South Central Idaho News

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Strong job growth over the last three years has pushed unemployment rates in south central Idaho to historic lows. In the Twin Falls-Jerome Micropolitan Statistical Area, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 2.6 percent in August. The other counties in the region also experienced unemployment rates lower than the national rate of 4.7 percent. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in August were Blaine 2.9 percent, Camas 2.7 percent, Cassia 4.1 percent, Gooding 2.9 percent, Lincoln 3.9 percent and Minidoka 4.5 percent (see South Central Idaho Table 2 on page 17).

After four years of remarkable success in recruiting new businesses, south central Idaho continues to create jobs in large numbers. The Twin Falls-Jerome area added 2,360 nonfarm payroll jobs between August 2005 and August 2006. Manufacturing other than food-processing grew an impressive 14.8 percent, largely due to the openings and expansion of Jayco Inc., which makes recreational vehicles in Twin Falls, and Hilex-Poly Inc., a plastic bag maker in Jerome. Although residential construction is starting to cool, commercial and industrial construction are picking up the slack. The largest project under way is the new temple for the Church of Latter-day Saints in Twin Falls. Over 200 people are on that job. About 110 new local government jobs came from expansion at the Magic Valley Regional Medical Center, the community hospital in Twin Falls. Rising incomes and buoyant consumer confidence have led to strong growth in retail and service jobs.

The rest of the region also enjoys solid employment growth. South Central Idaho Table 2 on page 17 shows the growth in employed residents in the region between August 2005 and August 2006 compared to the growth in the state and the nation. Self-employed are included with payroll employees. Expansion and diversification of the economic base — along with high levels of construction, growth in tourism and rising incomes that spur the retail and service sectors — have led to great job opportunities for the region's residents.

South Central Idaho Table 1: Twin Falls-Jerome MicSA Labor Force & Employment—Twin Falls and Jerome counties

	Aug 2006*	Jul 2006	Aug 2005	% Change From Last Month	% Change From Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	50,710	51,340	49,370	-1.2	2.7
Unemployment	1,330	1,660	1,330	-19.9	0.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	3.2	2.7		
Total Employment	49,380	49,680	48,040	-0.6	2.8
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	51,490	51,610	50,010	-0.2	3.0
Unemployment	1,480	1,590	1,480	-6.9	0.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.9	3.1	3.0		
Total Employment	50,010	50,020	48,530	0.0	3.0
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	40,770	40,110	38,410	1.6	6.1
Goods-Providing Industries	7,680	7,240	7,080	6.1	8.5
Natural Resources & Mining	40	40	40	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,560	2,560	2,140	0.0	19.6
Manufacturing	5,080	4,640	4,900	9.5	3.7
Food Manufacturing	2,880	2,420	2,970	19.0	-3.0
Other Manufacturing	2,200	2,220	1,930	-0.9	14.0
Service-Providing Industries	33,090	32,870	31,330	0.7	5.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	10,250	10,170	9,240	0.8	10.9
Wholesale Trade	1,930	1,950	1,780	-1.0	8.4
Retail Trade	5,860	5,830	5,560	0.5	5.4
Utilities	170	180	170	-5.6	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	2,290	2,210	1,730	3.6	32.4
Information	610	610	610	0.0	0.0
Financial Activities	1,730	1,770	1,690	-2.3	2.4
Professional & Business Services	5,390	5,120	5,340	5.3	0.9
Educational & Health Services	3,580	3,600	3,310	-0.6	8.2
Leisure & Hospitality	3,410	3,430	3,270	-0.6	4.3
Other Services	1,490	1,480	1,430	0.7	4.2
Government Education	2,580	2,640	2,580	-2.3	0.0
Government Administration	4,050	4,050	3,860	0.0	4.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full– or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies in south central Idaho:

- Arnold Machinery in Twin Falls. Arnold's has Volvo construction equipment and Hyster forklifts.
- T's Beverage Barn in Twin Falls. "Drive into the barn and we will bring you your order."
- Dawg House Subs and Pizza in Kimberly.

South Central Idaho Table 2: Growth in Employed Residents

County/Area	Employed Residents *Seasonally Adjusted* Aug. 2006	Aug. 2005	Growth
Blaine	14,040	13,650	2.9%
Camas	560	550	1.8%
Cassia	10,330	10,000	3.3%
Gooding	8,770	8,130	7.9%
Jerome	10,460	10,180	2.8%
Lincoln	2,600	2,460	5.7%
Minidoka	9,690	9,370	3.4%
Twin Falls	38,920	37,860	2.8%
SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO	95,370	92,200	3.4%
STATE OF IDAHO	734,500	714,300	2.8%
United States *	144,579	142,425	1.5%

**In Thousands*

- Vinifera Wines in Historic Downtown Twin Falls. Vinifera offers a relaxing atmosphere to visit along with a wide selection of wines to purchase.
- Boys and Girls Club's new administrative building in Twin Falls. The Boys and Girls Club of Magic Valley provides summer and after-school programs to youth ages 6 to 18.
- Impact Athletic, formerly Racqueteers Health and Fitness, in Burley. The fitness center has added a number of services and includes not only pool, gym, weight room and other facilities but also fitness classes and personal training.
- Air Quality Services has a new location in Twin Falls. It continues to provide complete cleaning services.
- Ivan Merchants opened in Twin Falls. Banking and credit card banking along with risk management are its specialties.
- 1000 Spring Tours in Hagerman. The company offers a dinner cruise or a boat tour on the Snake River in the Hagerman Valley.
- AAMCO Transmission and Complete Auto Care Center in Twin Falls.
- Halo Zen in Burley. The business offers cuts, coloring, styling and perms along with manicures, pedicures and tanning.

Other Happenings in the Area:

- Clear Springs Foods Inc. in Buhl celebrated 40 years of operation on Sept. 9. The celebration included a dedication ceremony honoring the founder Ted Eastman. On Sept. 1, 1966, Eastman and other local investors made his dream of owning his own trout business come true when they founded Clear Springs Trout Co. Today Clear Springs Foods is the largest trout producer in the world. Owned by its 400 employees, it distributes products throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- The new $3.2 million biotechnology aquaculture laboratory and office complex at the Aquaculture Research Institute in Hagerman was dedicated by University of Idaho President Timothy P. White and Gov. Jim Risch. The new building includes six analytical laboratories, 14 offices and eight cubicles for technicians and graduate students. The facility has a room dedicated to archiving fish-tissue samples from around the Pacific Northwest for future DNA testing associated with research in population genetics of salmon, steelhead, trout, sturgeon, lampreys and burbot. The new biotechnology laboratory was constructed in collaboration with tribal partners from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, federal support and private donations. The facility will ensure the University of Idaho maintains international prominence in fish disease, fish nutrition and conservation fisheries research and in fish genetics and breeding.
- Ron Elkin of Buhl was recently named to the Idaho Barley Commission. Markets are a key concern for this newest member to the commission. Elkin farms between Buhl and Hagerman and will represent barley producers from Weiser to Rupert — an area that can consistently grow high-quality barley thanks to irrigation. About 23 percent of the state's 2006 barley crop was grown in this area. The closure of the Coors elevator has made growing barley more of a challenge. If new markets can be developed in human food products or fish feed, for example, growers will be able to meet the challenge with a quality crop.
- Intrepid Technology and Resource Inc. is adding an additional eight digester tanks to handle 6,500 cows at Whiteside Dairy near Rupert. The company turns dairy cow manure into methane and is expanding to produce enough gas energy to power 5,000 homes. The manure is pumped into digester tanks and heated to about the temperature of a cow's body. Then naturally occurring bacteria begins the chemical reaction that causes methane bubbles to rise to the top. It takes a minimum of 2,000 cows to make the project feasible.
- The city of Burley was awarded a $99,000 federal rural development grant to buy a well, water tower and water rights at a former fresh-pack potato plant west of Burley. The state provided another $750,000 in grants. They were awarded after Dutchmen Manufacturing announced plans to buy the plant for its western travel trailer manufacturing facility. The federal grant will also help other small businesses move to the area. Combined, the state and federal grants offset much of the $1.2 million the city had spent.
- Bellevue Square in Bellevue has four shops in its first development — Isadora, Lily's Closet, XCaret and Ab-

solutely Skin. The stores are owned by women who want to bring the "belle" out in Bellevue Square. Isadora's, owned by Diane Jarmusz, is a collection of pretty and practical joys and luxuries for women, most of which are "useupable." Lily's Closet has "cute and fun stuff" that Lily gets from wholesale markets in California at very reasonable prices. The choices are constantly evolving and include jewelry, purses and belts. Zaria and Maria Gomez opened XCaret in March, specializing in rustic home decorations of both old and new art mostly from Puebla and other regions of Mexico. In June, Candy Bradley opened the fourth store, Absolutely Skin. It carries exquisite collections of lotion, soap, bath soak, body scrub, face mask, massage oil and candles, and Bradley can help customers identify the herbal combinations for their specific needs. The store also carries gifts and hopes to add linens, lingerie and stylish picture frames in the future.

- Scott USA is anchoring a mixed use building under construction in Ketchum. The company, which markets ski, motocross and cycling equipment, accessories and apparel, has partnered with the Blaine Ketchum Housing Authority to provide 14 deed-restricted condos to qualified families on the authority's waiting list for affordable housing. The first floor of the 36,686 square-foot building will be office space for Scott USA. The second floor's 29,113 square feet will be for market-rate and deed-restricted condos and the 22,033 square feet on the third floor will be residential condos. Beside the office space, there will be 22 condos and six penthouse suites.

- Veltex, the 24-hour convenience store in Ketchum, has lots of business but not enough workers who want to work the graveyard shift. Beginning Sept. 1, the store will operate from 5 a.m. until midnight Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. until midnight on Saturday and 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sunday. Veltex was the only 24-hour business in Blaine County. Others in the Veltex chain have also changed their schedules because of both a lack of labor and safety issues.

- Jeff and Madonna Martin believe life is too short so eat dessert first, especially cheesecake. They own the Sun Valley Cheesecake Co. It supplies cheesecake and other desserts to area restaurants as well as individual slices at Ketchum's Farmers market, Albertsons and Atkinsons Market in Hailey. The Martins bake up their creations in the former Mama Inez restaurant just off Warm Springs Road. The cheesecake bill of fare includes New York style, key lime, white chocolate, raspberry, ginger peach, black cherry, black forest, lemon poppy, tiramisu, chocolate decadence, express, mint chocolate chip, praline, berry mascarpone, apricot, pumpkin, gingersnap, blueberry, banana crème, pineapple, peppermint, lemon sour cream, peanut butter cup, candy bar, chocolate chip, butterscotch, cookie dough and something called "Kermit's Chubby Turtle."

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