



Community Development

23 north/central Idaho small towns begin journey to reduce poverty

Twenty-three small Idaho communities from Bonners Ferry south to Cascade—each with poverty rates ranging from 11 to 26 percent—recently began an 18-month effort to reduce poverty and create broad-based economic opportunity. Towns range in population from 226 to 4,900.

Called Idaho Horizons, the project is funded by major grants from the Northwest Area Foundation, St. Paul, Minnesota. The amount of the grants will depend on community participation levels. The foundation partners with the University of Idaho Extension and seven other land-grant universities to run the program in eight states.

"We learned a lot about what works from successes in pilot work in Elk River, Orofino, and Kamiah," says UI Extension's Mary Schmidt, who leads Idaho Horizons with Priscilla Salant, University of Idaho coordinator for outreach and engagement.

Schmidt's team recruited 11 coaches, five of them UI Extension educators, to support local residents as they work to make their communities more prosperous. Through March 2007, Horizons communities will explore local causes and impacts of poverty. All interested residents are encouraged to participate.

Through July 2007 residents will strengthen and broaden their leadership skills. In September and October they'll create a shared vision and action plans. From November 2007 through June 2008, University of Idaho Extension and partners will help communities identify and connect to resources to create thriving communities.

From north to south, participants include Bonners Ferry, Silver Valley (Kellogg, Pinehurst, Smeltonville, Wardner), Coeur d'Alene Reservation (Desmet, Plummer, Tensed, Worley), Up River (Fernwood, Santa, Emida), St. Maries, Bovill, Troy, Kendrick/Juliaetta, Cottonwood, Kooskia, Stites, Grangeville, Riggins, and Cascade.

For more details see <http://extension.ag.uidaho.edu/horizons/> or e-mail Schmidt at mschmidt@uidaho.edu.

Growing Eastern Idaho community leaders

A University of Idaho Extension program in community leadership development is literally helping rural communities in eastern Idaho to EVOLVE. Based on an emerging approach called Extension Volunteer Organization for Leadership Vitality and Enterprise, the trainings prepare leaders for Idaho's growing and changing communities. Participants and instructors are drawn from the communities, and goals are thoughtfully determined by steering committees of area residents.

Successfully blending the needs and expectations of newcomers with those of long-time residents demands skillful, effective, and visionary leadership, says Ben Eborn, extension educator in Teton County. He led a seven-month class in 2005-06 and plans another for October. In Madison County, colleague Gale Harding launched a class in mid-February, and counterpart Joel Packham in Bear Lake County will follow in late summer.

Contact Eborn at bebom@uidaho.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

17 OF 44 IDAHO counties have poverty rates greater than the national rate of 12.7%.

*Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2004

Snowmobiling economic for Valley County outlined in publication

A bad snow year in Valley County similar to the 2004/2005 winter could cost Donnelly, Cascade, and McCall some 20,000 visitors and \$2.2 million in sales from the snowmobiling crowd alone.

That is one finding of an economic study published in 2006 by the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in the *Economic Impact of Snowmobiling in Valley County*. The 8-page report also envisions staging a new snowmobile event similar to an annual fun-run co-hosted by county snowmobile clubs, drawing 800 visitors and \$220,000 in sales.

Or, if a new snowmobile area comparable to West Mountain near Cascade and Donnelly were to open, it could bring in some 7,200 visitors and \$830,000. Sales figures factor in meals, lodging, and direct snowmobiling costs.

The report is available at <http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/pdf/BUL/BUL844.pdf>.

