

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

317 W. Main Street
Boise, ID 83735-0790

TRANSMITTAL # **1**

MEMORANDUM

January 30, 2006

TO: Workforce Development Council

FROM: Megan Ronk, Senior Policy Advisor
Office of Governor Kempthorne

SUBJECT: WIRED Application

ACTION REQUESTED: Information only

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Department of Labor announced a new initiative, Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED), on November 18, 2005. This initiative provided a unique opportunity for states to compete for grant funding to develop and implement a transformational approach to regional economic development. The ultimate goal of the WIRED Initiative is to expand employment and advancement opportunities for workers and catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities in the context of regional economies.

Idaho Commerce & Labor submitted an application on behalf of Governor Kempthorne in support of the Governor's blueprint to restructure processes and adjust programs to respond to the labor needs of Idaho's high-growth industries in the areas of science, technology and advanced manufacturing in defined economic corridors, the Northern Idaho Corridor and the Snake River Corridor. The goals of the project are:

- **Transformation of Idaho's e³ Infrastructure** – Idaho's e³ system will meet the needs of workers and business, reaching beyond regional restrictions to maximize successes.

- **Transformation of Idaho's Workforce** – Idaho's e³ partners will integrate efforts to identify, develop and deliver a highly skilled work force for Idaho's targeted high-technology industries—imaging, power and energy, agricultural/biosciences and nanotechnology/advanced materials.
- **Transformation of Idaho's Workplace** – Idaho's e³ partners will align resources to support creation of an entrepreneurial work force and an environment that supports business growth and expansion.

Key partners in this effort include the Governor's Workforce Development Council, the Science and Technology Advisory Council, the Economic Advisory Council, the Governor's work force and economic development policy advisor, the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, the State Board of Education, representatives from Idaho's largest technology and manufacturing industries, philanthropic partners, Tech-Help, Small Business Development Center and Idaho universities and community colleges.

The U.S. Department of Labor will award funding to 8-10 regional economies with grant awards of up to \$5 million per year for three years. Throughout the WIRED Initiative, participating states and regions will receive ongoing intensive technical assistance crafted to meet their specific needs. The State of Idaho has requested \$14,821,774 which will be used to assist with the transformation of Idaho's regional economies if we are awarded grant funding.

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