A dramatic landscape with a lightning bolt striking the ground over a valley. The sky is dark blue with a bright lightning bolt striking the ground. The landscape below is a valley with a river and mountains in the distance.

# IDAHO WEEKLY BRIEFING

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# In this issue



With little drama, the Idaho Legislature called it quits early last week, and governmental activity in the state largely took a breather – aside, perhaps, from reconsidering what did and didn't happen at the Statehouse.

## Idaho Weekly Briefing

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## Cover picture

**THUNDERSTORM** A lightning storm hits at the Salmon Falls Reservoir. The photo was released by the Bureau of Land Management last week. *(image/Bureau of Land Management)*

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## Housing tidal wave

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In Canyon County, where population and economic growth ordinarily is not just approved of but eagerly sought, organizations like the Canyon County Agricultural Planning Area Committee usually start with an easily accepted point of view: Mo' growth, mo' better.

But not so much at their last meeting in Caldwell.

The group, which will be advising the county on zoning and its comprehensive plan, was considering the question of the use of land for farming as opposed to land for housing.

A report in the *Idaho Press Tribune* said that, "Some attendees expressed concern about Meridian development spilling over into the farmland in North Nampa. One Nampa farmer told staff that development was happening in his area quicker than he had ever seen." One spoke of a "wall of houses" encroaching from Ada County into Canyon.

Another farmer replied, "It's not a wall of houses. It's a tidal wave."

Also last week, a group of mostly Canyon Countians spoke similarly at the new, small city of Star, where a local comprehensive plan change might lead to turning 5,000 rural acres into medium or low-density housing. Star is in Ada County, in what has long been an agricultural northwest corner of it, but it's close by Canyon, and the spillover effects were concerning for a crowd of 300 people - larger than the norm for a planning commission meeting in a small town.

These kind of developments have been happening at increasing speed, and seem likely to accelerate as long as growth does in the Ada-Canyon area.

The reasons go beyond developer pressure to be allowed to do more business. The fact that demand is so high is a large part of the reason for this tidal wave of houses.

A day after touring some of the huge fields of new houses in western Ada County, the big new crop in that area, I had coffee with an old friend who lived for many years on the east coast, a former Idahoan moving back to his old home area.

But not exactly into his old town of Boise; he had to settle for several miles away from it. He intended moving back there. But it didn't work out, because he could find no houses (at least, suitable) in Boise for near what he could pay - and that's after selling his comparable place in an eastern state metro area. Houses with a price tag under \$200,000 are rare birds now in Boise, and hard to find nearby. If you're an average income homebuyer, and your income is below the executive level, you're going to have a hard time finding a place there.

One reason is that there isn't enough residential space available to meet the need.

What we're seeing now may be another housing bubble; in fact, probably it is. But for now, housing is in too limited supply in the Boise region, and in other regions around Idaho - in Kootenai County, in Twin Falls and elsewhere. If you can afford high-end digs, you have ample choices. If you can't, you're probably in a difficult market.

This is something Idaho officials are going to have to come to grips with. Want to both preserve farmland and house the people of the Gem State? Some better answers are going to have to be found.

*- Randy Stapilus*

# In the news

*A review, in some cases with expansion and comment, of leading Idaho news stories – excluding national or feature articles, and local crime and accidents. Generally, these were featured last week on front pages of the state’s newspapers. But the list also includes some other articles of note, including from Idaho broadcasters.*

*Please note that some links lead to newspaper pay walls. They were live at the time of publication, but may be discontinued later.*

★ *Notes an article of special interest.*

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## March 25

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- [Students protest on guns, saying “enough is enough”](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) From the article: “Students and adults holding signs reading “Protect our Kids” filled the lawn. Other signs read “Fear has no place in school” and “Arms are for hugging, not killing.” The crowd stretched across the lawn toward the crosswalk at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Capitol Boulevard.
- [Idaho is one of the top states for opiod pain prescriptions](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls)
- [Homeless have few options in Lewiston area](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) There is no shelter for the homeless in the area, though there are some plans to build one.
- [A look at the unsolved death cases in Canyon County](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) About the cold cases in police files in the area, how they got that way and what the public could do to help. The story notes, “Canyon County has unsolved homicide cases that are anywhere from 66 to 13,860 days old. There are 13 other unsolved homicides among the various jurisdictions in the county, some dating back nearly 40 years.”
- [Leaders in agriculture look to preserve land for farming](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) As housing and other development engulfs large areas in the Treasure Valley, a group of agricultural advocates (gathered in the Canyon County Agricultural Planning Area Committee) start to seek ways to preserve farm land in the area.
- [Special education needs in southern Idaho assessed](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) There’s a lack of funding and resources available for many special needs students in the area.

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## March 26

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- [Approaches for keeping affordability in downtown Boise](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) Apartment rentals downtown now often reach \$1,700 a month. Subsidies and tax breaks are under consideration as ideas for helping. Few houses in Boise now are available for under \$200,000.
- [Living spaces cut into some area hillsides](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) One example is at Pioneer Park in Lewiston.
- [Anti-gun march includes hundreds of protesters in Moscow](#) (*Daily News*, Moscow) A substantial-sized group assembled in downtown Moscow on March 24.
- [Looking at what Magic Valley legislators did during the legislative session](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) With the session nearly done, this article looks at what local legislators did, the highlights and lowlights.
- [Metal transport containers still ok in Coeur d'Alene](#) (*Press*, Coeur d'Alene) Metal carriers were considered for banning by planning and zoning, but they're still allowed for now. The containers are used as storage units in a number of residential areas.

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## March 27

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- [Eight days after an anti-texting/driving bill dies, so does a Boise woman for that reason](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) The bill would have prohibited use of hand-held devices while driving. Police report that on March 25 Pamela Susan Sherman, 19, was killed when her vehicle was rammed by an allegedly distracted driver.
- [Should eastern Idaho city move to fiber optic Internet?](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) Idaho Falls has much of the infrastructure built in, but there are regulatory complications.
- [Alaska airlines ending Lewiston air service](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) Lewiston has had flights direct to Boise and Seattle, but those are going away. Flights to/from Lewiston are reported just 60% full. Flights end August 25.
- [Moscow council may order up edible forest](#) (*Daily News*, Moscow) A land exchange could lead to a new park with edible plants.
- [Census showing population jumps in Twin Falls and Jerome areas](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) They are growing by almost 2,000 people a year, and seems to be speeding higher. Those counties now have been declared a metro area.
- [Bachelor degrees approved for College of Southern Idaho](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) They are the first for the institution, but still need state board-level approval. Officials deny any plan to move toward four-year status.

- [Sales of guns increase in eastern Idaho](#) (*Idaho State Journal*, Pocatello) Some stores in area are selling out of stock.

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## March 28

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- [A turning point approaches for recycling in Boise](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) The Boise program, with some challenges and some successes, hits a question mark in a new world picture. See also Moscow [Daily News](#).
- [Otter says he's happy with growth in Idaho](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) He said in Moscow he sees it as his largest accomplishment.
- [Drones a key to future forest management](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) It's a way to keep more detailed and precise track of what's happening with trees.
- [High school workshops making use of drones too](#) (*Daily News*, Moscow)
- [Concerns raised about expansion at Star](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) About 300 people showed up at a meeting with officials at the small community, and said they don't much care for urban growth in the area.
- [Understaffing across Nampa city addressed](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) Reports at a city council meeting suggest that most agencies in the fast-growing city are insufficiently staffed.
- [Unemployment in Magic Valley stabilizing at about 2.5%](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) It's being called the "new normal" (for now).
- [Court ruling declared illegal federal potato quarantine](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) Ruling from federal Judge Edward Lodge allowed the restrictions to remain, but said there had not been enough allowance for public comment.
- [A little more allowance for breaking into a hot car](#) (*Idaho State Journal*, Pocatello) Story explains: "People in Idaho could still face a lawsuit for breaking into a hot car to rescue a pet. But if Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter signs a new bill delivered to him last week, those who damage a vehicle when rescuing a person would be immune from civil or criminal penalties."

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## March 29

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- [Students at UI want athletic director out](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) Meanwhile, Director Rob Spear is sharply defended by UI President Chuck Staben. Triggers include his handling of a sex assault case. See also [Daily News](#) ("UI Community torn on fate of Spear's career").
- [New laws on trespass and noncompete clauses will go into effect](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) Otter issued one veto, but let a few others become law without his signature.



- [Governor candidates talk about education proposals](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) Funding and policy issues variously unite and divide the candidates in both parties.
- [Legislature “takes toll” on legislators](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) Lots of time, stress and more are involved.
- [Legislature adjourns for the year](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) Legislators generally say they’re satisfied with their efforts.
- [Local petition asks Horizon Air not to leave Lewiston](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) The airline is set to depart later this year, however.
- [Moscow-Pullman airport could get new terminal early](#) (*Daily News*, Moscow) Plans call for having the new terminal ready in 2020.
- [Canyon County officials back plan for sales tax for jail work](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) Commissioner Pam White is circulating the petition, which represents only an expression of opinion, not a formal ballot proposal. Jail expansion has been a top discussion issue in the county recently.
- [Because International tries new shoe promotion](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) The non-profit is trying sales of a newly-designed shoe.
- [Settlement reached in dispute over Dutch Brothers drive-through](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) The coffee firm and Davita dialysis had conflicted over traffic flow; they may have reached a compromise.
- [Pocatello now expected to get a crisis center](#) (*Idaho State Journal*, Pocatello) From the article: “The Pocatello area will be getting a behavioral health community crisis center in the near future, thanks to newly approved state funding and the efforts of local officials driven to find a better way to help people struggling with drug addictions, mental health issues and other crisis situations.”
- [Radio Shack returns to Pocatello](#) (*Idaho State Journal*, Pocatello) Closing in many places, but a new RS grand opening is held in Pocatello.

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## March 30

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- [UI athletic director gets defense from Staben](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) The embattled AD Rob Spear has UI President Chuck Staben in his corner. The student government has asked he be fired.
- [Used book store saved by downtown book shop](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise) The owners of Rediscovered Books, Boise’s major locally-owned book store, bought Rainbow Books, a long-standing used book store.
- [Simpson was prepared for a Risch objection on Andrus wilderness name](#) (*Idaho Statesman*, Boise)
- [Otter declares success in finished session](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) He didn’t get some things, but did get others.



- [BLM plans rules for South Fork area](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) Planning is anticipated for perceived crowding on the South Fork of the Snake.
- [Lewiston airport runway could change configuration](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) A safety study suggests a smaller-sized runway.
- [Reported online threat to school may lead to charge](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) New law prohibits making an online threat against a school.
- [Some legislators stressed over bills that failed](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls)
- [Growth in health clinics planned for Buhl](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) Planning has been underway for years, groundbreaking underway. One is now, another an expansion; medical need in the area is cited.

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## March 31

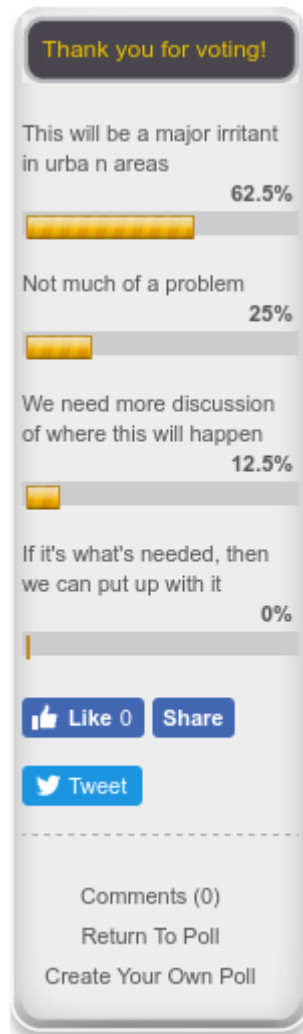
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- [Behind the statistics on Idaho doing well in worker pay](#) (*Idaho Statesman*) From the article, after noting that worker pay increased faster in Idaho than in other states: “The problem is that the statistics released measure overall earnings, not earnings per worker. And because Idaho added 24,880 jobs in 2017, wages paid to those workers bulked up the earnings growth.”
- [Animal shelter at Blackfoot gets critical grants](#) (*Post Register*, Idaho Falls) The amount is modest, just \$39,000, but it may have been enough to help the small operation turn a corner on adoption rates.
- [Lewiston airport governing board scrambles for flights](#) (*Lewiston Tribune*) The end of routes to Boise and Seattle sinking in and troubling the city.
- [Staben defends UI on lack of sex harassment information](#) (*Daily News*, Moscow) The president cites federal and other privacy regulations.
- [Downtown Caldwell plaza nears opening](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) The space is expected to open in June. It was inspired by a similar project in Rapid City, South Dakota.
- [Wasden signs religious exemption letter](#) (*Idaho Press Tribune*, Nampa) The Trump Administration plan would allow health workers to opt out of abortion and other procedures based on religious belief.
- [Flooding in Blaine County moves to cleanup](#) (*Times News*, Twin Falls) There’s also growing talk asking about what should be done on the Wood River.

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## Poll

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This week's question:

**How should Idaho respond to the need for additional housing, and high housing costs, together with the need to preserve farm land?**

Cast your vote at [www.ridenbaugh.com](http://www.ridenbaugh.com)

Have a question you'd like us to ask? [Tell us about it.](#)



## Top-ballot campaigns/2018

**Incumbents** in bold. Reports through December 31 unless otherwise noted.

<b>U.S. House 1</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>David Leroy</b> : raised \$189,161; spent \$121,938; on hand \$67,223. <b>Russell Fulcher</b> : raised \$267,245; spent \$106,116; on hand \$161,129. <b>Luke Malek</b> : raised \$144,317; spent \$52,137; on hand \$98,120. <b>Christy Perry</b> declared on November 14. <b>Michael Snyder</b> : raised \$74,441; spent \$33,820; on hand \$40,621 <b>Nick Henderson</b> has declared for the seat.	
	<b>D</b>	<b>Michael Smith</b> has filed. <b>Christina McNeil</b> has filed. <b>James Vandermaas</b> has filed.	
	<b>U.S. House 2</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Mike Simpson</b> , Blackfoot. Simpson: raised \$532,617; spent \$452,734; \$233,019 on hand
		<b>D</b>	<b>Peter Rickards</b> , Twin Falls, has announced. <b>Aaron Swisher</b> , Boise.
	<b>Governor</b>	<b>R</b>	Incumbent C.L. "Butch" Otter not seeking re-election. Candidates: <b>Raul Labrador</b> , U.S. representative. <b>Brad Little</b> , lieutenant governor. <b>Tommy Ahlquist</b> , Boise businessman
<b>D</b>		<b>A.J. Balukoff</b> has filed. <b>Paulette Jordan</b> has filed.	
<b>Lt Governor</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>State Senator Marv Hagedorn</b> , Meridian former legislator <b>Janice McGeachin</b> , Idaho Falls <b>State Senator Bob Nonini</b> , Coeur d'Alene State Representative <b>Kelley Packer</b> , McCammon Former Idaho Republican Party Chair <b>Steve Yates</b> , Idaho Falls	
	<b>D</b>	<b>Jim Fabe</b> has filed. <b>Kristin Collum</b> has filed.	
<b>Supt of Public Instr</b>	<b>R</b>	Incumbent <b>Sherri Ybarra</b> has filed. Wilder School Superintendent <b>Jeff Dillon</b> has filed.	
	<b>D</b>	<b>Allen Humble</b> has filed. <b>Cindy Wilson</b> has filed.	



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## INL research cuts biomass production cost

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For the bioeconomy to continue expanding, biomass must be produced and converted into biofuels in a cost-effective way.

In September, **Idaho National Laboratory** bioenergy researchers helped meet those cost challenges by reducing the modeled cost of growing, harvesting, storing, transporting and preprocessing biomass from \$149.58 per dry ton to \$82.86 per dry ton.

The modeled feedstock cost is lower than a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) performance goal of \$84.45 per dry ton from harvest to the biorefinery reactor throat, including the grower payment. A similar change in crude oil prices between 2008 and 2010 shrunk gasoline prices by more than \$1/gallon, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

“We have been working on this for five years,” said Kevin Kenney, director of INL’s Bioenergy Program. “To see technical targets met that seemed to be such a stretch is rewarding.”

The challenge arises from the fact that converting raw biomass to bioenergy requires a number of steps to create a stable, consistent feedstock for biorefineries. In particular, preprocessing steps such as grinding, drying, pelleting, roasting and chemical treatments can make biomass more uniform, easier to handle and easier to convert to biofuels or energy, but also add significant costs.

INL researchers were able to exceed the cost target milestone thanks to the combined efforts of three different BETO-funded projects – fractional milling and high moisture pelleting, intelligent and adaptive controls, and modeling that assesses biomass cost, availability and blending.

Two significant technical accomplishments – high moisture pelleting and fractional milling – resulted in lower energy usage and greater than 50 percent cost reduction in biomass preprocessing.

INL researcher Jaya Tumuluru developed a high-moisture pelleting process for various high-moisture feedstocks such as switchgrass, corn stover, lodgepole pine and municipal solid waste.

The high-moisture pelleting process eliminates the energy-intensive rotary drying stage. Instead, high-moisture biomass goes through two grinding steps and enters the pellet mill at moisture contents higher than 26 percent. Friction created from the compression and extrusion of pellets from the pellet die reduces biomass moisture content to roughly 20 percent.

Compared with standard pelleting methods, Tumuluru reduced the overall preprocessing cost of pelletized biomass by 35 to 40 percent using biomass with moisture contents ranging from 26 to 39 percent. Those savings include a roughly 55 percent reduction in operating energy costs and a 35 percent reduction in capital costs.

Likewise, INL engineer Neal Yancey used a flat orbital screen to separate biomass particles less than a quarter inch from larger particles destined for the stage two grinder. This “fractional milling” reduces energy costs during preprocessing because smaller-sized material that already meets particle size specifications doesn’t go through an additional, unnecessary grinding stage.

During tests conducted in September, Yancey used fractional milling to divert more than 40 percent of the material after stage one grinding.

Yancey not only reduced energy usage at the stage two grinder by 40 percent, but he also increased the throughput of the system by 80 percent compared to conventional grinding of high-moisture corn stover.



Airman Austin Reed, 366th Maintenance Squadron weapons loadcrew member, inspects an AIM-9X Sidewinder March 1, 2018, at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. The AIM-9X is the newest variant of the AIM-9 Sidewinder series. (*photo/Mountain Home Air Force Base*)

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## New weapons arrives for Mountain Home AFB use

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The 366th Fighter Wing's F-15E Strike Eagles are receiving a weapon upgrade to enhance mission capabilities.

The AIM-9X side-winder is a short-range, air-to-air missile that will increase fighter pilot's abilities to track their enemies.

"The AIM-9LM was our basic heat-seeking missile across the Air Force for years," said Master Sgt. **Zachary Payne**, 366th Maintenance Squadron weapons maintenance element NCOIC. "Our new AIM-9X has more maneuverability in the air, so it gives our pilots more range of motion while dog-fighting with enemy aircraft."

The elite design of the AIM-9X munition is aimed to advance pilot's ability to target enemy aircraft.

"They can actually track through their helmet," said SSgt. **Cameron Delsol**, 366th Maintenance Squadron weapons loadcrew team chief. "All they have to do is look around and they have the ability to lock on a target."

The upgraded missile is expected to benefit the Air Force with its improved flight performance.

"It will definitely impact the squadron, as there are multiple aircraft that can employ the AIM-9X," said a 389th Fighter Squadron pilot. "It's going to increase the squadron's lethality and survivability as a whole."

- [Mountain Home Air Force Base](#)





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## Legislative session adjourns for year

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**SESSION SUMMARY** *From the annual “key actions” report on the session (prepared by the legislative services office).*

Tax relief dominated the Second Regular Session of the 64th Idaho Legislature. The session began on January 8, 2018, shortly after Congress passed federal tax reform. The state’s economy continued to strengthen, which allowed the Legislature again to address areas of vital interest to Idahoans. Important legislative action included reductions in income tax rates (individual and corporate rates) and increases in public education support.

With improving economic conditions and strong revenue growth, the Legislature cut taxes for most individuals and businesses in the state, providing nearly \$142 million in tax relief. Federal tax reform played a role in driving these changes and, in response, the Legislature reduced income tax rates (by nearly half a percentage point), the Legislature also provided a new child tax credit of \$205 for eligible children. The net impact of the Legislature’s tax package, while accounting for conformity to federal tax reform, resulted in a fiscal impact of approximately \$129.5 million less revenue to the General Fund.

Regarding education, for the fourth year in a row the Legislature increased the General Fund appropriation for K-12 by more than \$100 million. Included in K-12 funding is \$41.6 million for the fourth year of the five-year phase-in of the career ladder compensation system for teachers. The K-12 appropriation reflects a 5.9% increase in General Fund support over last year’s appropriation. Other notable increases in General Fund appropriations include a 10% increase for Medicaid and a 20% increase for Health Education programs.

The Legislature also: revised the Idaho Child Protective Act by providing more review and oversight of the foster care system as recommend by the Foster Care Interim Committee; provided that certain water right holders participating in an approved management plan are not subject to administration on a time priority basis; provided for suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers and other public school personnel; provided that certain adult students are eligible for Idaho Opportunity Scholarships if they meet certain criteria; to further transparency in government, the Legislature required that the open meetings law applies to meetings of public agencies established by executive order of the Governor and that meeting agendas be posted online if the agency has an online website; expanded provisions regarding self-defense to allow for the defense of oneself, others, a home or habitation, place of business or employment, or an occupied vehicle; and finally, the Legislature followed most of the recommendations of the Joint Change in Employee Compensation Committee, which included a 3% salary merit increase for state employees.

Regarding statewide budget matters, revenue projections for fiscal year 2019 represent the eighth consecutive year of economic growth in the state. In January 2018, the Division of Financial Management revised the FY 2018 forecast upward to \$3.63 billion, reflecting a 5.3% revenue growth over actual FY 2017 collections. While the Economic Outlook and Revenue Assessment Committee concurred with the projections from the Executive Branch, JFAC later used \$3.65 billion (or \$20 million more than the EORAC projection) for the purposes of setting budgets. General Fund revenue collections have come in \$111 million higher than anticipated through February 2018. For FY 2019 the original forecast of \$3.78 billion was increased in January to \$3.82 billion due to a number of factors including current economic conditions, actual collections and the recently passed federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Both EORAC and JFAC concurred in this assessment.

Legislators wrote more than 770 pieces of draft legislation, of which approximately two-thirds were introduced as bills.

**GOVERNOR COMMENTS** Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter said the final legislative session of his three terms in office continued advancing progress made in recent years by improving educational opportunities for Idaho’s children and adult learners, growing Idaho’s economy, and strengthening Idaho families and communities.

“I’ve always been more disposed to celebrating what we have – our victories as citizens and as a state – than complaining about what we don’t have or what wasn’t achieved. We made a good run at some things that didn’t end up happening, but we also got a lot done that will help people accomplish their own goals for years to come,” Governor Otter said. “There have been some setbacks. But I’m not nearly as disappointed about them as I am proud of the work the Legislature and my administration have done together over the past 12 years.”

Building on targeted and sustainable K-through-Career education investments, stepping up strategic workforce development efforts, hardening the State’s cyber defenses, and providing Idahoans with historic tax relief highlighted accomplishments during the second regular session of the 64th Idaho Legislature. Some of the most significant successes included:

Providing over \$100 million in new funding for Idaho’s public schools. That includes almost \$42 million to continue improving teacher pay along the career ladder, \$10.5 million for classroom technology, and \$8 million for such post-secondary student opportunities as dual credit courses, advanced placement and career-technical exams.

Fully funding the statewide rollout of a new comprehensive reading assessment. That will provide teachers with a more robust Idaho Reading Indicator so students can get the necessary intervention and support to read proficiently by the end of the third grade.

Providing \$3.5 million for the Opportunity Scholarship program, including authority to use some of the funding to help “adult completers” return to college and get an academic degree or career-technical certification.

Expanding criminal penalties for willful threats of violence directed at schools, facilities, buses, staff or students. Penalties also will be increased from misdemeanors to felonies if weapons are involved.

Funding an audit of degree programs throughout Idaho’s higher education system. The system-wide review will help educators track the progress of students as they advance toward degree completion.

Funding a system-wide study into integrating higher education support services. The study will help identify areas in which efficiencies and improved services can be realized by consolidating certain back-office functions throughout Idaho’s college and university system.

Providing \$10 million for a new health sciences building at the College of Western Idaho.

Funding start-up costs and ongoing operations at the new College of Eastern Idaho.

● [Governor Otter](#)

## Legislation

### ENACTED LEGISLATION Measures so far which have been signed into law.

206	<a href="#">H 453</a>	Adoption expenses, tax deduction	03/20/18	Retroactive to 01/01/2018
207	<a href="#">H 478</a>	Electricians, inspectors	03/20/18	07/01/2018
208	<a href="#">H 479</a>	Electrical contractors, licensing	03/20/18	07/01/2018
209	<a href="#">H 480</a>	Electrical work, limited license	03/20/18	07/01/2018
210	<a href="#">H 483</a>	HVAC, exams and certificates	03/20/18	07/01/2018
211	<a href="#">H 484</a>	Plumbers, inactive certificates	03/20/18	07/01/2018
212	<a href="#">H 497</a>	Motor vehicles, towing	03/20/18	07/01/2018
213	<a href="#">H 519</a>	Title insurance, reimbursements	03/20/18	07/01/2018
214	<a href="#">H 522</a>	Certificates of insurance	03/20/18	07/01/2018
215	<a href="#">H 527</a>	Labor, franchise employees	03/20/18	07/01/2018
216	<a href="#">H 537</a>	Produce safety law	03/20/18	07/01/2018
217	<a href="#">H 538</a>	Wolf control board, sunset date	03/20/18	07/01/2018
218	<a href="#">H 601</a>	Good samaritans	03/20/18	07/01/2018
219	<a href="#">H 647</a>	Education, representative status	03/20/18	07/01/2018
220	<a href="#">H 578</a>	Sales and use tax	03/21/18	07/01/2018
221	<a href="#">H 447</a>	Civil forfeiture, property	03/21/18	07/01/2018
222	<a href="#">S 1313</a>	Self-defense, castle, stand ground	Law without	07/01/2018

		signature	
223	<a href="#">H 611</a>	Open meetings notices, agendas	03/21/18 07/01/2018
224	<a href="#">H 526</a>	Farm equipment agreements	Law 07/01/2018 and shall apply without signature to dealer agreements that are executed or renewed on or after 07/01/2018
225	<a href="#">H 638</a>	Abortion, reporting act	03/22/18 07/01/2018
226	<a href="#">H 605</a>	Alcohol, waterfront resorts	Law w/o signature 07/01/2018
227	<a href="#">S 1254</a>	Wireless phone service, transfers	03/22/18 07/01/2018
228	<a href="#">S 1324</a>	Barber and cosmetology services act	03/22/18 07/01/2018
229	<a href="#">S 1347</a>	Approp, pub schls admin, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
230	<a href="#">S 1348</a>	Approp, pub schls teachers, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
231	<a href="#">S 1350</a>	Approp, pub schls children's, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
232	<a href="#">S 1351</a>	Approp, pub schls facilities, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
233	<a href="#">S 1352</a>	Approp, pub schls cntrl srvs, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
234	<a href="#">S 1353</a>	Approp, pub schls deaf blind, orig	03/22/18 07/01/2018
235	<a href="#">H 401</a>	PERSI, definitions	03/22/18 07/01/2018
236	<a href="#">H 474</a>	Joint printing committee aaS	03/22/18 07/01/2018
237	<a href="#">H 506</a>	Military vehicles aaS	03/23/18 03/23/2018
238	<a href="#">H 568</a>	Initiatives, referenda procedures	03/23/18 07/01/2018
239	<a href="#">H 648</a>	Computer science courses	03/23/18 07/01/2018
240	<a href="#">H 665</a>	School violence	03/23/18 03/23/2018
241	<a href="#">H 717</a>	Approp, supt public instruc, orig	03/23/18 07/01/2018
242	<a href="#">H 677</a>	Approp, water resources, orig	03/23/18 07/01/2018
243	<a href="#">S 1232</a>	Transfer, foreign offenders	03/23/18 07/01/2018
244	<a href="#">S 1277</a>	Civil actions, claims for damages	03/23/18 07/01/2018
245	<a href="#">S 1279</a>	Idaho opportunity scholarship	03/23/18 07/01/2018
246	<a href="#">S 1306</a>	Planning, development application aaH	03/23/18 07/01/2018
247	<a href="#">S 1344</a>	Approp, edu bd, college univ, orig	03/23/18 07/01/2018
248	<a href="#">S 1346</a>	Approp, public defense com, orig	Law w/o signature 03/26/2018 SECTION 5 & 6; 07/01/2018 all other SECTIONS
249	<a href="#">H 429</a>	Crime victims compensation aaS	03/26/18 07/01/2018
250	<a href="#">H 443</a>	School districts, firearm education	03/26/18 07/01/2018
251	<a href="#">H 466</a>	Minimum wage, family	03/26/18 07/01/2018
252	<a href="#">H 500</a>	Public records, child abuse	03/26/18 07/01/2018
253	<a href="#">H 507</a>	Rotary license plates aa	03/26/18 07/01/2018

254	<a href="#">H 551</a>	Ignition interlock system, DUI	03/26/18	01/01/2019
255	<a href="#">H 582</a>	Justices, judges, salary	03/26/18	07/01/2018
256	<a href="#">H 584</a>	Sex crimes, video voyeurism	03/26/18	07/01/2018
257	<a href="#">H 586</a>	Juror compensation	03/26/18	07/01/2018
258	<a href="#">H 607</a>	Information technology services	03/26/18	07/01/2018
259	<a href="#">H 618</a>	Legend drugs, code imprint	03/26/18	07/01/2018
260	<a href="#">H 620</a>	Elections, public funds	03/26/18	07/01/2018
261	<a href="#">H 626</a>	Elections, bonded indebtedness	03/26/18	07/01/2018
262	<a href="#">H 632</a>	Educational support program funding	03/26/18	07/01/2018 SECTION 1 & 2; 07/01/2019 SECTION 3
263	<a href="#">H 634</a>	Education, suicide prevention	03/26/18	07/01/2018
264	<a href="#">H 643</a>	Magistrate's division, funding	03/26/18	03/26/2018 SECTION 1; 07/01/2018 SECTION 2 & 3; 07/01/2023 SECTION 4
265	<a href="#">H 649</a>	Medical help, overdose, charges	03/26/18	07/01/2018
266	<a href="#">H 667</a>	Approp, legislative branch, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
267	<a href="#">H 668</a>	Approp, supreme court, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
268	<a href="#">H 669</a>	Approp, STEM action center, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
269	<a href="#">H 670</a>	State officers, salaries	03/26/18	07/01/2018
270	<a href="#">H 672</a>	Approp, edu bd, office, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
271	<a href="#">H 673</a>	Approp, human resources, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
272	<a href="#">H 674</a>	Approp, regulatory boards, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
273	<a href="#">H 678</a>	Approp, industrial com, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
274	<a href="#">H 679</a>	Approp, fish & game, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
275	<a href="#">H 680</a>	Approp, state police, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
276	<a href="#">H 681</a>	Approp, lieutenant gov, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
277	<a href="#">H 683</a>	Approp, aging com, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
278	<a href="#">H 685</a>	Approp, lands, orig	03/26/18	03/26/2018 SECTION 4 & 5; 07/01/2018 all other SECTIONS
279	<a href="#">H 686</a>	Approp, edu bd, special prgms, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
280	<a href="#">H 687</a>	Approp, parks & rec, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
281	<a href="#">H 688</a>	Approp, bond payments, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
282	<a href="#">H 689</a>	Approp, military division, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
283	<a href="#">S 1349</a>	Approp, pub schls operations, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
284	<a href="#">S 1225</a>	Civil actions, renewing	03/26/18	07/01/2018
285	<a href="#">S 1245</a>	Legal immunity, vehicle entry aa	03/26/18	03/26/2018
286	<a href="#">S 1314</a>	Criminal records, expungement aa	03/26/18	07/01/2018
287	<a href="#">S 1341</a>	Child protective act	03/26/18	07/01/2018
288	<a href="#">S 1355</a>	Approp, pardons & parole, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018

289	<a href="#">S 1356</a>	Approp, arts com, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
290	<a href="#">S 1357</a>	Approp, edu bd, career tech, orig	03/26/18	03/26/2018 SECTION 3; 07/01/2018 the rest
291	<a href="#">S 1358</a>	Approp, capitol com, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
292	<a href="#">S 1359</a>	Approp, edu bd, comm college, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
293	<a href="#">S 1360</a>	Approp, DEQ, orig	03/26/18	07/01/2018
294	<a href="#">S 1361</a>	Approp, H&W welfare division, orig	03/26/18	03/26/2018 SECTION 7; 07/01/2018 the rest

**This session** (compared to the 2017 session at this point):

- 799 new measures prepared (785)
- 561 bills introduced (540)
- 355 bills passed (241)
- 340 bills signed by the governor (208)
- 51 resolutions and memorials passed (46)

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## State Regulation

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Published rules appear in [the administrative bulletin](#). No proposed rules appeared in the March Administrative Bulletin.

An index reflecting rule changes for the previous year was included.

The next publication will be on April 5.





## Benton Street Bridge Rehabilitation Project Begins

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### Pocatello works on Benton Street bridge

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A bridge that has stood in **Pocatello** for more than 50 years is getting a bit of work.

Recently, crews began work on the substructure that supports the Benton Street Bridge. The project will use various techniques to rehabilitate the structure with plans calling for reinforcing the concrete using carbon fiber wrapping, installation of a corrosion protection system, and repairing the column footings below ground.

“The bridge was originally constructed in 1965 and the bridge deck was rehabilitated in 2004,” said **Jeff Mansfield**, Public Works Director/City Engineer for the City of Pocatello. “The time has come to rehabilitate the bridge’s substructure.”

In order to accommodate the construction access and minimize the impact to the public during the project, traffic will be limited to one lane of travel in each direction and one sidewalk for pedestrians over the bridge. Traffic control measures are expected to be in place starting in April.

“We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding during the project,” Mansfield said. “The Benton Street Bridge is an important part of the City’s



transportation system. It is critical that the City stay on top of the routine maintenance requirements to ensure that the bridge remains in service for many years to come.”

Total construction contract for the project is approximately \$4.2 million. The funding is primarily coming from federal sources with the City of Pocatello being responsible for a 7.34 percent match, some of which is covered through in-kind services such as surveying and engineering.

The work is anticipated to wrap up in June 2019 but due to unforeseen circumstances, the project may be delayed.

- [Pocatello city](#)

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## Nampa selling right of way trees

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The city of **Nampa** has trees available for purchase to plant in the city’s right-of-ways.

Trees purchased will be planted in the right-of-way or within 15 feet of the road if there is no improved right-of-way. Cost is \$80 and includes a personal consultation with City Forestry staff at the purchaser’s home, education on the right tree for the right place, pickup and delivery of the tree, planting and a one-year guarantee. The program begins April 2 and continues through the cool months of spring.

The right-of-way area is defined as "Improved or unimproved public property dedicated or deeded to the city for the purpose of providing vehicular, pedestrian and public use." The right-of-way can vary in width and typically extends a few feet behind the sidewalk.

Tree varieties to choose from may include: Lustre Maple, Sensation Maple, Royal Red Maple, Royalty Crabtree, Thundercloud Plum, Chanticleer Pear, Skyline Locust and Greenspire Linden. Variety choice is subject to nursery stock availability. All varieties may not be available at all times.

Homeowners will be asked to call Dig Line to have utility lines marked before planting, to remove stakes after one year, to apply proper watering methods for newly planted trees and to use licensed tree care companies with the city for any future tree care pruning and maintenance.

- [Nampa city](#)



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## State investigates Texas disruption by Idaho prisoners

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The **Idaho Department of Correction** is investigating a disruption by Idaho inmates at a contract-bed facility in Texas.

Shortly before midnight (CDT), inmates damaged two televisions, ripped apart a mattress and broke several sprinkler heads at the Karnes County Correctional Center in Karnes City, Texas. After talking with the prison's warden, the inmates returned to their bunks. There were no reported injuries. Damage is estimated at less than \$1,000.

Due to a shortage of beds in Idaho, 250 Idaho inmates are incarcerated at the Karnes County Correctional Center. A group of 150 inmates arrived at the facility on Feb. 13, 2018. A group of 100 inmates arrived at the facility on March 14.

The inmates are being held at the facility temporarily while the department seeks a long-term agreement with a prison-bed provider.

- [Department of Correction](#)

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## Supreme Court decisions

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*Recent civil decisions of the Idaho Supreme Court.*

- [\*\*\*Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Idaho v. Edgar and Laurie Cook and Joseph Stanczak\*\*\*](#) (March 30, Brody) This case involves the interpretation of the insuring clause of a bodily injury liability provision in a property insurance contract. This case originated from an intentional shooting at a campground. Michael Chisholm shot Joseph Stanczak during an altercation on property owned by the Cooks, who had property insurance through Farm Bureau. Farm Bureau determined it had no duty to defend or indemnify the Cooks because the shooting was not a covered act under the policy. Farm Bureau filed a declaratory judgment action seeking judicial confirmation of its determination. Farm Bureau filed a motion for summary judgment, requesting that the district court find as a matter of law that the intentional shooting was not an "occurrence." The district court granted Farm Bureau's motion. We affirm the district court's judgment in favor of Farm Bureau.

# Economy

## Stocks

From late in the week, as reported through Google. Prices on stocks were mixed by the end of last week. (Google finance) **Up ▲ Down ▼**

		Last week		Week before	One year ago
<b>Micron Technology</b>	MU	52.14	▼	54.21	28.90
<b>Hewlett Packard</b>	HPQ	21.92	▲	21.85	17.88
<b>Idaho Power</b>	IDA	88.27	▲	84.34	82.96
<b>Clearwater Paper</b>	CLW	39.10	▲	37.00	56.00
<b>CenturyLink Inc.</b>	CTL	16.43	▲	15.52	23.57
<b>Boise Cascade Corp.</b>	BCC	38.60	▼	39.05	26.70

## Gas prices

Price of gasoline in Idaho increased significantly from the week before. Source: [idahogasprices.com](http://idahogasprices.com).

Gas	Last week	Natl/St Avg	Week before
<b>low</b>	2.39 Rigby (Conoco)	2.60/2.69	2.26 Shelley (Exxon)
<b>high</b>	3.35 Malta (Sublett Fuel Stop)		3.09 Island Park (Sinclair)



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## Decision signed for South 21 project

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The **Challis-Yankee Fork Ranger District**, Salmon-Challis National Forest, recently signed a decision to implement the South 21 Project.

The South 21 Project planning area is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Stanley, Idaho on the Middle Fork Ranger District, administered by the Challis-Yankee Fork Ranger District; is within an insect and disease area designated by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill).



The project area is approximately 13,735 acres and varies in terrain from flat meadows to steep timber. This project area is partially located within the Hanson Lake #915, Blue Bunch Mountain #923, and Red Mountain #916 Idaho Roadless Areas. 3,000 acres will be treated through thinning and fuel treatments, with implementation starting this summer.

The primary purpose of this project is to increase forest stand resiliency to insects and disease and other disturbances, including wildland fire. The need is evident by the declining health of the current vegetation in the project area. The conifer stands in the South 21 Project area predominantly consist of lodgepole pine and mixed conifers (Douglas-fir, subalpine fir and white bark pine), and are categorized as moderate to heavily stocked with partial to closed canopies.

These timber stands have missed multiple fire return intervals. If a fire were to start, it would be expected to burn uncharacteristically due to lack of significant fire disturbance and heavy dead and down fuels accumulation.

The South 21 Project, when implemented, will lower the threat of catastrophic wildfire by reducing high tree densities, altering closed canopies structures, setting back mistletoe occurrence, and removing ground or ladder fuels associated with previous bark beetle outbreaks.

These actions will leave stands and/or trees that are more resilient to future insect and disease events, and associated wildland fire disturbances, which in turn increase overall forest health.

Planning and development of the South 21 Project were done through a transparent, nonexclusive collaborative process with the Salmon-Challis National Forest and the Sawtooth Valley Wildland Fire Collaborative Group, which includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests. The desired outcomes of the collaborative approach to the project were to increase agency transparency, better integrate interested parties, prevent conflict, and acquire better information in arriving at a decision for the project.

This collaborative process provided opportunities for all participants to discuss current conditions, desired conditions, action opportunities, mitigations, and local issues.

- [Salmon-Challis National Forest](#)

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## 440K acre-feet recharge expected into Snake aquifer

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The **Idaho Water Resource Board** estimated that 440,000 acre-feet of water will flow into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer by the end of the current water year – 76 percent more than the annual recharge goal of 250,000 acre-feet.

The Water Resource Board set a record with 317,000 acre-feet of recharge to the ESPA last year. The board has recharged more than 350,000 acre-feet of water from the Upper Snake River Valley and Magic Valley regions, with another month to go in the recharge season.

“We’re breaking new records every day now,” said **Wesley Hipke**, the board’s recharge program manager.

Hipke said surplus water in the Upper Snake reservoir system and additional recharge site capacity developed by the board and its water user partners has led to a very successful recharge season.

At its March meeting, the Water Resource Board also approved spending up to \$30,000 to study potential mitigation options for impacts to the northern Idaho ground squirrel resulting from a proposed expansion of the Lost Valley Reservoir near New Meadows. Lost Valley Reservoir water users want to raise Lost Valley dam to expand the size of the reservoir from 10,000 to 30,000 acre-feet. However, the reservoir is surrounded by populations of the ground squirrel, which is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

In other action, the board approved a loan to the Goose Lake Reservoir Company for \$300,000 over 20 years. The company operates the 4,600-acre-foot reservoir near Brundage Mountain and McCall. The Board approved a \$20,000 loan to the company last July to complete a structural evaluation of the dam and spillway.

The study found that the dam’s spillway retaining walls have experienced significant cracking and deterioration and recommended that they be replaced. The stored water serves ranchers who irrigate about 4,600 acres in Meadows Valley. The dam was built in 1920 and raised to increase reservoir capacity in 1951 and 1972.

- [Department of Water Resources](#)

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## Prescribed burn planned near Jordan Valley

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The **Bureau of Land Management** will soon conduct the Pole Creek Jackpot Prescribed Burn, located approximately 35 miles southeast of Jordan Valley, Oregon, on the western flanks of Juniper Mountain.

Expected to take place during the first two weeks of April, ignitions will occur for two to three days with subsequent mop-up and patrol continuing for several days after.

This 2,500-acre burn will target piles of heavy, dead fuels that have accumulated from previous western juniper thinning projects, but not the surrounding live vegetation. This is part of an effort to protect the sage-steppe landscape that supports traditional land uses and serves as important habitat for wildlife.

The exact timing of this burn is subject to weather, fuel and ground conditions.

- [Bureau of Land Management](#)



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## State considers lake trout future for Payette Lake

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Managing a large sterile lake with big, long-lived predators and a fluctuating prey species poses a big challenge for fisheries managers, and Payette Lake at McCall is the latest case where managers are asking anglers what they would like to see in the future.

The issue essentially breaks down to Payette Lake's lake trout population, which also happens to drive the population of its primary prey species, kokanee salmon. Balancing those two populations is critical to maintaining viable fisheries for each, and that balance comes at a cost, but more on that later.

Payette lake is currently dominated by lake trout, which isn't a bad thing, but they've created problems, as Fish and Game Regional Fish Manager **Dale Allen** explains.

"Based on past stocking strategies for lake trout in Payette Lake during the 1980s, they are now overly abundant. This increase has reduced the kokanee, which is their favorite and most-important food."



The lack of kokanee is affecting the future size and population of lake trout, which are “now smaller and much thinner than they were just a few years back,” Allen said. There are a couple of options: Add more kokanee, or remove some lake trout, but both have challenges. “Any action taken by the department, or anglers, is not going to show quick results in either an increase in kokanee numbers, or in the size and numbers of lake trout,” Allen said.

Fish and Game is updating the six-year Fishery Management Plan, which lays out the future direction for management of fisheries in the state.

Fish and Game has been through this situation before in North Idaho. Also, most western states are trying to manage this same situation.

In the last decade, the Fish and Game spearheaded a massive kokanee restoration project on lake Pend Oreille. It removed lake trout by providing a bounty on them, as well as large rainbow trout, to encourage anglers to harvest large, predacious fish. The project also included netting lake trout in large numbers to depress the population while temporarily boosting kokanee stocking.

After years of intense lake trout removal, and much money and effort spent, kokanee rebounded, was followed by a manageable increase in those trophy-sized rainbows and lake trout. Angling effort also significantly increased as anglers targeted the renewed kokanee population.

- [Department of Fish & Game](#)

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## Fish and Game commission considers hunting seasons

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At its March 22 meeting in Boise, the **Fish and Game Commission** instructed staff to draft a proposal for a fall grizzly bear hunt in which one male bear could be harvested.

Fish and Game biologists are scheduled to present the commission with proposed hunting season options for commission action at the commission’s May 10 meeting in McCall.

Under an agreement with Wyoming and Montana, the three states meet to annually review the Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear population status, the population-based mortality threshold and estimated bear mortality. The states then decide if there are bears available for hunting harvest.

- [Department of Fish & Game](#)

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## ■ Snowpack

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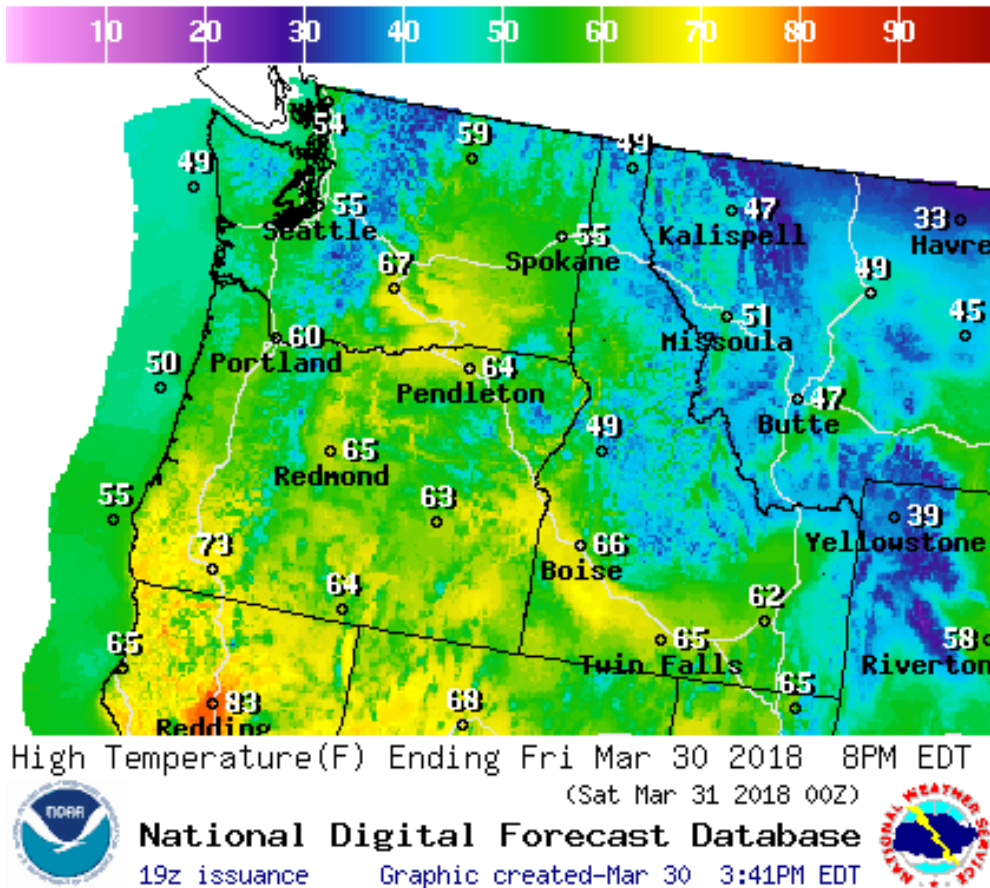
The numbers are percentages.

From the Natural Resources Conservation Service: “The Accumulated Precipitation Percent of Average represents the total precipitation (beginning October 1) found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day.”

**Note:** The new water year began on October 1. Normal would be 100. Much higher can mean flooding; much lower, drought. [From the Natural Resources Conservation Service](#). The percentage represents total precipitation (beginning October 1) at selected SNOTEL sites near the basin compared to average value for those sites.

basin	Last week	Week before	1 year ago
<b>Northern Panhandle</b>	109	109	143
<b>Spokane</b>	111	112	132
<b>Clearwater</b>	118	121	124
<b>Salmon</b>	102	102	138
<b>Weiser</b>	89	92	132
<b>Payette</b>	93	93	148
<b>Boise</b>	94	98	158
<b>Big Wood</b>	93	97	179
<b>Little Wood</b>	102	102	199
<b>Big Lost</b>	104	104	194
<b>Little Lost, Birch</b>	106	107	157
<b>Medicine Lodge, Beaver, Camas</b>	103	104	142
<b>Henry’s Fork, Teton</b>	104	104	152
<b>Snake above Palisades</b>	106	107	166
<b>Willow, Blackfoot, Portneuf</b>	96	95	157
<b>Snake above American Falls</b>	104	105	160
<b>Raft</b>	87	84	148
<b>Goose Creek</b>	84	85	132
<b>Salmon Falls</b>	91	92	133
<b>Bruneau</b>	96	97	141
<b>Owyhee</b>	90	90	133
<b>Bear River</b>	85	84	162

## Weather



From the [National Weather Service](https://www.weather.gov).

	Last week	Week before	One year ago
<b>Boise</b>	57/38 s	52/35 c	56/39 s
<b>Idaho Falls</b>	47/34 s	48/34 r	53/29 s
<b>Pocatello</b>	48/36 s	43/37 r	52/34 s
<b>Coeur d'Alene</b>	48/34 r	40/34 r	47/38 r
<b>Lewiston</b>	59/43 c	46/39 c	56/43 c
<b>Twin Falls</b>	52/39 s	50/35 c	52/34 s
<b>Sun Valley/Ketchum</b>	44/26 s	43/23 c	44/22 s

s- sunny; c - cloudy; r - rainy; p-snow



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## Board comments on legislative session

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*Linda Clark, president of the state Board of Education, on March 29 released this statement on the just-finished legislative session:*

The 2018 legislative session is over and from my perspective as a member of the State Board of Education, it was a good, productive session for public education in Idaho – from kindergarten through college.

Our public schools budget will increase 5.9 percent next year. That’s \$100 million in additional state general funds that will help us improve technology in our classrooms and continue our investments in our teacher “career ladder” designed to increase teacher pay.

Idaho’s colleges and universities will see a 3.2 percent increase in ongoing state general funds, or \$9.2 million. This includes funding for creation of a new clinical master’s degree program at Idaho State University to help address the need for more mental health professionals in Idaho. Lewis-Clark State College received funding for career counselors to help students align their courses and interests with a career after they graduate.

On other legislative fronts, the State Board will have more funding available for the Opportunity Scholarship program to help Idahoans pay for college including career technical certificates. Lawmakers and the Governor increased the board’s Opportunity Scholarship fund by nearly a third from \$10 million to \$13.5 million. Over 3,700 students benefited last year from the Opportunity Scholarship.

I’m very pleased that Governor Otter’s legislation passed authorizing the board to offer the Opportunity Scholarship to adults interested in returning to school to earn a certificate or a degree. The board plans to have this scholarship for adult learners available by next fall.

Legislators also increased funding for medical residencies in Idaho as part of a ten-year plan designed to train more doctors who will hopefully practice medicine in Idaho, particularly in rural parts of our state, once they finish their residencies.

More emphasis was placed on computer science courses offered in our high schools; more financial support will be available for career technical education, including classes offered in middle school and it will be easier for college students to transfer from one Idaho college or university to another.

There were other proposals the board both supported and opposed that did not make it through the legislature this session. We as a board look forward to visiting with the sponsors of those bills during the interim to learn more about their proposals and to explore ways to possibly work together.

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## ISU dual-enrollment program progressing

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**Idaho State University's** College of Arts and Letters started its on-campus dual-enrollment pilot program in the fall of 2017 and has almost tripled the program's size from 10 students to 29 in just one semester.

The program also almost doubled the number of high schools participating from four to seven. This includes Highland, Pocatello, Century and New Horizon High Schools, Blackfoot High School, Bingham Academy and Sho-Ban Junior/Senior High School.

The dual-enrollment program allows high school students in Southeast Idaho to take college courses while still enrolled in high school, with each course counting for credits at both levels. The courses available are ones generally not offered at the local high schools, and range from Elementary Shoshoni, Media Literacy, Art of Film, philosophy and more.

"I like the early college program because it prepares me for college by familiarizing me with the ISU campus and the professors, and gives me a feel for what I should expect when I attend college," said **Amia Hopster**, a dual-enrollment student from Highland High School.

One of the most enrolled course sections is Elementary Shoshoni, taught by **Drusilla Gould**, the only Shoshoni course taught at the college level in the United States. Nine students are enrolled in the course from three different high schools.

As the program grows, the number of courses available is also growing. During the first semester, the program offered 16 courses. This spring, there were 20.

"Our goal is for this program to continue to grow in size so we can offer more courses for our local high school students," said **Holly Kartchner**, director of Outreach and Retention for the college. "We want to be able to help as many students in Southeast Idaho be prepared for college, and we believe this program is one of the biggest ways to do so."

- [Idaho State University](#)

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## University of Idaho gets grad school access grant

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Some **University of Idaho** students will soon qualify for funding to complete their undergraduate degrees, expand their ways of thinking, and prepare for graduate school thanks to a \$1.15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The grant, awarded to the university's College of Education, Health and Human Sciences and funded by the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, is one of eight DOE programs designed to advance the academic careers

of students from underrepresented segments of society, particularly those with strong academic potential coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Approximately 125 University of Idaho students will benefit from the five-year grant. During each of these years, \$231,000 in funding will be awarded to 25 students, commonly known as McNair scholars.

"This outstanding program, part of the federal TRIO programs, provides critical resources for students who have strong academic potential but come from disadvantaged backgrounds," said Janet E. Nelson, U of I's Vice President for Research and Economic Development. "This national program will go far in helping these students realize their academic goals at the University of Idaho."

The goal of the McNair program: provide financial support, as well as educational and cultural enrichment to help junior- and senior-level students attain graduate degrees in their chosen area of study, preferably at the Ph.D. level.

To achieve this, student awardees will receive a range of financial and educational support over two years. McNair scholars receive stipends for room and board, instructional supplies, admission fees and a research project under the guidance of U of I faculty. In addition, these recipients will be sent to educational, professional and cultural enrichment events related to their fields of study.

- [University of Idaho](#)

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## Board of Education interviews LCSC candidates

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The **Idaho State Board Education** next week will interview three candidates in the running to become Lewis-Clark State College's next president.

The LCSC Presidential Search Committee has been informed by its search consultants that a fourth candidate, Dr. Robbyn Wacker, has withdrawn her name from consideration.

The board will meet with the three finalists on Tuesday, April 3, 2018 in Executive Session.

They are:

- Cynthia Pemberton, EdD – Vice President for Academic Affairs, Colorado Mesa University
- Kristin Poppo, PhD – Provost, Alfred State College
- Brock Tessman, PhD – Dean of Davidson Honors College, University of Montana

The Board will also interview three finalists for president of Idaho State University on April 2

- [Board of Education](#)



# Cult/Com/Trans



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## Rebuild of St. Joe River bridge at St. Maries coming soon

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Construction on the west half of the St. Joe River Bridge could begin as early as Monday, April 2 after the completion of the bridge's substructure and prompt the closure of one lane.

This is the next phase of a project that began last fall to improve safety for travelers crossing the river.

Travelers can expect up to 15-minute delays while Idaho Highway 3 is reduced to one lane and one pedestrian path over the bridge. Temporary signals will direct traffic.

Once the west half of the bridge is completed in mid to late July, crews will work to complete the east half of the bridge. When crews start work on the east half of the river bridge, they will also begin work on the railroad bridge, which will be completely closed during its reconstruction.

Riverside Avenue, which runs underneath the bridge, will continue to be closed for safety reasons between First and Fourth Streets until further notice. Railroad Avenue, which intersects the highway between the two bridges, is being reconstructed. The road will be closed between ID-3 and Fourth Street until the west half of the St. Joe River Bridge is completed.



The overall project is scheduled to be finished in spring 2019 and includes designing and replacing the bridges over the St. Joe River and the St. Maries Railroad Company tracks.

Upon completion, both bridges will include one lane in each direction with a shoulder and sidewalk on each side. Work will also include reconstructing the highway to match the bridges, replacing guardrail and signs and improving the intersections of Railroad Avenue and Meadowhurst Road with the highway.

Record Steel Construction Inc. and J-U-B ENGINEERS Inc. will complete the work for \$17.3 million.

● [Idaho Transportation Department](#)

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## Ski areas

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Information from the [SkiTiger.com](#) Northwest ski site.

<b>Ski area</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Snow depth (in)</b>	<b>Snow depth year ago (in)</b>
<b>Schweitzer</b>	open	159	40
<b>Silver Mountain</b>	open	154	70
<b>Brundage</b>	open	87	51
<b>Bogus Basin</b>	open	57	66
<b>Sun Valley</b>	open	46	82
<b>Tamarack</b>	open	38	61
<b>Soldier Mountain</b>	open	38	50
<b>Kelly Canyon</b>	open	-	46
<b>Pomerelle</b>	open	31	110

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## Bestselling books

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Top selling paperback non-fiction, from the [Pacific Northwest Independent Bestseller List](#), by IndieBound and the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association, based on reports from regional independent booksellers.

\*Regional bestseller not on national IndieBound list.

1. Being Mortal – Atul Gawande, Picador USA, \$16, 9781250076229
2. The Stranger in the Woods – Michael Finkel, Vintage, \$16, 9781101911532

- \*3. How to Love – Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, \$9.95, 9781937006884
- 4. On Tyranny – Timothy Snyder, Tim Duggan Books, \$7.99, 9780804190114
- 5. You Are a Badass – Jen Sincero, Running Press, \$16, 9780762447695
- \*6. The Immortal Irishman – Timothy Egan, Mariner, \$15.99, 9780544944831
- 7. The Lost City of the Monkey God – Douglas J. Preston, Grand Central, \$15.99, 9781455540013
- \*8. How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain – Lisa Feldman Barrett, Mariner, \$15.99, 9781328915436
- \*9. The Soul of an Octopus – Sy Montgomery, Atria, \$16, 9781451697728
- \*10. Alexander Hamilton – Ron Chernow, Penguin, \$20, 9780143034759
- \*11. How to Fight – Nhaaat Hoanh, Parallax Press, \$9.95, 9781941529867
- \*12. Astoria – Peter Stark, Ecco, \$15.99, 9780062218308
- 13. Everybody Lies – Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, Dey Street, \$16.99, 9780062390868
- \*14. Braiding Sweetgrass – Robin Wall Kimmerer, Milkweed Editions, \$18, 9781571313560
- \*15. Other Minds – Peter Godfrey-Smith, FSG, \$16, 9780374537197

# Calendar

## March

- 1 Last day for the County Clerk to receive written requests for the purpose of authorizing persons to act as challengers at the polling place for the March 13 election.
  - Joint Legislative Oversight Committee meeting (child welfare). Boise.
  - Respectful workplace task force committee meeting. Boise.
  - Idaho State University's International Affairs Council, 47th annual Frank Church Symposium. Pocatello.
- 2 Legislative committee target for rules review.
  - Board of Education meeting. Boise.
- 5 Legislative transmittal deadline (general) between chambers.
- 6 Regulatory Reform Joint Subcommittee legislative meeting. Boise.
- 7 State administrative rules bulletin publishes.
- 9 Last day for filing declarations of candidacy for candidates, including independents, with secretary of state or county clerk for the Primary (May 15) and General (November 6) Elections.
  - Last day for Early Voting until 5:00 p.m. for the March 13 election at the Early Voting polling place.
  - Budget setting target deadline in JFAC.
  - Water supply committee meeting, Boise.
- 12 Statewide labor force, nonfarm employment data for January 2018 released.
- 13 Special election day.
  - Joint Legislative Oversight Committee meeting. Boise.
  - Regulatory Reform Joint Subcommittee legislative meeting. Boise.
- 14 Board of Transportation meeting. Boise.
- 15 Health Care Rally calling for action on the Idaho Health Care Plan. Boise.
  - Board of Education meeting. Boise.
- 16 Capital for a Day at Moyie Springs.
- 17 St. Patrick's Day.
- 19 Last day for the Secretary of State to certify candidates to the County Clerks for the Primary Election.
- 20 State Land Board meeting. Boise.
  - Board of Examiners meeting. Boise.
  - Possible Snake River Basin Adjudication information meeting, status conference.
  - Board of Health & Welfare meeting. Boise..
  - Board of Correction meeting. Boise.
- 21 Fish & Game Commission special meeting. Boise.
- 22 Water Resources Board meeting. Boise.

- Idaho Economic Advisory Council meeting. Boise.
- 23 Last day a partisan candidate may withdraw before the Primary Election.
  - Target deadline to complete legislative session business.
  - Last day for the Board of County Commissioners to meet and canvass the vote for the March 13 election.
- 27 Legislative target for sine die adjournment.
- 28 2018 Serve Idaho Conference, focus on Diversity and Inclusion. Boise.
- 31 Last day a candidate for political subdivisions may withdraw before the May 15 election.

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## April

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- 4 State administrative rules bulletin publishes.
- 5 Last day for the Secretary of State to provide form of sample Primary Election (May 15) ballot.
  - State Workforce Development Council meeting. Meridian.
- 6 Board of Dentistry meeting. Boise.
- 12 Last day for a candidate or a ballot measure interested party for the March 13 election to request a recount with the Attorney General.
- 13 Fish & Game Commission meeting (conference call).
- 15 Last day for County Commissioners to set polling place for Primary Election.
- 17 State Land Board meeting. Boise.
  - Board of Examiners meeting. Boise.
  - Possible Snake River Basin Adjudication information meeting, status conference.
  - Nampa state of the city address by mayor.
- 18 Board of Education meeting. Moscow (University of Idaho).
  - Idaho Transportation Board meeting. Lewiston.
- 25 I-90 Aerospace Corridor Conference & Expo. Spokane.
- 26 Idaho Cybersecurity Interdependencies Workshop. Boise.
- 30 Last day to begin Early Voting at the Early Voting Polling Place for the Primary Election for those counties who elect to conduct Early Voting.

# People

**Frances Symms**, 80, who was married to former Senator Steve Symms (1959-90), died in Boise on March 28. A native of Hammond, Indiana, she attended the University of Idaho, where she met Steve Symms. She was highly active in civic life for many years.

- [Idaho Statesman](#)

# A year ago



**2017:** Wind blown precipitation fall streaks at sunset over Pocatello. (*photo/Jeff Hedges, National Weather Service, Pocatello*)

In the *Idaho Weekly Briefing*:

- The Idaho Legislature adjourned for the year on March 29.
- Mayor David Bieter on March 31 declared a state of local emergency in the City of Boise due to nearly unprecedented flows on the Boise River and the unpredictable impacts those flood waters could have on the city over an extended period of time.
- Representatives Mike Simpson and Raul Labrador have introduced legislation to address the routing of the Gateway West Transmission Line, through the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The



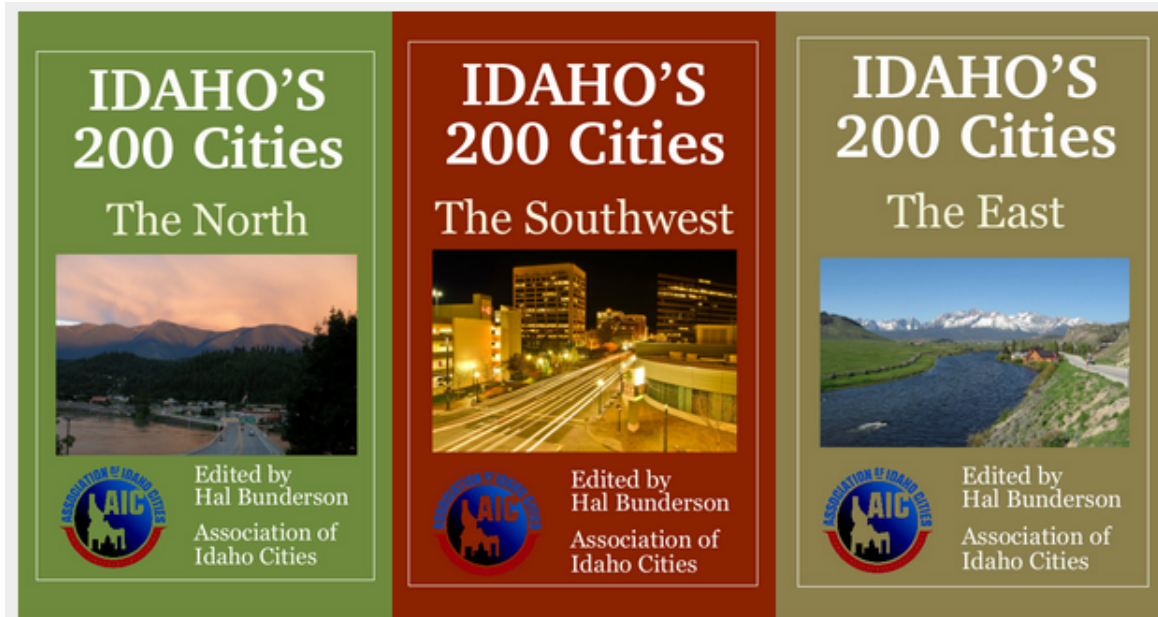
project – jointly proposed by Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power - will construct and operate 1,000 miles of high voltage transmission line across Wyoming and Idaho.

- The Treasure Valley saw more than 80 new jobs in the state’s growing solar industry last year, according to a report released today by The Solar Foundation. The Boise’s metropolitan area is now home to 289 solar jobs, an increase of 43% from 2015 figures.
- Boise State University now offers a fully online bachelor of business administration degree in management. The new management degree, offered through Boise State’s College of Business and Economics, gives working adults an affordable, flexible way to finish their bachelor’s degree and advance their careers.
- Idaho Fish and Game on March 30 transported about 4,000 adult sockeye salmon from its Eagle Fish Hatchery to its sockeye hatchery at Springfield to ensure the fish remain protected if there’s flooding at the Eagle hatchery.
- Two bighorn sheep rams that were in immediate proximity to domestic sheep near Challis were euthanized Thursday, March 30, to prevent the sheep from potentially carrying disease back to the wild herd. One ram was a five-years-old and the other a six-year old.
- Private-sector innovators and government researchers will work hand-in-hand to create the next generation of clean, advanced nuclear power under bi-partisan legislation advanced out of committee today in the U.S. Senate.
- Idaho State University researchers have established a clear link to septic sources of nitrate contamination in about one-third of the 100 private wells in the Lower Portneuf Valley Watershed sampled for a study.
- The Idaho Panhandle National Forests and Idaho Department of Lands are holding a public meeting to discuss the Hanna Flats Good Neighbor Authority Project on the Priest Lake Ranger District. The meeting will take place on April 13 at the Priest Lake Ranger Station located at 32203 Hwy 57, Priest Lake.
- Idaho State University’s College of Arts and Letters has been approved to allow 90 high school students to take dual-enrollment credits on campus with ISU professors.
- The Idaho Water Resource Board voted unanimously on March 28 to approve a hearing officer’s recommendations on four suction-mining permits issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources on the South Fork of the Clearwater River in 2016.
- The Bureau of Land Management has extended the public scoping period for the Canyonlands West and Grand View Travel Management Plans’ environmental analyses through April 21, 2017. This extension is in response to multiple public requests to allow more time for review and to provide feedback about issues to be considered in the environmental analyses.

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## Idaho's 200 Cities – North, Southwest and East

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Three new books arriving this week: The series of Idaho's 200 Cities, with one title each focused on the norther, southwestern and eastern parts of the state.

And more than that too: There are also three books of Idaho trivia, a challenge for anyone who thinks they know the state.

The books are the culmination of a decade of work by the Association of Idaho Cities, spearheaded by former legislator Hal Bunderson. The books were written in part by Bunderson and in part by people all over Idaho, in cities from Moyie Springs to St. Charles.

The detail is startling, and the insights often surprising - there's a lot more to these communities than almost anyone but locals know (and not all of them). One of the most useful parts of the books is the section on turning points, describing the developments and events that caused the city to grow and change, for better or worse, the way it has. A of lessons can be found there.

If Idaho is of interest - and if you live there it ought to be - then these books belong on your bookshelf. They're available now, and in both paperback and full color hardbound flavors.

[You can find out more about them, and order them, here.](#) (They're also available [at Amazon.com](#)).