

# OUTLOOK

SPRING 2011

Companies and site selectors continue to look closely at southern Idaho when considering relocation and expansion. As the heartland of the state, southern Idaho boasts numerous positive economic factors that companies just can't resist: low business/electric costs, skilled workforce; diverse employer base of support services; ideal transportation location; and a vital business training and education partner, the College of Southern Idaho. Add these to many quality of life issues only offered in this unique region, southern Idaho has clearly set itself apart to draw businesses here.

Food processing, storage and distribution remain the core industries of the region.

Established and new transportation and distribution operations help support food processors with warehousing and quick, cost efficient nationwide distribution of products.

The abundance of natural resources here has allowed for the creation of operations in all five renewable energy sectors. Many of these renewable energy operations know that they will be able to tap into a well-trained workforce specifically trained in their area to support their operations thanks to the College of Southern Idaho.

Our vibrant region provides the numerous ingredients needed to attract businesses and help current businesses grow.



## INTERNATIONAL CONTACT CENTER OPENS IN TWIN FALLS BRINGING UP TO 1,200 JOBS

In a significant announcement for southern Idaho and the state, Florida-based C3/CustomContactChannels signed an agreement in June 2010 with the Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency to operate a contact center here. Operations began just three months later.

C3/CustomContactChannels, with call centers around the globe, serves Fortune 500 clients including health-care companies.

"This is a call center state," said Roger B. Madsen, director of the Idaho Department of Labor, at the ribbon cutting celebration in early October. He cited the time zone, Idaho work ethic and non-regional dialect as what made the state so appealing. "I think C3 likes Idaho and we are very hopeful they will expand."\*

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, C3 announced 900 new hires were on staff with the potential for 300 more. The Department of Labor estimated that the call center has indirectly created an additional 690 jobs in Twin Falls and that more than \$22 million will flow into the local economy directly and \$20.7 million indirectly from C3.

C3 is housed in the 8,170 square-foot building formerly occupied by a Dell call center. Twin

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## WEL COMPANIES OPENS IN GOODING

WEL Companies, Inc -- a national warehousing, transportation and storage company with 14 facilities throughout the United States -- has expanded operations in Gooding. WEL, headquartered in De Pere, Wisconsin, will be fully operational this spring.

"The Gooding location provides us with a 120,000 square foot facility capable of retrofitting for full refrigeration and is ideally located next to rail for more efficient transport of stored products to our customers throughout the country," said Bruce Tielens, president and CEO of WEL Companies. "Along with good highway access, this Gooding facility will be a prime location for our storage and transport operations," he said.

According to Greg Krall, northwest warehouse and operations manager, "The facility will be turned into all refrigerated space over the next several months to store dairy products, the main commodity that will be stored and transported out of this new facility."

Krall said 15 local OTR divers will be hired to join their 500 refrigerated truck fleet that hauls food-grade products throughout the United States. Some products will come from local producers including Glanbia Foods, Jerome Cheese and Lamb Weston.

"There is a significant shortage of outbound and inbound trucks in Idaho and neighboring states, but there is an abundance of products that need to be transported," Krall said. "Expanding into southern Idaho is a good move for WEL Companies for many reasons. We will meet the growing need of area businesses for transporting refrigerated products to markets around the country, we'll be able to tap into the many qualified truck drivers in this area, we'll have backyard access to rail for longer hauls and we'll be able to provide warehousing services to supplement the transport side of our operations," he said.

### **ABOUT US**

The Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO) was formed in June 2001 as a joint venture of public and private sectors to help diversify and strengthen the local economies of southern Idaho communities.

SIEDO: Builds support within the community for economic development and marketing programs; promotes retention and expansion of existing firms; implements a focused, cost-effective marketing plan to attract new firms to the southern Idaho area; and stimulates new startups.

SIEDO positions southern Idaho as a highly desirable location for corporate executives and site consultants to consider. New businesses will also be attracted via various marketing efforts targeting appropriate industries. An easy-to-use web site -- [www.southernidaho.org](http://www.southernidaho.org) -- allows anyone interested in learning about southern Idaho to access valuable information quickly and easily.

Visit our web site at  
[www.southernidaho.org](http://www.southernidaho.org)

208-324-7408  
Toll free 866-768-8443

### *“C3” continued*

Falls Urban Renewal Agency acquired ownership of the building, over 680 workstations and more than 1000 PCs and laptops after Dell closed their center.

The combination of unemployed, call center-experienced workers and the vacant, call center-ready building was a large draw for the company.\*

“We are proud to open our newest location in Twin Falls and have been particularly impressed with the quality of the workforce and strong work ethic in this community,” said Richard Mondre, co-chief executive officer of C3/ContactChannels. “This property is perfect because it has been well maintained and is ready to go. And a local ready workforce can be quickly trained to accommodate our complex systems. Twin Falls will be a great place to support our sophisticated clients,” he said.

Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter said C3 coming to Twin Falls sets an example for economic growth throughout the state because of

the teamwork and public/private partnership used to make it happen.

“They made it work,” Otter said about Twin Falls leaders. He said it sets an example in “making sure all the team is put together, state, local, city, for the economic development region, urban renewal, making sure all of them are in the room together and making sure they know who is leading so that nothing falls through the cracks. And it worked to perfection right here,” he said.\*

“Bringing C3/ContactChannels to our community was done in just five months thanks to the Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency with a ready-to-go building, a large workforce already trained in customer service and the ability of the College of Southern Idaho to get folks trained quickly,” said Jan Rogers, executive director of Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization. “Entities worked together to get folks ready to work in about 30 days. This is a major coup for our community and the entire state.” \* Times news Oct 10 2010

## **U. S. COMMERCE DEPARTMENT INVESTS \$4.4 MILLION TO PROMOTE GREEN ENERGY IN SOUTHERN IDAHO**

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development announced that a \$4.4 million U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant has been awarded to the College of Southern Idaho (CSI) to help build the Applied Technology and Innovation Center here.

The nearly \$7 million Center will provide a single location for CSI’s numerous renewable energy programs including training to meet the demand for local technicians in wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy, green construction, and the biofuel industry.

This is the largest award ever made by the EDA west of the Mississippi and will be the only project EDA will award in Idaho this year.

“Encouraging innovation and the development of new technologies are critical to creating jobs and improving our nation’s economic competitiveness,” said U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development John Fernandez. “This EDA investment will support lo-

cal businesses and strengthen the local workforce by helping to prepare College of Southern Idaho students for jobs in the state’s growing alternative energy sector.”

The 29,600 square foot high-technology LEED certified facility will be located on CSI’s campus and will take about 18 months to construct.

“Across the region, we have witnessed the development of projects in the five major areas of renewable energy – hydro, geothermal, biofuel, wind and solar,” said Dr. Gerald Beck, president of CSI. “As these sustainable energy technologies come on line, the continued competitive advantage of the region will hinge on the availability of a trained workforce. The Applied Technology and Innovation Center will capitalize on green building practices to create a state-of-the-art facility that will position the College to provide the training necessary to keep south-central Idaho at the forefront in alternative energy.”

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## “Green Energy” continued

The state’s wind turbine farms in the Twin Falls area and East Central Idaho will total over 544 megawatts by the end of this year, producing over \$700 million in private sector investment for this sector alone. In addition, with over 500,000 dairy cattle, Twin Falls area dairies have \$14 million biomass projects using anaerobic digesters and manure-to-energy power plants. This is on top of the \$40 mil-

lion investment in the geothermal power plant just south of Twin Falls which will produce up to 36 megawatts, the 150,000 panel solar array just north of Twin Falls, and the 13 hydro power plants along the Snake River, which runs through Twin Falls and south central Idaho.

## SOUTHERN IDAHO IS POWERING UP WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY

Southern Idaho is serious about renewable energy. Hydro electricity. Wind energy. Geothermal heat exchange. Biomass. All these sectors, with solar production in the planning stages, find this unique region of southern Idaho a perfect place for commercial renewable energy production projects. The area boasts an abundance of naturally-rich resources that fuel renewable energy operations. And more companies are looking at this region to tap into its many energy resources and to take advantage of low energy costs, a pro-business climate and strong pool of trained employees.

This past November, Idaho National Lab, the College of Southern Idaho (CSI) and Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO) hosted the state’s first Sustainable Energy Conference. Tours to five green energy facilities gave attendees private access to key local projects covering wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, ethanol and a biomass factory.

In addition, 25 speakers – representing private industry, utilities, developers, educators, legal counsel and state/federal agencies – participated in presentations and panel discus-

sions providing significant insight into the many aspects of Idaho’s growing renewable energy sector.

Sharing their expertise in technology, markets, energy efficiency, business strategies, training, and policy in all five energy arenas, speakers gave attendees valuable insight into these sectors and specifics on how to capitalize on the resources and opportunities available in Idaho.

“The Sustainable Energy Conference 2010 was the first opportunity to bring together experts in many areas to address federal, state and local issues as well as area projects that are impacting our economy,” said Jan Rogers, executive director of SIEDO. “Our region is unique in that currently produces commercial power in four of the five renewable categories,” she said.



Photo by Times News/Ashley Smith

## WIND POWER EXPANDS IN SOUTHERN IDAHO

Hydroelectric power continues to be the area’s primary source of energy thanks to the massive Snake River that runs through southern Idaho on its way north.

Coming up fast as a secondary energy source is wind. With strong sustained winds along the Snake River plain, southern Idaho is one of the windiest in the state and a great spot for wind developers.

Idaho Wind Partners (IWP) – Idaho’s largest wind power project – announced in December 2010 the purchase of lots in a southern Idaho business park to build a 10,000 square foot building. The facility will house IWP’s administration and maintenance offices to oversee the 11 wind farms being constructed in southern Idaho.

This followed an announcement in July 2010 by GE Energy Financial Services as an investor in Idaho Wind Partners’ numerous wind

farms, valued at nearly half a billion dollars. GE owns a majority equity interest in the project, while developer Exergy Development Group, Atlantic Power, and manager and operator Reunion Power own minority interests.

“Through our investment in Idaho’s largest wind power portfolio, GE Energy Financial Services is putting millions of dollars to work to bring jobs and clean energy to Idaho and help the country meet growing demand for domestic, renewable sources of energy,” said Kevin Walsh, managing director and head of Power and Renewable Energy at GE Energy Financial Services.<sup>1</sup>

The wind farms, with a total capacity of 183 megawatts, have 20-year agreements with Idaho Power Company to sell all of the power they produce. Wind farm construction began in June 2010.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Times News 12/2/10  
<sup>2</sup> Area Development Online 7/2/10

### POTATO DEHYDRATION PLANT SLATED FOR SPRING OPENING

Gem State Processing – the Idaho division of Oregon Potato Co. – plans to begin operations by this spring on a new 240,000 square foot potato dehydration plant in the southern Idaho community of Burley.

Locally grown potatoes will be processed into potato flakes used in a wide range of other potato-based products. Local representatives have been working with Gem State and are pleased to see that construction is on target.

“We are all very excited to see this project come on line this spring,” said Burley’s economic development director Doug Manning. “This project is actually stirring interest from another couple of companies in our Industrial Park. It’s kind of the snowball effect. This particular business has been of great interest to everybody. It’s like the property has gone full circle,” he said.

Manning said that Gem State’s operation will help diversify the local economy and create about 50 local jobs to the area,

providing opportunities for people to find a better job or just get back to work.

Thanks to a \$499,000 Idaho Community Development Block Grant, the city of Burley is installing a new water, sewer and storm water systems in the industrial park where Gem State is housed.

“Securing this grant shows that the city is aggressively pursuing business and industry,” Manning said. “And it has already opened pathways for more businesses to come in.”

### SOUTHERN IDAHO RURAL DEVELOPMENT HIRES DIRECTOR TO SUPPORT RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to help rural Twin Falls County communities with business expansion, relocations and new business development, Southern Idaho Rural Development (SIRD) hired Larry Hall who will serve as director of this new program.

Hall will be responsible for working with the seven rural communities in Twin Falls County (not Twin Falls City) to establish economic development opportunities using the tool of Urban Renewal Agencies. While URA’s are being developed, projects will be identified that could draw new businesses, expand local business and build jobs.

Southern Idaho Rural Development was established in 2010 to assist rural communities with economic development. The program is primarily funded by a grant from the Idaho Department of Commerce and supported with funds from Twin Falls County, Business Plus, Region IV and from the rural communities that will benefit from this effort.

“Most of our rural communities don’t have the means to hire their own economic development person,” said Hall. “In this new position, I look

forward to utilizing my skills to help each of them grow business and add jobs in their communities.”



Hall brings over 30 years of experience in corporate finance, banking and strategic planning to this position. He currently serves as a board member of the City of Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency and will work out of Region IV’s offices in Twin Falls.

### CITY OF KIMBERLY HIRES P&Z/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

In an effort to further promote the City of Kimberly, Jenny Nickerson was hired as Planning & Zoning Director/Economic Development Officer. She is responsible for serving as a liaison between the City and business owners/developers during the planning and zoning process and promoting Kimberly to new businesses while encouraging local business retention and expansion.

Nickerson has provided code consulting services to the City since 2007 through JRN Reviews, reviewing commercial building permit application documents for completeness and compliance.

Nickerson will work in cooperation with Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization, the Kimberly Business Owners Associ-

ation, Kimberly City Council and Kimberly Planning Commission to ensure Kimberly is prepared to promote new business opportunities and support growth/expansion of local industry. She will also focus on designing and implementing Urban Renewal Districts to benefit current and potential commerce.

