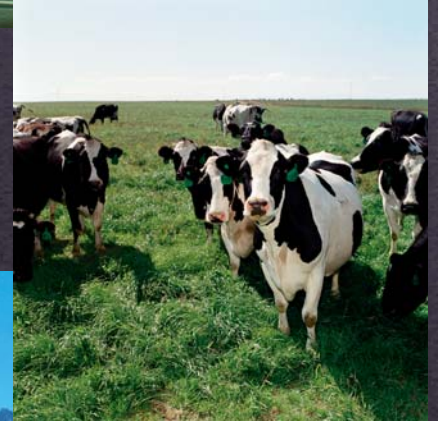
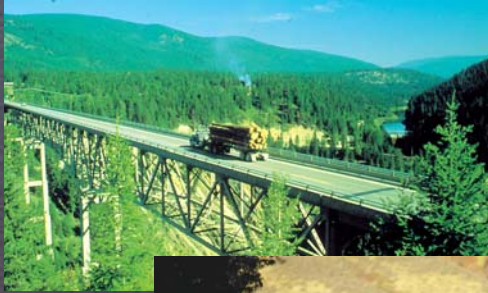


PROFILE OF RURAL IDAHO

A look at economic and social trends affecting rural Idaho



DIRK KEMPTHORNE, GOVERNOR ROGER B. MADSEN, DIRECTOR
IDAHO COMMERCE & LABOR



DIRK KEMPTHORNE
GOVERNOR

Dear Idahoan:

Idaho's greatness is in her people. Consider that almost a third of Idaho's residents live in rural areas, and they are as diverse as our state's unparalleled landscape.

The Profile of Rural Idaho highlights the strengths we share and the challenges we face.

Community members, working with leaders in business, government and the nonprofit sector, can gain a greater understanding of the entire state by reading this report. It is important for all of us to use the information contained in these pages to maintain Idaho's quality of life.

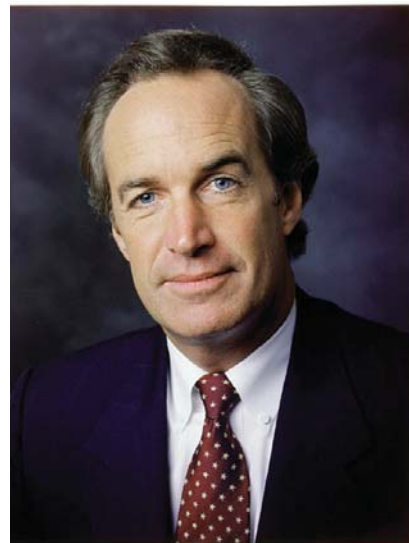
We are seeing many parts of the state grow at a record pace. Across Idaho, there are new industries, new jobs and new opportunities. Still, data and statistics also show that parts of rural Idaho are less prosperous than many urban areas in our state. I believe this highlights the importance of recognizing and understanding the economic, environmental and social impacts rural and urban areas have on one another. All Idahoans are better off when we think of ourselves as living in one Idaho.

Our rural residents are, and will always be, critical to Idaho's future. We all gain by building from those strengths born in our rural roots: creativity, work ethic and a can-do attitude to find new markets for our natural resources and agricultural products. At the same time, we are safeguarding our landscape and finding new ways to bring economic vitality to all of Idaho.

Teamwork, collaboration and partnerships are keys to our collective success. When those living in rural areas work with those in urban areas, and when business and nonprofits work with government, we can ensure that Idaho is a great place to live, work and play for many years to come.

Sincerely,
DIRK KEMPTHORNE

Governor



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Profile of **RURAL IDAHO**

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INTRODUCTION

Change truly is the one constant on which we can depend. If there is any question, travel throughout rural Idaho. Seasons change, challenges change and communities change. Some change is positive, some managed and some is out of our control. As human beings, it is our duty to seek change that is best for ourselves, neighbors, community and state. We must get ahead of the change and direct it when we can, adapt to the change we cannot control and maintain a positive approach throughout.

One of the most powerful ways to influence positive change is through partnership. Sitting down with people from divergent backgrounds to work toward a common goal of creating change or adapting to it benefits everyone who participates.

The Profile of Rural Idaho represents the power of partnership. The University of Idaho and Idaho Commerce & Labor invested greatly to gather, assess and organize the data. Numerous people from a variety of federal, state and private entities helped through the Profile writing process. Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) provided resources and technology and financed printing. The Profile is a tangible example of IRP's mission to join diverse public and private resources for innovative collaborations to strengthen communities and improve life in rural Idaho. The coalition of federal, state, local and private partners recognizes the importance of this profile and the possible positive changes that come from understanding the data. However, the true collaboration comes now.

The information represents the dynamic changes experienced in rural Idaho. Population fluctuations, rural economies and employment, agriculture and natural resource management issues, and educating Idaho's young people are challenges highlighted in the Profile of Rural Idaho. The issues are the impetus for divergent groups to gather with a single goal: How can Idahoans work together to improve the quality of life in this State? How can federal, state, private, and non-profit groups enter the realm of give-and-take, consensus building, collaboration, and ultimately partnership?

The process starts by critically assessing the data, setting aside agendas and entering the discussion asking, "What is best for rural Idaho?"

This is the fourth Profile of Rural Idaho. The data is collected and assembled every five years. We are most grateful to authors Priscilla Salant and Alan Porter. They, and respective staff, also researched the data. Salant works in the area of rural policy and assessment in the Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department at the University of Idaho. Porter is the manager of information services in the Communications & Research Division of Idaho Commerce & Labor. Christine Dearien and Debbie Gray, research analysts with the University of Idaho, and Tony Tenne, economic development analyst with Idaho Commerce & Labor, also researched the data and offered technical assistance. The document is available online at <http://irp.idaho.gov>.