

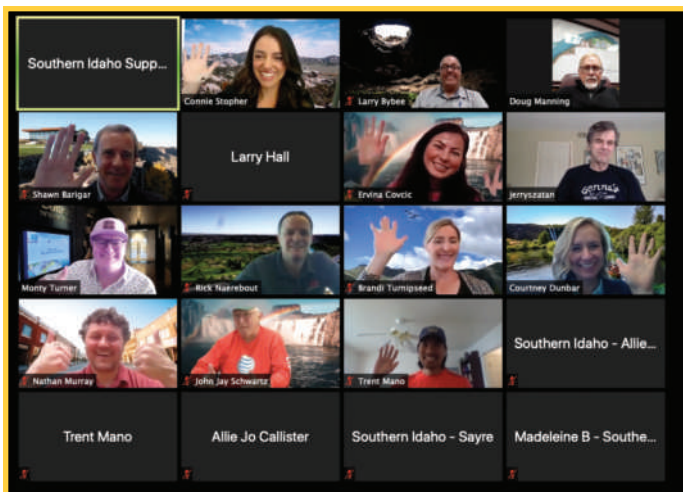
# UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS DURING UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: HOW COVID-19 SHOWCASED THE INNOVATIVE AND RESILIENT NATURE OF THE SOUTHERN IDAHO REGION - #MAGICVALLEYSTRONG

By Madeleine Bumstead, Southern Idaho Economic Development



It's no secret that 2020 has been a scary, unpredictable and strange year. When it comes to economic development, talent recruitment and job growth, COVID-19 certainly upended all of our plans. Like every business or organization in every industry, Southern Idaho Economic Development had to suspend in-person events, including valuable business recruitment activities like FAM tours. However, that didn't stop the organization from thinking outside the box to continue the unprecedented business and talent growth the region has seen in recent years.

Over the course of several months, the organization hosted Virtual Southern Idaho FAM Tours, inviting site selectors to a one-hour Zoom call for a virtual trip through the region. Since dairy and food processing are at the heart of the Southern Idaho economy, regional experts showed the attendees every step of a dairy product's life journey, from the farm to the consumer.



With the help of a customized box with locally made surprises delivered right to their door, local leaders guided them through everything they needed to know to successfully grow a business in Southern Idaho—from workforce development to available

sites. As an added bonus, the organization received the International Economic Development Council's Gold Award in the Special Events category for this virtual event series.

## A BOOM FOR BUSINESS & BROADBAND

While winning awards and staying connected with our economic development colleagues was valuable, it is even more important that our region and the state as a whole maintained a strong economy for our residents and businesses. Idaho has always been a top state to do business, even during a global pandemic. *The state and region are proud to be:*

- #1 in the U.S. for economic momentum, financial solvency and personal income growth over the past year
- #3 in the U.S. for best employment rate and most investment in broadband

Throughout the pandemic, the Southern Idaho region saw major business development news including a new Agri-Beef beef processing plant in Jerome, Idaho. The partnership, known as True West Beef, is based on a strategy that provides a beef-processing solution to recent production interruptions that challenged many companies in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Also in Jerome, The Scouler Company will build a new 15,000-square-foot facility to manufacture a new sustainable, plant-based alternative protein made from barley for use in aquaculture feed and pet food.

Additionally, Southern Idaho Economic Development, along with Region IV Development Association and the Idaho Department of Commerce, secured grants to provide unprecedented access to broadband in rural communities like Bliss, Eden, Hazelton, Murtaugh and Wendell, Idaho. Access to reliable internet is critical for economic growth, business sustainability and community connectivity, especially now that more people of all ages are working and learning from home.

Ultimately, Southern Idaho Economic Development is here to help businesses succeed. As the single-point contact for business recruitment, expansion and talent growth, the organization is here to connect you to the answers you need to stop searching and start building.

Ready to get started? Call today at **208-732-6459** or email Connie at [connies@southernidaho.org](mailto:connies@southernidaho.org) 🏡



# Health and Life Sciences Industry in the Inland Northwest

A growing healthcare and life sciences cluster is emerging in the Inland Northwest, a region spanning from eastern Washington and northern Idaho. The region features a strong combination of companies in the healthcare and life sciences industries as well as an increased focus on health sciences medical education.

In 2016, healthcare in northern Idaho was responsible for approximately \$720 million in economic activity and regional healthcare paid \$525.4 million in total wages. In Spokane County, 18.5 percent of the total workforce is employed in the healthcare and life sciences industry.

With quality medical centers and specialties in both rural and urban communities, the Inland Northwest serves as a healthcare service hub for more than 1.5 million people, with patient numbers more than doubling over the past two years. The region's largest hospitals, including Deaconess Medical Center, Kootenai Health and Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital, are known for emergency medicine, women's healthcare, neurosciences, continence, cardiac care, cancer treatment, orthotics, respiratory care, kidney services and pediatrics.

Further driving the growth of the region's healthcare and life sciences cluster are the area's seven universities, including two medical schools. The Spokane University of Washington School of Medicine, in collaboration with Gonzaga University, welcomed its inaugural class of 60 medical students in the fall of 2016. Washington State University's College of Medicine is currently pursuing accreditation by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education to become Washington's premier community-based medical school. The region's expanding medical education opportunities combined with its strengths in healthcare and life sciences will have a positive impact on the regional economy as this cluster continues to grow.

The Inland Northwest is also home to leading companies that are poised to grow in the areas of health informatics, biopharmaceuticals and diagnostics, precision agriculture and aerospace medicine – sectors that offer crossover opportunities into health and life sciences. 🏡

## CdAEDC

Coeur d'Alene Area  
Economic Development Corporation

The Regional Strengths of North Idaho Go Beyond the Beauty of OUR LAKES

- Ranked #5 in business friendliness in the USA
- #1 in regulatory and tax code friendliness
- Hwy I-90 services West to East and I-95 services North to South
- 3M passengers, 370 daily domestic connections, 65 international 1-stop destinations

**COEUR D'ALENE AREA EDC**  
210 Sherman Ave. Suite 206  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814  
208-667-4753  
[www.cdaedc.org](http://www.cdaedc.org)