

Businesses Are Drawn to Vibrant Southern Idaho

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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, and you will see that southern Idaho has clearly set itself apart to draw businesses here.

A Strong Food Chain

Food processing, storage and distribution remain the core industries of the region. Numerous cheese, meat and trout processors take advantage of the region's large dairy, cattle and fish industry.

Cheese and milk product companies – Glanbia Foods, Jerome Cheese, Darigold, and Gossner Cheese – take advantage of large nearby dairy operations. Seneca Foods, Amalgamated Sugar, Lamb Weston Con Agra, Gem State Processing and Independent Meat are just a few of the region's other food processors.

Southern Idaho is home to the world's largest trout farm, Clear Springs Foods, the number one producer of commercial trout in the United States. Silver Creek Farms is another premier fish producer and processor and Rangen, Inc., Aquaculture Division is recognized as an international leader in the production of feeds and feed additives for the aquaculture industry.

Other processors – potatoes, grain/seed crops, sugar, mink, honey and chicken – round out this solid industry sector.

Transportation and distribution operations including WOW Logistics, WEL Companies and Henningsen Cold Storage help support food processors with warehousing and quick, cost-efficient, nationwide distribution of products.

Turning Natural Resources into Energy

Mother Nature has blessed the region with fertile soil, wide open spaces, good weather, water from snow, rain and the Snake River to build the region's food

processing operations to where they are today.

Southern Idaho also has an abundance of natural resources that allows for the creation of operations in all five renewable energy sectors.

Renewable/sustainable energy is currently the largest growing sector in southern Idaho. Hydropower, geothermal, wind, and biomass-generating producers are already in operation here with solar coming later this year.

The massive Snake River's flow is captured via 13 dams and run-of-river projects to generate electricity for southern Idaho residents.



With this region's distinction of being the windiest in the state, wind developers and producers are drawn to southern Idaho to capture the strong, sustained winds and convert them into energy. Over 320 wind turbines are planned for the area with the potential to generate almost 600 MW of power.

Although the underground hot spots of Yellowstone are a hundred of miles away, the areas geothermal pockets are plentiful here. Current production is 10 MW of power but, the potential is estimated to be about 100 MW.

Over 525,000 dairy/feedlot cattle – supporting cheese, dairy and beef producers – generate plenty of their own waste. This “ground cover” is now being captured and processed through methane digesters to create methane gas energy.

Finally, a 150,000-panel solar farm is planned for the area to capture 60-75 MW of sun power.

Labor Force Preparation

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.

The College of Southern Idaho (CSI) is not the standard, small community college. CSI is unique by taking an unprecedented role in the area's economic development. For over three decades, CSI has worked closely with current and new business to build tailored training programs for current and potential employees.

Businesses here representing a wide range of industries will attest that the presence of CSI was a strong determining factor on either bringing them here or supporting their local business expansions. In fact, CSI received the International Economic Development Council's most prestigious award in 2003 that honors an economic development practitioner who has demonstrated excellence in continuing education. This internationally-recognized, pro-business recognition is unprecedented in such a rural community.

Since 1981, CSI has been powering up the work force with education and training in renewable energy. The College of Southern Idaho Renewable Energy Training Center provides a comprehensive curriculum designed to give students the skill sets necessary to work in any of the renewable energy areas.

In 2008, CSI received approval from the Idaho State Board of Education to create the state's first wind technician energy program. And this January, a \$4.4 million U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant was awarded to CSI to help build their Applied Technology and Innovation Center.

The nearly 29,600 square foot, \$7 million LEED certified 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 bio-fuel industry.

Southern Idaho provides the numerous ingredients needed to attract businesses and help current businesses grow. 🏡