

2014-2019

# Region IV Development Association Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Proudly serving South-central Idaho:  
Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka,  
and Twin Falls Counties

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# Chapter I

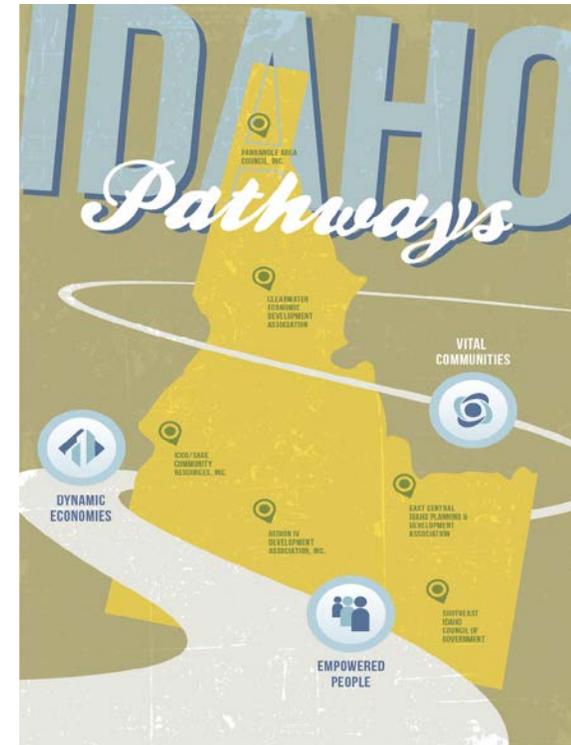
## Building the Pathways

The **Pathways to Accelerate South-Central Idaho** are the foundational framework for Region IV Development Association’s comprehensive economic development strategy. The creation of the *Pathways* involved tapping into the knowledge base and forward thinking abilities of elected officials and representatives from private sector industries, institutions of higher education, state resource and regulatory agencies, local economic development organizations, and human service associations. Combined with quality economic data developed by the University of Idaho, this engagement of stakeholders from around the state is helping to establish a state-wide economic development blueprint that will help drive future Legislative-level public policies, programs and investments.

As a complement to this greater state-wide undertaking, the Region IV Development Association’s comprehensive economic development planning effort concentrated on creating a five-year roadmap for regional economic development for the eight counties of South-central Idaho with the same focus of identifying impactful public policies, programs, and investments – but this time, at the local level.

Community participants were first engaged in identifying the specific assets and potentials, as well as resource gaps and hazards, which may influence the region’s ability to capitalize on its competitive advantages. Secondly, data were brought in to help quantify those assets, economic potentials, and resources. And finally, the conversations moved to pinpointing strategies that would directly support the region’s industry clusters, communities, and populace.

The results: Our regional comprehensive economic development strategy identifies and seeks to implement specific actions that build a suitable environment for economic development - recognizing the interconnectedness of place, infrastructure capacities, access to resources, and long-term sustainability; all while staying true to a long-term vision.





**Vision:** South-Central Idaho is THE place to live, work, and play.

Over the next five years, Region IV Development Association seeks to promote the continued prosperity, progress and productivity of South-central Idaho by creating thriving, connected, sustainable, and evolving people, communities and economies.

To achieve this vision:

- We will cultivate ***Dynamic Economies*** by creating the environment that can successfully support industries that are diverse, sustainable, geographically dispersed, and globally competitive.
- We will engender ***Empowered People*** by fostering a culture that enables people to lead productive, prosperous and meaningful lives.
- We will develop ***Vital Communities*** by enhancing our communities' unique characteristics, strengths and assets to improve economic competitiveness.

During the discussions around these three affirmations, four areas of focus were identified that encapsulated the needs and gaps in the network of resources essential to crafting and pursuing effective strategies. The consensus of the working groups revealed that creating strategies that attacked gaps in education, community infrastructure, transportation, and entrepreneurial resources would have cross-cutting benefits – addressing the issues pervasive in the three categories - economy, people and place. The outcome is the attached regional strategy.



## Region IV Development Association, Inc.

Public entrepreneurs transforming ideas into achievements

*Facilitating solutions to problems, supporting access to resources, and leading practical collaborations between the private and public sectors*

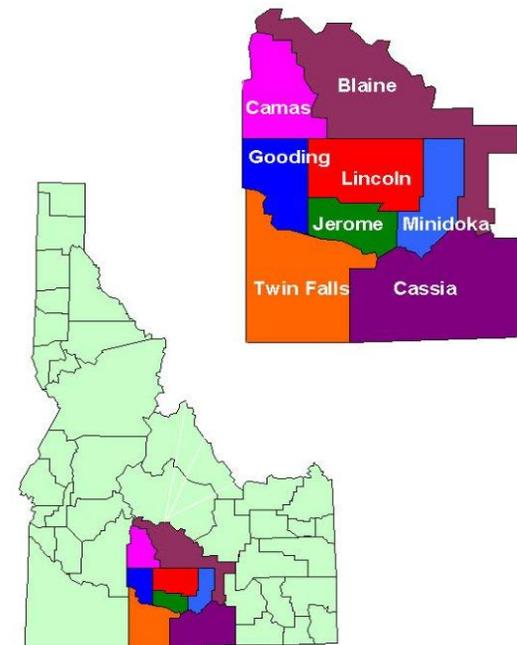
The Region IV Development Association (RIVDA) was established in 1975 by a group of local elected officials seeking to develop professional capabilities to respond to the needs of the area's small towns. By banding together, they hoped to achieve what they could not do alone. Financial resources and time were donated to provide the seed money necessary to start a "Council of Governments" - seeking solutions to common problems and help with the ever growing demands from the people in our communities.

As a member-driven, private, not-for-profit 501(c) 3 organization, RIVDA is governed by a 23-member Board of Directors comprised of local elected officials and representatives from private industry, labor, agriculture, higher education, commerce, finance, minority businesses and community organizations.

With a mission “to make community and economic development happen”, RIVDA also serves as the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration’s designated regional planning organization serving the eight counties of South-central Idaho – Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls.

Activities of the association include:

- Community development, grant writing, project development, project implementation, group facilitation
- Small business financing, planning, counseling





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This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was created with the support of the  
U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration

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The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is created through a process that brings together public and private sector stakeholders to provide a regional economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen a regional economy. The CEDS analyzes the regional economy, addresses regional economic problems, and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, identifying investment priorities and funding sources, and assigning lead organizations responsibilities for execution of the strategy.

## Chapter 2

# The Plan to Accelerate South-Central Idaho

With a vision to make South-central Idaho THE place to live, work and play, over the next five years, Region IV Development Association seeks to promote the continued prosperity, progress and productivity of South-central Idaho by creating thriving, connected, sustainable, and evolving people, communities and economies. These ideals are described as:

- **Dynamic Economies** creating the environment that can successfully support industries that are diverse, sustainable, geographically dispersed, and globally competitive.
  - Education and Workforce Development – A knowledge based economy requires the cultivation and preparation of the workforce
  - Healthy Communities – Investment in local products and resources strengthen the economic base of the community
  - Transportation – Idaho is the hub for commerce, vital to the global economy
  - Entrepreneurship/Economic Empowerment – An ever-changing economic climate demands the discovery of new ways of combining resources
- **Empowered People** fostering a culture that enables people to lead productive, prosperous and meaningful lives.
  - Education and Workforce Development – Lifelong learning is recognized as critical to empowered people
  - Healthy Communities – Access to quality health care must be attainable
  - Transportation – Transportation options must be available to allow people to get around – at whatever age, ability or income level
  - Entrepreneurship/Economic Empowerment – A comprehensive entrepreneurial environment must be established to create, develop and implement ideas
- **Vital Communities** enhancing our communities' unique characteristics, strengths and assets to improve economic competitiveness.
  - Education and Workforce Development – Education is crucial in meeting the needs of residents, industries and governments
  - Healthy Communities – A healthy community reflects a sense of mental and physical well-being which contributes to economic vitality
  - Transportation – Economic opportunities arise when transportation infrastructures are able to answer mobility needs and facilitate access to resources and markets
  - Entrepreneurship/Economic Empowerment – Strong economies are diverse and value human nature and capital



	<b><i>Dynamic Economies</i></b>	<b><i>Empowered People</i></b>	<b><i>Vital Communities</i></b>
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Creating the environment that can successfully support industries that are diverse, sustainable, geographically dispersed, and globally competitive.</b>	<b>Fostering a culture that enables people to lead productive, prosperous and meaningful lives.</b>	<b>Enhancing our communities’ unique characteristics, strengths and assets to improve economic competitiveness.</b>
	<b>Education - Workforce Development</b>	<b>Education - Workforce Development</b>	<b>Education - Workforce Development</b>
<b>Guiding value</b>	A knowledge based economy requires the cultivation and preparation of the workforce	Lifelong learning is recognized as critical to empowered people	Education is crucial in meeting the needs of residents, industries and governments
<b>Strategies</b>	Facilitate discussions between industry and education to match industry skill set requirements with educational standards	Develop network of entrepreneurial mentors to link education opportunities with innovators	Work with local Legislators to provide competitive teacher pay scales and incentives for remaining in Idaho
	Work with University, Community College, and industry leaders to create a food science and innovation center in the region to support the food processing industry cluster	Promote hands-on learning opportunities to engage students at early age with real-life business experiences	Support investment in alternative energy possibilities to create a climate for innovation - propose potential tax incentives to support the investment
	<b>Healthy Communities</b>	<b>Healthy Communities</b>	<b>Healthy Communities</b>
<b>Guiding value</b>	Investment in local products and resources strengthen the economic base of the community	Access to quality health care must be attainable	A healthy community reflects a sense of mental and physical well-being which contributes to economic vitality
<b>Strategies</b>	Create an asset mapping tool/format that will allow communities to determine/understand local resources and competitive advantages	Develop affordable housing tools that address the need for improved access to health care and public transportation	Increase investment in public amenities by engaging the Legislature on local option taxes, and other locally controlled tax flexibility
	Implement an assessment of wastewater capacities to identify the gaps and potentials of the region’s municipal systems for accommodating growth of our industrial base	Work with area EMS and fire departments to build capacity	Work with water managers and environmental quality agencies to mitigate the impact of water rights issues and to develop more flexible wastewater recycling and reuse rules

	<b>Transportation</b>		<b>Transportation</b>		<b>Transportation</b>
Guiding value	Idaho is the hub for commerce -- vital to the global economy		Transportation options must be available to allow people to get around - at whatever age, ability or income level		Economic opportunities arise when transportation infrastructures are able to answer mobility needs and facilitate access to resources and markets
Strategies	Develop an inventory of transportation/freight loads in and out of the region to improve the effectiveness of the freight network		Work with area providers and communities to develop additional public transportation options		Facilitate community planning efforts in land use and transportation planning, industrial/residential siting decisions
	Support ITD to increase state highway load limits and improved coordination between neighboring states on speed and load limits				Engage Legislators to develop resources for investment in roadway infrastructure to improve local transportation networks
	<b>Entrepreneurial Resources</b>		<b>Entrepreneurial Resources</b>		<b>Entrepreneurial Resources</b>
Guiding value	An ever changing economic climate demands the discovery of new ways of combining resources		A comprehensive entrepreneurial environment must be established to create, develop, and implement ideas		Strong economies are diverse and value human nature and capital
Strategies	Continue to work with communities on the development of universal broadband network to provide access to the global marketplace		Expand the working relationship with the Idaho Small Business Development Center to improve seamless support for entrepreneurs and access to business finance programs		Support Main Street programs in local communities to address business growth and market mix opportunities

Progress made on these strategies and anticipated activities for the coming year follows:

DYNAMIC ECONOMIES		
STRATEGY	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS 2017-2018
<b>EDUCATION - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Facilitate discussions between industry and education to match industry skill set requirements with educational standards	Workshops with the Idaho Department of Labor, College of Southern Idaho, and regional industrial partners held to identify skills gaps and assessment tools	*Preparation and dissemination of an assessment tool that will identify what specific skills/educational requirements need to be met to support local business growth *Formulate an asset map of existing skills within the region - retraining opportunities
Work with University, Community College, and industry leaders to create a food science and innovation center in the region to support the food processing industry cluster	Multiple meetings held with the University personnel to create a food science center and promote the creation of degree programs in Magic Valley	*Identification of existing physical space on CSI campus - specifically capacity for analytical chemistry; microbiology; food engineering; and process control *Exploration of the establishment of UI dairy management program in the Magic Valley
<b>HEALTHY COMMUNITIES</b>		
Create an asset mapping tool/format that will allow communities to determine/understand local resources and competitive advantages	Coordination with the Idaho Rural Partnership, Idaho Department of Labor, and University of Idaho on asset mapping and analytical tools for community and economic development	*Use existing resources/tools to assist communities with identification of assets and opportunities *Work with the Idaho Rural Partnership on asset mapping for community economic development
Implement an assessment of wastewater capacities to identify the gaps and potentials of the region's municipal systems for accommodating growth of our industrial base	Minimal progress on this initiative as many communities are working on individual wastewater improvement projects to address immediate NPDES or other federal clean water requirements	*Currently not materially significant as the capacity issues are being managed by the individual communities
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Develop an inventory of transportation/freight loads in and out of the region to improve the effectiveness of the freight network	Conducted a working session with leaders from different representatives of the logistics sector - including ITD and the railroad	*Pursue funding of the freight assessment - for trans-loading facility *Support WATCO - Mini-Cassia Commerce Authority development of logistics park in the Burley area
Support ITD to increase state highway load limits and improved coordination between neighboring states on speed and load limits	Working with WATCO and the Mini-Cassia Commerce Authority on recruitment of logistics partners for the food industry	*Continue to monitor Legislative actions regarding improvements to highway freight system and coordination
<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCES</b>		
Work with communities on the development of universal broadband network to provide access to the global marketplace	Continuing to work with communities on rural broadband access	*Research additional funding opportunities to help rural communities improve broadband access

EMPOWERED PEOPLE		
	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS 2017-2018
<b>EDUCATION - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Develop network of entrepreneurial mentors to link education opportunities with innovators	Contributed to ISBDC workshops on entrepreneurship	*Continue to support the ISBDC's mentoring program and technical assistance *Coordinate funding for entrepreneurial efforts around small producers and processors
Promote hands-on learning opportunities to engage students at early age with real-life business experiences	Assisting Hageman School District with the development of a culinary 'farm to table' curriculum	*Creation of a video competition highlighting careers in food processing/supply chain companies *Development of a "Shark Tank" for kids that can bolster entrepreneurial activities at an earlier age
<b>HEALTHY COMMUNITIES</b>		
Develop affordable housing tools that address the need for improved access to health care and public transportation	Identified potential grant resources to South-Central Community Action Partnership's self-help housing, as well as sources for infill projects for the City of Twin Falls	*Work with the City of Ketchum on the creation of affordable worker housing *Assist the City of Fairfield with the creation of multi-family rental housing
Work with area EMS and fire departments to build capacity	Coordinated construction activities for new fire station improvements in Paul and Filer	*Assist with project development for a new station in Gooding and Buhl
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Work with area providers and communities to develop additional public transportation options	Continuing discussions with the City of Twin Falls regarding the creation of a fixed route public transportation system	*Identification of resources for the planning and development of a fixed route public transportation system with the City of Twin Falls *Continue to provide technical assistance to area communities seeking to implement some form of public transit improvements
<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCES</b>		
Expand the working relationship with the Idaho Small Business Development Center to improve seamless support for entrepreneurs and access to business finance programs	Increased the number of clients transitioning from business planning to business implementation	*Continue successful partnership

VITAL COMMUNITIES		
	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS 2017-2018
<b>EDUCATION - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</b>		
Work with local Legislators to provide competitive teacher pay scales and incentives for remaining in Idaho	Idaho State Legislature is currently implementing a career ladder salary structure for the State's teachers	*Continue to provide information to the region's Legislative leadership on the value of an educated populace and the need to adequate support the wage structure for the region's teachers
Support investment in alternative energy possibilities to create a climate for innovation - propose potential tax incentives to support the investment	Prepared applications for USDA alternative energy improvements for local businesses and farming operations	*Identify resources to support the implementation of alternative energy throughout the region *Work with RIVDA board members on sustainability ideas and resources
<b>HEALTHY COMMUNITIES</b>		
Increase investment in public amenities by engaging the Legislature on local option taxes, and other locally controlled tax flexibility	Support communities working with Legislators on tools and programs that can assist local community and economic development activities	*Provide technical assistance to the region's communities through data and analytical information
Work with water managers and environmental quality agencies to mitigate the impact of water rights issues and to develop more flexible wastewater recycling and reuse rules	Facilitated discussions with processors and canal companies regarding wastewater discharge and potential for aquifer recharge	*Identification of planning/feasibility study resources for recharge project *Identification of implementation resources
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Facilitate community planning efforts in land use and transportation planning, industrial/residential siting decisions	Provided technical assistance to individual communities regarding industrial development	*Continue to act as a resource for communities in the region
Engage Legislators to develop resources for investment in roadway infrastructure to improve local transportation networks	Worked with members of the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee by providing data and other relevant information on infrastructure needs in the region	*Continue to act as a resource for communities in the region
<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCES</b>		
Support Main Street programs in local communities to address business growth and market mix opportunities	Participated in Kimberly Community Review and working with the City of Jerome on business activities in the downtown core	*Assist communities access the Idaho Department of Commerce's Main Street program and associated resources *Continue to promote Idaho Rural Partnership Community Review as a useful tool for determining community vision, values, potentials and opportunities

## Chapter 3 Technical Report

### Background - History of the Region

Forged from the volcanic and seismic turmoil now beneath Yellowstone National Park, the Snake River plain of South-central Idaho was further sculpted by the great Bonneville Flood and uplift of the Sawtooth Mountains. The resulting austere landscape supported native peoples, but offered little to the pioneers heading west along the Oregon Trail. Those hardy enough to try and homestead the high-desert plain found the going tough until businessman Ira Burton Perrine – I.B. Perrine – realized damming the Snake River could provide significant water to homesteads through a system of canals and ditches.



The wild dream of turning the desert into fertile farm ground was significantly helped by the Carey Act of 1894. Also known as the Federal Desert Land Act, this Congressional vision allowed private companies in the U.S. to erect irrigation systems in the western semi-arid states, and profit from the sales of water. The Carey Act was a new approach for the disposal of public desert land, as the federal government decided this task was too large for individual settlers.

Idaho was among the small group of states implementing projects under the Act -- and South-central Idaho became one of the most successful beneficiaries – turning the desert into the “Magic Valley”. Today, irrigation continues to make the desert bloom and provides the driver for the majority of the regional economy by turning a harsh desert environment into one of the most productive agricultural areas in Idaho -- and the Intermountain West.

## Overview of the Region's Economy

The economy of South-central Idaho is driven by agriculture. Agricultural production (and the associated food processing) provides almost 20% of the state's gross revenues, and a sizeable chunk of those dollars are generated in the "Magic Valley" – making this region home to one of America's most diverse food baskets.

The volcanic soils and irrigation water from the Snake River make the area a successful producer of a wide range of commodities. The State of Idaho ranks first in the nation for the production of potatoes, Austrian winter peas, and food sized trout accounting for 32%, 51%, and 47%, respectively. Production of five other agricultural crops rank Idaho second in the nation – barley, alfalfa hay, sugar beets, peppermint oil, and wrinkled seed peas. Moving up to 3<sup>rd</sup> in the national production mix are plums/prunes, all mint, hops, and the dairy statistics for total cheese, and milk production.



The farm and ranch output of the District's eight counties accounts for a large portion of Idaho's agricultural success. Approximately forty-six percent (46%) of Idaho's total farm income is produced in Region IV. According to the 2015-2016 Idaho Department of Agriculture statistical report, the 8 county area produces a significant share of Idaho's farm commodities and livestock including:

- 15,189,000 bushels or 16% of the state's wheat;
- 17,580,000 bushels or 34% of the barley;
- 8,100,000 bushels or 40% of the corn;
- 3,806,000 tons or 60% of the sugar beets;
- 1,434,000 tons or 34% of alfalfa hay;
- 380,000 bushels or 19% of the oats
- 765,000 hundredweight (cwt) or 41% of the dry beans; and
- 38,420,000 cwt or 29% of all potatoes.

Cassia County and Twin Falls County provided the region's agricultural lion's share of commodities. Cassia County farm production accounts for 37% of the region's wheat production; 32% of the potatoes; 24% of barley; and 25% of the oats grown in the region. Twin Falls leads the way in

corn, alfalfa hay and dry beans with 32%, 29%, and 52% of the regional production, respectively. Minidoka County remains the region's premier grower of sugar beets with 40% of the regional production.

The District also raises 44% of the State's cattle and calves – 20% of the beef cows, and a staggering 71% of the dairy cows. Area ranchers also account for 20% of the sheep and lambs in the state. The region accounts for all this economic activity despite a 22% decrease in the number of farming operations since 1987.



Region-wide, dairy and beef cattle outnumber people by almost 6 to 1. Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, and Twin Falls Counties account for more than 88% of the total number of cows in the region. In these four counties, the combined quantity of cows outnumbers the people by close to 7 to 1. Gooding County has more than 18 cows per person when compared with the 2010 Census population.

Agriculture's role in South-central Idaho contributes to more than 45% of the Region's gross product. To adequately show the importance agriculture plays in the economic stability, all value-added products must be included in this percentage. If South-central Idaho food processors' outputs are included, then the region's dependence on agriculture rises to 78% of the gross product.

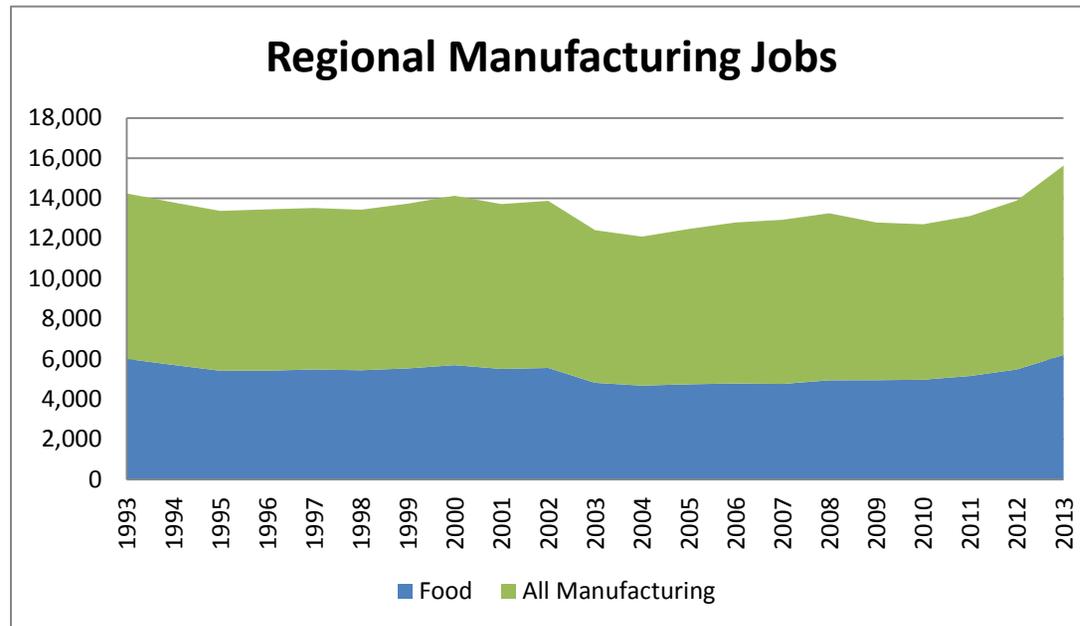
Agricultural processing remains a strong component of the economy. Lamb-Weston, McCain's, Rite-Stuff, and Idahoan process local potatoes; Amalgamated Sugar converts sugar beets into table sugar, industrial sweeteners, and animal feed additives; Standlee Hay enjoys an aggressive export market sending high quality alfalfa pellets to a number of Pacific Rim countries. Clear Springs Trout supplies almost 75% of the nation's food sized trout for consumption in fine restaurants across the nation. Moyle Mink tans locally raised hides for export to Russia's fur coat industry and sends the by-products to Rangen in Buhl to be used in the manufacture of fish feeds used by Clear Springs. The fish by-products created from Clear Springs Trout Company's processing are used in the mink feed for a closed loop.

### **Industrial Clusters**

By far, the largest industrial cluster in the region is food processing. This diverse food basket includes household names like Darigold, Chobani, Idahoan, and Clif Bar. Other local companies have a lower profile with products that appear on kitchen tables and restaurant menus without recognizable corporate labels: Clear Springs Foods rainbow trout, Con-Agra Lamb-Weston potatoes, and Independent Meat – Snake River Pork. You will taste our malted barley in your Coors, Modelo, or Budweiser beer. The region is also host to the manufacturers of the whey protein in your morning smoothie, the cheese powder in your favorite boxed mac-n-cheese, and the French fries accompanying your Happy Meal. Despite

the growing season limitations of the high-desert climate, South-central Idaho-raised fruit, mint, dry beans, lentils, and sweet corn may find their way into your grocery cart. The region is ‘meat and potatoes’ and so much more!

Leading the charge (and pushing the increase in the number of dairy cattle in the region) is one of the region’s strongest industrial clusters – cheese and dairy products. The increase in the number and size of dairy operations in the eight county area has led to the creation of a range of dairy-related expansions and business recruitments. Among these are Chobani, Jerome Cheese, Darigold, Idaho Milk Producers, Brewster Dairy, Gossner Foods, Glanbia Nutritionals, and High Desert Milk producing a range of Greek yogurt, cheddar, Swiss and powdered cheese/milk products.



Supply chain opportunities have helped a number of companies exploit a niche that complements the number of cows that need to be fed every day. Standard Manufacturing, PerforMix, the Scoular Company, and Standlee Hay are taking local grains and alfalfa crops and creating animal feeds to support the dairy industry. After the production piece of the dairy food chain, WOW Logistics expanded westward from Wisconsin’s ‘dairyland’ to provide warehousing and transportation services for finished dairy products – including refrigeration space and dry milk/whey storage.

In more recent years, the region has increased efforts to diversify the economy from its dependence on agriculture. These concerted efforts have led to significant advances in

manufacturing employment. Area communities have successfully recruited expansions by out-of-state companies and encouraged home-grown operations to development new capacities.

			Total # of establishments
<b>31 - Manufacturing Detail</b>			<b>243</b>
311	Food Manufacturing		55
	3111	Animal Food	12
	3112	Grain and Oilseed Milling	1
	3113	Sugar and Confectionery	5
	3114	Fruit and vegetable preserving	7
	3115	Dairy Product	11
	3116	Animal Processing	5
	3117	Seafood Production	3
	3118	Bakeries and Tortillas	7
	3119	Other food	4
312	Beverage		2
314	Textile		7
315	Apparel		1
316	Leather		2
321	Wood		19
322	Paper		3
323	Printing		10
324	Petroleum		1
325	Chemical		14
326	Plastics		9
327	Nonmetallic		7
331	Primary Metal		3
332	Fabricated Metal		38
333	Machinery		19
335	Electrical Equipment		3
336	Transportation Equipment		5
337	Furniture		24
339	Miscellaneous		21

Among the recent recruits and expansions to the industrial base are: Glanbia, Chobani, Clif Bar, Hilex-Poly, Gem State Processing, Brewster Dairy, High Desert Milk, Packaging Specialties, Hy-Line, Fabri-Kal, and Gossner Foods.

Local companies Pickett Equipment, Microbial-Vac Systems, Scoular Company, Reed Grain, and Kodiak Northwest have undertaken company start-up, created new production lines, or expanded capacity. These developments have established industrial clusters around small machined parts, heavy equipment fabrication, cheese and dairy operations, and plastics.

Location, location, location. The intermountain west location of our eight counties provides our food processing companies with a competitive advantage for reaching many west coast markets in under 24-hours – making the most of the region’s abundance of raw materials, labor, and relatively lower energy costs.



With all this product coming and going, regional attention is also being given to the transportation/warehousing sector. A growing number of companies are engaged in logistics, warehousing, and freight handling. These logistics companies are finding that southern Idaho provides access to west coast markets while offering a lower cost of doing business than comparable California, Washington, or Oregon locations.

WATCO, the region’s short-line railroad is stepping up to provide logistics and freight services for the area's perishable food producers - with a state of the art facility in Burley currently being developed. The new business park will have the ability to serve regional clients and attract additional supply chain partners to a 93-acre site in conjunction with the Mini-Cassia Commerce Authority.

2009 County Business Patterns			
Major Industry			
48----		Transportation and warehousing	336
	481	Air transportation	8
	483	Water transportation	1
	484	Truck transportation	244
	485	Transit and ground passenger transportation	13
	486	Pipeline transportation	1
	487	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	0
	488	Support activities for transportation	33
	492	Couriers and messengers	16
	493	Warehousing and storage	20
			336
Truck transportation - 244 companies			
	General freight - 138 companies		Specialized freight - 106 companies
Of the general freight (138) - 35 are engaged in local hauling and 103 in long-distance loads			
Of the specialized freight (106) - 7 are local household goods movers, 78 are local goods and 21 haul long-distance			





The region is also home to a strong, internationally-recognized tourism economy. World-famous Sun Valley resort is located in Blaine County. The amenities and natural conditions of this part of the area bring countless tourists (and their dollars) to the region. Several outdoor equipment manufacturers have located their headquarters in the area in order to have a “Sun Valley” address to use in their marketing materials. Over the last several years, the resort (and nearby communities) has been positioning themselves as a year-round destination. Mountain biking, camping, hiking, fishing, and other outdoor fair-weather activities are now drawing a significant number of visitors to help the local businesses survive the end of ski season slump.

Other outdoor activities attract visitors from around the globe and contribute to the diversification of the economy. Snow-sports – The region is home to four large-scale commercial ski areas – Soldier, Pomerelle, Magic Mountain and world-famous Sun Valley. Miles of backcountry skiing as well as

Nordic trails are also available in several parts of the area. Snowmobiling is also a significant local pastime with groomed trails and warming stations providing visitors with support for outdoor adventure.

Boating and Rafting - From whitewater to flat water, the region is blessed with an abundance of boating opportunities on one of the premier rivers of the West - the Snake. Centennial Park, directly under the Perrine Bridge, is a wonderful spot for a low-key canoe outing. Just a bit further south in the Hagerman Valley, there is a short, forgiving whitewater stretch that is a favorite with paddlers of all abilities including Class II and Class III rapids. Known as the “Hagerman Stretch”, it combines big water with modest rapids in the warmest part of the state. This portion of the river is well suited to paddlers of middling ability but no place for rank beginners. More advanced whitewater enthusiasts can tackle big rapids on the “Murtaugh Stretch”. This 14 mile section of the Snake River is renowned for its 16 class III, IV and V rapids. Other boating opportunities include Salmon Dam reservoir, Murtaugh Lake, Wilson Lake, Redfish Lake, Magic reservoir, and countless other streams and water bodies.



Rock Climbing - City of Rocks rivals Yosemite National Park as a western favorite for technical rock climbers and is widely considered one of the world's top rock climbing destinations. International climbers come to the City of Rocks Reserve to climb on Rabbit Rock, Morning Glory Spire and Bread Loaves. Granite faces rising as high as 700 feet offer a variety of challenging routes. The degree-of-difficulty scale for rock climbing here runs from the least difficult at 5.0 to 5.10, most difficult. The statuary of Twin Sisters, 62 stories above the road and Bath Rock - one of the present day landmarks ascending 260 feet - are some of the taller formations.



Another opportunity for the extreme sport enthusiast, the Perrine Bridge across the Snake River in Twin Falls is one of the few places in the U.S. where jumping off a bridge is not only permitted, but embraced. When the weather is warm and the wind is right, BASE (Buildings, Antennae, Spans, Earth) jumpers come from around the globe to jump off the Perrine Bridge in Twin Falls. With the banks of the Snake River providing the landing spot over 486 feet below, the Perrine Bridge offers some of the most ideal and breathtaking jumping conditions. The 'Perrine Bridge Festival' in August brings additional jumpers from around the world to South-central Idaho to take part in jumping exhibitions, listen to music, and enjoy regional cuisine.

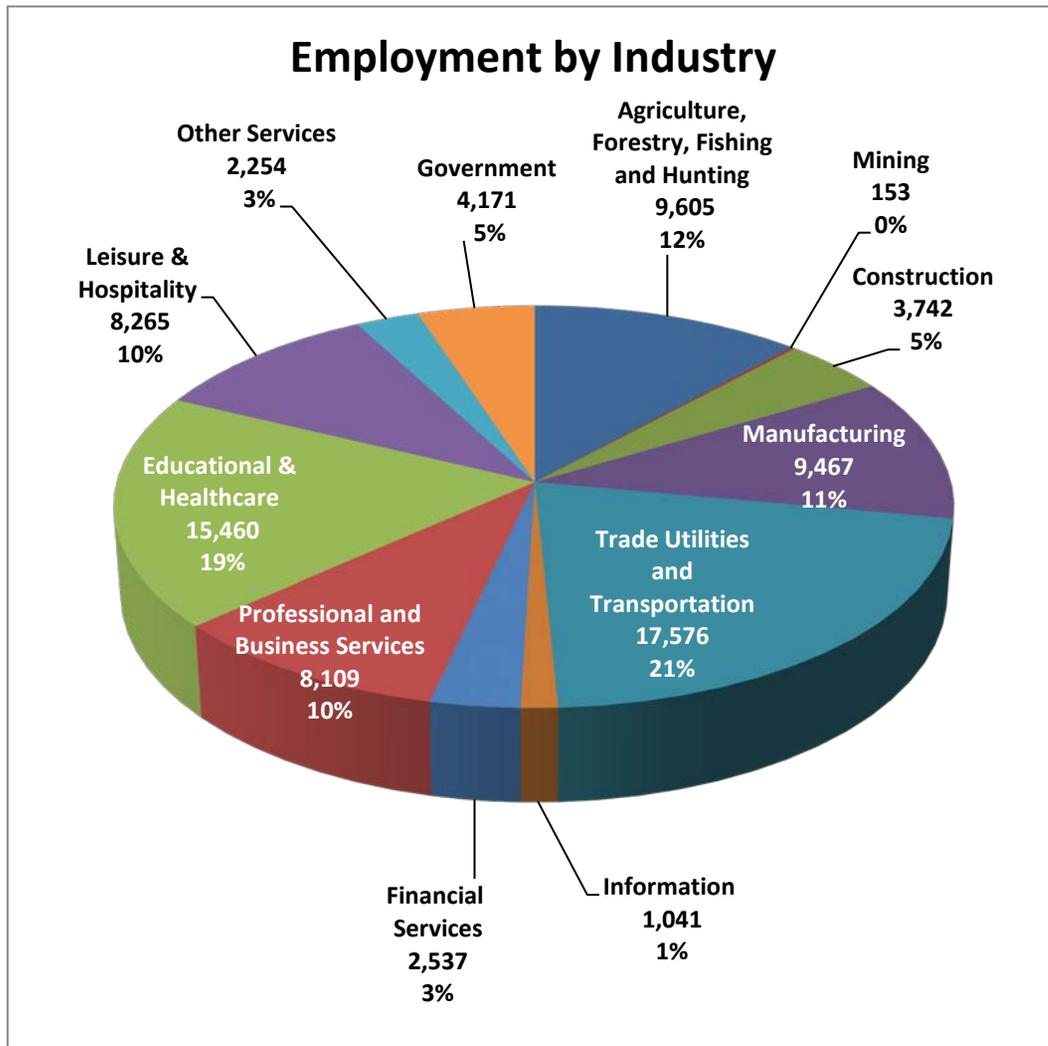
Taking advantage of other natural resources to drive the economy, another emerging industrial sector is alternative energy.

The Idaho Power Company, with their traditional power-generation base of hydro and coal-fired plant, is also working with small wind power generators to meet their "green goals"; and the College of Southern Idaho is taking the lead in developing curriculum to train workers in these emerging fields.

Dairy- based methane gas recapture is being used for power generation, wind projects are lining the Snake River Canyon and being positioned on BLM ground.

Hydro has always been a factor in bringing electricity to the eight counties; and living above the hot spot that created Yellowstone National Park provides a ready source of geothermal resources for power generation and hot water for space heating.





The mix of industries in the region has remained relatively stable with the addition of a handful of ancillary businesses capitalizing on changes in the global market place and Idaho's proximity to those markets.

A diverse plastics industry has been growing, primarily in Jerome and Twin Falls counties. The companies have national and regional presence – making everything from plastic bags and eating utensils to foam packaging to PVC pipe. Metal fabrication is also gaining a foothold in the region.

As with every region of the state, construction is still recovering after the housing bubble burst. South-central Idaho is operating at about 60 percent of the prerecession level, and the recession job losses saw many of those skilled workers leave the sector, limiting the labor force available in the recovery.

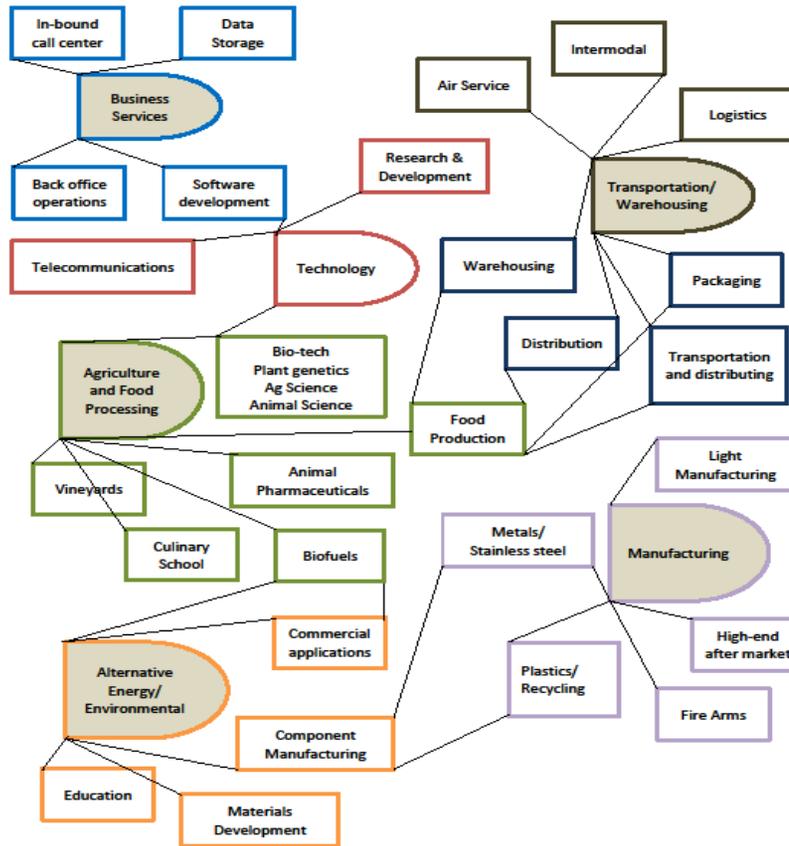
Retail and wholesale trade is strong. The City of Twin Falls is the retail hub for roughly 250,000 consumers spanning a radius of more than 100 miles. National retailers have had a strong presence in Twin Falls, and turnover has been limited. Twin Falls is also home to the largest regional medical center and the College of Southern Idaho.

### Target Industries

Understanding the natural clusters in the economy based primarily around agriculture and natural resources, a recent analysis identified several logical additions and innovations that can help the region achieve greater stability and long-term growth.

This chart provides a glimpse at the current connections and offers a vision for future recruitment, expansions, and entrepreneurial opportunities. With our regional economic development partners, District staff is working to enhance economic opportunities by capitalizing on the linkages between our base industries and the next generation of business innovations. Integration, value-added production, supply chain management – each of these challenges are being considered as the region works to re-tool itself for the next wave of economic growth.

While the area remains a powerhouse in agricultural production and processing, the questions become – how do we improve efficiencies and profitability in order to move to that next level of global competitiveness? How does the region remain relevant in that global economy? Basically, what else can we do with what we have? It comes back to making the best use of the assets. The region is already playing hard to the strengths inherent in our demographics, workforce, capital resources, and industrial base.



### Employment Trends in South-central Idaho

People remain the most important piece in the regional economic development puzzle. From providing support for entrepreneurs in creating innovative concepts and companies, to training and engaging the workforce required to make those ideas real, maximizing local brain power and talent are critical to the continued success of the region.



According to the Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho led the nation in the percentage of hourly employees who made the minimum wage in 2012. Nearly 8 percent of the state's hourly workers — 31,000 people — made \$7.25 an hour or less. That is the highest percentage for Idaho since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics started making estimates a decade ago. Idaho's minimum wage workers increased by 63 percent from 2011, when the state ranked 30th. While this low-wage environment may be good news for employers seeking to minimize labor costs, the small paychecks have serious implications for families across the state.

Wages in South-central Idaho remain some of the lowest in the state. Analysis indicates that this is due to several factors: a high percentage of jobs are agriculturally-based; there is little wage competition from Nevada - the area's bordering state which eliminates any market-forced boost of wages; and there are few major employer/corporate headquarters that pull in CEO wages and professional jobs. In concert with the low wage levels, the region continues to suffer a significant underemployment (living wage gap) and lack of access to benefits.

This combination of factors creates unique characteristics in the local workforce – first, most families must have both parents work to make a living; and second, the workforce is very elastic in that people are willing to change jobs for as little as a ten cents an hour increase in wages – especially if there are benefits. Many workers are employed at two or more part-time jobs, which increases their receptiveness to switching jobs to gain full-time (living wage) employment.

This propensity to job-hop for better wages and benefits is evidenced by the number of applicants that turn out for positions that offer above average salaries/hourly rates and benefit packages. Thirty-five (35) percent of the workforce is estimated to have no access to company provided fringe benefits. This group is always a potential applicant pool for employers that are willing to provide this incentive.

The region has seasonal structural unemployment in construction and agriculture. Harvest brings peak employment in the early fall with the processing of vegetables and sugar beets requiring immediate attention and seasonal hiring. The unemployment rate in recent years has tended to



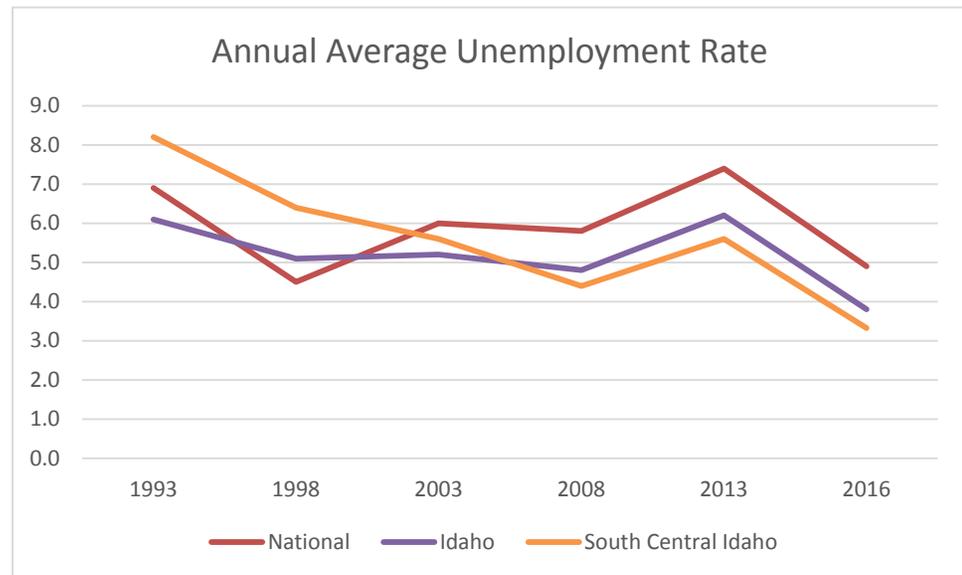
be lower than the state, which has been below the national rate for a dozen years. The civilian labor force has grown over the last 20 years, but the bulk of that growth was between 1993 and 1998 when the dairy industry was expanding and housing was booming. Food processing helped maintain the labor force during the Great Recession, with only Blaine, Camas and Lincoln counties seeing a decline.

Most counties in the region experienced the size of their labor forces expanding faster than their populations as more women and young people went to work, following a state and national trend. Women still account for less than half the region's labor force and participate at a lower level than either statewide or nationally.

Unemployment rates	1993	1998	2003	2008	2013	2016
National	6.9	4.5	6.0	5.8	7.4	4.9
Idaho	6.1	5.1	5.2	4.8	6.2	3.8
South Central Idaho	8.2	6.4	5.6	4.4	5.6	3.32

As the largest portion of labor force - the baby boomers - ages, the region anticipates that by 2016, there will be a 63 percent increase for the population cohort, aged 55 and older. The current workforce approaching retirement has survived

periods of high unemployment, stagflation and recessions. Now, they are facing a personal crisis with the revelation that many of them are not prepared financially to retire. These individuals will either continue in their current occupations, or retire and take on another job potentially in a radically different career.



**Demographic Information**

2017	Total Population
Blaine	22,024
Camas	1,102
Cassia	23,664
Gooding	15,124
Jerome	23,627
Lincoln	5,318
Minidoka	20,729
Twin Falls	85,124
<b>Region IV</b>	<b>196,712</b>
Idaho	1,716,943

Idaho’s growth over the last decade once again showcases the notion that ‘we have been discovered’. As with the previous Census, steady increases were experienced by all of the eight counties. While the State of Idaho grew by more than 32% since 2000 - adding almost more than 1/2 million people, the eight counties in Region IV picked up an additional 23,393 residents for a growth rate of 14%.

Subsequently, this rapid, unsustainable growth has returned to a more modest level

and now stands closer to 2% annually since 2010.

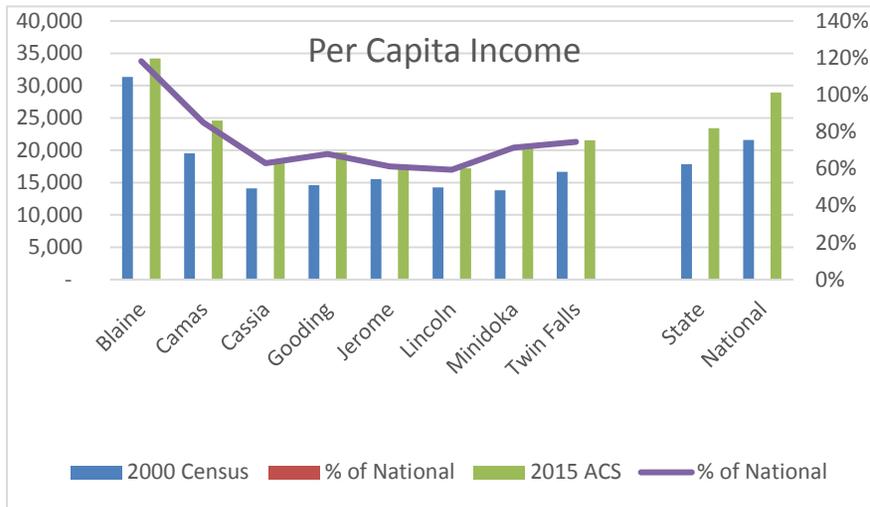
The region has the highest percentage of Hispanics – 22.5 percent, almost double the statewide percentage and five percentage points higher than the nation – and is host to people from at least 14 countries. The Twin Falls refugee resettlement office, set up 20+ years ago, influences the region’s cultural diversity. These workers, often with limited English proficiency, initially take on low-paying, low-skilled jobs, but subsequent generations typically realize more success as language skills are developed and access to higher education improves.

PER CAPITA INCOME				
	2000 Census	% of National	2015 ACS	% of National
Blaine	31,346	145%	34,208	118%
Camas	19,550	91%	24,588	85%
Cassia	14,087	65%	18,227	63%
Gooding	14,612	68%	19,688	68%
Jerome	15,530	72%	17,708	61%
Lincoln	14,257	66%	17,204	59%
Minidoka	13,813	64%	20,674	71%
Twin Falls	16,678	77%	21,553	75%
State	17,841	83%	23,399	81%
National	21,587		28,930	

**Socio-economic data**

According to the latest statistics available through the Idaho Department of Labor, per capita income is again on the rise. With growth in non-farm jobs (42 percent over the last 20 years -- outpacing the nation and just short of the 44 percent growth statewide), average pay is up 78 percent, exceeding both the nation and the state figures. However, even with the marked increase in average wages, per capita income – statewide and for all the region’s counties but Blaine – is below the national level. Blaine County leads the state in per capita income in part due to the number of affluent people drawn to the world-renowned resort area.

The last complete Census of the population in rural Idaho took place in 2000. The more recent 2010 decennial count did not use the traditional long-form to capture the usual range of data sets, so comparisons of the socio-economic data down to the community level are much more difficult. The 2000 Census indicated that Per Capita Income (PCI) was on the rise. The individual county figures more than a decade ago ran



from \$31,346 in Blaine County to \$13,813 in Minidoka County – approximately 145% to 64% of the national PCI of \$21,587. The City of Minidoka came in with the lowest figure and posted a dismal PCI of \$5,728, while in Sun Valley, the PCI was more than \$50,000.

Fast forward to the 2015 estimates generated by the American Community Survey (ACS) for the communities within the eight county area. For the most part, the eight counties in South-central Idaho appear to be falling off the national pace. As a percentage of the National figure, PCI fell for seven out of the eight counties. Only Minidoka County was projected to have gained ground compared to the National PCI.

Despite best intentions to produce usable Census data more frequently than the decennial inventory allows, the new ACS has

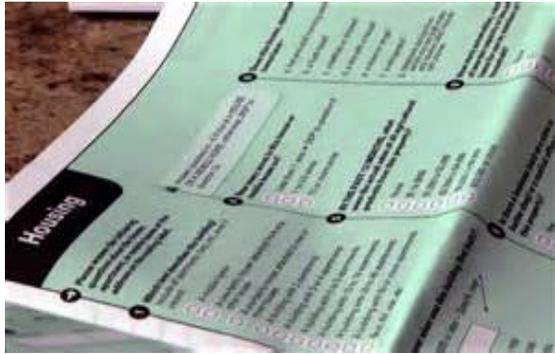
some serious problems when it comes to taking stock of the demographics and socio-economic conditions of our smallest communities.

Drilling down to the individual town level, the ACS has the tiny community of Minidoka more than doubling its population – from 112 at the 2010 Census to 245 according to the 2012 ACS estimates. And with that amazing burst of in-migration, per capita incomes magically jumped from the low \$5,728 PCI in 2000 to \$14,072 for 2012 – (146 %!). Must be something in the water --- or more likely a glitch in the American Community Survey sample and analysis.

Taking a look at the same correlating data from the 2000 Census and the 2012 ACS on Median Household Income (MHI), similar issues with the accuracy of the data are evident. In the 2000 Census data, Median Household Income (MHI) increased across the Region - rising from figures that barely reached 60% of the national MHI in 1990, to most Counties posting MHI in the 70-80% range. In that last round of Census-collected statistics, the majority of the Region had achieved household incomes that fell between 76 and 120% of the U.S. MHI of \$41,994. The County MHI(s) range between \$50,496 (120%) in Blaine County to \$31,888 (76%) in Gooding County. However, for families in the individual towns, the MHI ranges from \$21,250 in the City of Minidoka to \$71,000

Median Household Income				
	2000 Census	% of National	2015 ACS	% of National
Blaine	50,496	120%	60,088	112%
Camas	34,167	81%	42,614	79%
Cassia	33,322	79%	45,695	85%
Gooding	31,888	76%	39,930	74%
Jerome	34,696	83%	41,630	77%
Lincoln	32,484	77%	43,273	80%
Minidoka	32,021	76%	44,853	83%
Twin Falls	34,506	82%	44,048	82%
Idaho	37,572	89%	47,583	88%
National	41,994		53,889	

in Sun Valley - roughly 51% and 169% of the national MHI, respectively. The new ACS statistics demonstrate an incredible reversal.



When the ACS data are compared to the 2000 Census, by some mathematical miracle, the little City of Minidoka leaps from last in MHI to 4<sup>th</sup> in the region with a MHI of \$58,158 – more than Sun Valley’s MHI of \$56,071. That’s a 174% change. Amazing – yet very disheartening. While the statistical anomaly (and likely inaccuracy) makes for interesting conversation, does it really matter to anyone besides the number crunchers among us? The short answer is “Yes” – most emphatically. Federal programs that support infrastructure development base many of the decisions about their level of participation (grants, matching funds requirements, loan interest rates, etc.) on the published (federally recognized) statistics on income. In the case of Minidoka, this means that their water improvement project will receive less favorable consideration because of a federally-sanctioned statistical inaccuracy. The same statistical inaccuracy that more than doubled the City of Minidoka’s population in two short years.

Poverty statistics continue to reflect a growing divide in incomes between the larger communities and the rural towns. Nationally, in 2000, poverty was running at around 9.2% of the population; while in the eight counties, poverty rates ranged from 4.9% up north in Blaine County to 11.9% in Minidoka County. Among the communities in the region, the City of Castleford (Twin Falls County) posted 32.7%.; and in case you wondered – the City of Minidoka – 27.6% (the second highest) and Sun Valley 2.7% the lowest.

Here the ACS strikes again with poverty statistics all over the map. Nationally, the number of citizens scraping by is now bumping up against 16% of the population. Locally, the City of Bliss went from a modest 11.5% poverty figure in 2000 to a staggering 45.8% according to the ACS. The City of Minidoka rockets in the other direction with their poverty percentage plummeting from 27.6% in 2000 to 0.8% (*yes, the decimal is supposedly in the correct position*). Sun Valley clocks in with a poverty rate of 6.4%. Interesting...

It’s all about the margin of error for the new ACS figures. For a lot of these data points, the examples are almost comical. Seems that the smaller the community – the worse the numbers can get skewed by the small sample size analyzed. In the City of Murtaugh, their new ACS Median Household Income is \$30,000 – however, there is a  $\pm$  \$29,994 margin of error. For that population figure in Minidoka (the one that went from 112 to 245 in two years), the margin of error there is  $\pm$  193 people. Makes the numbers a tad suspect! – And very difficult to use when making strategic decisions about the future of the region.



**Educational attainment**

The region continues to struggle with overall education level. Levels remain below figures for the rest of Idaho and U.S. The region’s heavy agricultural concentration initially drove the lower-skilled labor pool. Agriculture’s continuing influence and the rise in value-added food processing jobs have enabled workers in the region to make a decent living without attaining a bachelor’s degree. Today, local companies are desperately searching for skilled workers capable of tackling advanced food science and the technical demands of the computer-manufacturing environment.

**Geography**

The region is home to some truly amazing (and varied) geography. The District is centrally located in the southern portion of the State of Idaho. The City of Twin Falls is the largest community in the District with almost 43,000 people. Twin Falls serves as the major retail, wholesale, medical and educational center for the Region. Boise, the State Capital, is located roughly 120 miles to the west along Interstate 84. Boise’s estimated population recently topped the 205,000 mark and



is the State’s largest community. The City of Pocatello lies roughly 120 miles to the east

along Interstate 86. Pocatello’s population is slightly larger than 55,000 - the fifth largest in the State. Salt Lake City, Utah is the nearest major metropolitan area - only 222 miles away by Interstate to the south.

The land of the EDD represents a complex mixture of land types. The mountainous area in the southeast portion of the District lies in the Basin and Range Geomorphic Province; the mountainous or hilly areas of the south-central and south-western portions are part of the Owyhee Uplands section of the Columbia Intermontaine Province; the central part of the District from east to west, lies in the Eastern Snake River Plain. North of the Snake River Plain lie the basaltic Bennett Hills; north of the Bennett Hills lie the fertile agricultural lands of the Camas Prairie and the rugged southern mountains of the Idaho Banolith - the Soldiers, Pioneers, Boulders, and Sawtooths. Elevations range from 2,000 feet where the Snake River exits Gooding County to 12,078 at Hyndman Peak east of Ketchum. With some areas referred to as high desert, others as forested mountain, the Region exhibits numerous soil types and natural vegetation varieties.

<b>Educational Attainment, 2015</b>		
	High School Diploma	BA
Blaine	90.3%	42.9%
Camas	87.1%	18.3%
Cassia	79.9%	17.8%
Gooding	75.8%	14.3%
Jerome	72.3%	14.0%
Lincoln	78.6%	11.6%
Minidoka	76.7%	12.9%
Twin Falls	85.5%	17.7%
Idaho	90.0%	26.0%
U.S.	87.1%	30.6%
Source: Stats America		

Due to these varied landforms, the overall regional climate is considered moderate. Although the area has four seasons, there exists a wide range of temperatures and conditions throughout the year. The higher mountain areas generally experience more snow and cold, while the Hagerman Valley nestled in the Snake River canyon is often referred to as the “Banana Belt” capable of raising fruit and melons. Avid golfers can play

virtually year-round, while skiers can generally enjoy snowy conditions from November through April.

2017 Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)			
County	Payment	Total Acres	\$ per acre
Blaine County	2,061,773.00	1,323,837.00	\$ 1.56
Camas County	163,668.00	443,580.00	\$ 0.37
Cassia County	2,247,018.00	922,507.00	\$ 2.44
Gooding County	668,430.00	251,430.00	\$ 2.66
Jerome County	256,927.00	96,880.00	\$ 2.65
Lincoln County	892,886.00	585,251.00	\$ 1.53
Minidoka County	474,546.00	178,912.00	\$ 2.65
Twin Falls County	1,692,593.00	638,145.00	\$ 2.65
	8,457,841.00	4,440,542.00	\$ 1.90
Idaho Total	30,054,704.00	32,619,640.00	0.9213684

The District is composed of eight counties and thirty-four incorporated communities and encompasses 11,502 square miles. Of the 7,364,864 acres, federal, state, or local units of government control approximately 63%. Roughly 37 percent is privately held. With the majority of some counties controlled by the federal government, the payments in lieu of taxes income become substantial.

Rangeland constitutes the major land use with over half (56.5%) of the District designated as Range. Agricultural uses require approximately 1.7 million acres or 23% of the available land. Lava flows have caused the classification of slightly over 1 million acres in the District as "Barren". Development in Lincoln County is seriously affected by this problem as the majority of the County -

399,400, or approximately 51.9% of the available land area, is designated as Barren. Lava also presents some land use problems in Blaine, Jerome, and Minidoka Counties. Forestland covers six percent (6.01%) of the District. Only one-half of one percent (0.54%) of the District is classified as Water and four-tenths of one percent (0.35%) as Urban.

**Natural Resources**

The greatest natural resource in the eight counties is the Snake River. From salmon recovery to aquifer recharge, agriculture to power generation, the Snake River is one of the hardest working (and consequently one of the hardest to manage) rivers in America. Totally dependent on snowfall in the upper basins of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, the fortunes of thousands rely on the sometimes stingy and capricious gifts from Mother Nature. In South-central Idaho, water provides the lifeblood of practically every aspect of the regional economy. The region was nicknamed "Magic Valley" because of the blooming of the desert triggered by irrigation. The harnessing of the Snake River, Wood River and Snake River Plain Aquifer has created an agricultural oasis supporting many diverse crops.



Although water is primarily used for agriculture, it is also necessary for industrial and domestic use. Tourism impacts on the economy are also tied to the availability of water for fishing, boating, swimming and – skiing. As a result of this overwhelming connection between water and the economy, the region’s leaders must pay special attention to water quality and quantity issues.

There are three major aquifer types in Idaho each characterized by distinctive geology. Examples of all three of these aquifer types can be found in South-central Idaho. Numerous basalt flows and thin, inter-bedded sediments characterize basalt aquifers. The principal aquifer of this type, and the principal aquifer in Idaho, is the Snake River Plain Aquifer extending from Ashton to Bliss. This system discharges over 6.5 million acre-feet annually into the Snake River, and provides for the water needs for over 275,000 people. This aquifer encompasses the major portion of the Region. The

Snake River Plain Aquifer has received the EPA’s designation as a “sole source” aquifer for the entire South-central Idaho area based on the Code of Federal Regulations. Tributaries and canals associated with the Snake River affect every part of the region and provide for domestic, municipal, and agricultural uses.

Although not as hard working as the river system, the region is home to several conservation areas, nationally designated recreation areas, protected wildlife habitats and historic communities. These resources contribute to the economic vitality (and livability) of the region in a variety of ways.

The City of Rocks in southern Cassia County has gained national distinction as a rock climber's heaven. Recently designated as a National Reserve (1988), this area holds a prominent place in the history of the Oregon and California trails. Wagon ruts and axle grease graffiti left by the pioneers can be seen among the massive rock formations rising from the valley floor. Cassia County is the only county in the Nation with five pioneer trails - the California Trail to Salt Lake City; the California Trail to Oregon; the Oregon Trail; the Hudspeth Cutoff; and the Salt Lake trail to California.



The Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) is primarily located in Blaine and Custer Counties. With spectacular scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, the SNRA offers year-round outdoor activities. Established in 1972, the SNRA covers roughly 758,000 acres. Within the recreational area are 217,000 acres of designated Wilderness. The SNRA boasts five mountain ranges (Boulder, Sawtooth, Pioneer, White Cloud and Smokey Mountains), 1142 lakes, 1000 miles of streams, and 740 miles of maintained hiking trails. The 36 developed campgrounds support 727 camping units - throughout the summer months these units rarely go without weekend inhabitants.

### Transportation



Transportation and transportation issues are always at the forefront of economic development considerations. The Region has been able to attract several manufacturing, processing and distributing firms by capitalizing on our central location for the Pacific Northwest and Pacific Rim markets. Maintaining transportation infrastructure is a critical part of our overall economic development strategy.

Communities in the region also recognize the importance to the region's economic vitality and livability of maintaining a quality transportation infrastructure. However, despite consistent efforts to improve mobility within the region, communities continue to face the ongoing issues of increasing traffic congestion, deteriorating roadways, limited alternatives to automobile travel, and archaic funding mechanisms that do not keep pace with the needs of the system.

#### Roadway Network

The regional roadway network consists of:

- Four federal highways (U.S. 20, U.S. 26, U.S. 30 and U.S. 93);

- Several State highways that are the primary linkages between communities within the region;
- Interstate 84, the principal east-west statewide corridor;
- Interstate 86, linking Interstate 15 in northern Utah with I-84 on the eastern end of the EDD;
- County roads, that serve the rural areas of the region and serve as secondary connections between cities; and
- City street systems.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) continue to increase due to population growth and the regional pattern of employment concentrating available jobs in the larger urban centers and the Wood River Valley (WRV) of Blaine County. As a result, a growing number of workers are commuting out of their communities of residence to their work sites. Despite some modest efforts at the State level to add new revenue [and bonding of future revenues] to address some immediate highway improvement issues, funding for the roadway network has not kept pace with either maintenance needs or the need to increase capacity where traffic volume has grown most significantly.

The major capacity constraints are:

- Along the U.S. 93/Idaho 75 corridor from Twin Falls through Ketchum
- U.S. 93/North Blue Lakes Blvd. in Twin Falls
- The single bridge over the Snake River linking the City of Twin Falls with I-84
- Overland Avenue in Burley





Interstate 84 provides the major east/west transportation route through the District. Travelers on Interstate 84 can go west to Portland, Oregon or south/east to Salt Lake City, Utah. Just east of Burley, Interstate 86 branches off from I-84 toward eastern Idaho - Pocatello where it links up with Interstate 15 to Idaho Falls (north) and Salt Lake City (south). Another major north/south route is U.S. 93 - over-the-road truckers favor this route as a more direct access from Canada to California.

The Region does not have a metropolitan area and as such no metropolitan planning organization has been established to assist in the identification and prioritization of transportation projects in the Twin Falls/Jerome area of the district.

#### Rail Service

Passenger rail service does not exist in the Region. Amtrak provides daily passenger rail service at Elko, Nevada, approximately 150 miles south and southwest of Twin Falls. The scheduling of this option is very inconvenient.

The Union Pacific Railroad serves the District with mainline service at the Cities of Minidoka, Shoshone, Gooding and Bliss. Service to Acequia, Rupert, Heyburn, Declo, Burley, Murtaugh, Hansen, Kimberly, Filer, Buhl, Hazelton, Eden, Jerome, and Wendell is available through Eastern Idaho Railroad. Freight services are often constrained by the availability of containers/cars and rail line capacities.



#### Air Service

Regularly scheduled commercial air service is available at the Magic Valley Regional Airport located roughly 10 miles south of Twin Falls. The



airfield is capable of handling single engine aircraft, small private jets, and the occasional 727. Commercial passenger service via SkyWest Airlines (Delta Connection) from Twin Falls is available to Salt Lake City where connections can be made to major airlines and destinations. Twin Falls no longer has commuter service to Boise -- Horizon Air discontinued their scheduled flights due to a lack of profitability. This has created some economic hardships for area business and tourism travelers. Airfreight service for overnight delivery is still available through a few major carriers.

Friedman Memorial Airport (SUN) in Blaine County is Idaho's second busiest airport. It serves the communities of Blaine County, including Ketchum, Sun Valley and Hailey and the world-famous Sun Valley Resort. SUN offers non-stop commercial air service to Salt Lake City via SkyWest Airlines and Seattle and Los Angeles (seasonally) via Alaska/Horizon Airlines. United Airlines provides seasonal service to San Francisco and Denver. Commercial service has been approved for regional

jets and the airport and its partners are working to secure new direct service to other cities. Atlantic Aviation serves a robust general aviation business, up to C-III class aircraft. Due to site limitations, which cause winter weather-related diversions, an effort has been under way for some years to relocate SUN out of the relatively narrow mountain valley to flatter terrain to the south. The Federal Aviation Administration has suspended this effort for now and both site and operational improvements at SUN have been undertaken to improve reliability.

#### Public Transit

There are two primary public transit systems in the District:

- Mountain Rides, providing scheduled fixed and deviated-route, and on demand bus transportation primarily in the Wood River Valley of Blaine County (WRV). Mountain Rides recently instigated a fixed bus route linking Twin Falls and the WRV with twice daily service and a fixed route for passengers travelling from Shoshone to WRV with service four times daily. Mountain Rides also provides van pool service for commuters working in the WRV and living in outlying communities in Blaine, Camas, Lincoln, Gooding, and Jerome Counties.
- Trans IV Busses, providing on demand and limited deviated fixed route service within the Twin Falls, Kimberly, Filer, Buhl, Jerome, Wendell, and Gooding areas. Door-to-door demand-responsive service is available to seniors and persons with disabilities. In response to local request for service, Trans IV has started a fixed route service linking Twin Falls with the Burley area in Mini-Cassia.



In addition to these providers, there are various levels of assisted living facilities that provide transportation for their clients and other paying customers. The majority of the senior centers in the District have a van or small bus provided through the Idaho Transportation Department. The Twin Falls and WRV areas also have private taxicab service available.

Southern Idaho and the region are served by Salt Lake Express (SLE). SLE is a for-profit transit provider linking Boise, Twin Falls, Pocatello, and Idaho Falls with the medical facilities and airport at Salt Lake City.



Among the strengths identified by the CEDS committee:

Assets	Strengths
College of Southern Idaho	Good work ethic
Western location	Affordable land
Railroad	Low utility rates
Interstate access	Low labor rates
Dedication to working together	“Chobani effect”
K-12 schools	Diverse nature of geography, etc. (i.e. Snake, canyons, etc.)
IMCP designation	Best growing conditions for seed crops – low disease, irrigation, etc.
Ag-Food industries	Collaboration – all of the above!
Work ethic	Capacity for dairy cows
Scenic natural resources	CSI
Relatively undeveloped	Family friendly/welcoming culture
Workforce and employment opportunities	Quality of Place & Recreation
Job growth	Agricultural Production is high
Fundraising capabilities of the region's non-profit sector	Relatively crime free
Proximity to food sources and the natural environment	Interstate 84
	Character of the people, work ethic, values
	Water
	Wildlife
	Excellent air/water/quality
	Diversity of agriculture/foodbasket
	Lack of pollution
	Public lands
	HUB location b/t Boise/SLC
	Language skills high (i.e. multiple foreign languages)
	FedEX/UPS Overnight Guaranteed from Region

Most repeated: Agriculture – the region is ALL THINGS FOOD; People work together; “Can-Do” attitude; and regional cooperation



Among the weaknesses identified by the CEDS Committee:

Obstacles	Weaknesses
Workforce -more employable people	Level of poverty is high/part-time jobs w/ no benefits, living wage
Transportation system	Crime rate is higher – Twin Falls
Diversification (Non-Ag-related business)	Quality of housing stock –substandard
Housing	Deficit in cultural sensitivity and inclusion
Infrastructure	Aging infrastructure – built envt., businesses (outdated facilities, etc.)
Communication	SOV-centric transportation choices – severe traffic patterns
Lack of IMCP understanding	Public lands
Trained workforce	Work ethic – some businesses have expressed concern
Housing	Education is not valued adequately – esp. higher ed
Infrastructure	Lower wage jobs
Transportation system	Air service connectivity
Water	Public transportation – connectivity
Rural broadband	Freight/Passenger Rail challenges
Affordable health care - rural access	Water availability
Job growth	Skilled workforce in trades – prof. tech ed
Cost of infrastructure improvements	Exports to Asia
Health care	Ability to transport
	Lack of vision for the future
	Too conservative – all of the above/not conservative enough – political polarization
	Sewer capacity – in some cities
	Lack of broadband – access/affordability
	Lack of diversity in Housing stock – especially affordable/quantity of rentals
	Lack of Transmodal/trans-shipping facilities
	Lack of value in skilled trades industry – not a preferred career path, awareness, cross-over skills

Most repeated: Perception that the area is not a major market/metro; Current unemployment rate; Lack of broader educational opportunities; Affordable housing.



<b>Opportunities</b>
Manufacturing clusters/jobs –
Negotiate w/ biz to encourage higher wage rates/fringe
Encourage a variety of career tracks
Value-Added to commodities that are exported – the “chili effect”
Celebrate cultural heritage – events, fun-stuff
Adding diversity to the area
New vendors – secondary suppliers to base/primary industries
CSI
Food productivity
Local COOPs
Green industries – energy production, recreation
Natural capital is HIGH
Regional airport/freight and passenger train
Higher level of educational attainment
Develop/encourage/draw Creative Class
Better regional public trans. connectivity

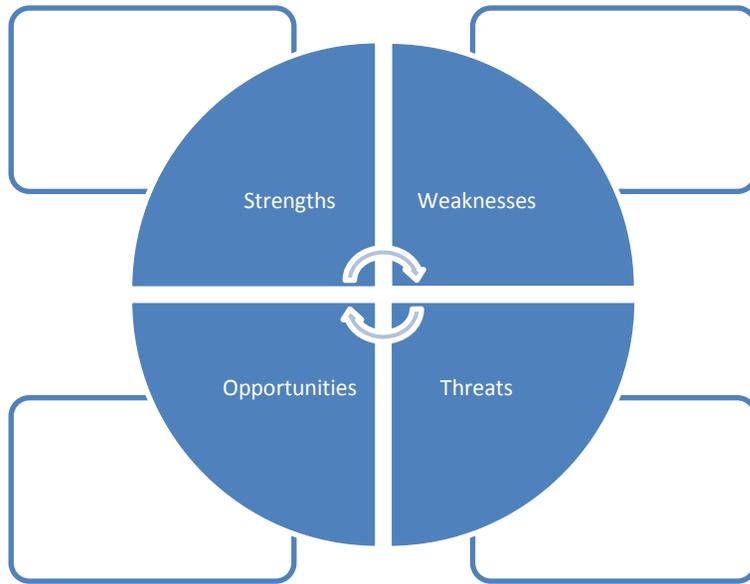
Most repeated: Expand research and innovation resources to support food production, processing, and science; supply chain recruitment/value added processing; participation in the development of the University of Idaho Ag-Research Center; and Smart Growth strategies for sustainability.



A lot of threats were identified. Among those that rose to the top were:

<b>Threats</b>
Potential to over-turn 1995 Nuclear waste agreement/Snake River plain aquifer storage
Rising home prices/mortgage rates
High cost of healthcare/consolidation in healthcare providers
Lowering of water table
Climate variability/change
Consolidation of agriculture/fewer farmers (i.e. potato growers is reducing, bean warehouses, etc.)
Lack of diversity in agricultural offerings
Agribusiness – GMO/Round-up situation
Decreasing sense of community – lack of personal interaction
Nitrate in groundwater
Columbia River Treaty
Outside demands on the River – other states/countries needing our water, etc.
Aging/lack of infrastructure
Food security – GMO
Fear of change
Patterns of land use development – sprawl, planning in general, etc.
Broadband inaccessibility
Public transportation
Undereducated workforce
Under-supporting social services --
Electrical transmission – interruptions
Downtown deterioration – all of them...

The threats that loom largest were: Changes in federal budget priorities; Inability to fill employment positions with qualified people; and Immigration 'reform'.



Analyses – the region remains a strong economy with a diverse assortment of food production, processing, and science partners. Currently, the food cluster is the largest industry sector in the region, with plastics a close second. Although this dominance in agriculture helped the region weather the most recent economic downturn, the opportunities for continued growth are constrained by environmental and political factors -- many of which are beyond local control. Diversification – of employment opportunities and industry partners - remains a goal for the region’s communities.

Economic resiliency: For the long-term durability and sustainability of the economy, the region must safeguard access to water. Whether from ground water, or snow melt and reservoir storage, the entire food economy is driven by the ability to make things grow in the high-desert of the Magic Valley –and this translates to the application of water to an arid (though fertile) soil. Even the Sun Valley tourism economy has some dependence on the amount of snowfall the mountains receive. While we cannot control Mother Nature, that does not mean that certain actions cannot be taken to address any potential

water shortage. Efforts are underway with the University system to develop drought resistant varieties of many of the crops that are the basis for the economy. Additional work is also being initiated to introduce reuse/recycle projects at municipalities and at companies throughout the region – to make the most of what we have of that precious resource.

On the policy side, immigration reform is also one of the largest unknowns facing the local economy. A significant portion of farm labor is provided by an immigrant population. With the new administration taking a hard view of documentation, many long-time community members are concerned with the possibility of deportation for themselves and their families. Advocacy groups are participating in information sharing with the Congressional delegation and industry partners to find a solution that will maintain access to this critical component of the labor force.

## Chapter 4

# Regional Action Plan

With a greater emphasis placed on identifying the competitive advantages we have to work with, the regional action plan takes our assets and mixes them into different combinations that can achieve a greater level of prosperity, and in these uncertain economic times – some measure of stability.

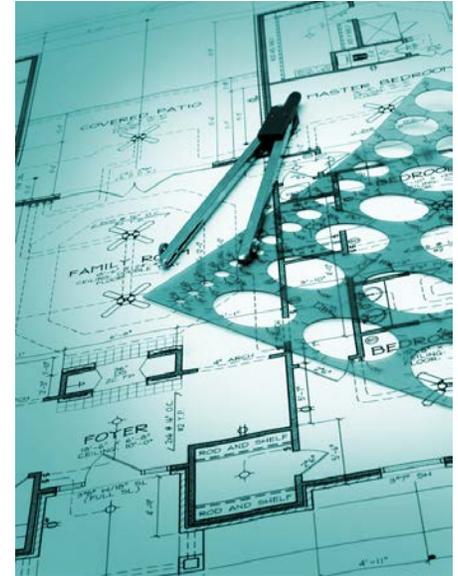
The work of the strategy committees has helped identify gaps in that inventory of resources and provided some insight into infrastructure priorities that can better link our economy with the outside world. In the growing knowledge economy, food production and processing may seem to rank fairly low on the technologically-advanced scale compared to aerospace engineering or designing computer chips, but there is more to production agriculture than plunking a seed into the dirt and standing back. From GPS-based planting and harvesting systems to computerized sorting, processing, and packaging equipment, today's agriculture is a far cry from our grandfather's day.

Similar advances have been experienced in the processing plant. Computer operated production lines, automated packaging systems, and global logistics tracking have dramatically changed the factory floor – and the skill sets needed by the people on the line and in the innovation laboratories designing the next generation of food products.

Whether on the family farm or in the local potato processing plant, the technical sophistication of the equipment being used is demanding a similar technical sophistication of the workforce. With the application of technology in every aspect of the region's economy, our labor pool must constantly update its level of training just to keep pace -- much less to excel. The problem is -- all that training takes facilities, curriculum, and cash; which, in turn, requires some tough decisions in a tight economy.

At the same time, our communities need to keep pace with infrastructure development. Broad-band access, wastewater processing, transportation corridors, and school facilities all lead the list of public investment needs and opportunities.

With a vision to make South-central Idaho THE place to live, work and play, over the next five years, Region IV Development Association seeks to promote the continued prosperity, progress and productivity of South-central Idaho by creating thriving, connected, sustainable, and evolving people, communities and economies. These ideals are embraced as:



**Dynamic Economies** creating the environment that can successfully support industries that are diverse, sustainable, geographically dispersed, and globally competitive.



**DYNAMIC  
ECONOMIES**

- Education and Workforce Development – A knowledge based economy requires the cultivation and preparation of the workforce
- Healthy Communities – Investment in local products and resources strengthen the economic base of the community
- Transportation – Idaho is the hub for commerce, vital to the global economy
- Entrepreneurship/economic empowerment – An ever-changing economic climate demands the discovery of new ways of combining resources

**Empowered People** fostering a culture that enables people to lead productive, prosperous and meaningful lives.



**EMPOWERED  
PEOPLE**

- Education and Workforce Development – Lifelong learning is recognized as critical to empowered people
- Healthy Communities – Access to quality health care must be attainable
- Transportation – Transportation options must be available to allow people to get around – at whatever age, ability or income level
- Entrepreneurship/Economic Empowerment – A comprehensive entrepreneurial environment must be established to create, develop and implement ideas

**Vital Communities** enhancing our communities' unique characteristics, strengths and assets to improve economic competitiveness.



VITAL  
COMMUNITIES

- Education and Workforce Development – Education is crucial in meeting the needs of residents, industries and governments
- Healthy Communities – A healthy community reflects a sense of mental and physical well-being which contributes to economic vitality
- Transportation – Economic opportunities arise when transportation infrastructures are able to answer mobility needs and facilitate access to resources and markets
- Entrepreneurship/Economic Empowerment – Strong economies are diverse and value human nature and capital

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**In delineating the strategies, the CEDS Committee was asked to identify policy recommendations, program development suggestions, and public investments that would have the greatest impact on the viability of the region's economy.** The 'fleshing out' of the proposed strategies was focused on those priorities as established by the RIVDA Board of Directors. While no less important in the bigger picture, the Board chose to target staff resources on the tasks that would have a direct impact on the economic stability of the region. Additional work to delineate the action steps associated with the remaining strategies is part of the Board's quarterly meeting agenda.

### **Dynamic Economies**

Objective – Creating the environment that can successfully support industries that are diverse, sustainable, geographically dispersed and globally competitive

- Strategy: Facilitate discussions between industry and education to match industrial skill set requirements with educational standards

Outcome(s): Creation of stackable credits/training modules to include opportunities for incumbent workers, high-school graduates, and upper-division students. Further development of the College of Southern Idaho's ATE grant application to create a system of latticed credentials for maintenance; controls and instrumentation; and food safety and quality assurance. Development of career ladders, incorporating short term training that can be combined to gain immediately valuable technical skills, as well as college credit that can help build towards an eventual technical certification, Associates in Applied Science degree and possible transfer to a four-year program

- Action Steps: Participate in meetings with industry, the Idaho Department of Labor, and the College of Southern Idaho to identify skill gaps; initiating partnership agreements and assisting College staff with the development of funding applications for implementation.
- Strategy: Work with the University of Idaho, Community College, Idaho National Laboratory, and industry leaders to create a food science and innovation center in the region to support the food processing industry cluster

Outcome(s) – Creation of a joint private/public sector research complex that will address workforce gaps ranging from food science and QA testing, to product development and waste stream redirection. The proposed partnerships would help bridge the gap between the University of Idaho/Idaho National Laboratory's research capabilities and the private sector. Technology transfer opportunities would be explored. Efforts to create Food Science and Innovation programs similar to those at South Dakota State/ North Carolina State that are currently serving the needs of our local industries

- Action Steps: Facilitate discussions between the partners; draft applications for assistance with planning and development (and eventual construction); maintain database food processing industry needs; provide coordination of team efforts
- Strategy: Create an asset mapping tool/format that will allow communities to determine/understand local resources and competitive advantages

Outcome(s) – Development of a comprehensive overview and database of positive elements specific to the sustainability of individual communities

- Action Steps: Research applicable asset mapping tools; engage Idaho Rural Partnership for Community Reviews as a starting point for some communities; work with the Idaho Department of Commerce – regional economic development specialists to use their on-the-ground expertise to help identify assets and involve community members
- Strategy: Develop an inventory of transportation/freight loads in and out of the region to improve the effectiveness of the freight network

Outcome(s): Completion of a regional transportation and freight study to identify the types of commodities and products being shipped into and out of the region. To include an analysis of the different methods/modes of transportation being used by businesses across the region. The intent is to be able to use this information to connect inbound and outbound shippers to maximize efficiencies, reduce costs, and help regional companies to compete on a global basis. Additional goal of the assessment is to ascertain the potential for creating a public sector intermodal complex that can offer shipping, receiving, and industrial space for business expansion and relocation

- Action Steps: Development of a scope of work; recruitment of companies and shippers to participate; preparation of an RFP and contract with a responsible consultant; development of funding required
- Strategy: Support ITD to increase state highway load limits and improved coordination between neighboring states on speed and load limits

Outcome(s): Higher weight limits will allow larger loads to transit the region. Reduction of fuel use and operating expenses

- Action Steps: This strategy is a policy stance and will require education and conversations with individual Legislators. Although the CEDS Committee voiced this goal in relation to the transportation pathway, staff will not take an active role
- Strategy: Continue to work with communities on the development of universal broadband network to provide access to the global marketplace

Outcome(s): Access to the global marketplace; enhanced communications ability; expansion of home-based businesses

- Action Steps: Continued work with the LinkIdaho team working to expand broadband throughout the state; provide local support by facilitating community participation
- 

## **Empowered People**

Objective – Fostering a culture that enables people to lead productive, prosperous and meaningful lives

- Strategy: Develop network of entrepreneurial mentors to link education opportunities with innovators

Outcome(s): Creation of an economic ecosystem for entrepreneurial support; contribute to economic resiliency

- Action Steps: Partner with local chambers of commerce and the Idaho Small Business Development Center to facilitate a network of mentors and mentees to support start-up companies and innovation

- Strategy: Promote hands-on learning opportunities to engage students at an early age with real-life business experiences

Outcome(s): Establishment of a pilot project to connect students with the employment opportunities associated with the regional food sector, including culinary, food science, production agriculture, and small processing; replicate the program at other schools throughout the region

- Action Steps: Work with the Hagerman School District and local companies on the development of a new food science/culinary program to educate students on 'farm to table' food systems; engage the College of Southern Idaho and ARTEC to institutionalize the program and create portable credentials/dual credit for the coursework

- Strategy: Work with area public transportation providers and communities to develop additional public transportation options

Outcome(s): Improvement of workforce/resident mobility

- Action Steps: Facilitate exploration of fixed route and on demand public transportation opportunities for the Twin Falls/Jerome economic center, including preliminary route discussions

- Strategy: Expand the working relationship with the Idaho Small Business Development Center to improve seamless support for entrepreneurs and access to business finance programs

Outcome(s): Creation of a more cohesive approach to small business support and entrepreneurial growth; increase in the number of business start-ups and expansions; mitigation of business failures

- Action Steps: Relocate to joint office spaces that provide additional resources to entrepreneurs through counselling and finance programs.

### **Vital Communities**

Objective – Enhancing our communities’ unique characteristics, strengths, and assets to improve economic competitiveness

- Strategy: Work with local Legislators to provide competitive teacher pay scales and incentives for remaining in Idaho

Outcome(s): Improved teacher retention and consistency throughout the various school districts in the region

- Action Steps: Continue to provide data and information on the benefit/effectiveness of programs implemented locally

- Strategy: Support investments in alternative energy possibilities to create a climate for innovation – propose potential tax incentives to support investment

Outcome(s): Economic growth and improved environmental sustainability

- Action Steps: Support local communities on the development of alternative energy resources; identify resources for implementation of projects; address legislative data requests regarding best practices for public investment

- Strategy: Increase investment in public amenities by engaging the Legislature on local option taxes and other locally controlled tax flexibility

Outcome(s): Creation of more livable, walkable, and sustainable communities, as well as improving the ability of our communities to retain and attract new residents – contributing to the available workforce

- Action Steps: Provide support to communities seeking to leverage the local tax base to address needs and community improvements that can attract and keep residents
- Strategy: Work with water managers and environmental quality agencies to mitigate the impact of water rights issues and to develop more flexible wastewater recycling and reuse rules

Outcome(s): Specifically address one of the potential economic stressors – access to irrigation water – by developing reuse systems to mitigate demands on other finite resources

- Action Steps: Encourage the development of water reuse projects for small developments; work with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to identify opportunities for innovative pilot projects to demonstrate practicability
- Strategy: Facilitate community planning efforts in land use and transportation planning – industrial/residential siting decisions

Outcome(s): Sustainable growth of the economy while protecting critical prime farmland; focusing development to appropriate areas of our communities

- Action Steps: Facilitate land use planning/comprehensive planning by assisting local communities and jurisdictions with the updates of their individual comprehensive plans; provide coordination between jurisdictions to mitigate development conflicts
- Strategy: Support Main Street programs in local communities to address business growth and market mix opportunities

Outcome(s): Sustainable communities that can provide for local residents

- Action Steps: Facilitate access to Main Street programs, Community Reviews, and other tools for creating vibrant downtowns

## Chapter 5 Resiliency

No one wants to talk about the potential for disaster, yet for the sustainability of an economy, of a community, of a people, preparedness could mean the difference between weathering the storm and losing everything.

In South-central Idaho, the biggest threat to the sustainability of the economy is fluctuations in available irrigation water. Mother Nature provides the lifeblood of the region's primary economic engine – agriculture. With a high desert climate, every drop of rain or flake of snow is precious and one season to the next without precipitation could spell disaster for the driver of the regional economy. Drought – too little moisture either in the winter snow pack or in the fields during the growing season creates a large amount of stress. Too much water causes similar problems.

This year, Mother Nature was particularly generous with her snowpack and offered an early taste of spring. The result? Flooding on a massive scale. With farm fields underwater (and roadways washed out), the Region was off to a rocky start to this year's planting season.

On the other side of the water disaster spectrum is fire. Wildfire is an ever present threat as the region's communities and farm/ranch land are tied to the public lands held by the

Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. In the last decade, wildfires have wreaked havoc with several communities – from Ketchum/Sun Valley at the height of the summer tourist season to cattle ranchers in the south hills. Among the

largest fires in the nation at that time, the Murphy Complex (2007) and the Castle Rock fire (2007) burned through more than 700,000 acres. In 2013, the same area in Blaine County that endured the Castle Rock fire burned again – this time losing another 115,000 acres.

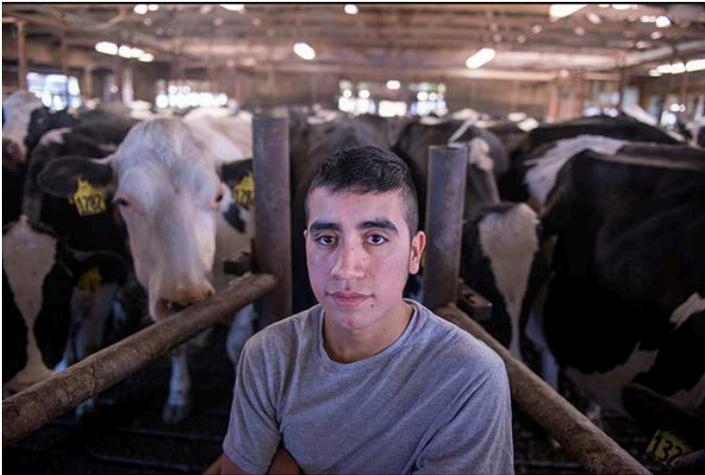
As a result, most of the Region's hazard mitigation plans focus on the wildland-urban interface. Wildland-urban interface fire plans are available on-line for Blaine, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls Counties.

# re·sil·ience:

the ability to bounce back when faced  
with stress or pressure.



Another issue looming large in the sustainability of the local economy is the issue of immigration reform. Although a political talking point/hot button within the D.C. beltway, our regional economy is driven by agriculture -- and for many inputs to industrial production that means farm workers. The Idaho Dairymen's Association is one of the leading advocacy groups working on the issue. <http://www.idahodairymens.org/immigration-reform/> Maintaining a supply of labor for dairy and crop production is critical to the sustainability of the region. Mechanization/automation has reduced that demand over the decades; however, some farm jobs still require hands-on help.



In South-central Idaho, the immigration issue reaches beyond just the farm field. Local processing companies are also struggling with the guest worker programs that limit their access to foreign-born science and technical employees. As several of the Region's companies are headquartered outside the U.S., access to qualified labor for their operations represents a bottleneck for their sustainability and growth potential.

The evaluation of risks to key economic assets included consideration of our ability to build responsive capacity. For the most part, national (or international)

downturns in consumer spending have not had a significant impact on the regional economy or demand for local products. "People still need to eat" and the Region will continue to produce food to meet that consumption. The difficulties occur when there are disruptions in the logistics system that gets product to market. Diesel prices, driver shortages, and road/weather conditions contribute to price increases that may make Idaho products less competitive in the global marketplace.



Among the efforts underway to create a more resilient system, comprehensive planning is taking a more proactive role in identifying corridors for industrial growth, while protecting critical farmland. Watershed protection, soil conservation, and invasive species eradication all contribute to the sustainability of the region as a powerhouse of food production. This approach to 'steady state' economic resilience takes into regard diversification (more value added production), as well as continuing to capitalize on the region's existing competitive advantages. Among the initiatives to bolster the economy from potential disruptions includes workforce training, transportation/logistics infrastructure improvements, and supply chain development.

## Chapter 6

### Performance Measures

To implement the region's development strategy, the efforts of RIVDA must be directed toward many individual activities and/or projects simultaneously. Understanding the potentials and constraints of the region's economy is critical to successful economic development. To this end, the gathering and analysis of information, progress points, and success factors is an ongoing task. The region's staff maintain direct contact with the various agencies and organizations that collect and disseminate information about economic trends, demographics, agriculture, environmental issues, and community interests.



RIVDA is concerned with all aspects of community and economic development. New employment opportunities are essential to the health and well-being of our communities, and adequate infrastructure for residential and business needs goes hand in hand with that philosophy. The limited resources of the Region IV Development Association will be used on the efforts that will provide the most benefit possible for the people of South-central Idaho. Twice annually, RIVDA provides data to the EDA regarding successful projects that have created new employment opportunities, leveraged private and public sector financing, and fulfilled a need in the region for economic stability and diversification.

The proposals identified within this CEDS will be measured for progress along the pathway of action steps. These steps towards success will be reviewed by the RIVDA Board of Directors and our industry and community partners. The RIVDA Board meets quarterly to monitor the progress of the region's initiatives and operations. The business leaders, educators, and agency personnel engaged in the specific implementation of the strategies will also be reviewing progress benchmarks as the proposals move forward.

As always, RIVDA staff is prepared to change gears when necessary to assist our region with pursuing opportunities not identified today. The RIVDA CEDS is not a static document with a single-minded attention to only those things on the horizon when the document is submitted to EDA. The staff and board believe that RIVDA must act as the region's team of public entrepreneurs - facilitating solutions to problems, supporting access to resources, and driving practical collaborations between the private and public sectors.

Measurable action Items are included under the individual objectives identified in Chapter 4.

# Chapter 7

## Regional CEDS Development Process

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is the culmination of a series of workshops, assessments, analyses, and discussions among business leaders, educators, government officials, and economic development professionals. Beginning with the shared statewide vision achieved by engaging people from across the state, and aligned with the other Economic Development Districts, the process moved into the regional level. The Region IV Development Association Board of Directors refined the vision to better represent the local ideal.

To capture the input of local stakeholders, strategy-specific conversations were held with industry leaders, subject-matter experts, and economic development groups to gather input on specific needs and direction. The Region IV Development Board of Directors drilled deeper into the recommendations to arrive at the proposed strategies. Among the community members represented in the effort were:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
* Alex Castañeda	Hispanic Business
* Barbara Cutler	Camas County
* Bob Kunau	Cassia County
* Brent Tolman	Idaho Department of Labor
* Chuck Corwin	Blaine County Communities
Craig Kelley	Rangen
Dale Gifford	Brewster West
* Dan Lloyd	D.L. Evans Bank
* Dan Olmstead	Idaho Power Company
* Don Hall	Twin Falls County
Dustin Person	Seneca Foods
Eddie Sanchez	Chobani
* Helen Edwards	Gooding County
James McShane	Con-Agra
Jeff Kronenberg	TechHelp
Jeff McCray	McCain Foods
Jeff McCurdy	City of Rupert
John Foltz	University of Idaho - College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
* Kelly Anthon	City of Rupert
Kenny Kneip	Idahoan Foods
Kent Giddings	Idaho Milk Products
* Kent McClellan	Minidoka County
* Lawrence Schoen	Blaine County
* Mark Mitton	City of Burley
* Mitch Arkoosh	City of Gooding
Rebekah Yancey	Commercial Creamery
* Robert Culver	City of Jerome
* Roger Morley	Jerome County
* Roy Villaseñor	Minority Organizations
Ruth Pierce	Certified Public Accountant
* Sherry Olsen-Frank	Certified Public Accountant
Stephanie Cook	Idaho National Laboratory
* Todd Schwarz	College of Southern Idaho
* Travis Rothweiler	City of Twin Falls
* Region IV Development Association Board of Directors members	