

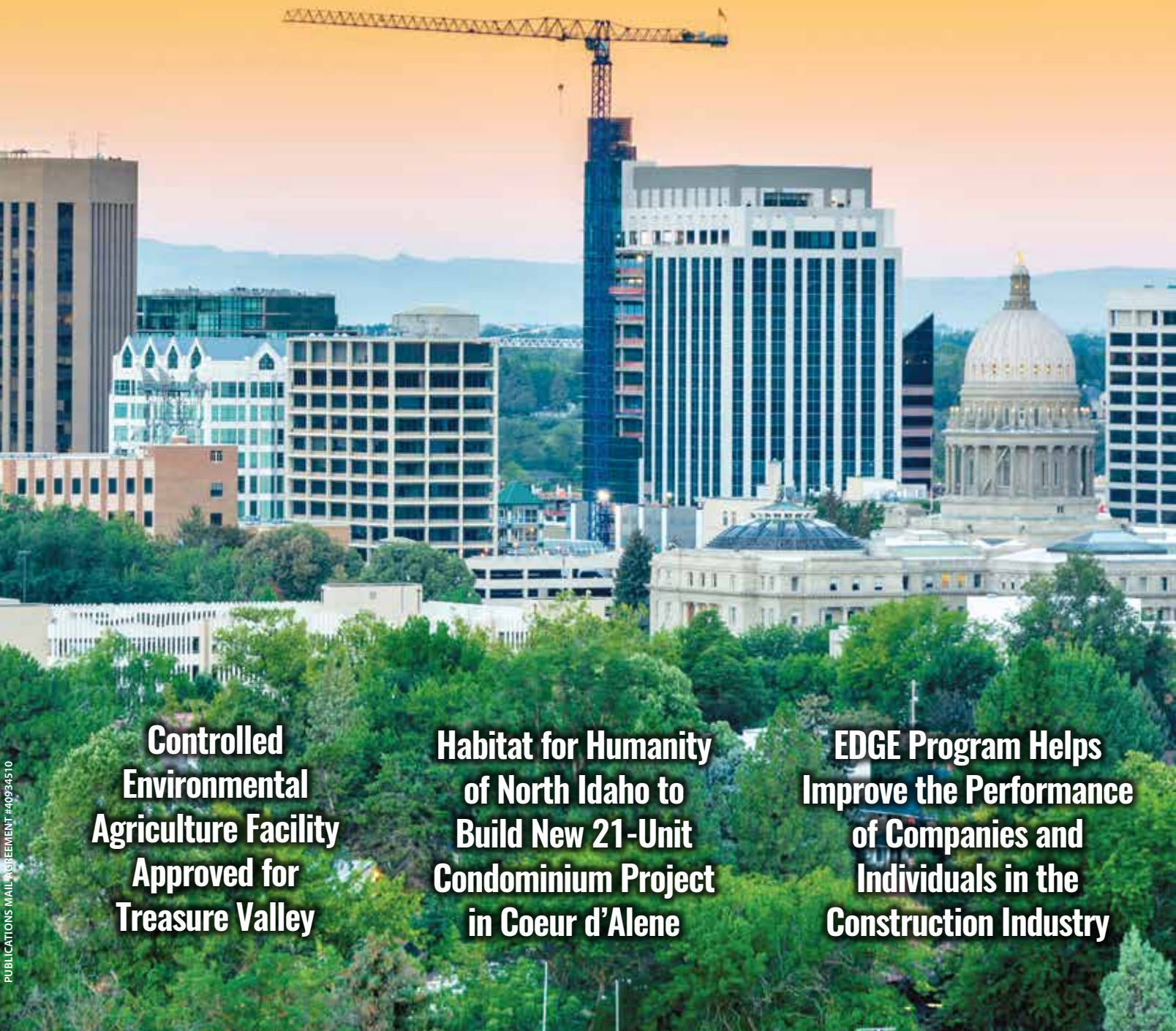
The official publication of the Idaho Associated General Contractors

building IDAHO

Fall/Winter
2023



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MESSAGE FROM IDAHO AGC CEO WAYNE HAMMON



Welcome to the latest edition of *Building Idaho*. All of us here at the Idaho AGC hope that you had a great summer and are heading into a productive and profitable fall. Each season is distinctively different in Idaho, and I hope that no matter which part of our great state you call home, that you find the fall months enjoyable and rewarding.

I'm excited that this edition of the magazine features several old friends of mine. Be sure to check out the "Idaho Influencer" feature that focuses on my good friend, Josh Tewalt. Josh and his team at the Idaho Department of Corrections are doing amazing work and I'm hoping you will take advantage of his invitation to join the effort.

You will also find an update with Mark and Heather Dunham inside. It's been just over 10 years since Mark concluded his service as the Executive Director of the Idaho AGC. I hope you enjoy learning about his progress and recovery as much as I did. Mark is a testament to how hard work and determination can change lives.

This year, I've been reminded of how important it is that Idaho's construction industry remains united in the face of opposition. As part of our ongoing advocacy work, we continue to fight off attacks on

multiple fronts. These past few months we've dedicated time to address serious challenges from both federal and state agencies, local units of government, and even other Idaho trade associations seeking to make construction more difficult and costly. We remain focused on fending off these assaults so that you can remain focused on the job at hand: building Idaho's future.

But when life hands you lemons, you make lemonade. For us here at the Idaho AGC, that means using these attacks on construction to reinforce our relationships with lawmakers and state leaders. We've spent the summer turning challenges into opportunities, all while advancing our own legislative agenda. I'm happy to report that we've been successful in our efforts despite the ongoing work of those who would wish to do our industry harm.

None of this would be possible if not for the generosity of our almost 700 member firms. Thank you to each one of them for participating in the Idaho AGC. Working together, we can achieve great things.

As always, please feel free to reach out to the Idaho AGC team if there is ever anything we can do to assist you.

Sincerely,
Wayne ●

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SCAN ME

Welcome, New Members

Please join us in welcoming these new members, who have joined the Idaho AGC since the last issue of *Building Idaho*.

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Idaho AGC Education Foundation Scholarship Recipients, 2023-24

These students are building a brighter future for themselves and Idaho, thanks to the Idaho AGC Education Foundation. The Idaho AGC Education Foundation's mission is to attract and retain quality workers in the construction industry, and one way it accomplishes that mission is by providing opportunities and funds to Idaho students who show an interest and high skill level in the trades.



The 2023-24 Education Foundation Scholarship recipients are:



EMILY ELLIOT

Emily is a Construction Management major at Boise State University. Emily is an active member in the Construction Management Association (CMA) and the Women in Construction Engineering and Design (WICED) group. She competed this spring as part of the Design Build team at the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) competition in Reno. This summer, Emily interned in Sun Valley as a junior superintendent, and she will graduate in the fall of 2024.



JOHNNY O'LOUGHLIN

Johnny is a Construction Management major at Boise State University. Johnny served as the Vice President of Operations for the Construction Management Association (CMA) in the 2022-2023 school year and in the 2023-2024 school year he will serve as the Vice President. He competed on the Commercial team at the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) competition in Reno for region six, where the team was awarded second place in the competition. Johnny's will graduate in the spring of 2024.



MATTHEW ROBERTSON

Matthew holds a degree in Welding Technology from Orange Coast College and is now pursuing his Construction Management degree from Boise State University. He is a member of the Construction Management Association (CMA), and he led the Heavy Civil competition in Reno at the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) competition. In his time at BSU, Matthew founded a new student organization called Applied Skills and Trades Society. He will graduate in the fall of 2023.



ETHAN DUNHAM

Ethan is a Construction Management major at Boise State University. Ethan will be starting his freshman year at BSU this fall. He is a Boise High School graduate and is very excited about the growth in his hometown (Boise) and to become a part of the infrastructure using his CM degree when he is finished with school. Ethan is the founding owner of a lawn mowing company and has worked hard building his business for seven years. He will graduate in the spring of 2027.



JAXON WAGNER

Jaxon is a Construction Management major at Boise State University. He serves as the President of the Construction Management Association (CMA) at BSU. Jaxon has had several internships during his years at school, working on several large projects including a multi-million-dollar water treatment facility. He led the Commercial Construction team in Reno this spring at the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) competition to a second-place finish. Jaxon will graduate in the spring of 2024. ●

TOOLBOX HUNT

Nobody won our last photo challenge, which was to identify the Alpine Academy Middle School in Chubbuck, Idaho.

For this issue, your challenge is to find all the tools scattered throughout the magazine, and tell us what page you found them on. The first person to “fill their toolbox” and email Hailey at HReyes@IdahoAGC.org will win this custom AGC embroidered Carhartt backpack compliments of In The Bag Promotions.



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IDAHO INFLUENCER: Josh Tewalt

Director of the Idaho Department of Corrections



How does a farm kid from Meridian end up running one of the state's largest departments?

Honestly, I'm still trying to figure that out myself. Meridian is still home, and we have a small farm, but I'm much, much older.

I started my career in politics, working for then-Governor Kempthorne. From there, I worked for Butch Otter in Congress and did a stint working for the Idaho Cattle Association. Because of my background, much of my work focused on agriculture and natural resources policy until Otter was elected Governor and I was given an opportunity to work for his Division of Financial Management. I worked on a public safety profile that included corrections, and it didn't take me long to fall in love with the work. I was fascinated with the enormity of the challenges in corrections but also struck by the unique opportunity for impact.

I joined the department in 2011 until leaving in 2017 to work for a national corrections group. While I appreciated the perspective gained from visiting several correctional systems, I jumped at the chance to return to IDOC in December 2018 as director.

That's the chronology, but how did I get here? All I know for sure is that my journey to this point is marked with so many people who saw things in me I didn't, gave me opportunities to make mistakes, learn and grow, and pushed me to be better.

Under your leadership, the Department has invested heavily in its rehabilitation work and efforts to reduce recidivism.

Are you seeing fruits from this labor?

Yes! We're not too far removed from criminal justice policy that believed if we just made the punishment severe enough and prison hard enough, people would stop committing crime. Well, that didn't work. In fact, it made people worse. But those policies were the byproduct of a common misperception that public safety is simply how quickly we apprehend people who commit crimes. Truth is, we're safer when we focus on interventions targeting the root causes of crime.

We start with the premise that our job in corrections is to facilitate behavior change, not punish or incapacitate, and we work backwards from there. Ironically, "hard" prisons weren't hard at all. We took people who wound up in our custody for making bad decisions and allowed them to make only one decision while they were incarcerated: whether to comply with what we told them to do. What's hard is getting out of bed and going to work when you don't feel like it. What's hard is figuring out how to make finite resources cover what might be a larger need. It's hard to take responsibility for yourself (let alone others) who might depend on you. Real life is hard, and our job is to mimic real life to the extent possible so people in custody learn the skills to make better decisions when it counts: when they're back in Idaho's communities.

In the last couple of years, we've

expanded educational and vocational opportunities significantly. For example, we began offering college courses at two of our facilities. Correctional Industries has more than doubled its offerings, and it now includes things like advanced manufacturing and CDL training. As a result, nearly half of incarcerated individuals are now working in some capacity. We've also seen folks who are released with education and vocational training are very often offered jobs in the community they had while they were incarcerated. We have more work to do, but we're already seeing the dividends in people being connected to meaningful employment and increased opportunities when they return to our communities.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

There simply isn't a more humbling experience than being the director of IDOC. The rewards of this job aren't in the numbers – they're in the humanity I get to witness every day. The hardest part of this job is defining success because it's not linear. For some, success might be staying sober for 90 days for the first time in their adult lives, or getting a job for the first time, or learning how to take care of themselves. For others, it might be changing how their belief systems affect their actions so they can make different and better decisions. And while seeing our residents and clients find success is inspiring, it's the people – my staff – who facilitate and enable change that recharge my batteries. I can't think of anything

more rewarding than being proximal to people who derive purpose and fulfillment from helping others.

Part of the effort is to help people succeed when they leave prison professional training. What construction training is currently underway at the Department's facilities?

We offer NCCER training in basic construction skills, carpentry, masonry, drywall, cabinetmaking, residential electrical, and electrical systems technician at one of our largest prisons south of Boise. Basic construction skills are also taught at two additional facilities. Through Correctional Industries (ICI) we also offer apprenticeship training programs in metal fabrication, welding, cost estimator and

drafter, and commercial driver's license (CDL), which also support the construction trades.

How can Idaho contractors help this effort?

There are lots of ways Idaho contractors could help us with our efforts. First, we invite you to come visit our training sites to learn more about what we do, so you can see where you can plug in. There are several specific ways contractors could help that come to mind: providing on the job training hours for people who are completing their apprenticeship after they release into the community, donating specialized tools or equipment to enhance classroom learning for our students, and letting us know which

industries are in the most need so we can adjust our offerings to meet the labor market.

Above all, tell us what YOU need! We want to train people for jobs that exist, and no one knows more about your unique and specific needs than you do.

Are there opportunities for Idaho contractors to meet those who have had this training when they leave the prison system?

Yes, we have had a long-standing partnership with the Idaho AGC. We have had contractors come out and tour the facilities and see the training we provide, and we also have had employers conduct job interviews in our classrooms. We are happy to facilitate connections

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for any contractor/employer who'd like to visit IDOC to learn more. We also have an apprenticeship coordinator who works closely with community employers to match trainees with job opportunities, so you may hear from her.

Even before they are discharged, there are hundreds of inmates eligible for work release. What are the details and how do Idaho contractors participate in this program?

When an individual is living at a community reentry center, they are expected to work in the community and return to the center at night. These individuals could be hired by a contractor and actively working in the community prior to completing their prison sentence. To get involved, the best thing to do is reach out to the local reentry center and talk to the employment coordinator to get established as a potential work site. Currently, we have reentry centers in the Treasure Valley (three), Twin Falls, and Idaho Falls.

Who should a contractor contact if they want to "plug into" the Department's efforts?

Please contact Crystal Robles at crobles@idoc.idaho.gov for apprenticeship-related information. To learn more about our primary construction offerings in our prison, please contact Michael Dinardo at mdinardo@idoc.idaho.gov. Phone numbers for the community reentry centers are:

- East Boise: 208-334-3448
- Treasure Valley: 208-334-2241
- Nampa CRC: 208-465-8490
- Idaho Falls: 208-525-7143
- Twin Falls: 208-644-7900

What keeps you occupied outside the office?

I remember feeling like I've been busy my whole life. Then I had two kids, and for the life of me, I can't understand how I wasted so much time! My family and small farm keep me plenty occupied.

What advice would you give to a younger Josh Tewalt?

I know "younger" Josh Tewalt well enough to know you couldn't tell him a thing! He had all the answers even without knowing the questions. What is it they say, "youth is wasted on the young and wisdom the aged"? I'm sure he wouldn't listen, but I'd tell him to spend less time looking for the next thing and

spend more time being present. You only have so many tomorrows with the people you hold dear.

I'd tell him that he will, in fact, grow to love some vegetables.

But above all, I'd talk to him about grace and the importance of being charitable in giving it freely and often to others. That kid has no idea how often he's going to need it. ●



Jen Grenrod
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Expansive Growth Creates Competitive Edge For Idaho AGC Health Plan

By Sue Fudge, Sr. Health Plan Director



The Idaho AGC Health Plan made some major changes in the last 12 months. Contracting with a new consulting team, enhancing the existing plans, and adding additional plan offerings that fit the needs of today's worker are just a few of the changes implemented to optimize the

Health Plan. All of these changes have given the AGC Health Plan a competitive edge that has resulted in AGC Health Plan membership increasing by over 35 percent from January 1, 2022 until August 1, 2023.

How the Idaho AGC Health Plan is marketed changed as well. The AGC Health Plan has hand selected a small group of Preferred Broker partners throughout the state to sell our plan. Each of these Preferred Brokers are trained on the intimate details of our products and services to better assist their Idaho AGC Health Plan clients in building a unique and comprehensive employee benefit package that fits the specific needs of the company, as well as meeting their budget.

As the Idaho AGC Health Plan flourishes, the stability and renewals become predictable and more favorable within the marketplace. If you are a company domiciled in the State of Idaho

and are looking for an alternative to your current benefit offerings or thinking about adding benefits for the first time, there is not a better time to see what the Idaho AGC Health Plan can do for you!

Getting a quote on the plan is easy:

- Call the Health Plan Team at (208) 344-9755,
- Request a quote for the Idaho AGC Health Plan,
- We will connect you with an Idaho AGC Health Plan Preferred Broker.

The Idaho AGC Health Plan will be able to provide flexibility to all prospective member companies regardless of their renewal date and, at times, provide an extended contract (longer than 12 months). Idaho AGC Association members and non-members not currently participating in the Idaho AGC Health Plan can get quotes for effective dates throughout the year.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to join the Idaho AGC Health Plan today! ●





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Beyond the Hard Hat: Mastering Employee Benefits Communication in Construction

By James Perkinson, CSFS, REBC®, Advanced Benefits

Communication plays a pivotal role in every industry, but in the dynamic realm of construction, it becomes an essential cornerstone for success. One facet that demands special attention is the communication of employee benefits. The construction sector is renowned for its distinct challenges and opportunities, necessitating adept navigation to keep the workforce informed, engaged, and motivated.

NAVIGATING THE CONCRETE JUNGLE

Steering a workforce in construction demands resilience, as employers and

HR professionals confront an array of challenges:

1. **High Turnover Rates:** The construction industry frequently grapples with elevated turnover due to project-based employment and seasonal shifts. This poses a formidable hurdle in effectively conveying employee benefits. Ensuring that benefits information reaches all employees, regardless of their tenure, requires innovative approaches.
2. **Diverse Workforce:** Construction sites are a melting pot of diverse talents, backgrounds, and languages. Communication must transcend

these barriers to reach every worker. Language barriers can lead to misunderstandings about benefits, resulting in underutilization or dissatisfaction.

3. **Remote Work Locations:** Construction projects can be spread across multiple sites, complicating centralized communication. Employees on different sites may not receive consistent benefits information, leading to confusion and discontent.

ELEVATING THE SCAFFOLD

In the face of these industry and workforce challenges, employers and HR professionals in construction are pioneering novel approaches to employee benefits communication:

1. **Technology as the Bridge:** Technology offers a robust solution to many communication challenges. Incorporating text-based services, online videos, educational resources, and company intranet pages can foster effective communication.
2. **Personalized Engagement:** Tailoring benefits communication to the

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individual needs of construction workers can enhance their sense of value. Highlighting benefits relevant to their role, such as health insurance and accident plans for hazardous jobs, fosters a sense of care and boosts morale.

3. In-Person Sessions: Despite the digital era, face-to-face interactions endure as invaluable. Organizing on-site sessions or town hall meetings to discuss benefits can provide a forum for addressing questions and concerns directly, fostering transparency and trust. Integrating this within safety and supervisory meetings can amplify benefit comprehension.
4. Clear and Simple Language: Benefits information can be intricate, but using clear and simple language is essential. Avoiding jargon ensures that every worker comprehends the value they receive, eradicating confusion and misinformation.

CONSTRUCTING A BETTER FUTURE:

The construction industry’s unique challenges necessitate a proactive approach to employee benefits communication. As technology continues to evolve, embracing digital solutions and personalization can bridge gaps and empower the workforce. Simultaneously, leveraging in-person interactions for clarity and understanding can foster a sense of unity and camaraderie.

In constructing effective benefits communication, companies must remember that every worker is an integral part of the project’s success. By recognizing the diverse needs and challenges that construction workers face, employers can create a benefits communication strategy that resonates, informs, and empowers, ensuring a strong and motivated workforce that’s equipped to build a better future together. ●

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Affordable Care Act “Family Glitch Fix” Giving Families Options



By Dave Larsen, Larsen Law, PLLC and Travis Webb, Alliant Employee Benefits

One of the goals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was to make health care affordable to more people.

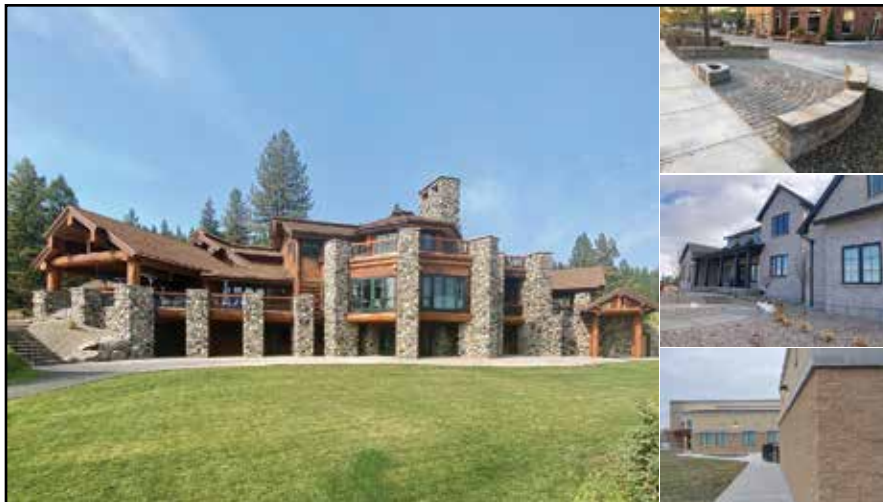
Under ACA, employers with an average of at least 50 full-time employees were referred to as applicable large employers, or ALEs. ALEs are subject to penalties if they do not offer minimum essential coverage that is both affordable

and provides minimum value to full-time employees and their dependents. Minimum essential coverage (MEC) plans offer ACA required wellness and preventive services, like immunizations and routine health exams only. Minimum value requires a plan to pay at least 60 percent of the total cost of medical services for a standard population.

Along with ACA, a Health Insurance

Marketplace, commonly known as an exchange, was created to help people obtain affordable health care. If an employer did not offer health care coverage, or if the health care coverage offered was not affordable (if the cost of employee-only coverage exceeded the percent of household income set by the federal government annually), the employee and their dependents could apply for coverage through the exchange. Enrollees on the exchange may be eligible for subsidies or premium tax credits. An ALE may incur a penalty if a full-time employee receives a premium tax credit for purchasing coverage through the exchange.

The family “glitch” in the ACA arises from the fact that affordability under the ACA has been based on the employee-only rate and not what it would cost to cover dependents. ALEs were required to cover most of an employee’s health care premiums to comply with the affordability requirements, and offer coverage to dependents, but they were not required to cover any premium costs for dependents. For example, the employer paid 100 percent of the cost for employee-only coverage and nothing towards dependent coverage. The coverage is considered affordable, based on the employee-only cost. This would disqualify the employee’s dependents from receiving a premium tax credit (or



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subsidy) to help pay for their coverage on the exchange.

To fix this problem, the Federal agencies finalized regulations that create a separate and independent calculation for family affordability. Beginning in 2023, affordability of employer-sponsored coverage for an employee's family members is based on the employee's cost for family coverage rather than on the cost for employee-only coverage. Family coverage means all employer tiers that cover an employee's dependent, including a "self plus one" tier. If employer-sponsored coverage for a family costs more than 9.12 percent (2023) of household income, then the employee's spouse and dependents may be eligible for subsidies through the exchange. This means an employee who is offered affordable employer-sponsored coverage will not be eligible for a subsidy; however, an employee's family members may be eligible for a subsidy for exchange coverage based on household income.

The final rule does not change the affordability calculation for employer-mandate penalties, so ALEs need to continue their normal ACA compliance, including affordability calculations, measurement periods, 1095 reporting, etc.

The final rule also provides that an eligible employer-sponsored plan satisfy the minimum value requirement only if the plan's share of the total allowed costs of benefits provided to dependents is at least 60 percent, which is similar to the existing rule for employees, and includes substantial coverage of inpatient hospital services and physician services. This means that even when an employee enrolls in a Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) Only plan or Skinny MEC plan, their family members may still be eligible for subsidized Exchange coverage. Employers should contact their Section 125/Cafeteria Plan administrators to

ensure amendments to allow a change in coverage to accommodate a dependent's exchange enrollment are approved and adopted.

The final rule will make it easier for certain family members, who are tax dependents, to qualify for subsidized exchange coverage. This may have an impact on enrollments, as employers see a shift in dependents enrolling in exchange plans and canceling their employer-

sponsored health coverage. As employers work through plan design scenarios and strategies, they will need to consider carefully how a shift of dependents to the exchange may affect their employer-sponsored health plan rates. Employers should be working closely with their brokers and professional advisors to ensure they understand the details and intricacies of this rule. ●



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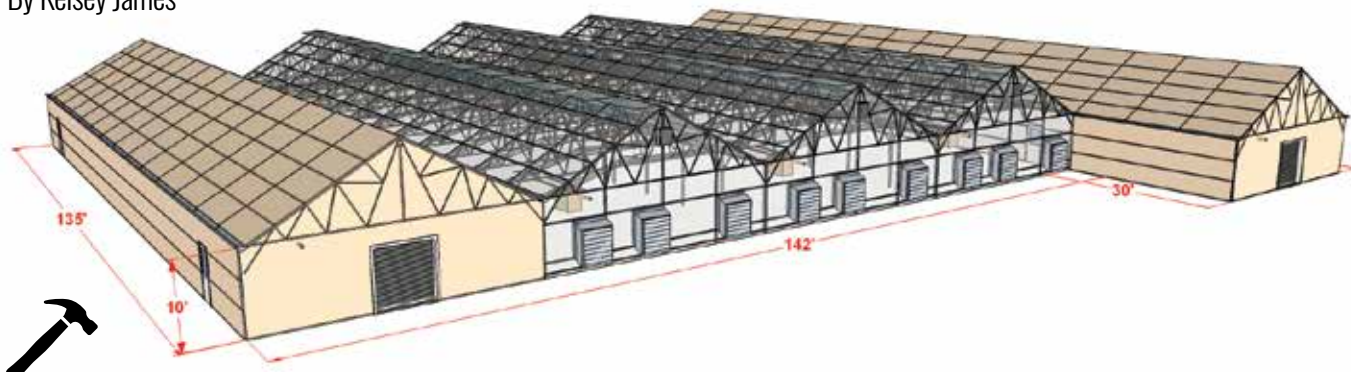
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Controlled Environmental Agriculture Facility Coming to Treasure Valley

By Kelsey James



Boise City Council has approved annexation for a controlled environmental agriculture facility at 750 S Federal Way near the Boise Airport.

Scott Meikle, Chief Executive Officer of the prototype project – called Greenscale – purchased the property in March of this year and is currently in the design review phase with the city.

Greenscale will not be your typical indoor agriculture operation; instead, the controlled environment agriculture will

be a combination of hydroponic-based greenhouses, including aquaculture plus deep-water culture hydroponics.

“In hydroponics, the plants grow in water and the water is dosed with fertilizer that allows the plants to grow,” Meikle said. “I will be growing my plants in what’s called ‘deep water culture,’ so these big ponds – about 1000 square metres of space – will be 20 to 30 centimetres deep with rafts that float on top and hold the plants.”

The deep-water culture side of the project will be a transparent house with

fields of green inside. The recirculating aquaculture aspect will be a series of approximately eight-to-nine-foot diameter tanks filled with fish. The idea is the nutrient stream feeding the plants will be organic and coming from the fish.

“Ammonia is the primary waste stream that comes from fish,” Meikle said. “In an aquaculture system, and nature as well, ammonia is converted to what’s called nitrate by bacteria. These systems are populated with a host of bacteria that naturally arise because those bacteria feed on the ammonia and they convert it to nitrate.”

Ultimately, plants need nitrate to grow. In conventional farming, nitrate originates from ammonia fertilizer which is produced from reforming methane and nitrogen at high temperature and pressure. In Meikle’s system the fish will produce ammonia and then through filtration he will convert that ammonia into nitrate and supply it to the plants.

“Rather than using methane and nitrogen at high temperature and pressure

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– an industrial process which is a huge CO₂ emitter – I’m feeding the fish, the fish eat the food, produce ammonia, and I convert it,” Meikle said. “It’s completely organically created ammonia.”

Unlike most controlled environment farming operations, Meikle will be relying primarily on the sun to grow the plants (in the winter months when the days are shorter, he will have augmentation lighting). One of the unique features of this area is the long growing season and length of days. The Treasure Valley is well known within agriculture as one of the best growing areas in the western United States.

The products coming out of the facility, which include fish and vegetables, will have zero pesticides, use no industrial fertilizer, have a low water footprint, and traceable production. While Meikle is still working out the specifics on what the

product focus will be, he does know the first type of fish he will be starting with is tilapia. The vegetables will be spinach, kale, and other nutritional leafy greens to begin, and then moving to refined products such as vegetable powders and extracts.

“This will produce food for people, and it’s a good option for food, but the costs are still high enough that it needs to become more efficient to appeal to a broader range of cost-conscious consumers,” Meikle said. “I wouldn’t say fresh, organic greens is going to be the primary focus. It’s going to be more focused on nutrition-based products. If your produce is industrial chemical free, it’s also appropriate for other applications, like cosmetics or pharmaceuticals. The idea is to create this very well controlled and well-defined growing system that produces plants with low water footprint but more importantly, zero industrial chemical footprint for

applications that care about that.” Meikle is working with industrial partners with advanced refining techniques that will help in product development.

The project, which is privately funded, will consist of five buildings in total, all one storey, at 25,000 square feet. There will be three greenhouses, one fish house, and one processing plant. Construction should start in November and Meikle anticipates it will take eight months to complete.

“The design space in which I’m working and how I’m managing the waterflows in the facility and the nutrient stream into the plants is arguably unique,” Meikle said.

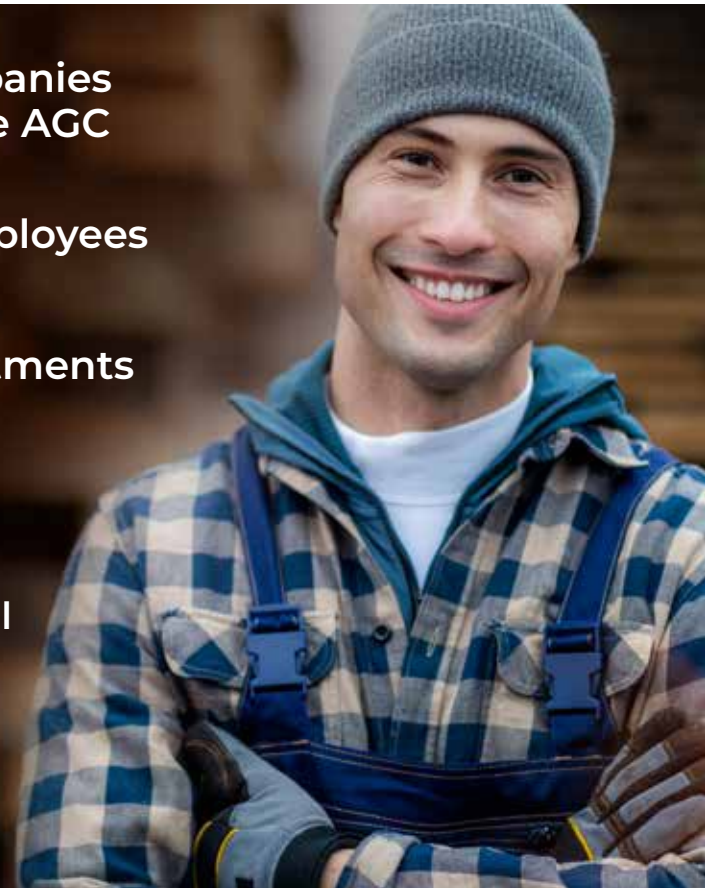
“Greenscale is going to incorporate industrial best practices everywhere it can. I just want to implement flexibility in management, as well as the ability to measure what I’m doing and gather data so I can optimize the operation. Greenscale will be very clean – it’s going to be run

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a little bit like a clean room – and the objective is to make it a well-monitored and well-managed operation.”

Combining aquaculture and hydroponics is not something that is new to the industry, but it is less common than other types of controlled agriculture, such as vertical farming. It will also be the first in Idaho of this scale. Depending on what Meikle does from the development side, he will hire 10 to 15 new employees to work at the facility.

“There are other smaller scale operations that are doing something similar, but on this scale and in terms of where my product focus will be, I would probably say this is unique to Idaho,” Meikle said.

“I grew up in Canada but my wife is from the U.S. and we ended up in Boise. By default, it is my home, but it also has several attributes I think make it a good place to enter this industry. It’s a business-friendly environment, which means the power and water costs are reasonable and I can get through the permitting process. From a regional perspective, there’s a lot of sunshine in Boise so it’s very good for

greenhouse-based agriculture. You don’t have to have a lot of power in it because you’ve got sunlight.”

Meikle worked for three decades in the semi-conductor industry, including manufacturing and R&D, which is “arguably the most complex manufacturing enterprise in the world,” he said.

“I bring to this a lot of understanding of how to manage complex facilities and operations, which this will be,” Meikle added.

Joining Meikle on the venture is Andersen Construction, a company that builds throughout the Pacific Northwest with offices operating in Boise, ID, Seattle, WA, Portland, OR (where its headquarters is located), and Eugene, OR. The company has proudly operated continuously in Idaho for over 21 years, said Andersen Construction senior project manager Shane Roe, who will be working alongside project manager Ami Ostrow and senior estimator Chris Bjork.

“The three of us have an extensive background in industrial and agriculture projects, and I have personally overseen several greenhouses, labs, and seed processing facilities construction projects”

Roe added. “Our role at Andersen is to provide input on constructability, material procurement, trade partnerships, and of course, to execute the project on time and budget.”

Andersen was selected as Greenscale construction manager consultant last year after a series of meetings and interviews during the design and preconstruction process. Some notable projects Andersen has completed in Idaho include the Owyhee Historic Renovation, Saint Alphonsus Neuro Surgical Trauma Intensive Care Unit, The Lucy, The Thomas Logan, College of Idaho dormitory projects, ISU Health Science Building expansion, and many projects at the HP Campus. The company has also worked extensively in the agricultural sector including projects for Syngenta, Simplot, and BASF Vegetable Seeds (formerly Bayer Crop Science).

“We immediately connected with Greenscale on a shared philosophy for an open, collaborative approach to the project, and have thoroughly enjoyed the engagement we have experienced throughout this process,” Roe said. “Innovative projects such as this really get us excited and engaged to solve for their unique challenges. Novel approaches to high quality, sustainable food delivery have inherent complexities that require a sophisticated construction team to achieve their goals.”

Having been involved with several freestanding, self-sufficient greenhouse projects, there are always challenges during construction, Roe said. For example, maintaining proper temperature, humidity, and light cycles/intensity for proper plant growth can be tricky. To alleviate these difficulties, Andersen is ensuring the controls, design, and outputs are clearly identified early on to ensure a smooth commissioning and start up. Specialized and attention to detail is necessary.

“The primary challenges have been



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understanding how to best couple different technologies together,” Roe added. “For example, understanding the chemistry make-up of different water sources and what each area’s requirements are. This is where the team has really come together and worked on solutions, engaged with plant and fish growth experts to ensure proper functionality of each area, and minimize potential issues in the future.”

McMillen, an international engineering, construction, and environmental company that was founded in Idaho, is engineer on the project and will provide the design of facility and preparation of the construction contract, including blueprints or plans.

For nearly 20 years McMillen has designed and built fish hatcheries, fish passages, hydro projects, and dams, so working on Greenscale is a natural fit. The company specializes in developing new facilities, such as the Springfield Hatchery in Idaho, Melvin Sampson Coho

Facility in Washington, and Walla Walla Salmon Hatchery in Oregon, as well as upgrading existing facilities to address water conservation needs and climate change impacts, said McMillen senior mechanical engineer Joe Carson, who will be acting as the process engineer for the overall Greenscale facility.

McMillen joined the project after the company was approached by Meikle. And, by coincidence, he sat next to one of McMillen’s top executives on an airplane where they started discussing Greenscale. The company’s job as system engineer is to ensure the overall system functions as one.

“Aquaponics is relatively new – the fish waste will flow from the hatchery to an adjacent greenhouse to grow plants,” Carson said, adding it is estimated the facility could grow up to 20,000 pounds of fish per year and up to 70,000 pounds of plants per year. “This is a project in our backyard, in an industry we know well.

We have a reputation for participating in innovative projects that make a difference, and we are eager to partner with the client to make this project a reality.”

McMillen’s goal when approaching the design of the facility is to meet the client’s production goals in the most cost-efficient manner to prove the economic viability of the pilot project.

“Bringing together the skills and expertise of several different companies – designers, manufacturers, and constructors – can take time, but we use proven methods to ensure an efficient design process and high-quality product,” Carson said. “Our goal is to combine all that industry knowledge to design and build a unique project at the lowest cost possible.”

To learn more about Greenscale, go to www.greenscaleusa.com. For more information about Andersen Construction and McMillen, visit www.andersen-const.com and www.mcmillen.com. ●



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Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho, Inc. Embarks on its Largest Affordable Housing Project to Date



By Kelsey James



A chance encounter with a flyer led Heather Lasher to turn her dream of home ownership into a reality.

Lasher, who has lived in Idaho for four years after relocating from California, has been selected to move into a new 21-unit Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho, Inc. condominium project on a one-and-a-half-acre site at 3246 N. Second in Coeur d'Alene.

for quite some time, but it was fleeting. The wind was knocked out of my sails before I even investigated this, got the flyer, and was approved,” Lasher said. “I had worked with a realtor and couldn’t find anything in the price range I was approved for. That was really discouraging for me, and then a couple of days later the flyer was on my counter. The next door opened. It was so uplifting and encouraging.”

Lasher is a mother of three, but her 17-year-old daughter is currently the only one still living with her. The two-bedroom unit the family will be moving into is not a handout, she said, adding that her acceptance was contingent on contributing “sweat equity” to the non-profit. So far, Lasher has learned drywall and caulking. She also cannot make under or over a certain amount of money to qualify to live in one of the units.

“For me, as a person who has never built anything besides IKEA furniture, just



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being involved and seeing the intricacies in building a home is amazing,” Lasher said. “It’s an awesome thing to be involved in. There’s also something special about living in a home you had a hand in building.”

Habitat for Humanity is a global organization with affiliates in many countries around the world. The concept centers on those in need of adequate housing working side-by-side with volunteers to build decent affordable housing, according to the non-profit’s website.

“We’re building for people who are lower income and struggling to afford to rent or to buy their own home,” said James Casper, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho. “The idea is to get them into home ownership, create stability, and enable their success for the future.”

Both Lasher and Casper believe the increased price of home ownership in

Idaho is the driving force for the need to have more affordable housing. The median house price in Kootenai County five years ago was about \$265,000. Today, it’s risen to \$510,000 (for further reference, Casper purchased his first home in Idaho Falls when he was 19 years old for only \$71,000).

Idaho also has a home ownership rate of about 70 or 80 percent, depending on the community. Yet only about 20 to 25 percent of people that are average workers can afford to buy a house due to the change in home values.

To respond to this need, Casper looked across the country for similar solutions to implement in Idaho. The organization is not the first to pursue a project like this, but the realities of the housing market forced them in this direction.

“The only way the non-profits will ever be successful is if we solve the problem for every client we could ever serve, and until

the day comes that nobody needs help being able to afford a home, we really must continue that path to help more people,” Casper said. “If we have the capability to build more units than not, and we don’t take that opportunity and don’t push ourselves to grow, we are not living up to what it means to say we’re a mission-oriented organization.”

The Coeur d’Alene project will feature 21 units and is the largest development Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho has been a part of. It will also be the first Habitat condominium of this scale to be built in the state.

“We used to only build single-family homes. That was valuable, but the idea is that there’s never been more of a need for people to have the opportunity to get started and be stable,” Casper said. “Doing multi-family or, in this case, condos, just allows us to do more units in the same piece of dirt and makes the cost per unit



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less. And, if the residents want something different in the future, it gives them that ability to save, build equity, and move onto a traditional single-family home.”

The project will be four buildings in total varying in size and number of units, ranging from one to five bedrooms. The largest building will have eight units and all the buildings will be two stories. There will also be some mixed designs, including townhomes with both lower and upper floors. The area is centrally located and about half a block from Costco with easy access to other amenities and services.

“We tried to design some different options for peoples’ personal preferences, but also if you are somebody with mobility challenges, a unit that’s all on one floor might be more useful,” Casper said. “The units are relatively modest; one-bedrooms are about 700 or 800 square feet while the larger ones will be more spacious.”

The average price of a unit is about

\$180,000, he added. That’s the middle of the road, however; smaller ones will be less while the larger units will cost a bit more, but still less than what the normal market is providing.

“We’re obviously very efficient for price because we’re using volunteer labor and some other things,” Casper said.

Habitat for Humanity North Idaho acts as the contractor for the project and raises money from their ReStore and other homes they have sold. Students from a local high school construction class even work on the job sites during the school year.

The project’s infrastructure was complete last summer and fall and included sewer, water, and underground work. The first building broke ground this spring, and the hope is to do two buildings per year and finish the project at the end of 2024, Casper said.

The original project estimate was

completed in 2022 and was anticipated to cost about \$3.5 million, but the organization hopes it will come under that number.

Pursuing a project of this magnitude is certainly new for the organization, but the overall construction process – including framing and building – does not vary too much from the single-family homes the crews are used to building. However, Habitat for Humanity North Idaho has hired more staff for the project and are working on bringing in more volunteers.

Other differences include ensuring the safety of residents living so close together by having higher requirements for fire walls and more sprinklers.

“What we’re doing is a standard product and, although there’s not many affordable condos produced, there are still condos,” Casper said. “So, from a permitting or zoning standpoint, all those things are actually very straightforward because we fit in with the traditional type of product, we’re just building it for a different demographic.”

Challenges Habitat for Humanity North Idaho has faced so far in the process include a limited scope of time for construction season, as well as delays with city approvals.

As for Lasher, being chosen to move into one of the units is especially meaningful to her as a single mother. Her and her daughter are already looking forward to being able to paint their walls, something they were previously unable to do as renters.

“I’m just so thankful and truly blessed to be part of it. For the volunteers, to the people who donate, everything... It’s a good thing,” Lasher said, adding she plans on continuing to volunteer with the organization and helping future families secure affordable housing.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity of North Idaho Inc. or to volunteer, visit www.northidahohabitat.org.



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Intermountain Packing Meat Processing Facility Opens in Eastern Idaho

By Kelsey James

An Eastern Idaho construction company has gone from building top-quality commercial and residential construction projects to building a premier meat processing facility.

Headwaters Construction Company recently completed work on the Intermountain Packing meat processing plant, located in Idaho Falls. The project involved the construction of a 70,860 square foot meat processing plant and an 11,804 square foot corporate office building over the span of 16 months beginning in the spring of 2021. The plant officially opened in November 2022.

“The meat packing industry is a tight knit world of huge companies,” said Headwaters Construction Company senior project superintendent Mike Blaser,

who oversaw the project from groundbreaking to completion.

“You often see plants in the Midwest that will average 1500 or 2000 head [of cattle] each day, but this one’s capacity is to do about 500 or 600 a day. It’s smaller scale, but nobody had one around here, so it was a new endeavour the client wanted to take on.”

Blaser has been with Headwaters Construction for nearly 18 years and has worked on golf resorts, high-end homes, and commercial work, including schools, hotels, and apartment complexes throughout Eastern Idaho.

“The opportunity to do this meat packing plant came right on the heels of finishing up Thunder Ridge High School

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and Black Canyon Middle School,” Blaser said. “It was a little bit out of the ordinary compared to what I’ve done in the past. It was very industrial and heavy duty and I think we excelled at it.”

The client wanted the plant “to last forever,” Blaser added. To achieve this, Headwaters Construction, and its trade partners, built most of the exterior using individually shipped precast concrete panels. The corporate office on site features old-world red brick veneer and modern finishes, including specialty white oak wood floors. The interior of the plant is made primarily using concrete and stainless steel, which meant the project’s processing equipment and systems cost nearly as much the building’s construction.

“The equipment is so specialized, and everything in it is stainless steel – even the underground plumbing and everything underneath the concrete – which jumps

the cost up tremendously,” Blaser said. “We were pulling pipe from pretty much every corner of the United States to get enough to do what we needed to do.”

In the plant, the HVAC system is carefully sized to ensure complete circulation of fresh, filtered air throughout the building seven times every hour. Additionally, a fully isolated water treatment facility was constructed on-site to pre-treat all waste generated during packing operations. Additional unique features include an advanced CO₂ refrigeration technology in the large freezer areas and the non-slip Stonhard floor finish inside the processing plant.

“The process of moving from building schools and apartment complexes to a meat processing plant was not too difficult,” Blaser said.

“Everything is industrial, so it’s all just bigger and oversized,” he added. “It’s the same technology and same things we

do every day, just on a more high-grade scale.”

Intermountain Packing is one of the largest packing facilities in the surrounding area and focuses on processing cattle and bison. The plant came to fruition under the vision of Chief Executive Officer David Adams who “wanted to serve the needs of ranchers and other small-scale meat marketers as well as feedlot operators in the region,” according to the company’s website.

The plant’s opening also brought about 200 new jobs to the area.

“It helps bring in the smaller cattle guys who bring their cattle here to get processed rather than somewhere else, so that keeps business in Idaho,” Blaser said.

For more information about Intermountain Packing and Headwaters Construction Company, visit www.intermountainpacking.com and www.headwaterscc.com. ●



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According to KFF, the overall drug overdose death rates have increased in Idaho between 2011 to 2021 from 12.9 to 19 lives per 100,000 in 2021. Over the same period, drug overdose death rates increased from 13.2 to 32.4 lives per 100,000 in the U.S. Likewise, the age-adjusted death rate due to opioid overdose increased from 5.1 to 12.8 per 100,000 in Idaho compared to an increase from 7.3 to 24.7 per 100,000 lives in the U.S.
 Source: <https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/drug-overdose-dashboard>

Why the Opioid Crisis Matters to Idaho Contractors and Your Families

The opioid crisis has plagued the nation since the late 1990's. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 107,573 overdose deaths in 2021. This was a 15 percent increase over 2020 following a 30 percent increase in 2019.

Idaho has experienced less dramatic impacts in opioid overdoses compared to the United States overall. Yet the state has not been immune to the effects of this tragedy:

- Nationally, opioid overdoses account for approximately 70 percent of all overdose deaths compared to 67 percent in Idaho;
- Synthetic opioids account for approximately 75 percent of all opioid overdose deaths in the U.S.; and
- In 2021, 353 Idahoans were lost to any drug overdose. Two hundred and forty one (or 67 percent) were attributable to opioids and of these 152 (or 63 percent) were attributable

to synthetic opioids compared to 21 percent in 2020 and 12 percent in 2019.

IDAHO DRUG OVERDOSE PREVENTION PROGRAM DASHBOARD (DATE LAST UPDATED: 6/20/2023)
SOURCE: <https://www.gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov/drug-overdose-dashboard>

According to KFF, the overall drug overdose death rates have increased in Idaho between 2011 to 2021 from 12.9 to 19 lives per 100,000 in 2021. Over the same period, drug overdose death rates increased from 13.2 to 32.4 lives per 100,000 in the U.S. Likewise, the age-adjusted death rate due to opioid overdose increased from 5.1 to 12.8 per 100,000 in Idaho compared to an increase from 7.3 to 24.7 per 100,000 lives in the U.S.



AN IDAHO CONTRACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE LOCAL OPIOID CRISIS

Sloan Security Group from Boise is a member of the AGC of Idaho. Safety Director Shane Greenfield is an experienced Emergency Medical Technician who has seen the effect of opioids, which he says, “can have a large impact on a community’s workforce.” Specifically, Greenfield expressed concern “if an employee taking opioids doesn’t let their supervisor know of the potential for delayed reaction and is allowed to operate equipment, it can result in a safety incident to include equipment, material damage or, worse yet, someone on the crew becoming injured.”

Greenfield highlighted the “importance of using an occupational medicine clinic that understands the risks of opioids following a work-related injury.” Greenfield cautions contractors about opioids “due to nature of working around heavy equipment or operating a commercial motor vehicle to not allow individuals taking these types of prescriptions to do those normal tasks.” Greenfield further cautions “it takes longer to get injured workers off of modified (light) duty assignments if they fall prey to addiction.”

HOW CONSTRUCTION IS IMPACTED HARD BY OPIOIDS AND OVERDOSE DEATHS

On August 22, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a new reporting showing overdose deaths by industry or occupation. Construction was shown to have the highest rate with 130.9 per 100,000 workers. Here is why that matters:

1. Year after year, a portion of working aged adults and youth is lost to opioid overdoses. The opioid crisis has shrunk the possible workforce candidate pool for industries like construction, manufacturing, and agriculture.
2. Nationally, the age group most affected by opioid overdoses is those aged between 25-44 years with 51 percent of all overdoses. Data for 2021 confirms this figure for Idaho as well with 51.7 percent of opioid overdoses between 25-44 years (KFF).

<24 years	25-34	35-44	45-54	>55
12.3	28	23.7	13.1	22.9
percent	percent	percent	percent	percent

3. Prescription medications continue to be source of new persistent opioid use in construction. In “Waging a Counterattack Against Opioids in the Workplace and at Home”, the increased frequency of opioid prescriptions among construction workers is highlighted. Moreover, prescription doses tend to be 20 percent stronger and for 20 percent longer

durations due to musculoskeletal injuries. This contributes to persistent opioid use leading to addiction.

4. Surgery is a leading gateway to new persistent opioid use. Depending on the type of surgery, between eight to 18 percent of patients are affected. Opioid-sparing Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols use up to 90 percent less opioids than conventional surgical methods. It is imperative for employees and dependents enrolled in contractor health benefit programs to know non-opioid medications exist. Moreover, multi-modal pain relief can be more effective at controlling post-surgical pain than opioids and without the risk of addiction. Become informed and be an advocate for yourself or any other family member scheduled for any medical or dental surgical procedures.
5. Drug deactivation products help properly dispose of leftover opioid pills after prescriptions for on- and off-the-job injuries and surgeries. Research shows 90 percent of patients receiving pain medication do not properly dispose of the leftover pills. This increases the household risk of overdose deaths.

CONCLUSION

Opioids impact every socioeconomic class and demographic status. Opioids are an equal opportunity destroyer of hope and lives. Opioid overdose deaths inflict a toll on families, workplaces, communities, and the state economy. The construction industry has been hit hard by opioids due to the high frequency of musculoskeletal injuries. Employers are encouraged to teach employees about the risks of opioids and to share resources to help employees and families protect themselves from opioids.

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Eric Rothfield, CIC, ARM, CRIS, is Vice President, Property Casualty Construction Team for Holmes Murphy. He’s been partnering with contractors to find the best solutions to manage risk and insurance since 2001. Prior to his broker experience, Eric worked on the insurance company side for 13 years. erothfield@holmesmurphy.com or 303-419-0741.

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AGC's Virtual Training Gives Companies Competitive Edge

By Hailey Reyes, Idaho AGC

For Anna Sparrell, Vice President of CM Company, growth-mindset and lifelong learning are core values that have guided her career in construction.

Born and raised in Boise, Sparrell graduated from Boise State University's Construction Management program. During her tenure with the program, she began working as a concrete laborer at CM Company, and over her two-decade career with the company, she grew through the ranks to her current position as Vice President. And she hasn't been alone. Many of the laborers she started with grew alongside her to become superintendents and project managers at CM.

This growth-through-the-ranks process



is a hallmark of the construction industry, and a tradition important to Sparrell: "That's something I want to continue on, something I want to encourage for our current and future employees, and that often involves affording them growth opportunities through education."

Launched in 2022, AGC's EDGE

program is there to help contractors take their employee training to the next level. EDGE offers several educational programs to improve the performance of construction companies and individuals in the industry. EDGE's virtual course programs include Lean Construction Education (LEAN), Construction Supervision Fundamentals

(CSF), Building Information Modeling Education Program (BIM), and a Project Manager Development Program (PMDP).

“We wanted to extend the advantage of AGC’s virtual education options to our employees,” Sparrell said. “When I saw the AGC EDGE course opportunities available, I shared them with my Project Managers and Project Engineers to see if there was interest, and we had employees jump at the opportunity for both the LEAN Construction and BIM courses.”

EDGE offers the same high-quality learning experience and expert instruction found in traditional classrooms, all available online. Those who have used the virtual training have expressed appreciation for the additional flexibility, especially when needing to remain focused on a project.

“Even though it was an online course, it didn’t feel like one,” said Ryan Pyper, Project Engineer at CM Company, who enrolled in the LEAN construction course. “I felt like I was there in person with the teacher and class because it was so interactive, with a lot of variety in how the course was presented.”

Christopher Goodale, Project Manager at CM Company, says it was a no-brainer to enroll in the BIM course.

“BIM is relatively new, particularly in Idaho construction, and more owners are adding BIM deliverable requirements, so getting certified makes us that much more competitive as a company, knowledgeable in our industry, and able to deliver what the owner wants,” Goodale added.

Other benefits of EDGE include bringing together construction professionals from across the country through a high level of interactivity.

“It was great to take a course that was small enough to get good interaction, and large enough to provide diversity—it is invaluable to gain insight into how other organizations around the country are working these skills into their processes,” Goodale said.

“I found a lot of value in the principles we learned in the class, because they apply to all projects regardless of the size,” Pyper noted. “Although I do wish more varied companies were taking the course with me, which would have helped during discussion regarding how to scale these practices in general to suit smaller companies.”

“It’s nice to know there is a network of support and knowledge out there and endless avenues of retaining information on how other people handle similar scenarios and situations to what we deal with every day,” said Spencer Morrison with Balfour Beatty in Oregon.

“It was great to meet and interact with different people from different backgrounds and to hear their experiences and stories,” said Anna Jacobson with Alan Shintani, Inc. in Hawaii.

EDGE features instructors with decades of experience sharing personal and practical examples, who act as facilitators more than lecturers.

“The instructor was very knowledgeable and took the time to walk us through any questions we had,” said Cory Muzzy with Granger Construction in Michigan. “He even shared insight on how he structures his VDC/BIM department.”

EDGE is a valuable tool for helping companies with their workforce development efforts to retain the best and most highly skilled employees.

“We plan to work to see how some of the principals outlined in the courses may help the organization moving forward. When you invest in the education and growth of your employees, you’re also investing in the growth of your company,” Sparrell said.

To learn more about EDGE and to start your company’s professional training program efforts, visit www.training.agc.org. Pricing discounts are available to Idaho AGC members (elect “Idaho AGC” as the referral chapter when registering). ●



Beyond Idaho's Population Growth... *A Peek at the Rest of the Story*

By Amy Luft, COMPASS Communications Team Lead

Idaho is growing. Likely no one knows that better than AGC members.

But there is more to that growth than simply more people—regional and national trends, and their impacts, affect how and where we are growing, which then affects the demand for residential housing.

First, a look back. Between 2000 and 2021, Idaho grew by 606,970 people—an impressive 47 percent. We are one of the fastest growing states in the nation. However, that growth isn't uniform throughout the state. Teton County grew the most, with a 92 percent increase; Clark County's population actually shrunk by 18 percent.

We don't anticipate Idaho's population explosion to slow down any time soon. The Idaho Department of Labor forecasts a statewide population of just under two million people by 2029.

Many of those people will come to the Treasure Valley. The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) forecasts a 2050 combined population of Ada and Canyon Counties of 1.075 million—an increase of 34 percent from today.

TIMES, THEY ARE A CHANGIN'

While the state's population is increasing, birth rates in Idaho have declined by 25 percent since 2000, while life expectancy has increased from 77.8 in 2000 to 78.4 in 2021. Between the two, the traditional population age “pyramid,” depicting the traditional decline in the number of individuals as the population ages (more young people at the base; fewer older people at the top), is now becoming an age “rectangle” without as significant of a

decrease in numbers of people as age increases.

This has implications for residential housing. Many childless couples, young and old alike, are preferring to live in smaller homes, townhomes, condos, and even downtown apartments where they have easier access to restaurants and shopping and, at the same time, fewer household burdens, such as lawn care.

In a 2019 COMPASS survey, 20 percent of respondents saw themselves living “in or near downtown or other areas with retail/jobs” in the future. However, at the same time, 55 percent said they see themselves living in a house on a larger lot, indicating that while a demand exists for downtown housing, the demand for traditional housing is still alive and well.

To throw a wrench into things, 68 percent of respondents indicated that housing prices were “very likely” to influence their future housing and neighborhood choices. The result may be that people will buy what and where they can afford, which may or may not match their ideal setting. These desires and limitations can all have a significant impact on housing needs and the ability to meet those needs.

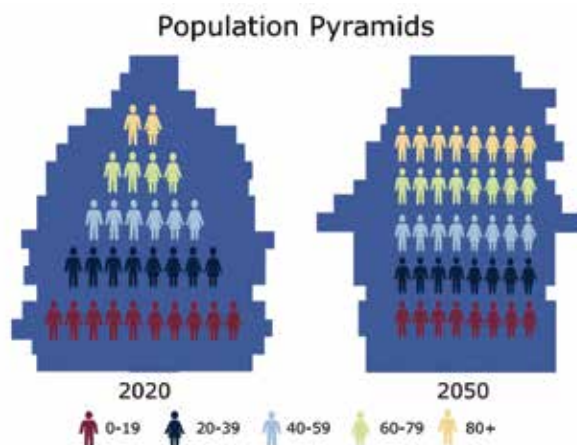
YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

Is construction keeping pace with housing needs? In a word, “no.”

The number of multi-family units being constructed in Ada and Canyon Counties has increased significantly over the past 10 years. From 2010 and 2012, multi-family and manufactured homes comprised an average of 12 percent of new annual residential construction. That figure jumped to an average of 32 percent for 2020-2022. That increase helps to serve those wanting an alternative to a single family attached home, but it is still not enough to keep pace with demand for multi-family housing, nor does it necessarily mean that housing is getting more affordable, especially for those with the greatest need. Most new multi-family housing projects are market rate developments and remain unattainable to those making 80 percent area median income or less.

The Treasure Valley housing market is projected to not be able to keep up with demand, period. Draft results from an ongoing COMPASS study of housing needs in the Treasure Valley concludes, among other things, that:

- Treasure Valley communities are growing fast and in uncoordinated ways;
- Housing supply has not kept pace with demand;



- Every community has housing needs at every income level; and
- Affordability is at risk.

THE TECH FACTOR

Not long ago, asserting technology would impact where we live would have seemed like a stretch. Not anymore.

The ability to work, shop, access entertainment, and more without leaving home has dramatically changed how we live our lives. Nationally, according to the Pew Research Center, 35 percent of workers with jobs that can be done remotely are working from home all the time, compared to only seven percent before the pandemic.

Online shopping has similarly skyrocketed, to the detriment of brick-and-mortar stores. The number of brick-and-mortar stores in the United States fell from over 450,000 to just under 350,000 in 2021. This increase in online shopping not only impacts the demand for space for storefronts, but also the demand for warehouse space, as e-commerce typically requires significantly more warehouse and logistics space than traditional stores.

The potential long-term impacts of these shifts could affect residential, commercial, and office construction. As workers work more from home, they may choose to live further from the office if a daily commute is not essential. And, as more people stay home, the demand for office, retail, and commercial space is impacted.

As stores close, or offices downsize, those buildings and locations are being repurposed. One of those new uses is housing, such as at the old Karcher Mall site in the City of Nampa, and as had been proposed at the old Sears site at the Boise Towne Square mall. These new options can bring more homes near more uses, which can decrease transportation costs for residents. These savings, in turn, can be used to help offset rising housing costs, thus increasing affordability.

THE DOMINO EFFECT

None of these trends or changes are happening in a vacuum. Each has the potential to impact others, likely in ways we haven't even discovered yet. Some changes may offset others, thus ending with no real net effect, while others could compound, greatly increasing the effect of any one trend individually.

What does all this mean for AGC members? A rapidly growing and changing population, evolving technology, online shopping, and an often-unaffordable housing market have spurred the desire and need for increased warehouse space and additional housing options. You will likely continue to see strong growth in both the commercial and residential markets, but with demand for a greater variety of stock in a greater variety of places, including some you've never seen before. ●





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Catching Up With Mark and Heather Dunham



Mark Dunham served as the Executive Director of the Idaho AGC from 2007 until a stroke in 2012 ended his professional career. Ten years later, we sat down with Mark and his wife, Heather, for an update on his condition.

Wayne Hammon: Welcome. We're so glad to have both of you joining us here at the AGC building you helped build. Remind us, how long did you work for the AGC?

Mark Dunham: I was hired in November 2007 at a time AGC membership was at an all time high. Soon afterwards, the nation entered the Great Recession, and I managed AGC's response until I had a stroke on January 10, 2012.

Wayne: Weren't there actually two strokes?

Mark: Yes. After the first stroke they basically told me I might need some speech therapy, but I would be back to work in a month or so. Of course, in my head I'm thinking, "I can't be gone a month, the Legislature is in town." Three days later, while I was still in the hospital, there was a second, massive stroke. The second stroke resulted in 20 percent of my brain being dead.

Heather Dunham: The damage from the first stroke was about the size of a quarter. The harm from the second was much more significant.

Mark: But I was still thinking I would be going back to work. Finally, one of the physical therapists said the earliest I might be cleared for work would be November. By mid-summer, it was clear even that was unrealistic. Strokes effect everyone differently. For me, it affected my

eyesight and my ability to communicate. Even today I have a hard time reading, handwriting, and ...

Heather: Word finding.

Mark: *chuckles* Yes, word finding.

Heather: While his stroke impacted his communication, it did not take away any knowledge, intellect, or memory.

Mark: I can understand very complex financials, but I can't do the calculations.

Wayne: It's now been 10 years and for those of us who knew you before, it appears the recovery has been amazing. But there are still side effects, and some things may never recover.

Mark: Correct. Because I look okay people just think I'm completely back to normal. But no matter how much progress is made, 20 percent of my brain is still dead. Yet there's something called "neuroplasticity" where the brain tries to

build new pathways. I had some paralysis in my right arm, but it's gone now. I couldn't speak at all at first and now my brain has overcome those limitations.

Heather: What people don't understand is this recovery just didn't happen. Mark worked hard, every day, for over two years to make this much progress. A rehab doctor told him, "You've had a stroke. Go home. Sit on the coach. You're done." But Mark wasn't going to be that person. We've run into that doctor since then and he says, "You're a miracle. Less than one percent of the people I see make this strong of a recovery."

Mark: Our son turned seven the day I was released from the hospital. I wasn't going to give up on being his dad.

Heather: But some things never fully recover. One day we were coming home, and I asked if he wanted a tuna fish sandwich, to which he replied, "Yeah, I'd love some sanupa." I asked if he was trying to say tuna and now the entire family calls it a "sanupa sandwich."

Wayne: More than just your life changed that day. Heather and Ethan's lives were altered as well.

Heather: Oh yes. I became a caregiver—something I was born to be. Ethan, our seven-year-old, was very upset and confused. He didn't understand what was going on and didn't want to go to the hospital. It was very hard on the family, but we got through it.

Mark: For Ethan's birthday we went to his favorite restaurant, Red Robin, on the way home from the hospital. I was overwhelmed by the noise and people. At one point I had to use the restroom but couldn't read the sign to know which door to open. Ethan took me by the hand, led me to the restroom, and waited for me. I thought, "My seven-year-old is going to spend the rest of his life taking care of me." It was a huge motivator to push myself in physical therapy.

Wayne: And now Ethan is all grown up.

Mark: We are very proud of the fine young man he has become. He graduated from high school and this fall will be attending Boise State University where he is majoring in Construction Management.

Wayne: That's so exciting. Why did he choose to major in Construction Management?

Mark: There is a long family history in construction. My grandfathers were both builders and so is my brother. He's been around construction his whole life and remembers the time he spent at AGC events when he was young.

Heather: We're so very grateful the Idaho AGC provided Ethan a scholarship.

Wayne: At the time of your stroke, you were very active outside your work at the AGC. Are you still serving on boards?

Mark: I was one of the original members of the College of Western Idaho's Board of Directors. When I had my stroke, I assumed I would need to resign that position. But Governor Butch Otter and then Lieutenant Governor Brad Little both came to me and asked me to not resign. So did a lot of others, but having support from Butch and Brad meant a lot. That first board meeting after the stroke was very difficult. I still couldn't speak much and just voted "yea"—it was about all I could say. I completed my term on the CWI Board and then Governor Brad Little asked me to serve on the Board of Directors for the Idaho Housing & Finance Association, the entity that handles all the bonding for the state. I am now Vice Chairman of the IHFA Board and find the work very fulfilling.

Wayne: You're also doing a lot of work with other stroke survivors.

Mark: Yes. When I was released from the hospital, I attended my first stroke support group. I was nervous and introduced myself as a victim of a stroke. They immediately helped me understand

I wasn't a victim. I am a survivor. About a year after my stroke, the speech pathology department at Idaho State University asked me to help start a new Idaho Aphasia Support Group. I've been helping to lead it for the past eight years. Our meetings are over Zoom and we have participants from across Idaho and beyond.

Heather: When he had his stroke, we thought our lives were over. It was like, "Oh God, we have no money coming in." But we had disability insurance through the AGC—which was a life saver—and slowly we rebuilt. We now know your life doesn't have to end with a stroke; it changes, but it doesn't have to end. That's the message Mark takes to people in the hospital and elsewhere.

Mark: Ethan's school asked me to speak to their health class about the stroke. He helped me with the PowerPoint. It was a little embarrassing having a fifth grader critique my presentation, but it brought us closer together. Now I speak to schools all over and other groups that will have me.

Wayne: Ten years removed, what do you miss about your professional life and what don't you miss?

Mark: I miss the great friendships I made while working. I treasure the memories of the great AGC members who were so supportive during the tough years and even more so after my stroke. I also miss the connections I made with my peers in other AGC chapters across the nation and the comradery of the lobbyist in the statehouse. I do not miss the stress.

Wayne: So, what's next? You're empty nesters after all.

Heather: We're going to travel. There are parts of Idaho I have never been, and we want some time together, just the two of us.

Wayne: I hope you know that no matter how far you travel, you will always have a home here at the AGC. ●

Idaho Construction Companies Are Benefitting from SASE Technology

By Aaron Zimmerman, President, TotalCare IT



Aaron Zimmerman is the President of TotalCare IT, which provides cyber and IT services to small- to medium-sized businesses throughout Idaho.



In an age where infrastructure projects are increasingly fueled by data and technology, safeguarding sensitive information has become a paramount concern. The construction industry is now embracing advanced digital solutions to fortify its data security. One of the most impactful innovations in this realm is Secure Access Service Edge (SASE). SASE is transforming how Idaho companies can access, manage, and secure their critical data and resources. Let's delve into this cutting-edge technology and its potential to revolutionize data protection in construction.

SECURE ACCESS SERVICE EDGE (SASE): A NEW APPROACH TO NETWORK SECURITY

Imagine if you could create a secure, isolated virtual environment where your project data could reside, away from the vulnerabilities of the public internet. This is the core concept behind SASE. SASE is like a gated cloud community for your data, where access is restricted to authorized users and devices. SASE is a comprehensive framework that combines network security and wide-area networking in a unified cloud-based solution.

For construction companies, SASE offers several compelling benefits:

1. **Protecting a Mobile Workforce:** From on-site engineers to project supervisors, construction professionals are always on the move. With SASE, the concept of a fixed perimeter is replaced by a dynamic, user-centric approach. This ensures that regardless of location, every user and device undergo

rigorous security checks before accessing sensitive project data. Executives can rest assured that their mobile workforce is operating within a fortified digital realm.

2. **Isolation:** Infrastructure projects often involve multiple stakeholders, from architects and contractors to clients and regulators. A SASE setup can ensure each party accesses only the data they need, maintaining a strict separation between project components.
3. **Zero-Trust Architecture:** The construction industry holds a wealth of proprietary information and project-sensitive data. SASE's zero-trust security model ensures only allowed programs and applications can run. Any program that is not on an "allow" list is denied access by default. This approach minimizes the risk of unauthorized access and data breaches, making SASE an essential tool in safeguarding intellectual property and confidential project details.
4. **Reduced Complexity:** In a world of ever-increasing cyber threats, SASE offers a comprehensive solution by consolidating various security functions into a single cloud-based platform. This platform integrates features like secure web gateways, firewall-as-a-service, and data loss prevention. Construction companies can manage all their security needs within a unified environment, simplifying management and enhancing overall resilience.
5. **Scalability:** Because of its cloud nature, SASE is scalable, adapting to the evolving needs of your company. As new sites are added or remote teams expand, SASE can seamlessly accommodate these changes.

SASE Secure Access Service Edge

All traffic is routed through the Secure Cloud Platform...

Keeping you connected and protected everywhere you work.



The construction industry is at the cusp of transformation, with technology reshaping the way projects are designed, managed, and executed. SASE is not just a solution for the present; it's a strategic move to future-proof operations. As Idaho CEOs embrace digital transformation, SASE ensures their security infrastructure keeps pace, accommodating emerging technologies and novel challenges.

In a sector where data integrity and secure communication are paramount, SASE emerges as an indispensable tool for construction companies. By embracing this holistic approach

to network security, engineers and contractors can focus on what they do best: building landmarks that stand as a testament to human ingenuity. With SASE as its digital cornerstone, the construction industry is setting a new standard for secure, efficient, and collaborative operations.

For more information on implementing a Secure Access Service Edge in your business, contact TotalCare IT, your local security-focused IT company, at 208-569-7925 or aaronz@totalcareit.net.

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TotalCareIT is a local managed IT services company for professional Idaho businesses that are security-focused. Locally owned and operated with offices in Boise and Idaho Falls. Count on TotalCareIT for support (IT helpdesk), cybersecurity services, data compliance consulting, technology planning and road mapping, and VoIP phone systems.

www.totalcareit.net



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A photograph of a construction site at sunset. Several large tower cranes are silhouetted against a bright, orange and yellow sky with scattered clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare effect. The foreground shows the dark silhouettes of building structures under construction.

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