



CICEP

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE
STUDY
2013

Collaborative Project Studies Pathways to Economic Growth for Idahoans

With a per-capita personal income and gross domestic product among the lowest in the nation and wages that dropped the second-most nationwide during the recent recession, Idaho is in need of plans to boost its economy and improve its residents' earning potential.

The University of Idaho's Office of Economic Development, the Idaho Department of Commerce, regional economic development agencies and other stakeholders have joined together to create the Idaho Pathways Project—a collaborative effort to stimulate successful productivity and prosperity while positioning Idaho's economy to be more competitive and dynamic in today's global marketplace.



District 1 SWOT analysis discussions

The Idaho Pathways Project is gathering information from Idaho's six Economic Development Districts to help each region revitalize its official comprehensive economic development strategy, then create a statewide plan of action.

The project seeks to enhance regional economic development strategies by partnering with local agencies, business owners and educational institutions.

“Stakeholders within the regions will decide what it is they want to accomplish,” said Gene Merrell, associate vice president for economic development at UI. “The Pathways Project team can help them figure out the most effective way to reach those goals.”

A team of UI faculty and staff has been traveling the state facilitating the regional planning discussions. The team described similar statewide efforts in other states, presented data on the regional assets available to support economic development, and data on the current economic condition and potential for growth. These data, when combined with the participants' perceptions about their region, will help guide the process of crafting goals, strategies, and tactics.

“The goal of the Pathways Project is to help communities make informed, evidence-based economic development decisions,” said Philip Watson, a UI assistant professor of applied economics who is on the project team.

Broad, statewide themes emerged from the 5 regional discussions: Talent Development, Infrastructure, Leadership, Quality of Life & Place, and Business & Industry Growth/Support/Development. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) were identified for

each theme. These themes and SWOT outputs will be the starting points for the statewide planning process that will begin in earnest at the 2013 Idaho Economic Summit.

The draft regional goals, strategies, and measures of progress will form the basis for discussion about statewide plans with state and regional leaders in business and industry, education, economic development, and government.

Over the subsequent three to four months, state and regional leaders will use the regional and Summit inputs to develop a statewide comprehensive economic development strategy.

The ultimate goal of the Pathways Project is to leave a legacy of information and action that will continue strengthening Idaho's economy, said team member Tammi Laninga, UI assistant professor of land-use planning.

“This state needs a living, breathing, workable roadmap to lead the economic development districts and the state to economic prosperity.”

METRICS

Economic engagement with a range of stakeholders—Of the attendees at regional meetings, 49 were from local, state or federal government, 48 from economic development NGOs, 35 from business & industry, and 7 from higher education.

LINKS

<http://blogs.uidaho.edu/idaho-pathways/>

<http://www.idahoeeconomicssummit.com/>



District 4 SWOT analysis discussions



District 6 SWOT analysis discussions