



Inland Northwest
Economic Alliance

The Power of Two

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Inland Northwest Economic Developments

SPOKANE, WASH. -- Following are projects, initiatives and economic developments making news in eastern Washington and northern Idaho distributed by the Inland Northwest Economic Alliance on behalf of its regional partners. For more information, contact Mary Joan Hahn at 509-744-3350.

Spokane, Wash. – Software distribution center relocates operations from California. TAB Distribution, a distributor of media and solar products is relocating from Lake Forest, Calif. to Chimney Rock Industrial Park in east Spokane. The firm brings nine employees and will fill additional warehouse and office positions as needed. Lower business and real estate costs were two driving factors for choosing Spokane, according to company officials.

www.spokaneedc.org

Pullman, Wash. - Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories (SEL) growth spurs expansions. Makers of equipment for the electric power industry, SEL is completing construction of a 22,000 square-foot research and development center and a 9,900 square-foot facilities maintenance building in the Whitman County Industrial Park. This in preparation to hire 125 employees in Pullman, with an additional 75 added to its global operations. SEL also unveiled plans for a 92-acre mixed-use project adjacent to operations in Pullman, including single and multi-family housing, restaurants and retail outlets, a hotel and convention center, services, suppliers and light industrial operations. The firm recently marked the addition of its 1000th employee worldwide. www.selinc.com

Airway Heights, Wash. – The May report of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission of the US Department of Defense has recommended retention of most activities at Fairchild Air Force Base including its active duty Air Force tanker wing and survival school. Eight jets flown by the Washington Air National Guard from the Base are expected to be relocated from Fairchild. www.brac.gov

Republic, Wash. - Rural northeast Washington bolsters small business development with “Virtual Frontier.” A technology initiative to help small businesses in rural communities gain sales through website development, online marketing and collaboration is gaining momentum. A number of partners including the Tri-County Economic Development District, Washington State University and Stone Soup, a non-profit organization, are working on the initiative, offering training, start-up funding and technical resources. Virtual Frontier received \$254,000 through a rural technology grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional support from Qwest and other organizations. www.teddonline.com

Bonner's Ferry, Idaho – New destination resort in Boundary County, Idaho. The pristine beauty of this rugged region close to the Canadian border is expected to draw more vacationers to northern Idaho, and Kootenai River Inn and Casino is preparing with a major expansion and renovation of their facility. A full-service spa, showcase casino room, renovated guest rooms and new meeting and dining facilities are being managed by Hagadone Hospitality Company of Coeur d'Alene. The new facility opens this month. www.kootenairiverinn.com

Liberty Lake, Wash. - Isothermal Systems Research Inc. signs \$6.6 million contract with Northrop Grumman. ISR, which also operates in Clarkston, Wash., has signed a contract with Northrop Grumman Corporation Intelligence Systems Division to provide SprayCool™ technology for the Airborne Signals Intelligence Payload Program used in U-2 and unmanned Global Hawk platforms used by the US Air Force. SprayCool technology allows computer systems to operate in severe environmental conditions including high and low temperature extremes as well as high altitudes. According to *Journal of Business* reports, the firm has announced growth of its Liberty Lake workforce by 20 employees over the next few months, and expansion into a nearby 20,000-square-foot facility. www.spraycool.com

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho - Medical resources grow in Kootenai County. Ernest Health Systems recently broke ground on a new 40-bed rehabilitation hospital in Post Falls, Idaho, which is expected to generate 150 jobs with an average salary of \$40,000. Separately, Kootenai Medical Center purchased five acres of land just north of its existing facility for future expansion. KMC is known as one of the nation's 101 most-wired hospitals according to the American Hospital Association. Kootenai County is one of the nation's fastest growing counties with 3,900 jobs added last year. www.jobsplusonline.com

Kellogg, Idaho – Health care and education resources grow. With considerable local investment and innovative FHA 242 financing from HUD, this community medical center has expanded with new imaging facilities and facelift that reflects the community's "Alpine Village" décor. North Idaho College has also opened a satellite campus in the Silver Valley.

Spokane, Wash. - Airport, flights expanding. Fresh on the heels of more than \$20 million in capital improvements in 2004, the Spokane International Airport has begun work on the first phase of a new \$23 million air-traffic-control tower. An additional \$16.9 million in improvements are slated for 2005, including facility improvements to taxiways and facilities and the Airport Business Park. Frontier and United Airlines recently announced plans to add additional flights from Spokane to Denver starting in May. Both currently operate two round-trips daily. www.spokaneairports.net

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SPOKANE SPOTLIGHT

Spokane moves up Inc.'s list - Spokane ranked 35 out of 274 Metropolitan Statistical Areas in *Inc. Magazine's* recently released *Best Places for Doing Business in America 2005*. Spokane jumped 31 spots from last year's 66th place ranking, largely on the basis of job growth over the past three years. According to the publication, cities like Spokane are "ideal places for doing business with their lower housing and labor costs. The low costs in these cities make it possible for businesses to thrive in a tough global economy, especially in an economy where companies operate under relentless pressure to keep costs low and quality high." www.inc.com

Great location for tech company growth - The *Washington Technology Center's 2005 Index of Innovation & Technology Report* shows Spokane ranks high in key indicators essential for technology company growth. Spokane placed third in the number of technology start-ups, in total technology employment (13,016 jobs), and for private investments on a per capita basis. It ranked first in housing affordability, and second for number of residents with a high school diploma, with students showing a higher-than-average performance in math and science proficiency. "Spokane possesses a number of attributes that make it an attractive place to start and build a technology business," according to Tab Wilkins, WTC spokesperson. www.spokaneed.org

Biotech companies, resources expand. GenPrime, makers of Prime Alert, a test for suspicious powders has sold 40 units to the U.S. Post Office, a strong validation of the Spokane firm's technology. The biotech firm has also sold a substantial number of its patented yeast-monitoring kits to major U.S. producers of ethanol, which use yeast to break down complex sugars in corn to produce the fuel. www.genprime.com

Separately, Hollister-Stier Laboratories has begun construction of a \$2 million, 10,000 square-foot temperature controlled warehouse, and plans to convert the existing warehouse into a production facility. The firm will move some workers off-site to accommodate growth. Hollister-Stier produces allergy-treatment products for U.S. and global customers, and performs contract filling and packaging services for pharmaceutical companies. www.hollister-stier.com

Construction is underway by the Spokane Intercollegiate Research & Technology Institute (SIRTI) on a new 39,200 square-foot technology center on Washington State University Spokane's Riverpoint campus. The new facility will contain office and wet lab space available for leasing to area technology companies and start-up firms. www.sirti.org.

Washington Governor Christine Gregoire has signed a bill creating a "life sciences discovery fund" to encourage medical and agricultural research in the state. The fund started with \$350 million in state money from the 1998 settlement with the tobacco industry. The Governor predicts that private and federal matching grants will build the fund to \$1 billion. www.governor.wa.gov/news

Seattle-Spokane connections ultra-fast – The Pacific Northwest Gigapop network, a high-speed data link between Spokane and Seattle has received \$1 million from the state Legislature to help with development. The system will give Spokane-area researchers more capacity to increase research and expand the economy. www.pnw-gigapop.net

Washington's best global trader from Spokane. Itron Inc. has been named the Governor's Trader of the Year by the Seattle-based World Trade Club. Makers of technologies for the automated meter reading market, Itron trades in 63 countries. www.itron.com