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**REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO CONNECT VETERANS WITH OPPORTUNITIES IN IDAHO**

*Idaho National Laboratory grant to assist SIEDO and its regional partners in promoting employment opportunities for military veterans*

TWIN FALLS, ID – May 30, 2018 – Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO) is pleased to announce a regional partnership to attract veterans and transitioning servicemembers into skilled, vacant positions across Southern Idaho. SIEDO is partnering with Idaho National Laboratory (INL), the Idaho Department of Labor, the Idaho Division of Veteran Services, and regional employers.

The partnership stems from a grant SIEDO received from Battelle Energy Alliance (BEA), a private, non-profit that manages INL for the U.S. Department of Energy.

BEA awarded the \$5,000 INL Technology Based Economic Development grant to the College of Southern Idaho Foundation, Business Plus and Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization. The funding enables SIEDO to identify opportunities and resources from regional partners, focus on attracting military veterans transitioning to civilian careers, and fill a large number of vacant jobs in the region.

“We were thrilled to receive this grant through INL,” said SIEDO Executive Director Connie Stopher. “We’re thankful for the service of our military men and women and want them to receive the best employment and training opportunities we have to offer. The Southern Idaho region has experienced tremendous growth in recent years and this success has resulted in a record low unemployment rate. We’re hoping to work with both employers and veterans to fill these highly skilled jobs with highly skilled people.”

According to data from the Idaho Department of Labor, 10 percent of Idaho’s adult population are veterans of the Armed Forces. The partnership will explore ways to better reach and attract these veterans to fill the high number of job vacancies in the Magic Valley while also helping solve the issue of veteran unemployment.

“Veterans play a vital role at Idaho National Laboratory,” said INL Director Mark Peters. “By partnering in this effort, we hope to share with employers in Southern Idaho what we have learned at INL: that veterans are smart, disciplined, value teamwork, possess a strong sense of patriotism, and are an incredible asset to any organization.”

The partnership enhanced following meetings facilitated by Senator Mike Crapo’s office to identify strategies to retain and attract veterans to highly skilled jobs and educational opportunities across the state.

“Veterans have served our nation honorably and gained valuable skills that are needed in a rapidly growing Idaho workforce,” adds Senator Mike Crapo. “Veterans have done their part and now Idaho communities are helping veterans transfer their skills to civilian jobs and educational opportunities. I’m proud to help facilitate this effort, working with employers, schools, and community support networks to provide our veterans with the framework they need to succeed as they transition from the military to new employment and educational opportunities.”

The regional partnership’s activities and outreach include:

- A free “Hiring Our Heroes” training to educate Magic Valley employers on how to better understand veterans’ skills and how those might apply to their industry and company, as well as how employers can help veterans overcome obstacles as they transition to civilian life. The training will highlight programs that offset training costs and other financial benefits of hiring veterans. It will be held at the College of Southern Idaho in the Taylor Building Room 277 from 9 am to 1 pm on Thursday, June 7. The event is in partnership with the Idaho Department of Labor, the Idaho Division of Veteran Services and the Airman & Family Readiness Center at Mountain Home Air Force Base. To register or find out more information, email [connies@southernidaho.org](mailto:connies@southernidaho.org).
- Presentations at veteran transitional programs at regional military bases, including Mountain Home Air Force Base and Hill Air Force Base. The educational series helps veterans with tips on applications, resumes, and job interviews and raises awareness about the employers and job openings in the Magic Valley.
- Participation in a group of regional, state, and federal agencies and the private sector facilitated through Senator Mike Crapo’s office to discuss strategies to address Idaho veterans workforce skills and educational needs.
- Traveling to job fairs throughout the northwestern United States to promote the Magic Valley and attract military veterans transitioning into civilian careers.

For more information about hiring veterans, visit the Idaho Department of Labor’s website [online here](#).

To learn more about SIEDO and/or the Southern Idaho region, please visit us online at [southernidaho.org](http://southernidaho.org). Find out more about Idaho National Laboratory on their website, [inl.gov](http://inl.gov).

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## **About Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization**

Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO) is a joint venture of public and private sectors in the communities of Buhl, Burley, Filer, Glenns Ferry, Gooding, Heyburn, Jerome, Paul, Rupert, Shoshone, Twin Falls, and Wendell formed to help diversify and strengthen the local economy by retaining and attracting business to the Southern Idaho region. SIEDO works closely with each of these communities to promote economic development through expansion of existing business and to implement a focused consistent program to attract new businesses to the region. For more information about SIEDO and/or the Southern Idaho region, please visit [southernidaho.org](http://southernidaho.org).