the military. Three years ago, it employed seven people. Today, the payroll is nearly 50. Its growing reputation for quality has provided something of a shield from the recession. On its Web site, Nightforce says, "Every single scope we sell is thoroughly inspected and tested by hand at our Idaho headquarters. Each is checked at 70 different points and must pass a battery of tests that would, frankly, destroy a lesser-quality scope."

- “Rooster” and Tamela McReynolds, who recently moved from eastern Oregon to Pierce, opened a deli on Main Street in Pierce on New Year’s Day. The Roost offers homemade breads and soups.
- Optometrist Rick Lundgren and his wife Holly, who grew up in Orofino, own Family Eye Care in Orofino. Their on-going commitment to the area is signified by the new building they completed in 2008.
- In 2008, Cindy Koerling and her daughter April expanded their First Stop Java espresso stand in Weippe, adding 625 square feet of indoor space where people can gather to visit and enjoy their coffee and some food, including goods baked by Cindy’s daughter Clorinda Gilmore of Orofino.
- The Orofino office of the Idaho Department of Labor can help businesses take some of the stress out of hiring new employees with pre-employment skills assessments. Employers can choose among 700 different tests designed to assess job applicants’ skills for various professional, office, call center, legal, health care, industrial, financial and technical fields. The software assessments provide full program simulations. This requires the person taking the assessment to complete an actual software task in a fully functional software environment. Results of the tests are available immediately and can be sent to employers by email or printed for them to pick up. The scores are detailed enough for evaluation of what skills applicants have. The scores also help job applicants assess their skills.

IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES

- At its facility in the ghost town of Mount Idaho, four miles southeast of Grangeville, Idaho Sewing for Sports makes custom padding for ski resorts, baseball stadiums, Olympic sports centers, pole vault pits, tracks and more. It also makes tubes for tubing hills all over the United States. Increasingly, it ships to Canada, Japan and New Zealand. Between July and December, the business ships about two-thirds of its product out to ski resorts for their openings. It employs about 14 people year-round. Idaho Sewing for Sports recently was featured in a National Business Series documentary, which can be viewed on YouTube link at www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvXJLCtL9v4.
- Civic Ventures, a national think tank on boomers, has designated Elk City’s Joyce Dearstyne as one of its 2008 Purpose Prize Fellows. The prize goes to people over 60 who are taking on society’s biggest challenges. Dearstyne, executive director of Framing Our Community, was named for her work in rural economic development, forest and watershed restoration and wildfire/home defensible space education.
- A \$250,000 grant from M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust will allow Grangeville’s Syringa Hospital and Clinics to renovate a building it purchased two years ago. When renovation is completed in April, the building will be occupied by Syringa Physical Therapy, Syringa Therapy Services and the Women’s Health Center, doubling the current spaces they occupy. The added space will allow the hospital to introduce chronic pain management and cranial-sacral therapies and expand pediatric and occupational therapy services, which have been limited by space constraints.
- At the beginning of the year, Cottonwood welcomed the opening of the Corner Cupboard, owned by Becky Madden and her daughter Melissa Madden, in the former Cottonwood Kitchen and Bath. The store features antiques and second-hand clothing, shoes, knick-knacks and furniture. Down the street in the former Idaho Stove building, John and Denise Mager opened Mager Bargains. The store sells new and used toys, kitchenware, furniture, appliances, tools and home décor. It also offers dog grooming services.

LATAH COUNTY

- The University of Idaho is losing \$8.8 million in state funding in 2010, or about 7 percent of its 2009 appropriation. The university plans to close or consolidate 41 of its over 200 degree programs if the state Board of Education approves. The programs to be dropped or consolidated serve about 200 students. The university also is considering eliminating up to 80 faculty and staff positions, about 5 percent of its overall work force. Many are already vacant as a result of a hiring freeze implemented last year. The university also plans to eliminate \$538,000 in travel expenses, which is about half its travel budget.
- Terrible conditions in the lumber market forced layoffs at Latah County's largest manufacturer in late January. Bennett Lumber Products Inc. eliminated the night shift at its Princeton sawmill, idling 32 of its 150 employees. In late 2007, mill workers were forced to take two weeks off without pay after the company temporarily shut down the mill in the face of poor market conditions. Last February, the Princeton mill went from two 10-hour shifts a day five days a week to two 8-hour shifts a day four days a week. At the same time, Bennett laid off 45 percent of its staff at the Port of Wilma near Clarkston. After eliminating the night shift, the Princeton mill restored the day shift to 10 hours a day five days a week.
- After five years of falling student enrollments, the University of Idaho posted its second straight gain. After a 1.3 percent increase last fall, spring enrollment rose 1 percent to 11,192 — 10,048 on the Moscow campus. The university has stepped up recruiting and is making a special effort to convince students finishing two-year degrees at community colleges to continue their education at Idaho. The university also has been trying to retain more students, especially those on the verge of failing. The Division of Student Affairs has increased its work with students on academic probation to get them back on track with help like time management and career counseling. The upward enrollment trend appears likely to continue. Undergraduate applications for next fall are up 12 percent over a year ago.
- The city of Moscow and the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency recently hired Travis Cary as the city's first economic development specialist and the first executive director for the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency. Cary possesses a master's degree in regional planning with an emphasis in economic development and has held various positions in local government.
- Winger's plans to reopen its restaurant by June 1 after a fire severely damaged the building at the Palouse Mall in Moscow.
- The U.S. Census Bureau recently revised its 2007 population estimate for the city of Moscow. It increased the estimate from 23,223 to 24,329.

NEZ PERCE AND ASOTIN COUNTIES

- The ATK ammunition plant in Lewiston permanently laid off 75 workers in January, reducing the payroll to 850. ATK began ramping up production to reduce a backlog of orders in 2006. It added about 200 workers over the last two years. Now, the backlog has been cleared.
- Lewis-Clark State College's enrollment of 3,601 students this spring shattered last spring's record by 7.6 percent. The school provides high value education at a relatively low cost. It has the lowest tuition of any four-year public college or university in the state. It's enjoyed steady enrollment growth for more than seven years.

Students seeking professional and technical degrees during the economic slowdown increased enrollment in professional-technical programs from 760 last spring to 955 this spring. These gains were partly driven by the

recession, which is making many adults re-assess their job skills. Other evidence of economic uncertainty includes increases in the number of former Lewis-Clark students returning to complete their degrees and part-time students.

- Lewis-Clark State College is struggling with the restricted state budget for the 2010 school year. It's facing a \$1.5 million or 9.9 percent decrease in state funding, at a time when the new Nursing and Health Sciences Building, which opens this fall, requires \$487,000 a year just to use it. The school is exploring many possibilities including tuition and fee increases, larger class sizes, cutting faculty or staff positions, reducing athletic scholarships and eliminating low-demand programs.
- With the U.S. housing slump now spreading to other countries, demand for lumber is extremely limited. Clearwater Paper cut its 250 hourly employees at its Lewiston sawmill from 40 to 30 hours a week on Jan. 12. Employees are able to maintain health insurance, vacation time and other benefits even though they are working less than full time. Clearwater Paper, which spun off from Potlatch in November, is the largest private employer in north central Idaho. It employs 1,700 people in Lewiston. The other 1,450 workers in Lewiston make tissue, pulp and paperboard, which have not been affected by the recession.
- Marv Eveland, Pete Broyles and their wives recently opened Riverport Brewing Co. near the Port of Clarkston. Its tasting room near the Quality Inn is open from noon to 8 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Its products include Blond Moment beer, River Rat Red Ale, Old Man River Oatmeal Stout and Seven Devils India Pale Ale. Restaurants serving Riverport brews include Tomato Brothers, Roosters, Hogan's Pub, Fazzari's Pizza and the Bistro, all in Clarkston.
- A fire that severely damaged the Winger's restaurant in Moscow required considerable reconstruction, leading to a postponement of the opening of a Winger's in Lewiston. Before the fire, owner Wes Hassard expected to open the Lewiston restaurant in March. Now it is scheduled to open toward the end of the year.

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SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

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

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Southwestern Idaho's economy has slowed dramatically. Over the last several years homebuilding and commercial construction were driving a rapid — and unsustainable — expansion. Home and property values skyrocketed. Bidding wars developed over virtually every new property that hit the market. Construction was bringing in major money from outside the area, led mostly by new residents and investors from California and Washington. At the same time, the manufacturing industry was performing solidly except for some of the high technology companies. Metals manufacturing was booming.

Then the rug was pulled out from under everyone. The number of people moving into Idaho slowed dramatically, leaving a gross oversupply of homes and commercial buildings. As a result, property values began to plummet, and with the accompanying banking crisis it was harder to get credit. Ada and Can-

yon counties experienced unprecedented growth and increases in property values, which are now reversing themselves and may settle lower than when the boom started.

The underlying problem is insufficient new money coming in. Manufacturing has slowed, and construction has all but dried up. Without these goods producing industries running on all cylinders, the economy will continue to struggle. Layoffs have deepened individual economic fear, and consumer spending is dwindling toward only the absolute necessities. Consumer spending drives much of southwestern Idaho's economy. With no injection of new money and consumers holding on to the cash they have, the region is stagnating. Until something happens to encourage people to start spending again, businesses will continue to be cautious if they have the wherewithal to continue operating.

Outside the metropolitan area, the financial collapse of Tamarack is taking a toll on both Valley and Adams counties. The construction of the resort completely changed the Valley County economy, sending property values through the roof and stretching the local labor force way beyond its ability to handle demand from the construction activity along with increasing tourism. But when the bottom fell out of Tamarack a year ago, things turned sour. Sales of resort homes and condos to people from throughout the nation and the world dried up, and property values plummeted to the point that in some areas it is hard for appraisers to even put a value on a piece of property. The builders of some of those resort homes are in way over their heads and taking major losses since the market has evaporated.

Adams County is feeling some of that, although not to the same extent. But with an economy reliant on logging and sawmills, Adams County has been hit hard by the bursting housing bubble. It finished 2008 with one of the highest unemployment rates in the state.

The housing crisis is also affecting small communities in Payette and Washington counties, where major employers like Woodgrain Millwork, Champion Homes and Mirage Trailers have pulled back as housing demand contracted. There are too few employers in rural Idaho for the growing number of people needing jobs. These small economies are just not diversified enough to ride out an extended downturn.

One bright spot in rural southwestern Idaho is Elmore County. Marathon Cheese has been a real boon to its economy. Despite the recession, Marathon continues hiring at a decent wage and a benefit package. In addition, Mountain Home Air Force Base is still rebuilding its housing stock and updating base infrastructure.

SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO DEVELOPMENTS

- Caldwell urban renewal officials expect proposed revenue bonds for a downtown Treasure Valley Community College campus to cost less than the potential \$8.5 million previously discussed for locating the campus at the Sky Ranch Business Center. The agency plans to hold an advisory vote, probably in May, to gauge public support for the project. Plans to seek judicial permission to issue up to \$8.5 million in bonds were made before deciding to move the site downtown and put the issue to an advisory vote. A downtown facility would be about 18,000 square feet compared to the original plans for a 65,000-square-foot building. The urban renewal-owned parcel in Sky Ranch at which officials broke ground in August would likely be used for future expansion as the college grows, he said.
- Tough times for most mean good times for some. Ask Alan Armstrong, chief auctioneer for Armstrong Auctions in Nampa. Armstrong conducts 60 to 80 auctions a year, often for homeowners and businesses that are liquidating. Winter is usually the slow season, but this year Armstrong has been getting

more calls from people leaving Idaho to find work elsewhere. He just signed deals to auction the homes and belongings of one family moving to Alaska and another to Hawaii. Both were pushed by the real estate slump. "We feel we're going to have a pretty busy spring and early summer," he said.

- Lenders led by investment bank Credit Suisse Group and the court-appointed receiver running Tamarack Resort in north central Idaho have yet to agree to a renewed cash infusion to keep the resort afloat after February. A state court tentatively approved using more than \$2 million of a \$10 million bridge loan from the Zurich-based bank to finance operations until the end of this month. Tamarack, once hailed as America's newest all-season resort and now mired in bankruptcy, has had only 27,000 skiers this year, leaving it with an operating deficit of over \$300,000. The recession and less than adequate snow is being blamed. The deficit is more than double the red ink anticipated by San Diego, Calif.-based receiver Douglas Wilson Co. By contrast, the Bogus Basin ski area near Boise had 179,138 skiers through Feb. 10, 3,000 more than last year. Tamarack is currently being run by the receiver after majority owners Jean-Pierre Boespflug and Alfredo Miguel Afif used up a \$250 million syndicated construction loan and then failed to make repayments. Credit Suisse, which is working on behalf of lien holders, says it's now owed more than \$270 million. Douglas Pahl, a Portland, Ore.-based attorney for Douglas Wilson, told the judge that the inhospitable market for resort real estate and deepening global recession have made additional financing for Tamarack difficult. Wilson's company so far has reported expenses of some \$433,000 to run Tamarack in November and December. Additionally, those people who placed deposits on condominiums to be built as part of the unfinished Village Plaza are now demanding their money back after the units weren't delivered by Dec. 31, 2008, as promised. So far, about \$6 million of \$12 million in deposits has been returned, Credit Suisse lawyers said Thursday. Resort homeowners want a speedy resolution so the way is clear for a new, long-term owner to take over. Some local appraisers are struggling to determine the value of Tamarack real estate on grounds the resort could be shuttered.
- Workers at Microsoft's Boise site will be among those affected by the software giant's elimination of 5,000 jobs. The company would not disclose an exact number of layoffs in Boise, but sources said the local impact would be less than a dozen. Microsoft came to Boise when it bought software-maker ProClarity in 2006. The company employs about 100.
- As the number of new homes built in Ada County plummeted in the last couple years, the hundreds of millions of dollars associated with that segment of the economy have started to disappear as well. A study by the National Association of Home Builders shows homebuilders, when added together, now make up the eighth largest employer in Ada County, providing about 3,000 jobs. That's down from about 9,000 jobs in 2006 when homebuilders were the second largest job source. And 2008 salaries associated with homebuilding, including the salaries earned when income from the construction industry is spent in the local economy, totaled \$267 million, compared to \$702 million in 2006.



- Ada County Development Services Director John Traylor is laying off 15 employees because of the dramatic decline in home construction. Housing permits dropped 21 percent between fiscal years 2007 and 2008, and fiscal year 2009's first quarter revenues were down \$385,000 from the previous year. Fred Tilman, chairman of the Ada County Commission, said these layoffs aren't a result of tax shortfalls since Development Services is funded by development application fees. In March 2008 the department cut four positions, eliminated all travel and training expenses, reduced its fleet of vehicles to cut fuel and maintenance costs and streamlined the development application process to cut down staff review time. Additionally, the county recorder's office will cut two full-time clerk positions in response to the fewer real estate transactions being recorded.
- According to Metrostudy's latest report, during the fourth quarter of 2008, there were 277 new-home starts in southwestern Idaho, 46 percent fewer than in the fourth quarter of 2007. For the year, new homes totaled 2,046, a 34 percent decline from 2007. New-home closings also slowed to 645 in the fourth quarter of 2008, a 20 percent decline from a year earlier. For the year there were 3,007 closings, down 25 percent from 2007. "The bright side of this scenario is the fact that closings have outpaced starts for the past seven quarters, which has allowed builders to reduce their standing inventory," said Eric Allen, director of the Utah/Idaho region for Metrostudy, based in Houston. Housing inventory — units under construction, finished but vacant and model homes — continued to fall in the fourth quarter. The decline has been most noticeable in homes under construction. Homes are selling so inventories are declining, which bodes well for the southwestern Idaho market, Allen said. In December, there were 1,578 detached homes in inventory, a 6.3-month supply. Most were vacant. The share of unsold homes that are vacant is 74 percent, more than twice what the industry considers a "balanced" level. The region has a 16-month supply of homes priced above \$500,000, and those homes represent 14 percent of total inventory, MetroStudy said. "Vacant developed lot inventories in the Treasure Valley market are worrisome, as they continue to increase," Allen said. During 2008, 3,114 lots were brought to market, and 2,046 were absorbed, he said. In December, there were 12,836 lots available, enough supply to last more than six years.
- Supervalu, the owner of Albertsons supermarkets in Idaho, is cutting 25 corporate jobs in Boise as part of a companywide reduction of 90 jobs. An additional 60 positions will not be filled, the company said. Supervalu employs about 2,000 people in Boise, including workers in Albertsons stores, a data center and the former Albertsons headquarters. The company also said it would undertake cost-cutting measures that would include layoffs and about 50 store closings, mostly of Albertsons supermarkets. None of the store closures are in Idaho.
- Hewlett-Packard has laid off as many as 30 contract workers in its Boise LaserJet Enterprise Solutions Group responsible for testing printers. "They cut everyone from engineers to basic support positions," said Kelly McClinton, a test technician who worked at HP for almost six years. He and another technician, who did not want to be identified, said they were told their work would shift to Beyondsoft, a Chinese firm that provides technical outsourcing to a number of U.S. tech giants.
- The information technology department at St. Luke's Health System is shedding 10 of its 28 positions, but hospital officials hope they can keep everyone employed at St. Luke's Hospital. Spokesman Ken Dey said 28 jobs were cut and then 18 new ones created. Current employees applying for those

new positions are being given preference. All employees will continue to be paid for at least two weeks. The hospital wants to find other open positions for the 10 employees who are not rehired. All of the lost jobs are at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Boise.

- It looks as though Boise's MotivePower won't be building locomotives for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority any time soon. After the Federal Transportation Administration nullified the bid of a Spanish competitor, MotivePower appeared to be the last man standing in the contest to win the contract worth hundreds of millions of dollars. But now the Massachusetts authority has decided to shelve the project indefinitely. "Given the current uncertainty of the MBTA's future financial condition and the near-certainty of protracted and expensive litigation, the MBTA is canceling the procurement for new locomotives and will assess the possibility of re-advertising for bids over the next several months," MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo said in a statement.
- In spite of a conservative budget drafted last fall, declining revenue has forced more cuts in Canyon County. Revenue during fiscal year 2009, which began Oct. 1, is now expected to fall \$6.6 million short of initial projections. Declines during the last quarter of 2008 were seen in just about every source including fees, taxes and revenue sharing. Stalled construction projects and business closures are the most likely cause of lost revenue, county officials said. "(Property) tax revenue has been pretty good. The big hit is in non-tax revenue," Canyon County Clerk Bill Hurst said. That revenue includes the various fees and surcharges collected by county departments, especially for construction. Business closures resulted in reduced personal property taxes. Sales tax and revenue sharing distributed by the state on a quarterly basis have also taken a hit. The county received \$561,860 in the first quarter of fiscal year 2009, down 19 percent from the previous quarter and 14 percent compared to the same quarter in 2007. The county received \$1,115,514 in revenue sharing in the first quarter of fiscal year 2009, down 16 percent from the previous quarter and 10 percent from the same quarter in 2007. The projected \$6.6 million decrease amounts to more than 8 percent of the county's \$78,894,812 budget. Commissioners have asked department heads to consider new cuts on top of those made during development of that budget. The Canyon County Sheriff's Office, for example, cut about \$750,000 last fall after department heads were asked to strip their 2009 requests to the bare essentials, Sheriff Chris Smith said. Five unfilled positions were left vacant. Smith said he is confident the situation can be resolved without layoffs, although additional unfilled positions may not be staffed.
- Two Idaho banks are among 39 nationwide that will get \$1.5 billion from the U.S. Treasury's program to inject money into banks to encourage lending. Syringa Bancorp will get \$8 million, and Idaho Bancorp will get \$6.9 million. Many Idaho banks say they have sought the funds because they are having difficulty raising money from investors or selling stock in this troubled economy. Money from the Treasury's Capital Purchase Program only goes to banks that are considered healthy. The money comes with restrictions. Banks get it by selling preferred stock to the government. They must pay dividends of 5 percent a year on the money for the first five years. The percentage increases after that. A number of Idaho banks that have received the money say they will use it to increase lending.
- A report by Boise-based Thornton Oliver Keller states commercial real estate, unlike residential real estate, is not facing an oversupply. It instead is struggling with a lesser problem: a lack of demand. The report states inven-

tory will be absorbed quickly once the economy stabilizes. It says land-buying activity should pick up through the year as land prices fall. Commercial development has declined, the report says, though not to the near halt the residential side has seen. Land sales and values decreased throughout 2008, and it is becoming difficult to estimate land values due to a scarcity of transactions.

- Two Treasure Valley communities are looking for ways to reduce their fiscal 2008-2009 budgets in the face of a worsening economy that is cutting into the amount of state shared sales tax revenues they receive every year. Even the usually sacrosanct budget line item for law enforcement is coming under scrutiny in Kuna and Eagle, who contract for police protection with the Ada County Sheriff's Office. Officials in Kuna and Eagle say the largest part of their financial worries can be attributed to shared sales tax revenues from the state that have been trending downward during the recession. As in most cities, law enforcement is the big ticket item. "That's our national defense fund," said Kuna Planner Steve Hasson. "It exceeds our total property tax revenues." In Kuna's case, however, the city recently discovered that it faced a nearly \$500,000 budget shortfall, 4 percent of the city's total budget, for fiscal year 2009. Kuna Mayor Scott Dowdy approached the sheriff's office about slashing the city's \$1.35 million contract with the department by "a minimum of 6 percent." The sheriff's office has come up with a plan to save 10 percent, or \$86,276, for the remainder of the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30. The sheriff's proposal for Kuna would eliminate one detective position. It also would mean keeping the local sheriff's office open only part-time and scrapping plans to buy a \$15,000 vehicle. The city council has cut the deficit to \$250,000 by eliminating a \$92,000 contingency fund, cancelling plans for a part-time grant writer and an impact fee study, eliminating travel, training and uniform expenses, reducing the work week by one hour for each of the city's 31 employees and cutting a recent cost-of-living raise from 5 percent to 3 percent. Still pending are elimination of \$36,000 in support for the Kuna Days street festival, the Boys & Girls Club and the Kuna Chamber of Commerce.
- Eagle, meanwhile, is in preliminary talks with the sheriff's office on what Mayor Phil Bandy called a last resort plan that would shave 5 percent from its \$1.8 million contract with the sheriff's office. "We recognize that cities are in a (money) crunch," Sheriff Gary Raney said. "And we recognize that we have to share in that burden." Also facing Eagle is an overall budget reduction, from \$16.8 million to \$10.5 million. Eagle is contending with a drop-off in property taxes, a levy rate that is the second lowest in the state, lower building permit fees and the city's decision not to take a 3 percent increase in property taxes allowable under Idaho law.
- Unlike Eagle, the city of Star does not anticipate having to alter its \$502,000 contract with the sheriff's office that places five full-time deputies on the streets, said Mayor Nathan Mitchell. Star's budget of \$2.6 million is based solely on the collection of property taxes, franchise fees and revenue sharing funds. Revenues generated by growth — such as building permit fees — are allocated to capital projects. "I could go 10 years without issuing a building permit, and we'd still be able to operate," Mitchell said. Mitchell said the city expects to offset an expected \$25,000 shortfall in state revenue sharing funds by not filling two vacant positions. "So we have not asked the sheriff's department to reduce its contract," he said. "But if economic conditions have not improved a year-and-a-half or two years from now, I think we're going to have bigger problems than just our sheriff's office contract."

- More jobs are being shed because of production slowdowns at Micron Technology. This time it is union workers who move and maintain fabrication equipment. They're not Micron employees, but they work at Micron under their employers' contracts with the computer-chip maker. "We lost 74 jobs at Micron, but we were able to put 35 of them back to work with other contractors," said Rod Clay, spokesman for Local 296 of the Plumber and Pipefitters union. Electricians and sheet metal workers represented by other unions were also cut, Clay said.
- As the economy changes, so do the needs of startup businesses. However, a new study reported that Idaho is losing ground as an entrepreneur-friendly state. The Kauffman Foundation — a non-profit foundation that promotes entrepreneurial growth — released its annual State New Economy Index, which reported that Idaho has fallen slightly behind other states in terms of promoting startup businesses. Idaho, which was ranked 20th in the nation in 2002, was given the 26th spot in 2008. The index measures work force education and training availability, efforts to attract skilled workers from other states and nations, and export promotion and foreign investments. States that perform higher in each of the 28 categories are ranked toward the top of the list. Idaho received some of the highest marks in the nation for innovations in health information technology, agriculture and issued patents — Idaho was the leader in patents issued during 2008. However, the index also reported that Idaho's greatest weaknesses were attracting highly skilled workers, manufacturing value-added products and promoting foreign investment. Officials with Idaho Department of Commerce say the state is in the process of promoting foreign investment and attracting highly skilled workers. States that held the top positions in terms of encouraging entrepreneurial growth included Massachusetts, Washington and Maryland. Mississippi and West Virginia were the lowest ranked states in the index. Southern and Plains states consistently ranked lower.
- Boise has made another national list, and it is not an honor roll. Forbes has placed the Boise metro area on its list of the country's 25 weakest housing markets, those the magazine says are furthest from recovery. The article says 2009 will be a gloomy year for second-home markets, which it says "followed Wall Street into a deep dive last year." The worst is yet to come, it says, for such late-hit markets. Moody's Economy.com Chief Economist Mark Zandi said the Boise area housing market is declining with a drop in sales of nearby ski homes. Although real estate prices across the country are expected to hit bottom late this year, Moody's predicts Boise will reach the bottom in early 2011 after a 32.2 percent drop from 2008 prices.
- A slow economy has prompted cuts to the staff of the Division of Motor Vehicles to offset dwindling revenues generated by fees collected for motor vehicle registrations and vehicle titling services. Two full-time and four part-time jobs have been eliminated. Two more full-time and two part-time jobs are not being filled until the economy rebounds and the fees once again cover the division's daily operating costs. Ada County Assessor Robert McQuade said the current revenue shortfall, between 7 percent and 15 percent, is caused by fewer people buying new cars, which means fewer vehicle registrations and fewer title changes. The shortfall is also compounded by the likelihood that more county residents are deciding not to renew registrations on recreational vehicles.
- Amalgamated Sugar Co. LLC will cut an undisclosed number of jobs at its Nampa plant because it has fewer beets to process this year. The plant, which employs about 400, will temporarily lay off some employees with hopes of bringing them back for next season's processing. Plant President

Vic Jaro was not sure just how many people would lose their jobs, but he said the plant anticipates returning to capacity operation in the fall. "It's due strictly to the size of this year's crop compared to what we usually experience," Jaro said. The company will let workers go on an incremental basis as different stages of the processing campaign end this year. Some workers could be without jobs longer than others. The sugar beet crop was smaller this season because the price of other crops was higher and therefore more attractive to growers, and windy, cold spring weather ruined 18,000 acres of beets with only some being replanted. Beet acreage last year was the lowest in Idaho since 1977.

- Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center blames patients' skyrocketing bad debt and charity care for a new round of layoffs. The hospital cut 66 people, including the staff of the unique, eight-bed Franklin House, a crisis center for people with mental illnesses. The house fell prey to state budget cuts and the state no longer can pay Saint Al's to run the home. The Saint Al's layoffs amount to under 2 percent of the more than 3,400 people who work at the hospital, one of the region's largest employers. Saint Al's laid off about 40 people in April.
- In Canyon County, Mercy Medical Center is laying off 70 of its nearly 800 workers, again because of brutal economic conditions. With each set of layoffs, hospital officials assure the public that no bedside nursing jobs are being cut, and the latest cuts are no exception. Officials at Saint Al's said they never have seen anything like the current recession. "Over the past few months, we have seen unprecedented economic changes and the dramatic effects they are having on the national health care industry over a very short period of time," interim President and CEO Janelle Reilly said. Among the factors triggering layoffs were more people out of jobs with no health insurance, declining reimbursements from health insurers including Medicaid, a 41 percent increase in charity care and a 14 percent jump in bad debt. At St. Luke's, charity care and bad debt numbers look about the same.
- Idaho retailers' holiday sales didn't suffer as much as national counterparts, an industry leader says. Some even saw increases over the previous year, according to Pam Eaton, president of the Idaho Retailers Association. And some of the state's smaller markets actually benefited from the downturn. "People who might have traveled to Salt Lake City or Oregon to shop stayed home and did their Christmas shopping locally," Eaton told Idaho legislators reviewing the state's economic outlook. Women haven't been splurging on themselves as much as in the past, though, so stores that specialize in feminine extras like lotions and bath oils struggled through the holidays, Eaton told legislators at a hearing in Boise. "But men are still buying, and stores catering to teenagers are doing well," she said. As a whole, 2008 wasn't as bad as you might think, she said. Store openings in Idaho outpaced closings. Several large national retailers who made plans to come to Idaho in 2009 and 2010 are still on track although she declined to say which ones. But she acknowledged that hard times lie ahead. "Most retailers are preparing for an 8 percent to 10 percent sales decrease in the next 18 months," she said.
- State economist Mike Ferguson recently presented Idaho lawmakers with their first detailed economic outlook of 2009, predicting four quarters of economic decline, further growth in unemployment and an overall drop in personal income. Ferguson predicted that nonfarm employment would de-



cline 2.1 percent in 2009 after a decline of 0.9 percent in 2008. Growth in 2010 would be modest before picking up in 2011. He also forecast a 0.7 percent drop in real personal income in 2009. He suggested that Idaho's employment picture could look a lot like the early 1980s when the state experienced three consecutive years of declining employment under "depression-like conditions."

- Plexus Corp. has cut 35 full-time and 100 temporary employees from its Nampa work force because of the deteriorating economy. After the layoffs, 460 full-time workers remain on the job, the company said.
- U.S. consumer bankruptcy filings rose last year, and Idaho filings jumped even higher. Nationwide, consumer filings were up nearly 33 percent in 2008 amid a recession that's expected to keep them rising. Idaho consumer bankruptcies were up nearly 41 percent to 5,149, according to the National Bankruptcy Research Center. Consumer bankruptcies increased 34 percent to 3,658 between 2006 and 2007.
- A southwestern Idaho television station has laid off six people, including its longtime operations director, because of slumping advertising from its largest sectors and changing roles in the newsroom. KBCI, a CBS affiliate, eliminated one on-air reporter, four cameramen and longtime employee Jeff Bishop, who has been the station's operations director for decades. Three master control operators were laid off in early 2008 due to automation.

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SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO

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

MAKING A CASE FOR ALTRUISM IN FACE OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

Economics is the study of human behavior and is most commonly used to track the nation's consumption habits, typically from the perspective of supply of and demand for goods and services. But the question has been raised about the effect economic downturns have on the altruism of the general population.

Altruism takes many forms and can often be misconstrued. As did many others, I joined the Peace Corps after college for the experience and not necessarily the satisfaction of helping others although that was another benefit. Many volunteers are pragmatic and understand that with limited life experience, enthusiasm and ambassadorship is their greatest contribution. This is especially true in working with community leaders, who understand their country's shortcomings far better and have been working to solve them far longer than most volunteers have lived.

Interestingly, statistics on organ donors maintained by the state Division of Motor Vehicles shows a dramatic jump in the percentage of Idaho drivers who agreed to be organ donors between 2000 and 2001. Through the late 1990s and 2000, about 39 percent of Idaho drivers a year were organ donors. Then in 2001 it jumped to 51 percent and has remained there or risen slightly since. Of course, 2001 is most remembered for the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but it also marked the nation's last recession, which ran from March to November. It is also interesting to note the difference in participation between counties. In 2008 Minidoka had the lowest participation at just under 25 percent. The highest levels of participation were in Valley County at 65.4 percent and Latah County at 64.9 percent. These are huge increases from 11 years ago when the lowest level of organ donors was 3.8 percent in Franklin County. Today that county is over 25 percent. In 1997, Minidoka was only slightly better at 6.5 per-

cent. The highest donor level in 1997 was in Custer County at 45.9 percent. There has definitely been a shift in most counties possibly linked to more media attention and education on the program. It also could reflect the kind of people who have been moving to Idaho in the past decade – people who are more philanthropic or have had experiences elsewhere that highlighted the benefit of organ donations.

Altruism comes in all forms, and some believe it is easier to give if you have a lot in the first place. If that were the case, every child and adult would be well fed and well educated. A quintessential example of helping humanity even as resources evaporate is the William and Melinda Gates Foundation, which lost 20 percent of its asset value in 2008. Still Bill Gates said the foundation will increase its giving in 2009. In his first annual letter on behalf of the foundation, which is at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/annual-letter/Pages/2009-bill-gates-annual-letter.aspx>, Gates said the wealthy have a responsibility to help those who are not. "This is especially true when the constraints on others are so great. Otherwise, we will come out of the economic downturn in a world that is even more unequal, with greater inequities in health and education, and few opportunities for people to improve their lives."

Table 1: Organ Donors by South Central Idaho Counties 2008

County	No	Yes	Total	Participation Ratio
BLAINE	1,816	2,588	4,404	58.8%
CAMAS	113	124	237	52.3%
CASSIA	2,492	2,467	4,959	49.7%
GOODING	1,559	1,180	2,739	43.1%
JEROME	2,414	1,549	3,963	39.1%
LINCOLN	519	484	1,003	48.3%
MINIDOKA	2,587	858	3,445	24.9%
TWIN FALLS	6,955	8,071	15,026	53.7%
Totals	18,455	17,321	35,776	48.4%

As the Peace Corps approaches its 50th anniversary, it has seen over 195,000 volunteers help promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of the 139 countries where they served. Applications to serve in the Peace Corps have increased 16 percent in the past year, the largest increase in the last five years and interesting to note during a recession. Currently, 7,876 Peace Corps volunteers are stationed in 76 countries, committed to 27 months of service.

Although it is not a requirement for service, the majority of volunteers have been college graduates. Currently, 94 percent have at least an undergraduate degree, and 9 percent have post-graduate degrees.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BLAINE COUNTY

- The Ketchum Community Development Corp. was awarded \$8.8 million in tax credits from the Idaho Housing and Finance Association. The credits will be sold to businesses needing tax write-offs, and the proceeds will help finance a low-income housing complex with 32 units next to the YMCA and the city-owned Park ‘n Ride lot. The “Northwood Place” complex will rent for \$430 to \$1,074, depending on the size of the units, which range from 617 to 1,234 square feet. Blaine County has the least amount of affordable housing in Idaho, meaning many workers have to commute to their jobs in the county from more affordable areas elsewhere.

- The Sun Valley-Ketchum Chamber & Visitors Bureau launched the Webb Winter Concert Series in January, which is similar to the summer live music series called “Ketch’em Alive.” The concerts run through March and are held Saturdays on a downtown street corner with food and drink available at local restaurants and fire pits to keep the crowds warm.
- The closure of the Restaurant at Elkhorn Springs opened up a new opportunity for Debbie Bacca. Bacca has organized the Elkhorn Supper Club in Ketchum, where different private chefs will be preparing multi-course fixed price dinners not found in other Idaho restaurants. The building and its kitchen were unused so Bacca said it only made sense to give the region’s best chefs a place to display their skills.
- St. Luke’s Wood River Medical Center recently expanded its labor and delivery unit from four to six suites. This allows the hospital to deliver about 330 babies annually. The St. Luke’s Wood River Foundation financed much of the project, which involved moving intensive care units to another floor.
- Gloria Steinem, celebrated feminist, founder of Ms. Magazine and creator of “Take Your Daughter to Work Day,” spoke recently at the Sun Valley Center for the Arts to a sell-out crowd of 400. Steinem signed books after her two-hour presentation that included questions from the audience.

TWIN FALLS COUNTY

- Downtown Twin Falls is getting some fresh faces. Cooper Norman Business Brokers and Advisors, a well known public accounting firm, recently expanded to a downtown office, and White Cloud Communications opened a wireless outlet, marking over 50 years of doing business in the Magic Valley.
- The College of Southern Idaho was awarded a three-year, \$2.2 million Workforce Solutions for Digital Age grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to train dental hygienists, law enforcement personnel, radiation technicians and welders and to enhance distance learning. The school partnered with Jerome Police Department, Twin Falls County Sheriff’s Department, St. Luke’s Magic Valley Regional Medical Center, Intermountain Orthopedic Clinic and the Twin Falls School District. These partners will provide another \$1.2 million in cash, facilities and personnel for the training regimen that will increase the standard of living for all participants.
- The arrangement between Twin Falls County and St. Luke’s Health System includes turning 32 apartments across from the Twin Falls hospital into housing for people moving from a prison or mental health facility back to general society. The hospital originally owned the apartments. After management fees and other expenses, the units will net about \$120 a month.
- The Xavier Charter School in Twin Falls wants to move from its leased facility to a new building on 10 acres on the city’s northwest side. The Planning and Zoning Commission has approved a special use permit for the land that was originally zoned residential. The school plans a 45,000-square-foot building for about 850 students. It eventually plans to expand to include high school.
- Buhl will be holding public meetings to determine the community’s future course. The Idaho Department of Commerce will help manage the recorded discussion of the city’s strengths and weaknesses similar in format to a town hall meeting. The Buhl Economic Council is sponsoring the meetings rather than pay a consultant to develop a strategic plan.

GOODING AND JEROME COUNTIES

- The North Valley Academy in Gooding, the state's only rural charter school, continues to be part of the Legislature's debate over education. It has been criticized because the state funding formula diverts money from local public schools to charter schools – essentially letting the money follow the students. The situation will be aggravated when the academy opens a high school this fall. Several legislators are concerned that charter school expansions may be unnecessarily duplicating programs. They want to eliminate any duplication and improve communication between charter and traditional schools.
- Jerome County commissioners have agreed to limit livestock operations to two animal units per acre, similar to the restriction adopted by Cassia County. This continues to raise the ire of producers and could negatively affect the area's chance of securing the proposed state livestock research facility.

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE

2008 was a good year for agriculture. There was enough water, and farm gate prices were historically high. Total cash receipts hit \$6.3 billion – up 11 percent from 2007. Fuel prices eroded some of the profit, and net farm income slipped 5 percent from 2007's record. Dairy accounted for 34 percent of all receipts, up from 25 percent a decade ago.

CATTLE AND CALVES

- The dairy industry in 2008 was coming off several years of stellar profits despite the higher cost of feed last year. An 8 percent increase in production offset the 3 percent slide in milk prices, which began partway through the year and put smaller dairies under significant financial pressure. Forward contracting has helped some milk producers, but the decline in consumer dairy and beef purchases has had a dramatic effect. If dairy producers decide to drastically trim their herds in an effort to change the supply and demand equation, the cattle market will feel the impact. Beef prices could drop by 70 percent should 400,000 dairy cows be culled. While milk cash receipts rose 5 percent in 2008, cattle and calves lost 2 percent as inventories rose.

POTATOES

- Higher prices and higher yields last year have some growers worried there could be added production in 2009 to the point of eroding the price improvements of the last few years. Potato sales jumped 13 percent year-over-year and continue to be the largest contributor to agricultural gross product.

SUGAR BEETS

- Problems plagued beet growers in 2008 starting with spring storms that caused second and sometimes third plantings. Then Round Up-ready seed became scarce due to all the replanting. As anticipated, acreage dropped in favor of grains that were garnering high prices, but then a very late harvest was impeded by more storms and snow. With planted acreage already down 23 percent, the storms reduced harvested acres to just 89 percent. Typically, 98.8 percent of planted acres are harvested. Processing plant layoffs have followed. There were 116,000 acres harvested in 2008 compared to 167,000 in 2007.

GRAINS

- Record prices at the start of the summer began sliding toward the end. Barley was the big cash receipts winner, gaining 62 percent from the previous

year, while wheat sales rose 55 percent to \$707 million, second only to spuds among the commodities. Once again, forward contracting was key for many grains producers.

HAY

- The demand by the dairy, beef and equestrian sectors kept prices up along with the summer’s higher fuel prices. Demand is expected to continue strong in 2009 coming off a season of \$225-a-ton dairy quality hay and \$180-a-ton average hay. Sales increased 47 percent from 2007, and hay had the third highest sales in 2008.

WATER

- The reservoirs seem to be faring well with early snow storms and cold temperatures keeping the snow pack intact. Spring weather will dictate the melt. Last year, cooler conditions in the early summer deferred water demand to later in the season and extended irrigation.

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SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO

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

ECONOMIC TRENDS

At 5.4 percent, the Pocatello metropolitan area’s unemployment in December was more than double the same month a year earlier, and the same was true for every county in southeastern Idaho. At the same time the metro area’s labor force was shrinking, down nearly 800 from November and over 900 workers smaller than in December 2007. The combination meant the area lost more than 2,100 workers in 2008. December’s 43,170 workers was the smallest for a December since 2003.

It was the second straight year that the metro labor force contracted from November to December, underscoring the length of the current recession. Generally the labor force expands between November and December because retailers increase payrolls for the holiday season, and people who have been out of the labor market see an opportunity to pick up extra cash for the holidays. But holiday hiring was off dramatically in both 2007 and 2008. Some workers may have left the area to look for work elsewhere. But with the job outlook dim nationwide, it seems more likely people have chosen to drop out of the work force to return to school, join the military or because they have become discour-

Table 1: Southeastern Idaho Unemployment, Employment Year-Over-Year

County/Area	Unemployment Rate		Total Employment		
	Dec 07 Benchmarked	Dec 08 Forecast	Dec 07 Benchmarked	Dec 08 Forecast	# Change
Bannock	2.30%	5.00%	39,276	37,321	(1,955)
Bear Lake	1.80%	4.70%	2,947	3,020	73
Bingham	2.40%	5.50%	19,733	19,406	(327)
Caribou	2.80%	6.60%	3,162	3,082	(80)
Franklin	1.50%	3.00%	6,615	6,544	(71)
Oneida	1.50%	3.50%	2,298	2,357	59
Power	4.60%	8.80%	3,715	3,535	(180)
Region	n/a	n/a	77,746	75,265	(2,481)
State of Idaho	2.70%	6.40%	736,864	710,733	(26,131)

aged about chances of finding a job and gave up trying. Enrollment is up at Idaho State University, indicating some workers in southeastern Idaho have gone back to school to improve their skills to better compete for jobs when the economy recovers.

Nonfarm jobs essentially held steady from November to December although layoffs occurring late in the month will not be reflected until the January report. Activity was mixed. Hotels and restaurants cut 90 jobs while health care added 110. Construction and manufacturing were off a percent while transportation and warehousing was up over 4 percent. Telling however, was the loss of 10 jobs in retail, which normally adds jobs during the holiday season.

For all of 2008, 2,430 jobs disappeared in the metro area, affecting nearly every sector. Construction, transportation and business services posted major losses, reflecting the stagnation these industries are suffering nationwide during the recession. Manufacturing jobs had been steady throughout the year in the Pocatello area until late November and December when modular homes manufacturers and ON Semiconductor began laying off workers. Job reductions in both sectors will probably continue for the next several months. But because of large commercial and highway projects on the drawing board, construction jobs may soon reverse their year-long slide.

WHEN WILL BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL SECTORS HIT BOTTOM?

Nationwide 2.8 million jobs disappeared in 2008, and more job losses are expected in the first quarter of 2009. Idaho followed the national trend, shedding more than 28,000 jobs in 2008, cutting across nearly every occupation. The unemployment rate has more than doubled in most areas of the country and in nearly all counties in Idaho. Most affected will be the financial, manufacturing and construction sectors. Where the economy will bottom out is still a question.

It will be some time before the effect of the new president's economic policies will be known, but there are indications from private job placement agencies that the management, business and financial sectors may have hit bottom and could be on the upswing. There appears to be increased activity by employers looking for management executives. Some are looking to replace workers who have quit or been fired, hoping the new hires will bring more efficiency and productivity to their businesses.

A popular Internet career network for jobs paying at least \$100,000 a year indicates rising demand in the management area. ExecuNet, at www.execunet.com, has polled executive recruiters every month since 2003 on needs and trends. Its December 2008 survey found 40 percent of the headhunters responding thought demand was rising for management executives. That was up from the all time low in November of 26 percent. Another job board for managers, TheLadders.com, at www.TheLadders.com, reported more than 400 employers and recruiters signed on to the site in the past three months looking for executive talent. A third executive search firm, CTPartners at www.CTParners.com, reports similar trends in executive recruitment. CTPartners says the surge reflects new opportunities created by the unprecedented difficulties in the business world. Recessionary times stimulate new thinking, and businesses are aggressively looking to hire executives who can be creative, energize employees and operate companies in a rapidly changing and dynamic environment. Companies successful in hiring such leaders will emerge poised for growth and job creation.

Nationally recruiters are reporting pockets of growth in the health care, environmental and energy sectors, and this may bode well for southeastern Idaho as alternative energy projects continue to develop, health care facilities are built and environmental oversight jobs grow in response to mining developments in the region.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS

BANNOCK COUNTY

- Motor City Auto Sales is closing as soon as its current inventory of used vehicles is liquidated. Ten people will lose their jobs. The parent company, B. A. Wackerli of Idaho Falls, said the closure will allow it to maintain good service to customers at its other locations in a challenging economic environment.
- Portneuf Medical Center's cardiovascular unit received a five-star rating from Health Grades, a leading independent health care rating organization. The center was ranked number one in Idaho for coronary interventions and was the only Idaho hospital to earn a five-star rating three years in a row. Since the unit opened, the staff has performed more than 1,000 operations. Many patients have been from outside Pocatello and that trend is expected to continue and increase.
- ON Semiconductor is expected to close one of its manufacturing units, Fab.9 in September as part of a company wide effort to cut costs and reduce inventory in order to stay competitive.
- Idaho Power is asking state regulators to approve a four-year energy sales agreement with Hoku Materials that deals with constraints on the utility's power supply and transmission. The agreement requires Hoku to "take or pay" for a certain amount of energy every month but allows for release from the commitment if Idaho Power is given enough notice. The contract also allows Hoku to reduce power during peak summer demand though 2012. Hoku is also paying the costs for Idaho Power to upgrade transmission lines and a substation to ensure delivery of power to its plant.

BEAR LAKE COUNTY

- Phase I of Bear Lake self-help housing is now complete, and applications for Phase II are being accepted. The project is coordinated by the Bear Lake Housing Coalition, Southeast Idaho Community Action Agency and various financing entities. Participants are required to meet income eligibility requirements, take a money management workshop and work 35 hours per week to build their home under the direction of professional builders.

BINGHAM COUNTY

- Fort Hall is experiencing a boom in large scale construction. The \$9 million Sage Hill Travel Center at Interstate 15 will open the end of March. The truck stop and casino is being built with Tribal Economic Development Funds. The \$16 million Tribal Justice Center is scheduled to be completed in December. It will have three courtrooms and a detention center for 80 adults and 20 juveniles. The detention center could generate extra revenue by housing state and federal prisoners. The largest project is a \$90 million resort and casino near the existing Fort Hall Casino. Tribal leaders indicate \$35 million in funding has been secured, and they are meeting with contractors and lenders this month finalizing plans to begin construction early this summer.
- Bingham County has agreed to Shoshone-Bannock tribal enforcement of zoning ordinances on the reservation and implementation of cleanup efforts. Under the agreement between the county and tribes, one of the first priorities will be the removal of abandoned buildings and trailer homes on the Fort Hall town site.
- Blackfoot Motor Co., one of the longest continually operating businesses in Blackfoot, is closing as soon as the current inventory of new and used vehicles can be liquidated. Twenty people will lose their jobs. The parent com-

pany, B. A. Wackerli of Idaho Falls, said the closure allows it to maintain good service to customers at other locations in a challenging economic environment.

- A new business specializing in catering services and take-out lunches has opened in Blackfoot. Two Loons Catering and Takeout is owned by two former employees of PBG's Restaurant. When PBG's closed, Kris Crook and Susanne Graham decided to fill a niche not being met by other eateries in the area. The business name reflects the fact that both are from Minnesota, where the loon is the state bird.

CARIBOU COUNTY

- More than 390 fishermen participated in the 19th annual fishing derby at Clear Springs Foods ponds in Soda Springs. In addition to \$5,283 being raised for local charity projects, the derby contributed to the local economy by attracting people from outside the area. Well over half the participants were from other communities, and many made purchases from Soda Springs merchants.
- The Monsanto Co., Agrium Inc. and the J.R. Simplot Co. have won a court ruling that will not require them to restore groundwater at their mines to natural conditions. The companies will be required to monitor groundwater points close to their operations for pollutants that must remain isolated from the water system outside the mining areas.
- An article in USA Today raising concern about air quality in Soda Springs prompted local residents to request additional testing by state agencies. But an Idaho Department of Environmental Quality specialist has assured them that the Soda Springs area meets all air quality standards, and there is no need for additional testing.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

- While the downturn in the economy has not changed Franklin County's desire to build a new hospital, a financial feasibility study has given increased scrutiny to bad debt and charity care concerns. In addition, an operational study has focused attention on costs associated with staffing and compliance with a new federal identity theft law.
- Air quality remains a concern in the Cache Valley. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials attribute the problem to little or no wind to disperse emissions from vehicles, farm operations and wood stove smoke.

ONEIDA COUNTY

- The Oneida County Hospital is installing a new computed tomography machine. The CT scanner has the latest in multi-slice technology, which allows physicians to quickly perform multiple diagnostic examinations.
- The third annual Elkhorn Ridge Ice Fishing Derby drew more than 150 contestants for more than \$5,200 in prize money. The winner was 14-year-old Logan Fancher from Logan, Utah. He won \$2,020 for catching a fish measuring 19 ³/₄ inches.
- Representatives for the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments met with Malad City Council members on developing an industrial park and the possibility of getting funding for a new water tank. But while it appears unlikely an industrial park area will be developed anytime soon, there is a possibility of getting a new water storage tank.

POWER COUNTY

- Indian Springs Natatorium may resume operation after being closed for nearly five years. The attempt to auction the property to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, which bid \$648,000, has been abandoned because of a lawsuit that clouded title to the property. Now the owner is indicating he may try to reopen the natatorium.

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EAST CENTRAL IDAHO

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

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Idaho Falls metropolitan area was up 2.8 percentage points in December from 12 months earlier. Jobs listings were very limited. Most applicants were going directly to businesses regardless of whether job listings were posted. There were nearly 2,600 fewer people in the labor force than in December 2007 because people have either given up looking for work or families consider it uneconomical for a spouse to also work due to child care and housecleaning costs. A number are going to school instead. In terms of jobs, the metro area lost over 4,400 during 2008. Construction dropped 1,200 jobs while restaurants and hotels cut more than 700. More than 500 jobs each disappeared in business services and wholesale trade.

The Idaho Department of Commerce monitors tourism activity through lodging revenues by county. Those figures are found at commerce.idaho.gov/travel/research.aspx.

In the nine counties of east central Idaho, revenue has been rising since 2003 when the state began pulling out of the aftermath of the 2001 national recession. During the first 11 months of 2003, lodging revenue in the region totaled \$35.5 million. During the first 11 months of 2008, it was just \$52.5 million. The total for 2008 is expected to be around \$55 million once the December receipts are counted. That would be about the same as the 2007 total of just over \$55 million. Annual revenues have increased by at least \$3 million each year between 2003 and 2007 with the highest one-year increase \$7 million between 2006 and 2007.

It seems that the national recession and the low consumer confidence it is breeding mixed with earlier high gas prices influenced travel plans in 2008. While gas prices are much lower now than in many years, consumer confidence is still low, and many are trying to recoup lost savings or dig out of other financial challenges they were hit with in 2008. So maintaining lodging revenue at \$55 million speaks well of the region's ability to attract travelers and satisfy their needs.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY

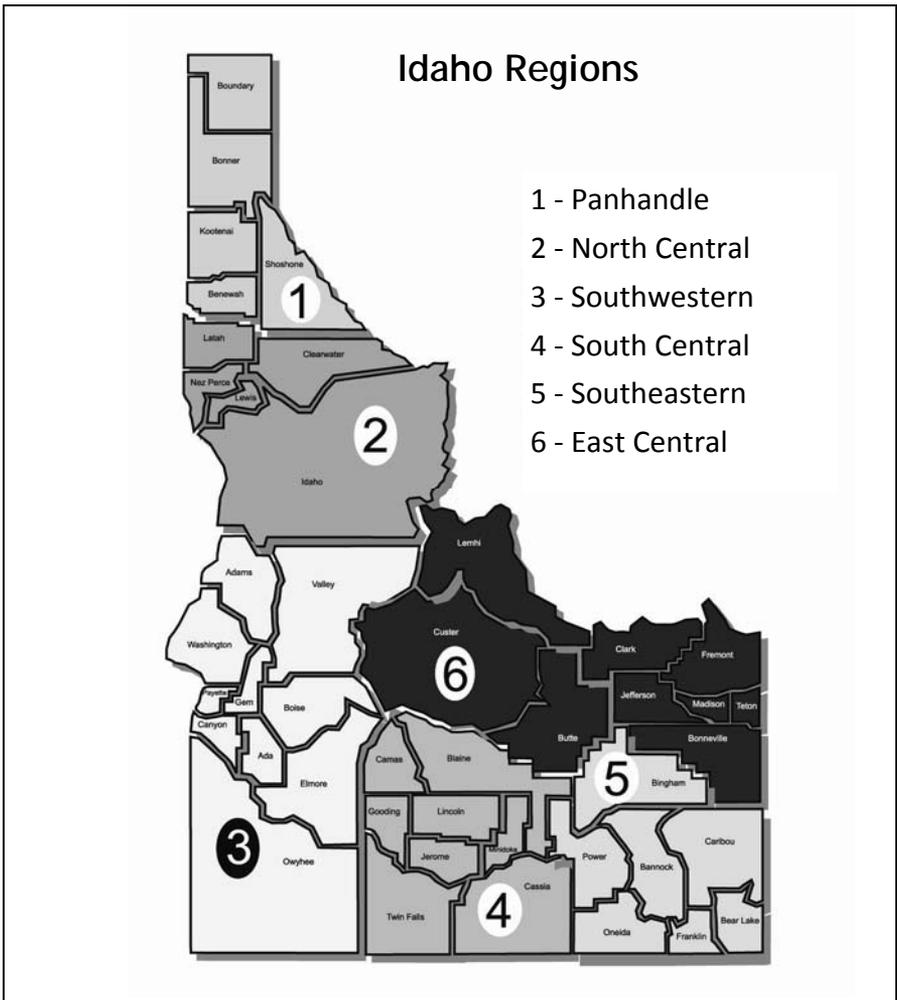
- Hastings Books is moving several blocks to a new Idaho Falls location, taking over space previously occupied by Ace Hardware and The UPS Store. The UPS Store lost its lease and is moving east of town. No customer interruptions are anticipated. Ace Hardware is about ready to move into its new building in Ammon, planning to open in March.

- Red Robin opened in Idaho Falls and is drawing a high number of customers considering the economy. The Colorado-based company has 250 outlets nationwide. The Idaho Falls restaurant employs 160.
- Layoffs have been announced by Woodland Furniture in Idaho Falls, Circuit City in Ammon and Wacklerli's American RV & Marine in Idaho Falls. At least 125 workers are affected.
- Eastern Idaho Technical College recently named Burton Waite as its new president. Waite has been serving as interim president since Bill Robertson retired in July. Waite was an instructor and program manager at the ITT Technical Institute in Boise for 20 years and also worked for seven years at Boise State University's Work Force Training Department before going to work part-time at the Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education. Waite hopes to increase partnerships with Idaho State University and the University of Idaho at University Place in Idaho Falls, which he believes is critically important to eastern Idaho.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

- The city of Rigby has annexed five areas including the Rigby Professional Plaza north of town, which will house professional and medical offices. A 65-acre tract was brought into the city, but the owner said there are no immediate plans for development.

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State of Idaho Data

December 2008 Labor Force (preliminary) compared to December 2007 data
(continued on next page).

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Dec 2008				Dec 2007			
	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem-ployed	% Unem-ployed	Total Employment	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem-ployed	% Unem-ployed	Total Employment
STATE OF IDAHO	759,694	48,961	6.4	710,733	757,044	20,180	2.7	736,864
COUNTIES								
ADA (1)	195,903	10,822	5.5	185,081	199,786	4,075	2.0	195,711
ADAMS	2,031	341	16.8	1,690	1,936	162	8.4	1,774
BANNOCK (8)	39,303	1,983	5.0	37,321	40,204	928	2.3	39,276
BEAR LAKE	3,167	148	4.7	3,020	3,002	55	1.8	2,947
BENEWAH	4,331	582	13.4	3,748	3,921	273	7.0	3,648
BINGHAM	20,542	1,136	5.5	19,406	20,224	491	2.4	19,733
BLAINE (5)	14,818	773	5.2	14,045	14,119	285	2.0	13,834
BOISE (1)	3,817	319	8.3	3,499	3,846	147	3.8	3,699
BONNER	23,089	1,792	7.8	21,297	21,229	709	3.3	20,520
BONNEVILLE (6)	48,354	2,155	4.5	46,199	50,546	884	1.7	49,663
BOUNDARY	4,383	508	11.6	3,876	3,980	281	7.1	3,699
BUTTE	1,449	65	4.5	1,384	1,302	22	1.7	1,280
CAMAS (5)	676	51	7.5	626	639	23	3.6	616
CANYON (1)	85,787	7,542	8.8	78,245	85,729	2,989	3.5	82,740
CARIBOU	3,301	219	6.6	3,082	3,254	93	2.8	3,162
CASSIA (2)	9,361	512	5.5	8,849	9,101	263	2.9	8,838
CLARK	461	42	9.1	419	447	14	3.2	432
CLEARWATER	3,315	522	15.7	2,793	3,165	284	9.0	2,881
CUSTER	2,225	182	8.2	2,042	2,211	92	4.1	2,119
ELMORE	11,378	772	6.8	10,606	10,807	370	3.4	10,437
FRANKLIN	6,748	204	3.0	6,544	6,714	99	1.5	6,615
FREMONT (9)	6,423	454	7.1	5,969	6,388	218	3.4	6,170
GEM (1)	7,500	637	8.5	6,863	7,523	266	3.5	7,257
GOODING	8,872	364	4.1	8,508	8,475	157	1.9	8,318
IDAHO	7,529	867	11.5	6,662	7,024	384	5.5	6,640
JEFFERSON (6)	10,828	637	5.9	10,192	11,217	260	2.3	10,957
JEROME (10)	10,372	579	5.6	9,793	10,281	249	2.4	10,032
KOOTENAI (3)	72,167	5,525	7.7	66,642	71,405	2,130	3.0	69,275
LATAH	17,259	895	5.2	16,365	16,507	389	2.4	16,118
LEMHI	3,791	393	10.4	3,398	3,600	182	5.1	3,418
LEWIS (4)	1,760	79	4.5	1,681	1,710	36	2.1	1,674
LINCOLN	2,506	284	11.3	2,221	2,410	126	5.2	2,285
MADISON (9)	15,721	661	4.2	15,060	15,788	220	1.4	15,568
MINIDOKA (2)	8,783	564	6.4	8,220	8,535	325	3.8	8,209
NEZ PERCE (7)	18,501	912	4.9	17,590	19,147	403	2.1	18,744
ONEIDA	2,443	86	3.5	2,357	2,332	34	1.5	2,298
OWYHEE (1)	4,624	123	2.7	4,501	4,818	58	1.2	4,760
PAYETTE	10,447	907	8.7	9,540	10,168	461	4.5	9,707
POWER (8)	3,868	339	8.8	3,530	3,894	179	4.6	3,715
SHOSHONE	6,685	863	12.9	5,822	5,673	281	5.0	5,391
TETON	5,682	211	3.7	5,470	5,218	87	1.7	5,131
TWIN FALLS (10)	38,707	1,865	4.8	36,842	38,498	757	2.0	37,741
VALLEY	5,695	641	11.3	5,054	5,419	263	4.9	5,155
WASHINGTON	5,089	408	8.0	4,681	4,832	175	3.6	4,657
ASOTIN WA (7)	10,674	1,055	9.9	9,619	10,558	587	5.6	9,971

* In thousands

State of Idaho Data

December 2008 Labor Force (preliminary) compared to December 2007 data
(continued from previous page).

Seasonally Adjusted Data LABOR MARKET AREAS	Dec 2008				Dec 2007			
	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment	Civilian Labor Force	# Unem- ployed	% Unem- ployed	Total Employ- ment
BOISE CITY- NAMPA MSA (1)	297,632	19,443	6.5	278,189	301,703	7,534	2.5	294,169
BURLEY MicSA (2)	18,144	1,076	5.9	17,068	17,636	589	3.3	17,047
COEUR D'ALENE MSA (3)	72,167	5,525	7.7	66,642	71,405	2,130	3.0	69,275
GRANGEVILLE SLMA (4)	9,289	946	10.2	8,343	8,733	419	4.8	8,314
HAILEY SLMA (5)	15,494	824	5.3	14,671	14,758	308	2.1	14,450
IDAHO FALLS MSA (6)	59,182	2,792	4.7	56,390	61,763	1,144	1.9	60,619
LEWISTON MSA (7)	29,176	1,967	6.7	27,209	29,706	991	3.3	28,715
POCATELLO MSA (8)	43,172	2,321	5.4	40,850	44,099	1,108	2.5	42,991
REXBURG MicSA (9)	22,145	1,115	5.0	21,029	22,176	439	2.0	21,738
TWIN FALLS MicSA (10)	49,079	2,444	5.0	46,635	48,779	1,005	2.1	47,774
CITIES								
BOISE	111,091	7,281	6.6	103,810	112,733	3,050	2.7	109,684
CALDWELL	17,660	1,756	9.9	15,904	17,549	745	4.2	16,804
COEUR D' ALENE	22,800	1,540	6.8	21,261	22,719	637	2.8	22,082
IDAHO FALLS	27,381	1,317	4.8	26,063	28,640	645	2.3	27,995
LEWISTON	15,122	741	4.9	14,381	15,678	352	2.2	15,326
MERIDIAN	31,478	2,195	7.0	29,283	31,856	917	2.9	30,940
NAMPA	37,032	3,228	8.7	33,805	37,085	1,367	3.7	35,718
POCATELLO	28,062	1,459	5.2	26,603	28,730	756	2.6	27,974
TWIN FALLS	21,497	1,207	5.6	20,291	21,263	494	2.3	20,769
United States*	154,447	11,108	7.2	143,338	153,866	7,655	5.0	146,211

* In thousands

SOURCE: Idaho Department of Labor, Research & Analysis and Public Affairs.

State of Idaho Data — Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

% change from

BY PLACE OF WORK	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	Last Month	Last Year
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	629,600	642,800	659,000	-2.1	-4.5
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	104,300	110,000	119,400	-5.2	-12.6
<i>Natural Resources & Mining</i>	3,900	4,300	4,600	-9.3	-15.2
Logging	1,800	1,900	1,800	-5.3	0.0
Mining	2,100	2,400	2,800	-12.5	-25.0
Metal Ore Mining	1,200	1,200	1,100	0.0	9.1
<i>Construction</i>	42,700	46,700	49,500	-8.6	-13.7
<i>Manufacturing</i>	57,700	59,000	65,300	-2.2	-11.6
Durable Goods	36,400	37,200	40,900	-2.2	-11.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	6,000	6,400	7,500	-6.3	-20.0
Sawmills & Wood Preservation	1,800	1,900	2,400	-5.3	-25.0
Veneer & Engineered Products	1,100	1,200	1,400	-8.3	-21.4
Other Wood Product Manufacturing	3,100	3,300	3,700	-6.1	-16.2
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	4,700	4,600	4,700	2.2	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	2,800	2,800	3,100	0.0	-9.7
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	12,000	12,600	15,000	-4.8	-20.0
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	3,000	3,100	3,500	-3.2	-14.3
Other Durable Goods	7,900	7,700	7,100	2.6	11.3
Nondurable Goods	21,300	21,800	24,400	-2.3	-12.7
Food Manufacturing	14,200	14,300	15,600	-0.7	-9.0
Fruits & Vegetable Preserving & Specialty	7,200	7,200	7,800	0.0	-7.7
Paper Manufacturing	1,600	1,600	1,700	0.0	-5.9
Printing & Related Support Activities	1,800	1,800	1,900	0.0	-5.3
Chemical Manufacturing	2,400	2,400	2,300	0.0	4.3
Other Nondurable Goods	1,300	1,700	2,900	-23.5	-55.2
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	525,300	532,800	539,600	-1.4	-2.7
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>	128,700	129,500	136,500	-0.6	-5.7
Trade	108,400	109,300	114,900	-0.8	-5.7
Wholesale Trade	26,600	26,900	28,300	-1.1	-6.0
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	12,800	12,700	13,100	0.8	-2.3
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	11,300	11,400	12,100	-0.9	-6.6
Retail Trade	81,800	82,400	86,600	-0.7	-5.5
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	12,000	12,300	12,500	-2.4	-4.0
Building Material and Garden Equipment	8,500	8,900	9,000	-4.5	-5.6
Food & Beverage Stores	12,600	12,600	12,900	0.0	-2.3
General Merchandise Stores	18,100	18,300	18,800	-1.1	-3.7
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	20,300	20,200	21,600	0.5	-6.0
Utilities	2,000	2,000	2,100	0.0	-4.8
Transportation & Warehousing	18,300	18,200	19,500	0.5	-6.2
Rail Transportation	1,300	1,300	1,300	0.0	0.0
Truck Transportation	8,800	9,000	9,600	-2.2	-8.3
<i>Information</i>	11,400	11,400	11,100	0.0	2.7
Telecommunications	4,100	4,200	4,000	-2.4	2.5
<i>Financial Activities</i>	30,800	31,800	32,400	-3.1	-4.9
Finance & Insurance	22,800	23,100	23,600	-1.3	-3.4
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	8,000	8,700	8,800	-8.0	-9.1
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>	76,000	80,200	82,800	-5.2	-8.2
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	32,100	32,600	33,700	-1.5	-4.7
Scientific Research & Development	7,700	7,600	5,800	1.3	32.8
Management of Companies & Enterprises	7,000	7,000	7,800	0.0	-10.3
Administrative & Support & Waste Management	36,900	40,600	41,300	-9.1	-10.7
Administrative & Support Services	36,200	39,600	39,100	-8.6	-7.4
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>	76,600	76,600	76,500	0.0	0.1
Educational Services	8,100	8,200	8,900	-1.2	-9.0
Health Care & Social Assistance	68,500	68,400	67,600	0.1	1.3
Hospitals	16,800	16,800	16,900	0.0	-0.6
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>	58,600	59,600	62,100	-1.7	-5.6
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	7,900	7,800	7,900	1.3	0.0
Accommodation & Food Services	50,700	51,800	54,200	-2.1	-6.5
Accommodation	8,900	8,900	8,800	0.0	1.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	41,800	42,900	45,400	-2.6	-7.9
<i>Other Services</i>	18,800	18,700	19,500	0.5	-3.6
<i>Total Government</i>	124,400	125,000	118,700	-0.5	4.8
Federal Government	12,600	12,800	12,000	-1.6	5.0
State & Local Government	111,800	112,200	106,700	-0.4	4.8
State Government	30,900	31,100	30,200	-0.6	2.3
State Government Education	15,200	15,500	14,900	-1.9	2.0
State Government Administration	15,700	15,600	15,300	0.6	2.6
Local Government	80,900	81,100	76,500	-0.2	5.8
Local Government Education	42,300	42,400	41,000	-0.2	3.2
Local Government Administration	35,200	35,300	32,200	-0.3	9.3
Local Government Tribes	3,400	3,400	3,300	0.0	3.0

*Preliminary estimate ** Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.

State of Idaho Data — State Economic Indicators

	Dec 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	759,700	760,800	757,100	-0.1	0.3
Unemployment	49,000	43,400	20,200	12.9	142.6
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	6.4	5.7	2.7		
Total Employment	710,700	717,400	736,900	-0.9	-3.6
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	756,700	759,200	755,500	-0.3	0.2
Unemployment	48,900	42,000	22,300	16.4	119.3
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	6.5	5.5	2.9		
Total Employment	707,800	717,200	733,200	-1.3	-3.5
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE⁽²⁾					
	7.2	6.8	5.0		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX⁽²⁾					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	204.8	207.3	205.8	-1.2	-0.5
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	210.2	212.4	210.0	-1.0	0.1
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	38,230	41,650	37,880	-8.2	0.9
Operators	9,740	9,740	9,740	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	360	360	360	0.0	0.0
Hired Workers	28,130	31,550	27,780	-10.8	1.3
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
<i>Claims Activities</i>					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	28,559	20,657	15,940	38.3	79.2
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	170,240	90,588	90,781	87.9	87.5
<i>Benefit Payment Activities⁽⁵⁾</i>					
Weeks Compensated	138,863	71,022	57,766	95.5	140.4
Total Benefit \$ Paid	36,923,316	18,524,208	14,765,224	99.3	150.1
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$265.90	\$260.82	\$255.60	1.9	4.0
Covered Employers	51,053	51,276	51,212	-0.4	-0.3
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$224,180,373	\$202,022,281	\$128,208,778	11.0	74.9

(1) Preliminary estimate

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

(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.

Panhandle Data

Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment — Kootenai County

	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	72,170	72,190	71,400	0.0	1.1
Unemployed	5,520	4,990	2,130	10.6	159.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	7.6	6.9	3.0		
Total Employment	66,650	67,200	69,270	-0.8	-3.8
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	71,610	72,250	71,100	-0.9	0.7
Unemployed	5,380	4,500	2,300	19.6	133.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	7.5	6.2	3.2		
Total Employment	66,230	67,750	68,800	-2.2	-3.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	55,390	56,960	56,550	-2.8	-2.1
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	9,830	10,660	10,730	-7.8	-8.4
Natural Resources & Mining	430	450	450	-4.4	-4.4
Construction	4,960	5,610	5,680	-11.6	-12.7
Manufacturing	4,440	4,600	4,600	-3.5	-3.5
<i>Wood Product Manufacturing</i>	750	780	890	-3.8	-15.7
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	3,690	3,820	3,710	-3.4	-0.5
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	45,560	46,300	45,820	-1.6	-0.6
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	11,100	11,080	11,460	0.2	-3.1
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1,480	1,460	1,530	1.4	-3.3
<i>Retail Trade</i>	8,580	8,590	8,750	-0.1	-1.9
<i>Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities</i>	1,040	1,030	1,180	1.0	-11.9
Information	960	960	940	0.0	2.1
Financial Activities	3,090	3,120	3,130	-1.0	-1.3
Professional & Business Services	5,740	6,050	6,010	-5.1	-4.5
Educational & Health Services	6,070	6,040	5,830	0.5	4.1
Leisure & Hospitality	7,100	7,600	7,140	-6.6	-0.6
Other Services	1,460	1,460	1,450	0.0	0.7
Government Education	3,800	3,890	3,630	-2.3	4.7
Government Administration	5,360	5,200	5,350	3.1	0.2
Government Tribes	880	900	880	-2.2	0.0

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

North Central Idaho Data

Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment — Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Wash.

	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	29,170	29,270	29,710	-0.3	-1.8
Unemployment	1,960	1,780	990	10.1	98.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.7	6.1	3.3		
Total Employment	27,210	27,490	28,720	-1.0	-5.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,850	28,990	29,450	-0.5	-2.0
Unemployment	1,860	1,590	970	17.0	91.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.4	5.5	3.3		
Total Employment	26,990	27,400	28,480	-1.5	-5.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,460	26,370	27,780	0.3	-4.8
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,690	4,400	4,790	6.6	-2.1
Natural Resources & Mining	190	190	230	0.0	-17.4
Construction	1,290	1,180	1,190	9.3	8.4
Manufacturing	3,210	3,030	3,370	5.9	-4.7
<i>Wood Product Manufacturing</i>	470	280	570	67.9	-17.5
<i>Paper Manufacturing</i>	1,090	1,090	1,130	0.0	-3.5
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	1,650	1,660	1,670	-0.6	-1.2
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	21,770	21,970	22,990	-0.9	-5.3
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,600	5,670	5,730	-1.2	-2.3
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	540	540	710	0.0	-23.9
<i>Retail Trade</i>	3,880	3,910	3,830	-0.8	1.3
<i>Utilities</i>	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
<i>Transportation & Warehousing</i>	1,090	1,130	1,100	-3.5	-0.9
Information	370	370	410	0.0	-9.8
Financial Activities	1,450	1,480	2,120	-2.0	-31.6
Professional & Business Services	1,690	1,880	1,520	-10.1	11.2
Education & Health Services	4,280	4,190	4,350	2.1	-1.6
Leisure & Hospitality	2,410	2,460	2,610	-2.0	-7.7
Other Services	570	570	1,090	0.0	-47.7
Government Education	2,640	2,610	2,490	1.1	6.0
Government Administration	2,020	2,010	1,980	0.5	2.0
Government Tribes	740	730	690	1.4	7.2

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Southwestern Idaho Data

Boise-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment — Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties

	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	297,600	297,800	301,700	-0.1	-1.4
Unemployment	19,400	17,500	7,500	10.9	158.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	6.5	5.9	2.5		
Total Employment	278,200	280,300	294,200	-0.7	-5.4
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	294,100	294,900	297,700	-0.3	-1.2
Unemployment	20,800	18,300	8,900	13.7	133.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	7.1	6.2	3.0		
Total Employment	273,300	276,600	288,800	-1.2	-5.4
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	266,900	270,600	274,700	-1.4	-2.8
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES					
<i>Natural Resources & Construction</i>					
Construction	18,400	19,500	20,700	-5.6	-11.1
<i>Manufacturing</i>					
Durable Goods	19,300	20,200	22,900	-4.5	-15.7
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,000	2,000	2,300	0.0	-13.0
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,100	1,100	1,200	0.0	-8.3
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	10,500	10,900	13,200	-3.7	-20.5
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	1,900	1,900	2,300	0.0	-17.4
Other Durable Goods	2,300	2,800	2,400	-17.9	-4.2
Nondurable Goods	6,500	6,600	6,900	-1.5	-5.8
Food Manufacturing	4,800	4,800	4,900	0.0	-2.0
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	1,100	1,300	-9.1	-23.1
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES					
<i>Trade, Transportation, & Utilities</i>					
Trade	45,700	45,500	48,000	0.4	-4.8
Wholesale Trade	12,700	12,800	12,500	-0.8	1.6
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	7,300	7,300	7,100	0.0	2.8
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,800	3,800	3,900	0.0	-2.6
Retail Trade	33,000	32,700	35,500	0.9	-7.0
Food & Beverage Stores	4,600	4,600	4,700	0.0	-2.1
General Merchandise Stores	7,300	7,300	7,800	0.0	-6.4
All Other Retail Trade	21,100	20,800	23,000	1.4	-8.3
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	8,400	8,400	7,900	0.0	6.3
Utilities	900	900	700	0.0	28.6
Transportation & Warehousing	7,500	7,500	7,200	0.0	4.2
<i>Information</i>					
Telecommunications	2,400	2,300	1,400	4.3	71.4
<i>Financial Activities</i>					
Finance & Insurance	10,100	10,100	9,900	0.0	2.0
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3,600	3,700	4,100	-2.7	-12.2
<i>Professional & Business Services</i>					
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	13,300	13,700	12,700	-2.9	4.7
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,500	5,500	5,800	0.0	-5.2
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	18,900	19,500	21,600	-3.1	-12.5
<i>Educational & Health Services</i>					
Educational Services	3,300	3,300	2,800	0.0	17.9
Health Care & Social Assistance	31,600	31,700	31,700	-0.3	-0.3
Hospitals	10,200	10,200	10,400	0.0	-1.9
<i>Leisure & Hospitality</i>					
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	1,600	1,800	3,100	-11.1	-48.4
Accommodation & Food Services	20,900	21,200	21,800	-1.4	-4.1
Accommodation	2,200	2,300	2,400	-4.3	-8.3
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,700	18,900	19,400	-1.1	-3.6
<i>Other Services</i>					
Other Services	8,300	8,300	7,000	0.0	18.6
Total Government					
Federal Government	6,300	6,400	5,800	-1.6	8.6
State & Local Government	39,700	39,700	36,700	0.0	8.2
State Government	14,500	14,400	13,900	0.7	4.3
State Government Education	4,900	4,900	5,000	0.0	-2.0
State Government Administration	9,600	9,500	8,900	1.1	7.9
Local Government	25,200	25,300	22,800	-0.4	10.5
Local Government Education	15,700	15,800	14,100	-0.6	11.3
Local Government Administration	9,500	9,500	8,700	0.0	9.2

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

South Central Idaho Data

Twin Falls-Jerome MicSA Labor Force & Employment – Twin Falls and Jerome counties

					<u>% Change From</u>	
	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	Last Month	Last Year	
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE						
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>						
Civilian Labor Force	49,080	48,120	48,780	2.0	0.6	
Unemployment	2,440	2,190	1,010	11.4	141.6	
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.0	4.6	2.1			
Total Employment	46,640	45,930	47,770	1.5	-2.4	
<i>Unadjusted</i>						
Civilian Labor Force	49,070	48,900	48,800	0.3	0.6	
Unemployment	2,530	2,110	1,150	19.9	120.0	
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.1	4.3	2.4			
Total Employment	46,540	46,790	47,650	-0.5	-2.3	
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK						
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	40,110	40,040	40,530	0.2	-1.0	
<i>Goods-Providing Industries</i>						
Natural Resources & Mining	60	60	40	0.0	50.0	
Construction	2,180	2,180	2,320	0.0	-6.0	
Manufacturing	4,360	4,510	4,640	-3.3	-6.0	
<i>Food Manufacturing</i>	2,500	2,610	2,550	-4.2	-2.0	
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	1,860	1,900	2,090	-2.1	-11.0	
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>						
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	10,310	10,170	10,530	1.4	-2.1	
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1,900	1,960	1,970	-3.1	-3.6	
<i>Retail Trade</i>	5,770	5,800	6,010	-0.5	-4.0	
<i>Utilities</i>	160	160	160	0.0	0.0	
<i>Transportation & Warehousing</i>	2,480	2,250	2,390	10.2	3.8	
Information	630	620	670	1.6	-6.0	
Financial Activities	1,640	1,640	1,780	0.0	-7.9	
Professional & Business Services	4,890	4,850	5,150	0.8	-5.0	
Educational & Health Services	5,360	5,350	5,370	0.2	-0.2	
Leisure & Hospitality	3,130	3,170	2,940	-1.3	6.5	
Other Services	1,490	1,520	1,400	-2.0	6.4	
Government Education	3,770	3,800	3,340	-0.8	12.9	
Government Administration	2,290	2,170	2,350	5.5	-2.6	

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Southeastern Idaho Data

Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	43,170	43,960	44,100	-1.8	-2.1
Unemployment	2,320	2,060	1,110	12.6	109.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.4	4.7	2.5		
	40,850	41,900	42,990	-2.5	-5.0
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	43,220	43,330	44,220	-0.3	-2.3
Unemployment	2,350	1,990	1,240	18.1	89.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.4	4.6	2.8		
Total Employment	40,870	41,340	42,980	-1.1	-4.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	37,800	37,900	40,230	-0.3	-6.0
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	5,120	5,180	5,680	-1.2	-9.9
Natural Resources & Mining	20	20	30	0.0	-33.3
Construction	1,620	1,640	2,000	-1.2	-19.0
Manufacturing	3,480	3,520	3,650	-1.1	-4.7
<i>Food Manufacturing</i>	1,350	1,350	1,410	0.0	-4.3
<i>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</i>	230	240	190	-4.2	21.1
<i>Machinery Manufacturing</i>	100	100	80	0.0	25.0
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	1,800	1,830	1,970	-1.6	-8.6
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	32,680	32,720	34,550	-0.1	-5.4
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,140	7,130	7,760	0.1	-8.0
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	1,480	1,500	1,370	-1.3	8.0
<i>Retail Trade</i>	4,420	4,440	4,850	-0.5	-8.9
<i>Utilities</i>	40	40	50	0.0	-20.0
<i>Transportation & Warehousing</i>	1,200	1,150	1,490	4.3	-19.5
Information	660	680	740	-2.9	-10.8
Financial Activities	2,090	2,120	2,110	-1.4	-0.9
Professional & Business Services	4,480	4,520	5,400	-0.9	-17.0
Educational & Health Services	3,530	3,420	3,370	3.2	4.7
Leisure & Hospitality	3,750	3,840	3,710	-2.3	1.1
Other Services	910	860	1,220	5.8	-25.4
Government Education	5,960	6,030	5,930	-1.2	0.5
Government Administration	4,160	4,120	4,310	1.0	-3.5

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

East Central Idaho Data

Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment – Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Dec 2008*	Nov 2008	Dec 2007	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	59,180	60,550	61,760	-2.3	-4.2
Unemployment	2,790	2,130	1,140	31.0	144.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.7%	3.5%	1.9%		
Total Employment	56,390	58,420	60,620	-3.5	-7.0
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	59,350	60,040	61,980	-1.1	-4.2
Unemployment	2,860	2,280	1,300	25.4	120.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.8%	3.8%	2.1%		
Total Employment	56,490	57,750	60,680	-2.2	-6.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	48,040	49,100	52,450	-2.2	-8.4
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	6,520	7,420	8,200	-12.1	-20.5
Construction & Natural Resources	3,570	4,190	4,760	-14.8	-25.0
Manufacturing	2,950	3,230	3,440	-8.7	-14.2
<i>Food Manufacturing</i>	930	910	930	2.2	0.0
<i>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</i>	290	300	260	-3.3	11.5
<i>Machinery Manufacturing</i>	140	140	160	0.0	-12.5
<i>Other Manufacturing</i>	1,590	1,880	2,090	-15.4	-23.9
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	41,520	41,680	44,250	-0.4	-6.2
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12,720	12,710	13,790	0.1	-7.8
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	3,170	3,230	3,700	-1.9	-14.3
<i>Retail Trade</i>	7,990	8,100	8,140	-1.4	-1.8
<i>Utilities</i>	50	60	60	-16.7	-16.7
<i>Transportation</i>	1,510	1,320	1,890	14.4	-20.1
Information	1,440	1,440	1,300	0.0	10.8
Financial Activities	2,190	2,140	2,200	2.3	-0.5
Professional & Business Services	4,780	5,020	5,330	-4.8	-10.3
Educational & Health Services	6,950	6,640	7,340	4.7	-5.3
Leisure & Hospitality	4,180	4,270	4,900	-2.1	-14.7
Other Services	1,840	1,970	2,150	-6.6	-14.4
Government Education	3,830	3,870	3,740	-1.0	2.4
Government Administration	3,590	3,620	3,500	-0.8	2.6

*Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month.

Glossary of Labor Market Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glossary of Labor Market Terms (cont.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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