



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 18, 2008

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Inland Northwest Economic Developments, Winter 2008

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.

Ferry County, Wash. – The new **Buckhorn Mine** in Ferry County began production in October and is expected to bring in 1,000 tons of gold per day when it reaches full production next year. The mine is thought to hold roughly \$900 million of gold, according to an article in the *Spokesman-Review*. The gold mine will employ approximately 180 people, becoming the largest employer in the county. Read the article at <http://www.spokesmanreview.com/breaking/story.asp?ID=17107>.

Pullman, Wash. – **Decagon Devices**, manufacturer of scientific instruments and sensors, was recognized by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the top 15 small workplaces in the U.S. The list of best workplaces recognized exceptional employers that have built workplace environments that foster teamwork, flexibility, and professional growth while providing an atmosphere and benefits that encourage employee loyalty. Read the article at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122347733961315417.html>.

Lewiston, Idaho – Munitions and rocket motor manufacturer, ATK, has completed - ahead of schedule - the training of more than 100 workers at its Lewiston plant using a \$272,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Labor grant. In January 2007, the company was awarded a five-year federal contract worth up to \$90 million to supply ammunition to the Department of Homeland Security. Much of the work is being done at the Lewiston plant, which has over 900 workers. To learn more, read the press release at <http://labor.idaho.gov>.

Lewis-Clark State College broke ground this spring on a \$16 million Nursing and Health Sciences building at its Lewiston, Idaho campus. The new addition will contain labs for Natural Sciences in addition to classrooms. Expected completion is fall 2009. Visit www.lcsc.edu to learn more.

Dayton, Wash. – **Blue Mountain Station**, the world's first eco-industrial park, will be located in Dayton, Wash. The park is focused on the recruitment and marketing of organic, artisan food processing companies. The Port of Columbia has hired USKH, Inc to design the park. For more information, visit www.bluemountainstation.com.

Boundary County, Idaho – An Idaho Community Gem Grant, engineered by the Panhandle Area Council, has been awarded to the **Inland Pacific Hub** project to embark on a \$300,000, year-long study to develop strategies to create the regional

transportation system hub. The Inland Pacific Hub is an inland transportation corridor with vital routes between the Columbia River and north into the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta as well as east-west routes. To learn more, view this PowerPoint presentation: <http://www.inwp.org/pdf/InlandNorthwestCrossroads.pdf>

Spokane Valley, Wash. – ICT Group, Inc., a leading global provider of customer management and related marketing, technology and business process outsourcing solutions, has announced plans to expand its local call center. The expansion is in support of a major outsourced telecommunications program, which is expected to result in over 300 new customer service representative positions and 70 operations management positions, when operating at full capacity. Learn more at www.spokanechamber.org.

Spokane, Wash. – The **Spokane International Airport's** \$14.1 million rental car modernization project is complete. The project consolidates facilities for rental car companies, expands vehicle circulation and improves pedestrian safety. Additionally, the modernization project enhances the flow and efficiencies for the rental car companies, which in turn provides greater customer service for the traveling public. The facility is designed to accommodate projected growth in passenger travel over the next 20 years. An official ribbon-cutting will take place later this month. Read the press release at http://www.spokaneairports.net/Press_PDF/rac_08.pdf.

The **University District** has announced a four-year-old strategic plan to promote the district as a center of economic growth and a melting pot of academia and entrepreneurship, according to a recent Spokesman-Review article. In the near term, projects could include extending and rerouting Riverside Avenue as a pedestrian-friendly street and designing a footbridge linking to the area south of the train tracks where possibly future student housing and other developments could be located. The first phase of the Riverside realignment, expected to cost \$5.7 million, is funded and should be done by 2010. Officials hope to secure \$500,000 in federal money to pay for the bridge. The city will offer \$30,000 a year for the next three years toward the district, and Greater Spokane Inc. has pledged \$25,000 annually. Read to article at <http://www.sr.com/business/story.asp?ID=265749>.

Two state programs are bringing medical and dental students to the region. A joint venture between University of Washington and Eastern Washington University called **RIDE** brought eight dental students to the Inland Northwest to for a four-week summer rotation in a rural community. Twenty medical students came to the Inland Northwest as a result of the Legislature's decision to expand Washington's participation in a med school program called **WWAMI**, a partnership between University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho. By distributing dental and medical students throughout region, these programs hope to ease the shortage of rural health care professionals.

Abbotsford, British Columbia-based **Cascade Aerospace** has signed a 20-year agreement with Spokane International Airport to lease 50,000 square feet of building space and six acres of ramp space for aviation maintenance and modifications. An established aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) provider, Cascade will invest over \$2 million in the facility, along with state and local matching funds. The company plans to hire 40 employees by February 2009, and anticipates hiring another 60 by the end of next year.

Headquartered in Great Falls, Montana, **LYS**, a wholesale building material provider has expanded its operations to the City of Spokane Valley. The company expects to hire 10 employees, ramping up to 60 by 2009. The company has distribution points in North and South Dakota and Wyoming. For more information about Spokane's economic development news, visit www.spokanechamber.org.

Spokane County has seen the **greatest gains in retail sales** of all 58 counties in Washington State, according to the Washington State Retail Survey. Spokane retail sales have grown at a rate that is 176 percent higher than the statewide norm over the past five years. The Washington State Retail Survey ranks each county based on a number of factors to determine the "relative strength index." Learn more at <http://washingtonstateretailsurvey.com>.

Rathdrum, Idaho – The Rathdrum Prairie will soon be home to a **trade-technical high school** where students can prepare for a technical career. Students interested careers such as diesel mechanic, machinist or welder will have the opportunity to attend a school that offers courses in those and other trades in addition to traditional high school courses. On the same 100-acre parcel of land, North Idaho College will establish a campus geared toward professional and technical education, allowing students to move seamlessly into college programs. These schools will focus on the 80-plus percent of local young people who don't pursue a four-year college degree. To learn more, read the following *Spokesman-Review* article <http://www.spokesmanreview.com/breaking/story.asp?ID=17510>.

Clean Energy Highlight

The Inland Northwest is home to a number of **smart grid companies** that take advantage of digital technology, electronics and "intelligence" when generating, distributing, and consuming electricity. These companies are making profound impact internationally through system solutions in energy efficiency:

- **Itron** is the world's leading provider of solid-state meters—electricity, water, gas and heat—and data collection/communication systems, including automated meter reading (AMR) and advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) technology. Itron's products enable customers around the world collect detailed, reliable and timely data, analyze it in meaningful ways and use it to make informed decisions that optimize the use of energy and water.
- **Schweitzer Engineering** in Pullman, Wash., introduced the world's first digital relay in 1984, revolutionizing the power protection industry. It has become a global leader in the management of electric power systems.
- **Advantage IQ** is a facility information and expense management company that helps multi-site companies manage (and reduce) major facility expenses related to utilities, telecom and waste. A number of leading national and international firms use Advantage IQ's patented technology and consulting services, and it consistently earns EnergyStar award from EPA.
- **ReliOn** produces modular, cartridge-based, proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cell technologies used in a range of stationary applications for emergency, backup and off-grid power requirements. Earlier this year, ReliOn received a \$23

million infusion of investment from funds in California and the Netherlands.

Inland Northwest companies are also making strides in **clean energy biomass**. A recent event at **Hearth & Home Technologies'** Colville-based manufacturing facility highlighted pellet fuels as an effective alternative source of fuel. The amount of thermal energy generated by one ton of pellets equals 2.8 barrels of oil, and wood pellets have an extremely high efficiency rate. In Idaho, **North Idaho Energy Logs** is providing heating alternatives with its compressed-wood logs. The logs, made from recycled wood waste, produce clean hot fires, leaving little or no creosote and deposits on the interior of fireboxes. The logs burn hotter and longer than other manufactured logs. Learn more at www.northidahoenergylogs.com or contact Jeni Forman at (509) 685-5931 to learn more about pellet fuels.

Spotlight on Inland Ports

Along the Washington/Idaho state line, four inland ports are demonstrating how a creative and nimble approach generates return on investment for taxpayers:

Colfax, Wash. – The **Port of Whitman's** off-river business park focuses on transferring technology, not cargo. Instead of cranes and pulleys, the port has invested in the paved roads of a campus-like business park and thick fiber-optics to create a fertile ground for young, start-up companies built on the intellectual property of professors and research scientists. Capitalizing on the assets of two land grant universities - Washington State University and University of Idaho, just 8 miles apart along The Knowledge Corridor - the park was recently designated an "innovation partnership zone" by the state of Washington, which brings with it additional development funds. The Tech Park is anchored by Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, a world leader in the electric power protection/efficiency, which has added more than 1,000 jobs over the past five years.

New start-up businesses are emerging. The Port has also taken the lead in securing telecommunications infrastructure throughout the entire County of Whitman, capitalizing on the significant investments made by and through the universities for high-speed connectivity.

Dayton, Wash. – The small **Port of Columbia** has been successful in advocating for and supporting the development of renewable energy in Dayton and Columbia County and the construction of wind farms in the sparsely populated areas of the county, creating 40 new jobs in the last 3 years, 33 of which are housed in the Port's industrial park. Blending the community's desire for a renewable future with their treasured history of agriculture and food processing, the port is developing a new eco-industrial park called **Blue Mountain Station** that will focus on a business cluster of organic and natural value-added food processing companies. The port provides a marketing umbrella program to help these small to medium sized artisan food processing companies succeed in the fastest growing sector of the food market.

Clarkston, Wash. Building on increased interest in experiential tourism - the gentle relaxation of a river cruise and the thrill of white-water rafting – the **Port of Clarkston** is one of the Pacific coasts' newest tourist ports. Cruise boat traffic along the Columbia, and thrill-seekers headed to Idaho's world-famous Hell's Canyon are making the Port of Clarkston a gateway stop on their trek. Traffic is up with almost 300 dockings and more than 15,000 passengers this year. Tourist amenities are growing, with wineries, breweries, river-side restaurants, shopping – even helicopter tours of nearby mountain regions coming on line over the past year. The Port invested in tourism studies to lay

the foundation for its expanding role, and plans are under development to expand the Port's services and improve infrastructure to accommodate anticipated growth.

Lewiston, Idaho – The **Port of Lewiston**, Idaho's only water access point to the Pacific Ocean, plays the traditional port role, off-loading the region's significant exports in timber, grain and other agricultural products, as well as containerized cargo, including plastics, jet boats, log homes and more. It also handles select imports, including heavy equipment destined for the Tar Sands in Alberta, Canada. Innovatively, the Port offers business incubator services to help young companies lay a strategic foundation for growth. Recently, the Port began development of an off-water, 42-acre business and technology park, presenting a campus setting, fiber optics and infrastructure for light manufacturing, professional services and R&D operations.