**ICMA Local Government Excellence Award 2016**

**Program Excellence: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD SUBMISSION**

**Program Title: SIEDO**

The City of Twin Falls, The City of Jerome, and The City of Burley in southern Idaho are pleased to submit for the 2015 Program Excellence Award Nomination. We will demonstrate how local city government’s met a specific delivery challenge by implementing a local successful program that has since become regional to address that challenge.

Problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted development of program:

The southern Idaho region may have one of the most unique and innovative multi-participant economic development organizations in the country. These region’s communities were struggling to recruit new businesses to their areas and were challenged to support local business retention and expansion efforts. Funds for any dedicated economic development effort were limited, neither city government was sure how to market the region, efforts were scattered, and there was overlap between our communities as efforts and contacts were duplicated.

In meeting with local business leaders and the College of Southern Idaho regarding these challenges, the cities of Twin Falls and Jerome offered funding to help launch a regional economic development organization. Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO) was formed in 2001 as a joint venture of public and private sectors to assist in diversifying and strengthening the local economies of Twin Falls and Jerome. The formation of SIEDO offered the best way to address the numerous challenges the City of Twin Falls and the City of Jerome governments faced in regard to economic development efforts.

SIEDO was also an opportunity to pool finances and economic development efforts under one roof to more efficiently support these two rural communities and eventually others in the region.

While Twin Falls and Jerome continue to partner with and help fund SIEDO, eight additional southern Idaho cities are members of SIEDO that also assist with funding, securing a true community and regional economic development partnership. The city of Burley is a significant community partner in this important regional effort to grow economies with business recruitment, expansion and retention.

Program implementation and costs:

Twin Falls and Jerome played an active role in implementing SIEDO both in funding and setting goals. It was determined that SIEDO would partner with a wide range of entities: local, regional and state governments; the region’s private sector; community economic development leaders; business support organizations; chambers of commerce; the College of Southern Idaho (CSI); local Business Plus; Idaho Department’s of Commerce and Labor; and the Governor’s office.

These partnerships were to be established to coordinate a common goal: grow southern Idaho communities with healthy economic diversification and good paying jobs. SIEDO would support city governments and would work with numerous communities to support economic development via a single organization to implement carefully designed and coordinated efforts with Twin Falls, Jerome, and Burley.

This cooperative relationship stems from the idea that what’s good for one community is good for the whole region. Growth in one area translates to jobs for residents around the region. Southern Idaho cities – including several rural communities – now think regionally and even market the region’s larger labor market. This approach allows for communities to have a much stronger position to leverage all of the region’s resources. Each community is part of the Southern Idaho market and within Southern Idaho, there are many opportunities in the region for business recruitment or expansion.

When developing SIEDO, Twin Falls and Jerome determined that innovative funding was required. Funding via collaboration would allow SIEDO to focus on economic development rather that fundraising and allow for city governments to do what they do best – run their cities. Thanks to the “three legged stool” funding model that was secured – the College of Southern Idaho, Business Plus (a regional non-profit organization of private businesses that support regional growth) and member cities/counties – all southern Idaho governments and communities have enjoyed tremendous success. The model also reflects the original design of the organization: to be a joint venture of public and private sectors.

In the first year of SIEDO, implementation costs included approximately $10,000 annual contribution by both Twin Falls and Jerome**.** The remaining funds came from CSI and Business Plus, a regional non-profit organization of private businesses that supports regional growth. Today, this funding model continues 14 years later but has significantly expanded to include numerous cities and counties – including Burley - in addition to founding partners Twin Falls and Jerome.

Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program:

Southern Idaho’s regionalism approach is not common to economic development. Yet Twin Falls’ and Jerome’s foresight to support the founding of SIDEO – to support multiple entities in economic development including government, private, public and business sectors and other governmental entities, private sector businesses and individuals to improve the quality of life for residents through a dedicated regional economic development organization -- has proved to be hugely successful. The tangible results for this regional, multi-participant model are massive.

Since the establishment of SIEDO in 2001, over 35 new and existing businesses have announced capital investments exceeding $1 billion to the region, and creating well over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs.

City, county, business, education and economic development teams across the region have come together to bring about significant successes to the region.

In December 2013, Chobani built their second domestic manufacturing facility in an unprecedented 326 days. Chobani’s $450 million investment built the world’s largest yogurt manufacturing facility in the world in Twin Falls, a community of 42,000 residents. The City of Twin Falls, led by City Manager Travis Rothweiler, went to great lengths to stay on Chobani’s radar for a new location, with sites in California and Nevada also under consideration.

Rothweiler worked with numerous city, county, state and government entities to secure for Chobani: numerous waived fees for building permits, water, sewer, construction, and those associated with increasing the city’s wastewater system; submitted application to secure state grants; secured state workforce training grant; partnered with the Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency to fund upgrades to the City’s wastewater plant, system and capacity, pre-treatment, improve water delivery capacity to Chobani’s plant; needed improvements from Idaho Power and Intermountain Gas for utility upgrades; investments by the City of Twin Falls, State of Idaho and local Business Plus (group of business that pool funds to support economic development) totaling over $25 million.

The results of Twin Falls securing Chobani’s facility are massive: approximately 800 new jobs created; 2,400 indirect jobs; a $1.3 billion economic impact to the region**;** all of Chobani’s R&D has been moved to this facility; Chobani has given back to the community with yogurt giveaways and donated $50,000 toward the construction of a new Twin Falls downtown plaza.

Clif Bar will open their first Clif Bar Bakery in Twin Falls this spring after investing $160 million to build a Gold LEED certified facility to develop a full line of Clif Bar products.

When Twin Falls City officials, under the leadership of Travis Rothweiler, studied the company to better understand its culture and operations, officials learned that there were nearly identical similarities between Clif Bar’s “5 Aspirations” and the City’s eight strategic planning objectives.

Twin Falls officials worked with several entities to develop a strategy to help Clif Bar understand it shared a very similar vision as the citizens and stakeholders of the City of Twin Falls. As the City developed the strategy, officials found themselves better understanding the significance of the City’s Strategic Plan.

The results were seen almost immediately as the City reinforced efforts to develop or expand strategic planning objectives such as connected pathways, community health programs, and stronger partnerships with community groups encouraging sustainable practices.

The tangible effects were realized shortly thereafter, as the number of housing starts increased 21 percent compared to the prior year. Clif Bar needs more than 400 employees at full-buildout, and because of low unemployment in the region, it is expected that many of them will come from outside of the region.

With new jobs and a growing workforce, which was enjoying the benefits of an employer whose wages and compensation were well-above the regional average, new commercial construction in the City of Twin Falls increased more than 20 percent in 2015 compared to the prior year.

The benefits brought to the region by Clif Bar have sparked a new way of thinking in communities where success is defined by each community’s unique sense of place.

Additional projects confirmed thanks to working in partnership with local and regional cities and businesses: 1) Glanbia Foods – the world’s largest American-style cheese manufacturer and one of the largest whey ingredient producers - invested $15 million to build their U.S. headquarters and Cheese Innovation Center. Two years later, Glanbia invested $82 million to expand two of their regional plants, creating up to 50 new jobs.

2) WOW Logistics - a national warehousing, distribution and logistics company - built a large facility in Jerome in 2002 and expanded in 2004 and 2008. In summer 2015, WOW expanded a third time with an additional 193,000 square feet to interconnect with the more than 350,000 square feet of existing space.

3) The City of Burley welcomed a $50 million investment by Fabri-Kal – a plastic food service packaging manufacturer- , the opening of DOT Foods - the largest food redistributor in the country -, and food manufacturers including Gossner Foods and High Desert Milk.

These are just a few of the successes Southern Idaho communities have enjoyed as a result of establishing a regional economic development partnership.

Every Southern Idaho city works closely with the College of Southern Idaho (CSI) to support business training and education needs. Numerous tailored courses, training programs and curriculum have been established over the years to assure that businesses can find residents that are trained and ready to work.

The region has been recognized several times by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) for its economic development efforts. In 2014, the City of Twin Falls received a bronze award for two brochures developed for the city’s recruitment of Clif Bar.

In 2015, IEDC recognized the region again with two awards: Dr. Todd Schwarz, executive vice president at local College of Southern Idaho (CSI) was awarded the prestigious Institutional Leadership Award for his last commitment to the field of education and CSI’s partnership with SIEDO. SIEDO was award a bronze Excellence in Economic Development Award for its ongoing collaboration with CSI.

Leadership, creativity and a unique eye toward multi-participation was exhibited in 2011 with the formation of Operation Facelift. Numerous partner communities were expressing concerns about their main street areas and drawing businesses activity there. Operation Facelift: New Look. New Attitude.” was established as a two-week regional community-wide project to help spruce up and clean up downtown business store fronts. The project builds community pride by involving a wide range of groups, entities (youth groups, boy scouts, church groups, business groups, school organizations, etc.). Every participant volunteers their time and labor to power wash, scrape paint, repaint, wash windows, repair facades, and plant new landscape.

While it started as a small idea to help a few rural communities, nearly every community in the region participates in this fun and local downtown-building effort each summer. To date, over 100 businesses in the region have received a “facelift” thanks to the help of thousands of volunteers. Many businesses now have tenants in buildings that were once empty, buildings have been sold that were on the market for a long time, and blocks of main street building have been given a new, fresh look. Operation Facelift activities have directly improved the tax base in regional communities while also increasing downtown activity.

The value and replication opportunity of this unique effort was recognized in 2014 by the International Economic Development Council with a Gold Award. “Economic development efforts have long been a keystone in the quest to bolster the economy and improve quality of life in every locality across the country," said Bill Sproull, IEDC chair. "As the nation continues to tackle challenges in the midst of global uncertainty, these efforts have taken on an even greater significance. With this award, we laud trendsetting organizations like Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization and the City of Twin Falls for leading the charge."

SIEDO has become the single point of contact for the southern Idaho region in regards for business expansion, retention or recruitment. The majority of economic development opportunities begin with the organization and then cities/communities are contacted directly to work on projects applicable to their area. SIEDO also has established close and direct relationships with member cities, counties, urban renewal agencies, chambers of commerce, business groups, community groups, State of Idaho Office of the Governor, Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho Department of Agriculture, Idaho Dairyman’s Association and community business leaders around the region.

Having one organization like SIEDO partner with local, regional and state entities, the region’s many rural partners that do not have the time nor resources to foster these important relationships, also gain from this effort.

Lessons learned during planning, implementation and analysis of the program:

Southern Idaho is one of the few regions in the country that works collaboratively in its economic development efforts. This region-wide partnership has proved to be appreciated by site selectors and business recruiters, getting support and assets of the whole region rather than individually by community.

This regionalism has paid off substantially with Southern Idaho being the smallest and only the 4th to receive national recognition from the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2015 as a Federal Manufacturing Community in the food category for the region’s extensive food production, processing and science cluster. The Federal Community Designation will allow the region to improve its efforts in a wide range of economic development support activities while also enabling the region’s rural regions to achieve prominence on a national level. Without the collaborative effort set forth in 2001 with Twin Falls and Jerome establishing a regional community partnership for economic development, this significant Federal recognition would not have been possible.