



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Inland Northwest Economic Developments, Spring 2010**

*The following are projects, initiatives and economic developments that are making news in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. This email is distributed by the Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA) on behalf of its regional partners.*

**Colfax, Wash.** – Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) was recently awarded an \$84 million grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). Approximately \$9.8 million of the funds will go to the **Port of Whitman** for the expansion of middle-mile fiber optic infrastructure to the unserved and underserved rural citizens in the areas of Whitman County. [www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov)

**Spokane, Wash.** – Spokane-based **Hollister-Stier Laboratories LLC** has added 70 employees over the last year, bringing the total count to 620. The contract drug manufacturer has also experienced double-digit revenue growth in its fiscal year that ends March 31, according to an article in the Spokane Journal of Business. Hollister-Stier is also working on a series of plant expansions and upgrades that collectively have cost in the tens of millions of dollars. Current expansion projects include the installation of two freeze-drier suites, each costing about \$3.5 million, and the expansion of a unit that produces drugs for clinical trials. Read the full article at <http://www.spokanejournal.com/article.php?id=5648>.

**Bonnars Ferry, ID** – **Alan Flory Logging Co.** is generating clean energy for the region through an innovative process of economically removing slash, a byproduct of tree thinning, by turning it into hog fuel which is used by wood burning biomass plants to create power. In the past slash was burned at the site, polluting the air. As a result of their success, the logging company has grown to employ 12 people. The company expects to add another 8 employees by the summer.

**Clarkston Wash.** – The **Port of Clarkston** received \$1 million in loans and grants from the Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) for infrastructure for Phase I of an industrial park. As a result of this project, 55 jobs are expected to be created. The project will allow the port to provide shovel-ready parcels in the industrial park. [www.commerce.wa.gov/cerb](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/cerb)

The **City of Clarkston** has received grant money from the Small Communities Rural Counties Grant program in the amount of \$334,610 to benefit the Downtown Clarkston 6th Street Lighting Project. Out of 212 applications requesting \$156,047,037, the City of Clarkston was awarded this money as part of the downtown revitalization efforts being led by the Heart of Clarkston Action Group. [www.palouse.org](http://www.palouse.org)

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Farmers Insurance recently ranked **Clarkston, Wash. and Lewiston, Idaho** as the two most secure small towns (population less than 150,000). The area's access to the Pacific Ocean through a network of river, rail and highway transportation facilities provides an excellent business climate for what is regarded as the most inland seaport in the Western U.S. It scored high in the study due to excellent job growth, low crime and minimal housing depreciation. [www.farmers.com](http://www.farmers.com)

**Lewiston, Idaho** – **Lewis-Clark State College** (LCSC) reached record enrollment this fall with 4,200 students. This is the first time in the college's history that enrollment has been above 4,000. It is also the fifth straight semester LCSC has set an all-time attendance record. LCSC's enrollment is a 6.6 percent increase over last year's total of 3,940 students and marks an increase of 806 students over the last three years, a 19.2 percent increase.

**Airway Heights, Wash.** – **Northern Quest Resort & Casino's** new 250-room hotel and spa opened its doors on December 31. The Resort and related infrastructure represent an investment exceeding \$200 million of which approximately 80 percent is with local businesses. The hotel's opening created 325 new jobs, bringing Northern Quest Resort & Casino's employment to approximately 1,675. The Resort spends over \$800,000 monthly in goods and services. With a total of over 2,000 jobs across its government and business enterprises, the Kalispel Tribe is one of the top employers in the region. [www.northernquest.com](http://www.northernquest.com)

**Mullan, Idaho** – Despite the current economic climate and below normal snowfall, **Lookout Pass Ski Resort** announced a 38 percent increase in actual lift tickets sold to date versus the corresponding time period last season, according to an article in the Shoshone News Press. The ski resort has also seen a 7.7 percent increase in revenues and a 6.5 percent increase in skier visits this January over last January. Read the article at [www.shoshonenewspress.com](http://www.shoshonenewspress.com).

**Coeur d'Alene, Idaho** – Membership has sky-rocketed at the **Ray & Joan Kroc Center** in Coeur d'Alene. Since its grand opening in May 2009, the Kroc Center's membership has grown to 20,000 people. The Kroc Center also employs 215 people. The \$60 million state-of-the-art facility houses an array of education, sports, faith, arts and supportive programs never before assembled in the Inland Northwest. [www.kroccda.org](http://www.kroccda.org)

**Hecla Mining Company** reported a net income of \$54.2 million, the third highest in Hecla's 119-year history, and a record operating cash flow of \$115 million in 2009. The mining company also saw record silver production of 10.9 million ounces, a 26% increase compared to the prior year period and the third consecutive year of increased silver production. [www.hecla-mining.com](http://www.hecla-mining.com)

**Wallace, Idaho** – **U.S. Silver** announced record production in Q4 2009 and for the entire year. Q4 2009 was the best quarterly silver and lead production from the Galena Mine since its acquisition by the Company in June 2006. [www.us-silver.com](http://www.us-silver.com)

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## **Regional Spotlight**

*Highlighting the region's strengths and burgeoning industries in smart grid technology, aerospace and entrepreneurship*

### ***Spotlight on Smart Grid***

A \$178 million federally designated smart grid demonstration project is underway in Eastern Washington. The study will involve more than 60,000 metered customers in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming and make Pullman, Wash. the region's first "Smart City."

Much of the technology was developed within a 100-mile area that has now stepped to the forefront of energy efficiency expertise for smart grid application. **Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories**, which grew into a worldwide business in Pullman, and **Itron**, a globally known company headquartered an hour away in Liberty Lake, Wash., are key partners in the Pacific Northwest Smart Grid Demonstration Project. Their solutions will be a big part of the devices, software and advanced analytical tools tested by the project. Other partners include **Avista Utilities**, the **City of Pullman**, **Washington State University**, **Hewlett Packard** and **Spirae**.

### ***Spotlight on Aerospace***

Spokane and the Inland Northwest are home to more than 60 manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and organizations – 8,100 workers and a \$324.8 million payroll – that serve and support the aerospace industry. Aircraft parts and auxiliary equipment manufacturers represent the greatest industry presence in the Inland Northwest, which is also home to companies involved in aircraft manufacturing, maintenance, repair and overhaul.

The companies represent a mix of locally founded entities, recruited firms and expanding businesses that are tapping the area's competitive business climate to grow. For example, **Titan Spring Company**, formerly of North Hollywood, Calif., has grown its operation since moving to Hayden Lake, Idaho two years ago. It is a certified manufacturer of precision wire-formed aircraft and aerospace parts and works exclusively with certified vendors. **Absolute Aviation Services** is a low-cost, quick-turnaround, reliable aircraft parts repair business that works for the likes of Delta, American, United and Allegiant airlines. The company, headquartered at Spokane International Airport, received the Governor's Excellence in Aerospace Award 2008.

### ***Spotlight on Entrepreneurism***

The Inland Northwest is a great place to start a business. Regional resources provide exceptional support for entrepreneurs, and solid success stories showcase how the region helps build thriving businesses – even in tough economic times. The region's positive business climate, compelling quality of life and innovation culture reward boot-strap entrepreneurs making this the perfect place to expand or start new operations.

Companies like Spokane, Wash.-based **Pacnian** are thriving here. Founded in 2007, Pacnian's HapticTouch technology enables digital devices to provide natural tactile feedback. With the help local incubator Sirti, Pacnian has been able to successfully grow its business. The company just signed on with two major companies and has nine patents pending.

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**About the Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA)**

The Inland Northwest Economic Alliance (INEA) is an alliance of 10 regional economic development agencies representing 14 counties in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. The collaborative effort is aimed at building economic growth through enhancing the brand recognition of the Inland Northwest and its communities and showcasing its business value. To learn more, visit

[www.inlandnorthwestregion.com](http://www.inlandnorthwestregion.com)

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