

# IMPACT



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## County at a Glance

### *The Situation*

Idaho was the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state in the U.S. in 2005. Statewide population growth has affected many of Idaho's rural counties. Long-time residents and new-comers alike are not often aware of the rapidly shifting economic, demographic, and social circumstances surrounding them.

The general public and local leaders are concerned about the future of Idaho's rural counties. Decisions made today will impact generations to come. As the saying goes, "It's difficult to know where you're going unless you know where you've been." Decision making is always easier when you have the facts before you. Through educational materials created by UI extension educators, residents can gain a research-based, non-biased understanding of the general economic, social, and demographic circumstances of the county in which they live.

### *Our Response*

Extension Educators on the Community Development team developed the *County at a Glance* tri-fold brochures and posters that highlight several social and economic trends and conditions in Idaho's counties. These resources illustrate many of the changes which have occurred over the past thirty-five years. Spotlighted issues include: population growth, employment, housing, Hispanic population, income, education, unemployment, poverty, and crime.

### *Program Outcomes*

Educators have distributed hundreds of copies of the brochure to local residents, business leaders, chambers of commerce, political leaders, economic development boards, and individuals throughout the state. The information is also displayed in county courthouses and on local chamber of commerce websites where they catch the attention of many interested citizens. In just a few minutes, the brochures and posters help readers gain a better understanding of the economic, social, and demographic conditions of their county and compare those conditions to the state and nation. The materials provide individuals with research-based information necessary to make sound decisions in planning for the future of rapidly changing communities.

### *The Future*

Members of the Community Development Topic Team have put together a template for the *County at a Glance* brochure. This template will be introduced to participants at the UI Extension Annual Conference held in Idaho Falls this April. In addition, participants will learn how to customize data for the brochure so that it reflects conditions in their county and highlights information important to the brochure's consumers.

## ***For More Information***

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