



Board of Directors Meeting

Held by Zoom

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

2:00 --5:00 p.m. MT

ATTENDANCE

Present via Zoom: Karen Appelgren, ID. Department of Commerce, Stephanie Bailey-White, ID. Commission for Libraries, Jon Barrett, Idaho Rural Partnership, Art Beal, Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Association, Sarah Beeks, IRP intern, Diane Bevin, Idaho Women’s Business Center, Jess Byrne, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Krysten Carr, ID. Department of Labor, Trent Clark, Customalting, James Curry, Bayer Crop Science, Brian Dale, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Cyndi Grafe, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Maureen Gresham, Federal Highway Administration, Juta Geurtsen, Idaho Commission on the Arts, John Holman, USDA Rural Development, Tom Kealey, ID Department of Commerce; Erik Kingston, Idaho Housing and Finance Association; Shannon Madsen, U.S. Small Business Administration; Kermit Mankiller, Nez Perce Tribe, Jeff Marker, Idaho Transportation Department, Jeff McCurdy, Region IV Development Association, Marsha McDaniel, Idaho National Laboratory, Jerry Miller, ID Dept. of Commerce, Daryl Moser, USDA – Rural Development, Kelley Packer, Association of Idaho Cities, Donna Pence, Gooding, , Colleen Rosson, Silver Valley Economic Development Corporation, Tim Solomon, Rocky Mountain Power, Chanel Tewalt, Idaho Dept. of Agriculture, Rep. Sally Toone, Idaho Legislature, Nathan Walker, Boise All Ages Movement Project

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVE MINUTES

Co-Chair Art Beal CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:05 P.M. Mountain. Co-Chair Beal asked if there are any corrections to the December 9, 2020 minutes sent prior to the meeting. No corrections were identified and the minutes were approved as read.

CO-CHAIR REPORTS

Co-Chair Beal thanked everyone for what they do on behalf of rural Idaho, Co-Chair Kealey, the Department of Commerce for providing office space, Region IV Development for serving as IRP's fiscal sponsor, and Executive Director Jon Barrett.

Co-chair Tom Kealey expressed hope that we'll be able to meet again in-person soon. He welcomed new board members. It's wonderful to have new vision and ideas for going forward. He expressed appreciation for working on the annual report with Jon and Art.

Things in rural and urban areas of Idaho are booming. The negatives are that there are more jobs than employees and there's more demand for housing than there is housing available. We are leading the nation on many fronts across the state, which is positive for our economy and our residents.

We're happy to have been part of the CARES Act funding opportunity last year to expand broadband across the state. Yesterday, the third reading occurred for the supplemental appropriation for Dept. of Commerce. Hope to have approval of supplemental funding soon, which includes some opportunity funds to help with infrastructure in rural areas and \$45 million for additional broadband projects across the state.

We also have legislation establishing the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board and Fund

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jon provided an overview of program, organizational development, and fundraising activities. We have completed the virtual sessions for Phase II of the Blackfoot Community Review. The City is moving forward on a couple projects identified through the community review. Planning for Phase II of Harrison Community Review is underway; hope to complete this Review in the next few months.

Working with U of I Extension, we've been able to provide \$2,500-\$5,000 mini-grant funding to communities that have completed community reviews. Harrison, Blackfoot, Cascade, and Emmett all received this funding to support projects identified during their respective community reviews.

Continuing to make progress developing a rapid response community review process to allow us to work with more communities in a given time, at less cost per community. Communities that complete the rapid response process will be well positioned to complete a full community review. We have 3-4 communities that have expressed interest in a community review.

Idaho Peer Learning Network continues to meet monthly. It currently has 12 rural leaders around the state participating.

IRP E-bulletin was recently distributed and we're now working on the next issue.

Intern Sarah Beeks has been working for IRP an average of 10 hours/week. She's been a big help, especially with the e-bulletin. We have applied for another intern for the fall semester through BSU's program.

We've initiated the process of updating the IRP strategic plan. We're currently conducting a survey, which we will be talking about later today.

We've completed the annual report for 2020. It's now on the IRP website – www.irp.idaho.gov.

We are on schedule to host the 2021 annual conference of Partners for Rural America here in Idaho. You'll all be hearing more about this in the spring and summer.

Reason for optimism in the area of funding. In recent months we've received \$5,000 of USDA funding through U of I Extension, \$2,500 from Rocky Mountain Power Challenge Grant, \$5,000 Tech-based Economic Development grant from INL, \$1,500 from Idaho Housing and Finance Association, and \$500 from Southeast Idaho Council of Governments to support the Blackfoot Community Review. Jon recently sent a proposal to USDA Rural Development for a RBDG grant to support a community review at the end of this year and early next year. A proposal for 2021 sponsorship funding has also been sent to the Avista Corporation.

Jon reviewed information showing year-to-date income, expenses, and fund on-hand. We have about \$29,000 in

income, with \$12,000 of new funding raised since Jan.1. In addition, we have over \$5,000 in the Fund for Rural Idaho. Our expenses for the 1st quarter are just over \$8,000.

Co-Chair Beal opened the floor for questions. Jess Byrne stated DEQ's operating expenses have been down this year due to COVID, which means DEQ might have a limited amount of funding to support IRP in general or a specific project. He expressed interest in looking into this possibility. It's something DEQ can at least talk about. Jon expressed interest in talking with Jess off-line.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Chair Beal introduced and welcomed new board members Jeff McCurdy (Region IV Development), John Stuart (MTE Communications), Colleen Rossen (Silver Valley Economic Development Corp.), and Sen. David Nelson. Jeff, John, and Colleen were present at the meet and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the board. Co-Chair Beal thanked Sen. Nye for his service on the board.

ROUNDTABLE REPORTS

Art Beal, Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Association

The North Fork Payette Watershed held a summit earlier this year to study ways to reduce water pollution. Last year, pollution levels reached toxic levels, which impacts rural communities and agriculture downstream in southwest Idaho counties. Last year, the RC & D and Owyhee County Conservation District collected 1,371 tires. Fuel reduction projects are ongoing on private land, with the RC & D's involvement. RC & D's support several coalitions, e.g., forest coalitions.

Erik Kingston, IHFA

IHFA has been working on the emergency rental and utility assistance payments (Home Preservation Program funding) for the last year. This is for folks who have been impacted by COVID. Folks can call IHFA to apply. We just received a new round of this funding. We finished the annual Avenues for Hope campaign last year, raising a record \$2.6 million for housing and homelessness nonprofits in the state. Also working on a one-year fair housing grant to provide education and outreach. Erik is putting info. in the chat. Starting to work with Commerce on 5-year analysis of impediments to housing. IRP board members will be invited to participate in this analysis. We continue to see the challenges due to

outside investment buying housing and property around the state, decreasing supply and increasing cost of available housing. It's a crisis situation. It's impacting people on all kinds of levels.

Kelley Packer,
Association of Idaho
Cities

Congratulations and welcome to new board members. Our annual conference is June 16-18. Please contact Kelley if your agency wants to share information with Idaho cities. Go to 'events' tab on our website, idahocities.org. There is a lot of (COVID recovery) money coming into the state from different areas; we're working with the cities to help them understand what's available and how it can be used. We've formed a partnership with Strategies 360, which has a presence in Wash D.C. We're providing monthly webinars to our cities. We're encouraging them to think regionally as they pursue funding for recovery, infrastructure, etc.

168 Idaho cities have less than 5,000 people. Some of these smaller communities don't qualify for certain funds. We're hopeful House Bill 362 will pass to provide needed transportation funding.

Trent Clark,
Customalting

In Caribou County, we saw the beginnings of the formation of community militia in surrounding counties. Some people talked about forming such a militia in Caribou County. Instead, people in the County decided to work with Bureau of Disaster Services, which helps train community emergency response teams and the community watch program coordinated by the Sheriff's Association. We're organizing to work with our government instead of organizing to work against government.

Ken Frederick, BLM

Representing John Ruhs, BLM State Director. Dept. of Interior has a new Secretary, Deb Haaland. In our office, 25% of staff are present. Everyone else teleworking. We now have one resource advisory council in Idaho representing all areas of the state; we had four until a year ago, but we were having problems with attendance. Over last 4-6 months we've received two proposed wind energy projects on public lands (Lave Ridge and Salmon Falls projects) from Magic Valley Energy. In environmental analysis now. Also working on environment analysis of proposed phosphate mine near Soda Springs. The fire season outlook looks pretty normal for Idaho, though precipitation is down a bit.

Tom Kealey, Dept. of
Commerce

I'd like to recognize Karen Applegren and Jerry Miller from Commerce on this call. I want to thank our economic development partners around the state. We work on the priorities of the Governor, including supporting rural Idaho and existing employers. Legislation going through now can help the state and rural areas specifically – lower taxes, less regulation, funding, etc. The state is very hot in terms of investment, commerce, workforce, housing, etc. We're trying to track and dig into the details of all the different funding sources coming into the state going forward, what they mean, how they can be used, etc. -- whether this funding runs through the state or other entities. We need to share this information with the folks on this call.

In addition to the \$45 million state appropriation for broadband, there's additional federal COVID recovery funding that will be available for infrastructure, including for broadband. This could be in the range of \$100-\$125 million, and possibly more that can follow. We will be getting this information out as we receive it.

John Stuart, MTE
Communications

Thanks to Director Kealey and Jon Barrett for helping me be appointed to this board. Hopefully I'll be someone who contributes as much as he can. I met Monday with Washington County Commissioners, who are doing their research about available COVID recovery funding. It's good to hear that people are aware of employment issues. In my area, restaurants are having to shut down at least part time due to difficulty finding employees. Nice to hear discussion about the fire season as I've been a firefighter for 33 years.

Colleen Rossen,
Silver Valley Econo.
Development Corp.

Shoshone County has about 13,000 people and growing fast. We've been working a lot on housing and have been able to get our Shoshone Housing Board up and running. Currently working with owners of non-residential properties to convert them to residential uses (e.g., second stories of commercial buildings). Also doing a vacant land inventory and working with major employers re: housing. We've created our own broadband action team, which is actively preparing to apply for broadband funding. We've engaged citizens in this effort. We've also created an airport advisory group to look at development of the airport and surrounding properties. The airport is impressive as is, but there are opportunities to

improve. We've created a placemaking group that's going to start in Kellogg that will focus on arts, walkability, education, etc. Workforce development efforts center around the workforce development council's Launch program to help people become more marketable in the job market.

Jess Byrne, DEQ

During session, we received \$6.19 million for our low interest loan programs for water and wastewater projects as part of the Governor's Building Idaho's Future program. This funding is essentially for principal forgiveness with a focus on small rural communities that are disadvantaged. We also received \$2 million for nutrient reduction projects on CdA Lake – point and non-point source projects. Also \$1 million for surface water non-point source pollution projects statewide. In addition, in American Rescue Plan Act, there's considerable funding for infrastructure, included for water and wastewater projects. Currently working with the Div. of Financial Management re: this funding.

To give you a sense of the need out there, this last year we received applications for about \$395 million for wastewater projects. Of this total, we were only able to fund \$7,230,000. There's a huge gap there. For drinking water, we received about \$60 million in requests and were able to fund about \$13 million. The prospect of additional federal funds coming into the state is important. One concern I have about this funding: communities will have to be ready without much notice to access this funding, and rural communities struggle with this.

James Curry, Bayer Crop Science

I appreciate continuing to be included in IRP activities and we obviously support these efforts. I traveled to Boise in February to present to pertinent legislative committees to talk about the company's commitment to the state of Idaho considering the merger and Roundup litigation. Happy to report we're closing the chapter on Roundup litigation without any impact to our Idaho operations.

We broke ground on the Pebble Canyon Mine last year. This is a \$330 million investment and 100 new employees. The other positive story is the approval of plans for the Ballard mine, which is one of the oldest mines in the region. Plan to move forward with \$200 million clean-up and remediation project at this site next year. Our water treatment plans and plant scrubbing system upgrades are also significant

investments. In total, we're talking about \$775 million in investment in SE Idaho. We hope to open our facilities for tours this summer and fall. We would love to be able to attend the Partners for Rural America event in later summer.

Daryl Moser & John Holman, USDA Rural Development

John is with USDA's rural utility service, which handles our telecommunication programs that expand broadband to rural communities. We have \$690 million available for such projects. There are no deadlines. It's a low interest loan for expanding/improving broadband infrastructure. We have another program called ReConnect which is a pilot program. About \$1 billion will become available this summer through this program. Eligible applicants are pretty broad. We want to hear from potential applicants. We also have a couple small grant programs. The Community Connect program provides up to \$3 million for broadband projects. We also have a distance learning and telemedicine program with a deadline of July 4. These grants are up to \$1 million per project.

USDA also anticipates receiving funding through the American Rescue Plan Act for these types of projects and for housing as well. Getting the information out in a timely fashion is our goal.

Tim Solomon, Rocky Mountain Power

Our focus as an electrical utility is to increase our capacity across our systems as growth occurs. We have a major transmission upgrade project in Eastern Idaho. We're working with other utilities and states on the installation of DC fast chargers across 7 western states so we are able to remove range anxiety among electric vehicle drivers. Major companies like Wal-mart want to go completely electric by 2030 or sooner if they can. The infrastructure just isn't in place yet.

Jeff Marker, Idaho Transportation Department

Under the Governor's Building Idaho's Future program, there will be \$71 million going to the state highway system. \$37 million going to local highway jurisdictions, and \$4 million to small community airports. In addition, \$2 million going to at grade railroad crossing safety and \$2 million for pedestrian safety statewide. As we live through COVID, traffic numbers in 2020 were down compared to 2019, but they've increased 8% so far this year.

With public transportation, the various federal grants are at about \$2.4 million coming into the state. The American Rescue Plan provides \$560 thousand for rural public transit grants and another \$82 thousand to assist elderly and disabled in rural areas with transportation.

Brian Dale, U.S.
Dept. of Housing
and Urban
Development

CARES Act funding coming through HUD is going to IHFA, Commerce, and the Tribes. All the entitlement cities have also received CARES funding as well. April is fair housing month. Montpelier made a declaration and put out some impressive materials. The last couple of months, we learned there was a homeless encampment on Bunker Hill Superfund site in Shoshone County. We've been working with some of the social service providers to address the unsafe, unsustainable situation. We're seeing a tightness in the housing market in rental and owner-occupied units. We'll keep monitoring this situation.

Kermit Mankiller, Nez
Perce Tribes

A lot of the things others have reported sound familiar. We have a couple electric vehicle charging stations and are looking at installing more at our bigger properties. This is one part of the America Rescue Plan we're keeping an eye on. We're moving forward with our business park project, with commitments from a couple metal manufacturers recently. We have a commitment from a livestock processing business. This will create new opportunities for ranching in our area. Collaborations I want to point to include new bridge replacement project with Nez Perce County, which encountered cultural resources which stopped the work. The Tribe and County were able to work out a process that worked for both parties. We're also working on broadband projects involving the Tribe, Port of Whitman, and Port of Lewiston. Last fall we were able to facilitate an agreement between the Tribe and Port of Lewiston to provide redundancy. This is significant because the priorities of the Tribe and the Port often go in different directions. The Nez Perce Tribe put a USDA-approved Hemp code in place. We continue tracking research efforts in this area, some of which are outside the region.

Chanel Tewalt, ID
Dept. of Agriculture

We've established the new Farm and Ranch Center at the department to serve farmers who are veterans, emerging farmers, and underserved farmers. At this time, this effort is focused on helping farmers with transitional planning and

management tools. We'll be developing related videos this year. We've also created a new website for this program. Please check it out. The new animal health lab is going to open this fall next to our main building. It will be the only large animal necropsy lab in the state. We have 27 rulemaking meetings in the next 10 weeks. This is an important opportunity for stakeholders to weigh in on rules that impact them. American Farm Bureau hosts a national discussion meet. Idaho's representative this last year, Marjie Ricks, was the winner of the meet!

Donna Pence, ad-hoc member and former legislator, Gooding

I'm involved in the Magic Valley and Lost Rivers Valley areas. The drought was mentioned by someone else. The northern part of the Magic Valley and Lost Rivers Valley is in pretty bad shape in terms of water.

Jeff McCurdy, Region IV Development

The economic development districts received about \$10 million from EDA. Some of this went to businesses to help them recover. In Region IV, we've saved or created over 150 jobs. There will still be a need for this funding going forward. The five regional districts are also involved in disaster recovery (using some of the EDA funding). The pandemic has pointed out the need for new business incubators. Interest rates are at an all-time low. Lots of interest in starting new businesses, but some people just aren't sure how to launch them into the marketplace. Here in Region 4, we're doing a feasibility study to create a food innovation center; there will be more to report on this in the future.

Shannon Madsen, U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA has been charged with pandemic programs in the CARES Act and other stimulus bills related to small business: PPP program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, Targeted Economic Advance, Save the Stages Venue Operator Grant. We're also designing the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, which should be launched in the next few weeks. I'll put a link for SBA updates on the chat. A lot of business in rural areas are in our priority groups right now.

Diane Bevin, Idaho Women's Business Center

Congratulations and welcome to the new board members. SBA has done a great job in a short amount of time. We know a lot of women-owned businesses are in the food space and we know they need the support. We have created an alliance with the Tribes in Idaho. Last Friday we announced the formation of the Idaho Native American Women's Business

Alliance, which is a partnership of the Idaho Women's Business Center. We're creating a movement to engage the women in each of the Tribes. We just finished a project with students at BYU-Idaho to research women-owned businesses across the state as part of our rural growth initiative. The Women's Business Center received \$800,000 through the CARES Act. We now have six offices and a team of 11 people.

Sarah Beeks, IRP
intern

I've been serving at IRP's intern this semester. I'm also a senior at Boise State. I've been helping with tele-health projects and writing articles for the IRP newsletter. I've really appreciated this opportunity to learn more about rural Idaho.

Karen Applegren,
Dept. of Commerce

Idaho businesses are showing strong interest in expanding, which is very exciting. Some of them are expanding in ways that make them eligible for our incentive programs, meaning they are not just create jobs, they are creating higher quality, good paying jobs. A lot of Idaho companies are getting venture capital funding, which is also good news. We're also getting business attraction projects off the ground. Artisan Labs is building a \$3 million facility in Hansen, for example. We also see housing and lack of childcare as significant issues.

Stephanie Bailey-
White, Idaho
Commission for
Libraries

Speaking of childcare, we are one of the partners in the \$6 million pre-school development grant that currently in the legislative process. We're hopeful this will be passed. IRP intern Sarah did a great job writing about a new libraries and tele-health pilot program with the Orofino and Weippe Libraries in partnership with Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation. We hope to replicate this program in other communities. We also have AARP funds of \$2.4 million, subject to legislative approval, which must be spent this next fiscal year. We're hoping to open up the bulk of this funding for public school, academic, and tribal libraries through a sub-grant process.

Nathan Walker,
Boise All Ages
Movement Project

I'm standing in today for Eric Gilbert. We represent our music communities. We've been working music advocacy a lot. We intersect with this group through economic development, small businesses, and workforce development – much more than the arts sector we get lumped into often. We're working with our regional Cascadia cohort on an economic impact study that will be broken down by state and zipcode. This will be the first such study focused on music in Idaho. We're also

helping our local musicians, businesses, and venues with the Save Our Stages grant program Shannon talked about.

Maureen Gresham,
Federal Highway
Administration

I'm the community planner with FHWA in Idaho and am available to help local community with community development, esp. related to bike, pedestrian, freight, and mobility. I'm happy to be involved with IRP again, having previously worked for the Idaho Transportation Department. Yesterday a notice of funding opportunity went out through the U.S. DOT for RAISE, which is a grant program for surface transportation projects. This was formerly known as the TIGER grant program. A local community can apply directly to FHWA. In rural areas, the minimum award is \$1 million.

Jerry Miller, Dept. of
Commerce

I'd like to put in a shameless plug for the IRP Facebook page. I post funding-related on the page as I receive it. Also, please go to link I put in the chat and do a speedtest of your internet speed. This data will help Idaho be more competitive as we continue pursuing funding for broadband.

Kristyn Carr, Dept. of
Labor

We had mobile services in rural Idaho that we had to pull back due to the pandemic. We're happy that these teams are getting back in their communities, although in different locations in some cases. We're still nailing down some new locations. We have a lot of resources and grants available right now. For example, Idaho Launch. If people need training or job search assistance, we have a lot to offer. We're also planning hiring events and job fairs across the state this summer as we keep helping businesses find a skilled workforce. We've been fortunate that our unemployment rates are still low. A lot of businesses are struggling to find workers.

Marsha McDaniel,
Idaho National
Laboratory

Appreciate this first opportunity to attend a board meeting. I'm a senior advisor here at INL in a leadership role in INL's economic development efforts. I look forward to continuing our collaboration with IRP.

Cyndi Grafe, US EPA

Director Byrne covered much of the information about funding for infrastructure improvements (e.g., water and wastewater). I would add we're anticipating more funding to come, including for water recycling. I want to note that EPA's brownfields program is doing a series of webinars led by the Center for Creative Land Recycling. One of the webinars was

just done with the City of Ponderay featuring a vision to action process. The EPA brownfields team is open to requests for targeted brownfields assessment assistance. This is a free opportunity available to communities and nonprofit organizations. EPA has completed a Phase 2 assessment in Plummer, ID on the former poleyard property.

Juta Guertsen, Idaho
Commission for the
Arts

Today we are finalizing the report that the Commission on the Arts commissioned the Idaho Policy Institute to complete for the creative district pilot project we've been working on for four years. This is modeled after similar efforts in Colorado. Initial findings show strong support and optimism regarding the potential for a creative district in the McCall community. This has positive implications for community and economic development in the state. Please contact me if you'd like to learn more.

Rep. Sally Toone,
Idaho Legislature

We're running crazy here in the Legislature. We haven't been connected as well as we should be, trying to get everything done. We've done some great things with some of our state parks in Thousand Springs.

EXTENSION OF
CONTRACT WITH
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR JON
BARRETT

The existing contract with Jon expires on June 30, 2021. The proposal before the board today is to extend the contract to August 11, 2021, the date of IRP's next board meeting. All terms of the existing contact remain in place. It is anticipated that between now and Aug. 11, we will be developing a new agreement with U of I Extension to bring someone in on contract to play a leadership role in coordinating community reviews. This person will be paid using USDA grant funds received by U of I Extension. Increasing our capacity in this way will allow Jon to put more of his time and energy on program development, organizational development, and fundraising. At this point, Jon asked the board if they have any questions.

Hearing no questions, Art asked for unanimous consent to sign the proposed extension. Hearing no opposition, the proposal is passed.

UPDATE OF IRP
STRATEGIC PLAN

Jon summarized the proposed strategic planning process for the board, beginning with engaging with the board to develop the strategic plan. Jon noted there are many things we could be doing with our existing capacity and there are many more

things we could do with additional capacity. This is the conversation we're embarking on.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

The IRP strategic planning survey was sent to 80 people – including all board members. As of today's meeting, we have 20 completed surveys. Jon review some of the survey results. One-half of the survey respondents are board members.

Survey respondents view the following statutory responsibilities (Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 90) **as most important:**

1. Advise the Governor and Legislature on public policy and strategies to promote rural community and economic development.
2. Improve coordination between local, regional, and statewide levels and seek partnerships to achieve rural development goals.
3. Seek solutions to unnecessary impediments to rural development.
4. Assess community and economic conditions in rural Idaho.
5. Conduct outreach to rural communities and facilitate communication between the communities and the agencies that provide services to them.

Survey respondents feel the following are the **most important audiences** IRP should engage and partner with:

1. Governor's office and Idaho legislature
2. Local elected officials in rural areas
3. Local and regional economic development organizations

With regard to the evolution of the community review program, survey respondents supported the following approach more than the other possibilities listed: *Give communities the option of applying for the existing 3-phase community review OR a streamlined, less detailed community assessment.*

Survey respondents feel the following four funding sources have the greatest potential to support IRP:

1. Grants from nonprofit foundations

2. Federal government funding
3. Private sector contributions
4. State government funding.

Survey respondents generally did not express optimism or support for creating an annual membership dues structure as a new source of funding.

12 of 20 survey respondents indicated they would be willing to serve on the IRP strategic planning committee.

Jon asked the board for questions and comments. Regarding the question about IRP's statutory responsibilities, Co-Chair Kealey suggested combining the results for some of the responsibilities where doing so makes sense. How would this change how we view the results?

ACCELERATING
CHANGES IN
POPULATION AND
FINANCIAL CAPITAL
FROM URBAN TO
RURAL AREAS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR
RURAL AREAS

Presenter: Jaap
Vos, University of
Idaho

Jon introduced the purpose of this conversation, and then introduced our presenter.

Jaap: I have more questions than answers on these topics. Robert Liberty from Oregon gave a presentation in Idaho in 2019 and said if you don't pay attention, all the things you love about Idaho will be gone.

Some things are changing dramatically and COVID pandemic is accelerating trends we were already starting to see. We have a group called ag-chat, a group of rural planners throughout Idaho. We meet monthly to talk about what's going on in their communities. Local planners across the state are concerned about the same things. Summarizing:

1. Almost every community in Idaho is facing growth. Planners are saying things like, "I've never seen things like this before." It's throughout the state.
2. Growth is increasingly occurring in rural areas. Broadband improvements are facilitating this.
3. Idaho is no longer isolated. It's being discovered by national developers, retirees, businesses and people looking for investment opportunities.
4. These trends provide opportunities for economic development. At that same time, they represent threats to quality of life and natural resources.

5. Discussing these issues with planners, we're disadvantaged because we're really not prepared for this growth. We haven't thought enough about this.

Attitudes or mindsets we need to change:

1. We're too focused on looking for economic development.
2. We've yet to fully realize how desirable we are and the position of strength this puts us in. We can actually have demands.
3. Most of us don't recognize that reality has changed – just in the last two years.
4. People coming into the state (national developers), don't know or care about "the Idaho way". They operate under different rules. They have deep pockets and they'll threaten to sue.
5. Many of our comprehensive plans are outdated.
6. Many of our zoning ordinances do not provide protection against undesirable development.
7. Most elected officials are hesitant to deny development because we're worried about treading on private property rights. It's difficult to find a balance between what we regulate and not regulate.
8. Planning is too urban. We really have no tools to support and protect rural areas. We're really not supporting agriculture with our planning and development processes, for example.
9. COVID and technology have facilitated people living and working in very remote areas, which facilitates additional development.

Emerging development cycle:

1. Demand for amenity-rich rural land
2. Supply of land is minimally regulated.
3. Exurban low-density development occurs.
4. Planning and regulatory environment gets more complex and urban.
5. Suburban and urban development begins to occur.
6. People and development starts moving out further.

Jaap reviewed real estate cost trends in the Boise Valley.

Idaho Transportation Department has useful data about how and where people are moving in the state. Where are they

moving from and to? – both Idahoans and people from outside the state. 2017-2018 data shows Idahoans are actually moving out of north Idaho and out of Ada County to some degree (e.g. Ada County residents moving to Canyon County and Owyhee County).

A large number of out of state people are moving to Ada, Payette, Valley Counties, and north Idaho. Similar changes are also occurring in Boise, Adams, and Gem Counties.

People moving to Idaho do not necessarily need jobs here because they are retired or they are teleworking.

The challenge: how do we make sure this new money coming into the state is spent in state and in our communities (e.g., does not go to Amazon, etc.)?

The ongoing conversation about state trust lands has significant implications. Developers and the wealthy see this as a huge opportunity. We need to be aware of what this means for rural areas.

Out of state developers are coming in aggressively. They are establishing offices in the Boise Valley. They are not necessarily bad people, but they have different priorities than local developers.

BOTTOM LINE: Popularity brings opportunities. We need broad-based understanding of this new reality. It can't be just planners. We need to identify opportunities and challenges and capture the new money coming in. We need to protect agriculture and natural resources.

Director Kealey: Thanks to Jaap for his contributions to the broadband task force.

Jon asked Mary Huff from Owyhee County if she would like to comment or add anything. Mary: I agree that the situation is urgent. Kids growing up in Idaho tomorrow won't grow up in the same Idaho as kids today if we don't figure this out and act.

ADJOURNMENT

Discussion ensued about uploading Zoom recordings of board meetings on the IRP website or Youtube Channel.

Co-Chair Beal adjourned the meeting shortly before 5:00 pm.

