



Inland Northwest
Economic Alliance

The Power of Two

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Inland Northwest Economic Developments

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.

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Companies flock to Kootenai County, Idaho. Jobs Plus, an economic development organization, recruited seven firms bringing more than 700 jobs to Kootenai County during the past year. Those companies included Form Physics, a metal injection molding manufacturer from San Diego, Calif.; Pathways Thermal Technology, a custom furnace manufacturer from Corona, Calif.; and All Wall Contracting, specialists in framing, drywall, acoustical tile and specialty exterior coatings. US Bank opened its new \$15 million, 60,000-square-foot service and call center facility last year as well. Buck Knives, an engineering and manufacturing firm from San Diego is scheduled to open in March 2005, anticipating 220 new jobs.

Spokane EDC recruits high-tech firms. Paradigm Lasers, Inc. a designer and manufacture of laser systems has moved operations from East Rochester, NY to the Spokane Valley. The company is leasing a 5,000-square-foot facility and anticipates adding 30 employees within the next two years. Aegis Biosciences of Granada Hills, California and Palm Harbor, Florida has announced expansion to Spokane, to focus research and development of biomedical drug delivery and wound healing technologies at the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute.

Inland Northwest communities among America's best small towns. Clarkston, Colville and Moses Lake, Wash, and Bonner's Ferry, Coeur d'Alene, Moscow and Sandpoint, Idaho are among the top 2.5 percent of non-metro towns in the nation according to veteran economic analyst Jack Schultz in his book, *Boom Town USA*. Schultz considers such "prosperity" factors as attitude, leadership, vision, leveraged resources, local control, entrepreneurial approach, and branding, and factors in essential quality of life elements as healthcare, education, recreation, culture, taxes, cost of living, crime rate, environment, climate and transportation access.

Major expansion underway for Huntwood Industries. The cabinet maker's new 530,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, under construction in Liberty Lake, Wash., will expand production capacity, add 100 employees to its existing payroll of 650 over the next three years, and is expected to cost between \$10 million to \$15 million. The

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firm tapped the area's Community Empowerment Zone program to earn sales tax deferrals, and a collaboration of organizations assisted the company by addressing job skills training, financing alternatives, environmental issues and other factors in this business expansion project.

On-the-grow in Silver Valley, Idaho. Silver Valley earned more than \$3.4 million in federal funds to develop 150 acres of underground infrastructure for commercial development to support small industrial and light manufacturing firms... Ready Set Go Direct, a subsidiary of Northpoint Financial, has opened a marketing services call center in nearby Wallace, employing 55... Deep in Rocky Mountain ski country, all 68 units of Morning Star Lodge condominiums, a \$14 million development by Eagle Crest, sold in four days.

Spokane rates. Spokane was ranked 55th out of 200 cities by the Milken Institute as one of the Best Performing Cities in the U.S., a huge jump from last year's ranking of 157. The Institute ranks cities based upon their ability to create and maintain the greatest number of jobs. Outcomes are based on the measure of job, wage and salary, and technology growth. The continuous growth of technology use has helped put Spokane on the map and boost the city's ranking. Spokane's industries also demonstrated the largest gains in economic performance.

Itronix grows, consolidates. The Spokane-based maker of rugged wireless computers has announced it will move into a new operations center at Mirabeau Point in the Spokane Valley within a year. The company's new 100,000-square-foot building will consolidate operations at its downtown Spokane and Liberty Lake offices, and put all 450 regional employees under one roof; 100 additional employees work abroad. Itronix expects sales in excess of \$150 million for 2004, a 20 percent increase over 2003.

By air or water to Lewiston, Idaho. Delta Airlines' connector Sky West launched jet service to Lewiston at the end of January 2005, with two flights a day to Salt Lake City and points beyond. Meanwhile, the community's marine industry continues to expand with eight private boat companies employing approximately 500 workers. The industry thrives with extensive port resources and direct access to the Pacific via the Columbia River. Sportsman watercraft, including aluminum boats, is fueling the growth.

About the Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA): Backed by the assets of two states and several counties, the INEA markets the considerable advantages of doing business in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. Recruiters travel regularly to California, selectively targeting companies for relocation and expansion project in the Inland Northwest. Members include a total of nine economic development agencies representing 13 counties in the two states.