

# IMPACT



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## Idaho's Journey for Diversity and Human Rights Shows Idaho's Roots in Diversity

### *The Situation*

Idaho statistics show population changes around the state, including growth in Hispanic representation, a shift from rural to urban living, increases in immigrant groups, and an influx of retirees. At the local level, these changes are often dramatic and can bring challenges of intergroup conflict and prejudice. Other human rights concerns in the state include tribal sovereignty and the role of the Aryan nations in northern Idaho. The University of Idaho Extension is interested in helping Idaho residents address these issues of diversity and human rights in their communities.

### *Our Response*

To address these issues, University of Idaho Extension developed Idaho's Journey for Diversity and Human Rights, a program to train community members and leaders in the historical roots of constituent groups and in the state's challenges as well as successes in human rights and inclusiveness. Idaho's Journey was designed as a traveling workshop, visiting historical sites and meeting those who had direct experience with historical events that shaped Idaho. Experts in historical events traveled with the participants to provide presentations and insights on events and people. The program is designed to be offered in regional segments, featuring Idaho's stories and challenges of the north, the southwest, or the east.

The first segment of Idaho's Journey focused on north Idaho issues and was completed in July 2005. The program included:

- Presentations in Coeur d'Alene on the meaning of human rights and discussions led by Kootenai County human rights leaders, Tony Stewart and Norm Gissel, on their community's efforts to counter the hate message of Richard Butler and the Aryan Nations.
- Discussions in Worley and DeSmet with Coeur d'Alene tribal members and community representatives about the Native American boarding school experience.
- A stop at Wallace to learn about Idaho's suffragist, May Hutton, from University of Idaho Professor Katherine Aiken. Mrs. Hutton helped make Idaho the fourth state to recognize women's right to vote in 1896. Dr. Aiken also talked about the early attempts at unionization in the silver mines of northern Idaho, and the violence that followed.

Idaho Journey's second segment in October 2005 turned to issues of southwest Idaho, including:

- Discussions by Priscilla Wegars and Terry Abraham from the University of Idaho on the lives of Chinese residents in Idaho's mining era in Idaho City.
- A presentation by Max Delgado on 140 years of Mexican-American History in Idaho, including a visit to the Pioneer Cemetery in Boise.

- A visit to Nampa’s Hispanic Cultural Center for Current Issues for Latino Families, where participants heard a panel discussion on educational attainment, employment and income, and the Idaho Latino Vote Project.

## ***Program Outcomes***

Retrospective pre-test methodology was used to measure the effectiveness of the program. In this approach, participants rate their knowledge and skills at the end of the program as well as retrospectively rate their understanding at the beginning of the program. Twenty-four people completed the north Idaho journey while 15 people completed the southeast Idaho journey. Twenty-six people completed the surveys. Results of the survey revealed that:

- Knowledge of the people and events important to Idaho’s past and present challenges of diversity and human rights increased by 72 percent.
- Knowledge of how Idaho’s past challenges can help us understand present day issues of diversity and human rights in Idaho increased by 91 percent.
- Knowledge of strategies that have been successful in addressing issues of diversity and human rights in Idaho increased by 90 percent.
- Ability to speak up or take action on issues of diversity and human rights increased by 37 percent.
- Connections to others in Idaho concerned about diversity and human rights increased by 54 percent.
- Commitment to helping address issues of diversity and human rights increased by 31 percent.

When asked how Idaho’s Journey affected your view of Idaho and its people, participants responded:

- “I never realized that Idaho was so diverse in the 1800s and wonder how we became so homogenous in the 1900s.” (Southwest Idaho Journey participant.)
- “I am reminded of the richness and complexity of Idaho’s culture and the many cross currents that affect our perceptions. From Cliff SiJohn and Rose Goddard, (Coeur d’Alene tribal members), I was reminded that even within groups that might seem homogeneous to

‘outsiders’ different perceptions exist...” (North Idaho Journey participant)

Idaho’s Journey for Diversity and Human Rights will be offered on a regular basis, with at least one trip per year. The next tour is planned for June 22-24, 2006, when Idaho’s Journey will visit southeast Idaho. In the words of one Idaho’s Journey participant: “This is an opportunity to ‘be there’ and to hear first hand from those who have participated and bore witness to history, and to those who have best examined those events.”

Idaho’s Journey for Diversity and Human Rights was developed by University of Idaho Extension educators Brian Luckey (Canyon County), Audrey Liddil (Bannock County), Kathee Tiffit (Nez Perce County), Arlinda Nauman (State 4-H Leader), Laura Laumatia (District I EIRP Educator) and Co-Chairs, Sue Traver (Bonner County) and Harriet Shaklee (Family Development Specialist).

## ***For More Information***

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