



Idaho Association of  
Commerce & Industry  
The Voice of Business in Idaho®



## Legislative Report — March 26, 2010 • Week 10

Friday, March 26, 2010

### NEWS TO USE — Idaho Education Network Funding Plan Moves Forward

Over the last several weeks, the Idaho Education Network has been embroiled in some controversy in the Legislature regarding the contracts that were let for the development of the system. The development of the network is one of IACI's top priorities, as well as a top priority of the Governor. After negotiations between Senate leadership and the Governor's office, legislation was drafted to approve the expenditure of funds to continue the development of this important project, as well as the development of a new oversight group that will monitor the construction and use of the IEN when it is ultimately completed within the next two years.

When completed, the network will be a dedicated system for the exchange of education resources in Idaho to connect every Idaho high school with higher education. This gives students in rural Idaho the same opportunities as those in more urban areas, and it will also allow teachers to earn more by teaching more students. Students will additionally have the ability to earn college credits through a concurrent enrollment process.



Education Networks of America and Qwest Communications have taken the lead on the construction of the system that will include a wide variety of other businesses. Many states have already expressed envy with how well-planned and developed the system is among the over 50 schools already connected. When fully built-out, the system will connect all of the over 200 Idaho high schools and colleges.

Ultimately, the system will expand the opportunities for a more technically proficient workforce. This is one of the most important aspects of business progress, resulting in greater opportunity for prosperity in a small state like Idaho.

### GARVEE Funding Installment

A \$12 million GARVEE funding installment will likely pass the House on Monday, after S1427 breezed through the Senate with only nine no votes. While it is anticipated that the House vote will be tighter, the next installment represents an important key piece that will allow for the acquisition of important rights-of-way for the expansion of Highway 16.

This amount is less than the \$26 million ITD had sought; however, based on significant cost savings due to reduced construction costs, GARVEE is nearly \$200 million under budget. This provides the opportunity to include even more projects to benefit the transportation infrastructure of Idaho, making it easier for businesses to get products to market.

### BILL TRACKING:

[Click here](#) for an updated list of legislation on which IACI has taken a position.

### CAMP Process Moves Forward



Agreement was reached late last evening whereby several interested parties worked together to amend S1407, which creates a fund for voluntary contributions for water projects that are contemplated within the Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan. The fund is necessary to get underway with several proposed projects for 2010. Many of the projects will receive matching funds from the Pristine Springs sale.

This year will also see a great deal of negotiation regarding finding a process to collect funds from water users to achieve the goals outlined in the ESPA CAMP over the next 10 years.

### Reserve Rooms for Annual Conference!



The annual IACI Conference at **Shore Lodge** in **McCall** is just around the corner! It all begins the evening of June 13, and concludes mid-morning on June 15, with the annual golf tournament immediately following at the Whitetail Club.

Please call **800-657-6464** now

► **The Legislative Committee will NOT meet on Tuesday, March 30.** ◀

### Health Care Overhaul Vote

After a year-long, often heated discussion across the nation, the U.S. Congress passed a bill mandating a major transformation of the country's health care



Photo by Mark Wilson / Getty Images

Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson joins colleagues in Opposition to the Health Care Reform Bill on Sunday

done by President Obama, who agreed to issue an executive order banning the use of federal money for abortions. This move was crucial to gain enough votes in the Democratic caucus to pass the bill.

Governor Otter was also in the national news again this week regarding health care, as he was the first Governor to file suit against the federal government when President Obama signed the health care bill into law. Governor Otter strongly believes it is unconstitutional for the federal government to mandate that citizens purchase insurance, as is included in the new law. Idaho Attorney General Wasden has agreed with this analysis and joined with at least a dozen other states in filing suit against the federal government about this issue.

## IDEQ Negotiated Rulemaking re Mercury Emissions

The next negotiated rulemaking meeting for Air Quality/Control of **Mercury Emissions** (Docket No. 58-0101-0904) has been scheduled for **April 29** from 9 AM to 12 Noon, at the DEQ State Office. DEQ plans to distribute Negotiated Rule Draft No. 3 by mid-April. Please contact the DEQ Hearing Coordinator with any questions at 208-373-0418.



The candidates are now set for the Idaho primary election. You can check the complete list of candidates on the [Secretary of State's website](#).

This is an important time to participate in IACI's PAC, the *Idaho Prosperity Fund*. [Click here](#) or call IACI staff to learn more about how you can be involved in electing citizens who share IACI's philosophy of providing prosperity for the people of Idaho. The IPF Board will meet next month to consider its participation in specific races.

Questions? Email us at [iaci@iaci.org](mailto:iaci@iaci.org).

gress passed a bill enacting a major transformation of the country's health care system. The \$940 billion bill, which will take 10 years to fully enact, barely passed with a vote of 219-213 in the House of Representatives. Both of Idaho's representatives, Republican Mike Simpson and Democrat Walt Minnick, voted against the legislation. A great deal of internal maneuvering was required by congressional leadership to gain enough votes for passage, in addition to that

to reserve your room in the **Shore Lodge** IACI block for the **June 13-15** conference. [Click here](#) for a list of lodging options in McCall with reasonable rates during those dates!

All members will be notified when online conference registration is available... very soon!

## Risk Evaluation Manual for Petroleum Releases

Those interested in participating in the development of the Idaho **Risk Evaluation Manual for Petroleum Releases** are encouraged to attend the next workshop to review the [current draft changes](#) on **April 6**, from 9 AM to 12 Noon at the DEQ State Office.



Visit [Idaho Prosperity Project](#) for information on becoming an informed Election participant!

