

SOCIOECONOMIC OVERVIEW AND AIRPORT BACKGROUND



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CHAPTER THREE

AIRPORT OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a general description of Idaho Falls Regional Airport (IDA) and the surrounding area which includes Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, and the state of Idaho. This is accompanied by a brief history of the airport, its location, area demographics, and its economic impact on the surrounding area. This overview helps to illustrate the nature of the community and the market the airport serves as well as its role in the community, region, and state. Additionally, the area's socioeconomic data, including population, employment, and income activity, is used when developing the forecast because it is helpful in identifying trends that could affect commercial and general aviation activity at the airport.

3.1. Area and Airport Overview

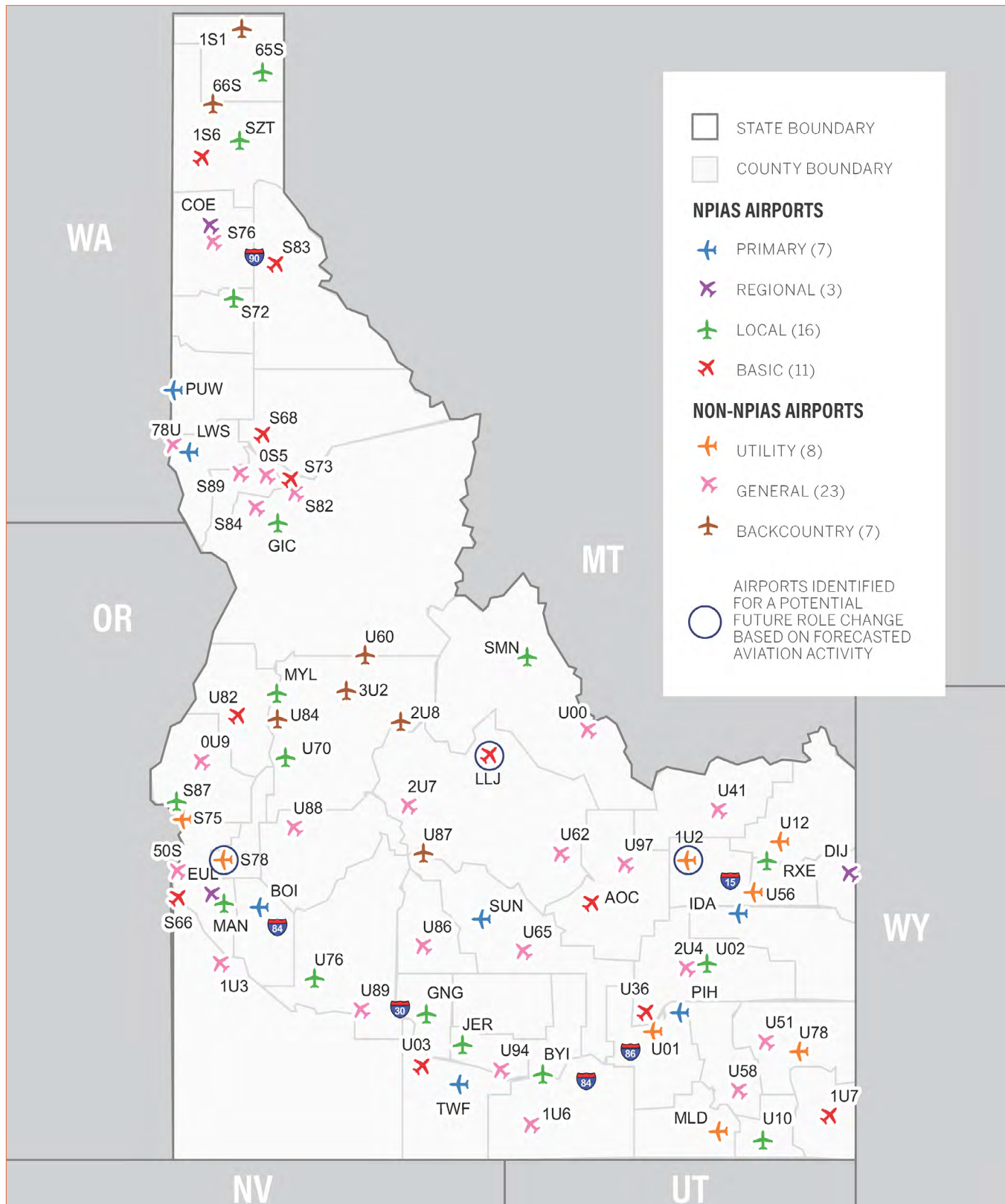
3.1.1. Aviation in Idaho

According to the 2021-2025 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), there are 301 aviation facilities in Idaho. Of these 301 facilities, 175 are private, and the remaining 126 are public. Thirty-six Idaho airports are included in the NPIAS. Six of these facilities are classified as commercial airports, three are classified as regional airports, 16 are classified as local airports, ten are classified as basic airports, and one is an unclassified airport.¹ (The NPIAS describes basic airports as those with moderate activity that fulfill the principal role of a community airport while unclassified airports tend to have limited activity.)



The Idaho Transportation Department Division of Aeronautics recently completed the 2020 Idaho Airport System Plan (IASP). The 75 publicly owned, public-use airports included in this plan are shown in [Figure 3.1](#).

Figure 3.1: 2020 Map of Idaho Airport System



Source: Idaho Airport System Plan Update

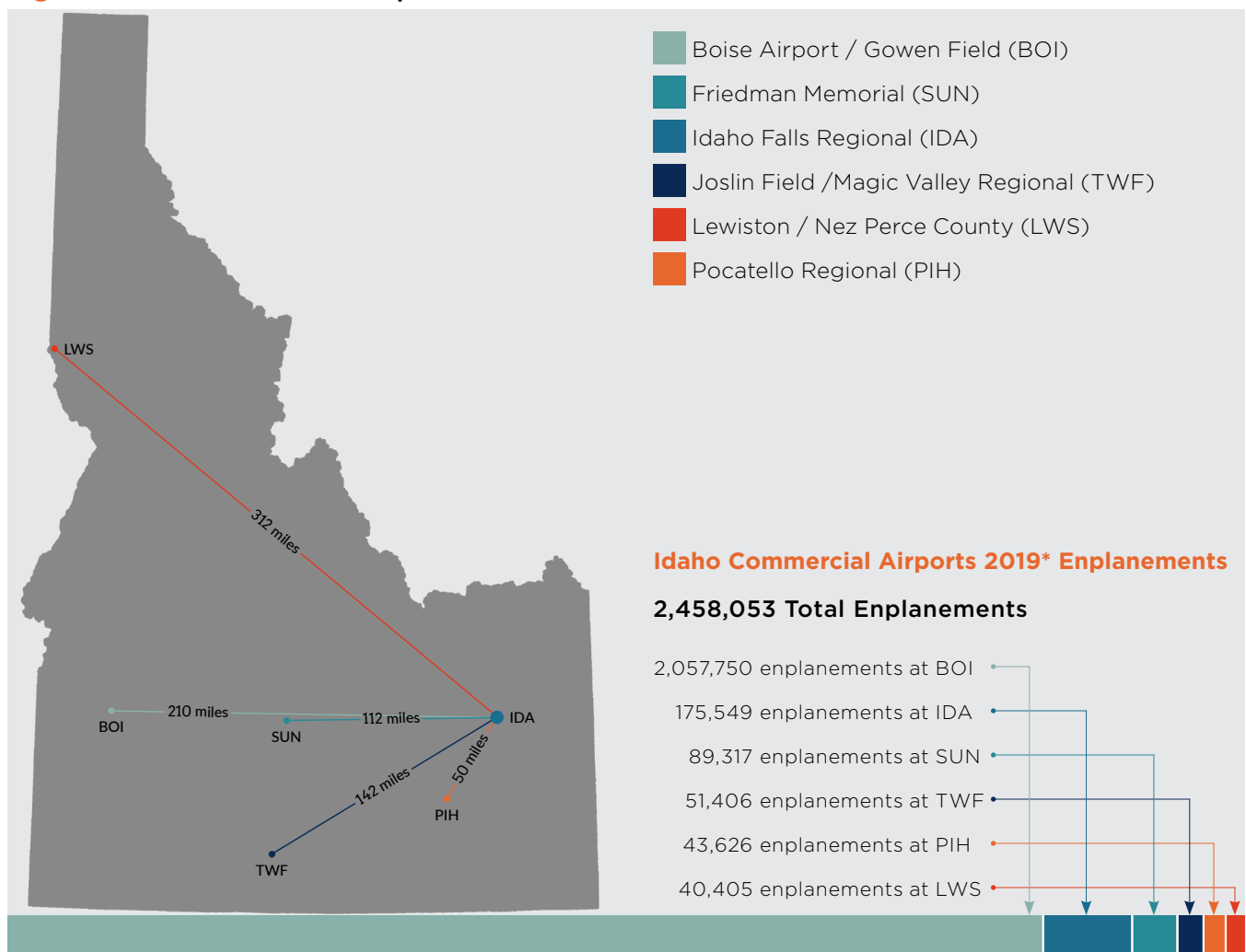
There are six primary commercial service airports in Idaho (Figure 3.2). Boise Air Terminal/Gowen Field (BOI) is the only medium hub airport, and there are five nonhub airports. In addition to Idaho Falls Regional Airport, these include Friedman Memorial (SUN) in Hailey, Joslin Field/Magic Valley Regional (TWF) in Twin Falls, Lewiston/Nez Perce County (LWS) in Lewiston, and Pocatello Regional (PIH) in Pocatello. There are no small or large hub airports.

NPIAS airports are categorized as either primary or nonprimary. Primary airports are defined as having scheduled air carrier service with a minimum of 10,000 annual enplanements (i.e., revenue paying passengers boarding commercial flights) while nonprimary airports mostly support general aviation. Primary airports fall into one of the following four subcategories based on the percentage of total U.S. enplanements occurring at a facility.²

- **Large Hub:** 1% or more
- **Medium Hub:** At least 0.25% but less than 1%
- **Small Hub:** At least 0.05% but less than 0.25%
- **Nonhub:** Less than 0.05% but more than 10,000

In terms of enplanements, BOI is the busiest commercial airport in Idaho, and IDA is the second busiest.³ The commercial airport located the closest to IDA is PIH, which is located approximately 50 miles to the southwest, and Salt Lake International (SLC), which is located approximately 190 miles to the south, is the closest large hub airport.

Figure 3.2: Commercial Airports in Idaho



*2019 data was used to represent normal operations prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: FAA and Google Earth

3.1.2. Bonneville County

Bonneville County, which is located in southeast Idaho, is bordered by Bingham, Caribou, Jefferson, Madison, and Teton counties in Idaho along with Lincoln and Teton counties in Wyoming. According to the county website, it encompasses approximately 1,216,000 acres (1,900 square miles) which makes it the 15th largest county in Idaho by area.⁴ Idaho Falls is the county seat, and the other cities include Ammon, Iona, Irwin, Ririe (partially), Swan Valley, and Ucon. Major roads in Bonneville County include Interstate Highway 15, U.S. Highway 20 and 26, and state Highway 31 and 43. Terrain in the county ranges from mountainous in the east to farmland and ancient lava fields in the west.

3.1.3. City of Idaho Falls

Present day Idaho Falls can trace its origin as a key river crossing and stagecoach stop on a transportation route during the gold rush to Bannack and Virginia City in southwestern Montana in the early 1860s. In 1863, Harry Rickard and William Hickman began construction of a ferry across the Snake River at a site called Eagle Rock with hopes of attracting gold miners and freight traffic headed to the Montana gold fields. James Taylor purchased the Eagle Rock Ferry from Rickard and Hickman the following year. He also constructed a toll bridge located nine miles south of Eagle Rock. This bridge was named Eagle Rock Bridge and the site was referred to as Taylor's Crossing until 1872 when it was changed to Eagle Rock. In 1879, the Utah Northern Railroad reached Eagle Rock on a rail line that extended from Brigham City, Utah. The Oregon Short Line Railroad started serving Eagle Rock in 1881 and built its shops there. However, the town's population began to decline after 1887 when the railroad shops were relocated to Pocatello. Between 1880 and 1910, irrigation projects and canal systems were developed around the Upper Snake River Valley which caused the area's population to increase again. In 1891, the name of the town was changed from Eagle Rock to Idaho Falls in reference to the rapids below the bridge.⁵ In 1900, Idaho Falls developed a canal to harness the energy of the Snake River. This was used to generate electricity for the city which made it the first city in Idaho with its own power plant.⁶ Idaho Falls Power continues to provide electricity to the city by way of five hydropower plants located along the Snake River.

3.1.4. Idaho National Laboratory

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) was founded in 1949 and is a science-based, applied engineering laboratory dedicated to supporting the mission of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) with energy research, nuclear science, and national defense.⁷ It's headquarters, which is located just across the Snake River from the airport, is where much of the research and development occurs. The Center for Advanced Energy Studies (CAES) is also located here at its Research and Education Campus. This research, education, and innovation consortium between the INL, Boise State University, Idaho State University, the University of Idaho, and the University of Wyoming is host to approximately 7,200 researchers and 50,000 students.⁸ University Place, which is located just south of this location, is where the local University of Idaho and Idaho State University campuses are located.

In addition, the Advanced Test Reactor (ATR) facility is located approximately 47 miles west of Idaho Falls. This site, which is 890 square miles in size, is where the first usable amount of energy was generated using nuclear power in 1951. The INL, which employs more than 5,200 people, is the largest employer in Idaho Falls and generates nearly \$3 billion in economic impact for the state of Idaho.⁹

3.2. Airport Overview

Idaho Falls Regional Airport began in 1929 when state aeronautics inspector Arthur Blomgren and U.S. Department of Commerce officials visited Idaho Falls in search of a location for an airport. After acquiring the site for the airport, the city soon completed construction of a 1,500-foot gravel landing strip and beacon tower in 1930.¹⁰ The first passenger flight to land at the airport took place September 1, 1934, when National Parks Airways began offering flights to Yellowstone National Park (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: First Airline Flight to Idaho Falls Regional Airport

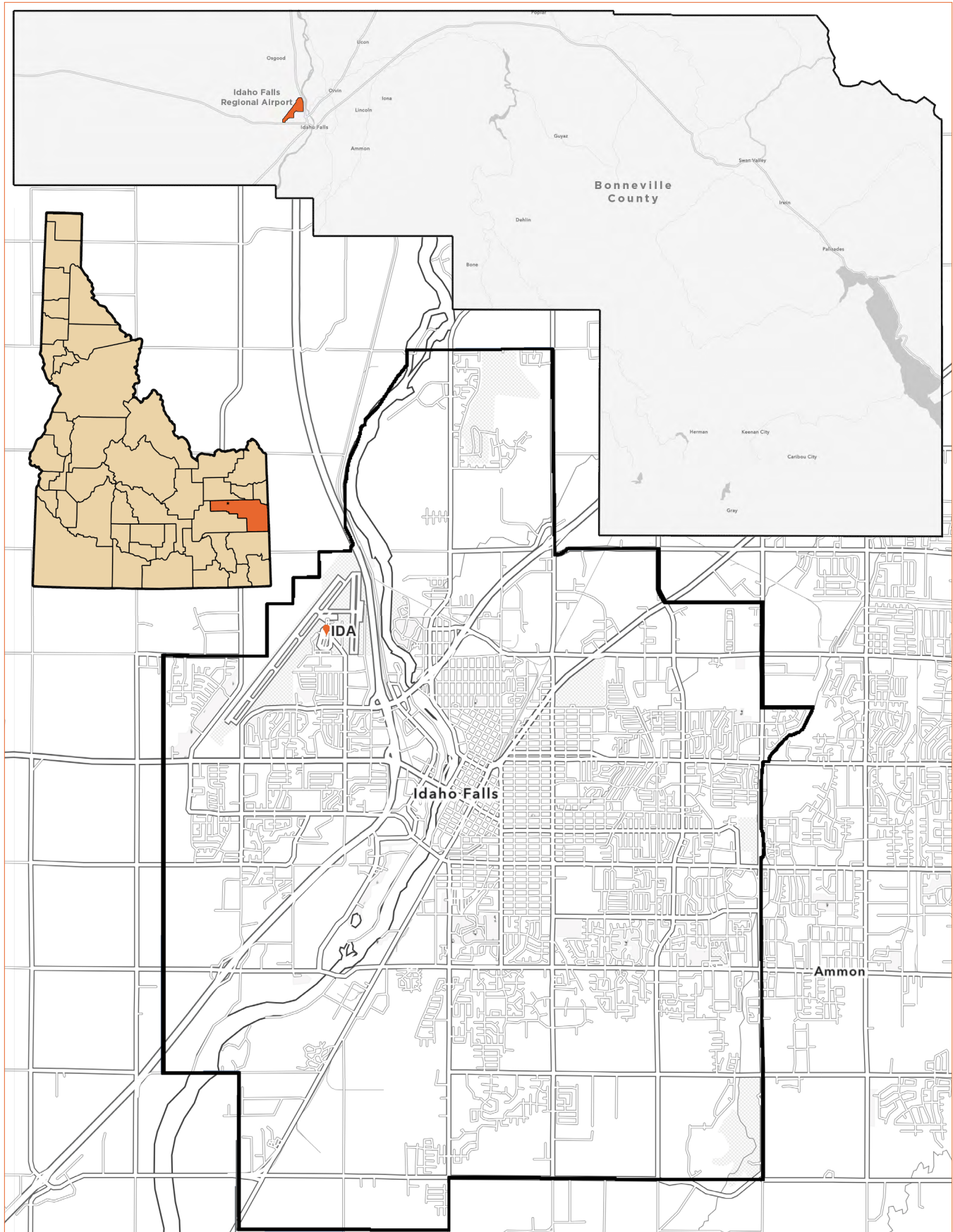


Source: Delta Flight Museum

The airport soon began to expand as a result of the Works Progress Administration (WPA); an ambitious employment and infrastructure program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The city partnered with the WPA to build the Red Baron hangar, an administration building, an administrator's cabin, and a beacon tower at the airport in 1936. Additional improvements, which included extending the runways and installing fuel tanks, were completed by 1937, and the airport was given its first operating permit June 8, 1938.¹¹ The Red Baron hangar, airport beacon, and caretaker's cabin, which remain intact, make up the Idaho Falls Airport Historic District. Together, they serve as examples of the important role the WPA had in the early development of aviation in Idaho. No other WPA aviation structures in the state are known to retain this level of integrity.¹²



Today, the airport continues to support commercial and general aviation with two runways, a passenger terminal, control tower, air cargo facility, navigational aids, hangars, rental cars, parking aprons, and other aeronautical and non-aeronautical services. It is served by five airlines, including Alaska, Allegiant, American, Delta, and United, that offer nonstop flights to 11 destinations. The airport encompasses 866 acres, and the published airport elevation is 4,743.7 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Federal regulatory oversight is fulfilled by the FAA's Northwest Mountain Region through the Helena Airports District Office (ADO).

Figure 3.4: Airport Location and Vicinity Map

Source: T-O Engineers

3.2.1. Airport Administration and Governance

Idaho Falls Regional Airport is owned by the city of Idaho Falls which is governed by a mayor and six city council members.¹³ The airport director heads up the airport department and manages the airport. The director is appointed by the mayor and confirmed by city council.¹⁴

3.2.2. Airport Location and Access

As shown in [Figure 3.4](#), the airport is located approximately two miles northwest of downtown Idaho Falls. The main airport facilities are accessed via public roadways ([Figure 3.5](#)). North Skyline Drive provides access to the passenger terminal via Grandview Drive and West Broadway Street; both of which can be accessed from Interstate 15. West Broadway also provides direct access from downtown Idaho Falls east of the Snake River, and, as U.S. Highway 20, provides access from the INL Advanced Test Reactor site to the west.

International Way and Borah Avenue provides access to many of the airport facilities via North Skyline including the main Aero Mark fixed base operator (FBO) apron, the airport snow removal equipment (SRE) building, the maintenance and operations building, and the employee parking lot. The FedEx air cargo facility and the aircraft rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) station are both located on Federal Way which is accessed via North Skyline. Flightline Drive provides access to the south general aviation area via Grandview, and Foote Drive provides access to the west general aviation area.

Figure 3.5: Street Access Map



Source: T-O Engineers and Google Earth

3.2.3. Area Airports

As shown in Table 3.1, there are seven airports within 30 nautical miles of Idaho Falls Regional Airport.¹ Two of these are private airports, and the other five are public facilities. Two of the public airports, McCarley Field and Rexburg-Madison County Airport, are NPAIS airports and have published instrument approach procedures.

Table 3.1: Airports Within 30 Nautical Miles of Idaho Falls Regional Airport

Airport and FAA Identifier	Distance From IDA	Location	Runway Dimensions	Instrument Approach Procedures
Idaho Falls Regional IDA	—	Idaho Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 3/21 (asphalt) 9,002 feet x 150 feet •RWY 17/35 (asphalt) 4,050 feet x 75 feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ILS or LOC RWY 21 •RNAV (RNP) Z RWY 03 •RNAV (RNP) Z RWY 21 •RNAV (GPS) Y RWY 03 •RNAV (GPS) Y RWY 21 •LOC BC RWY 03 •VOR RWY 03 •VOR RWY 21
Rainbow Ranch (private)	7 Nautical Miles (southeast)	E. Idaho Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 7/25 (turf) 2,400 feet x 60 feet 	None, Visual Only
Rigby U56	9 Nautical Miles (northeast)	Rigby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 1/19 (asphalt) 3,727 feet x 50 feet 	None, Visual Only
Rexburg-Madison County RXE	22 Nautical Miles (northeast)	Rexburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 17/35 (asphalt) 4,204 feet x 75 feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RNAV (GPS) RWY 35 •VOR RWY 35
McCarley Field U02	22 Nautical Miles (southwest)	Blackfoot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 1/19 (asphalt) 4,314 feet x 75 feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RNAV (GPS)-A •RNAV (GPS)-B •VOR/DME-C
Riverside Anderson (private)	26 Nautical Miles (southwest)	Riverside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 3/21 (turf) 2,700 feet x 80 feet 	None, Visual Only
Rockford Municipal 2U4	28 Nautical Miles (southwest)	Rockford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 16/34 (asphalt) 2,800 feet x 50 feet 	None, Visual Only
Mud Lake/West Jefferson County 1U2	28 Nautical Miles (northwest)	Mud Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •RWY 2/20 (asphalt) 3,300 feet x 40 feet 	None, Visual Only

Source: FAA Airport Data and Information Portal, SkyVector, ITD Aeronautics, Google Earth

¹ A nautical mile is slightly longer than a land-measured mile, which is also known as a statute mile, and is equal to 1.1508 statute miles.

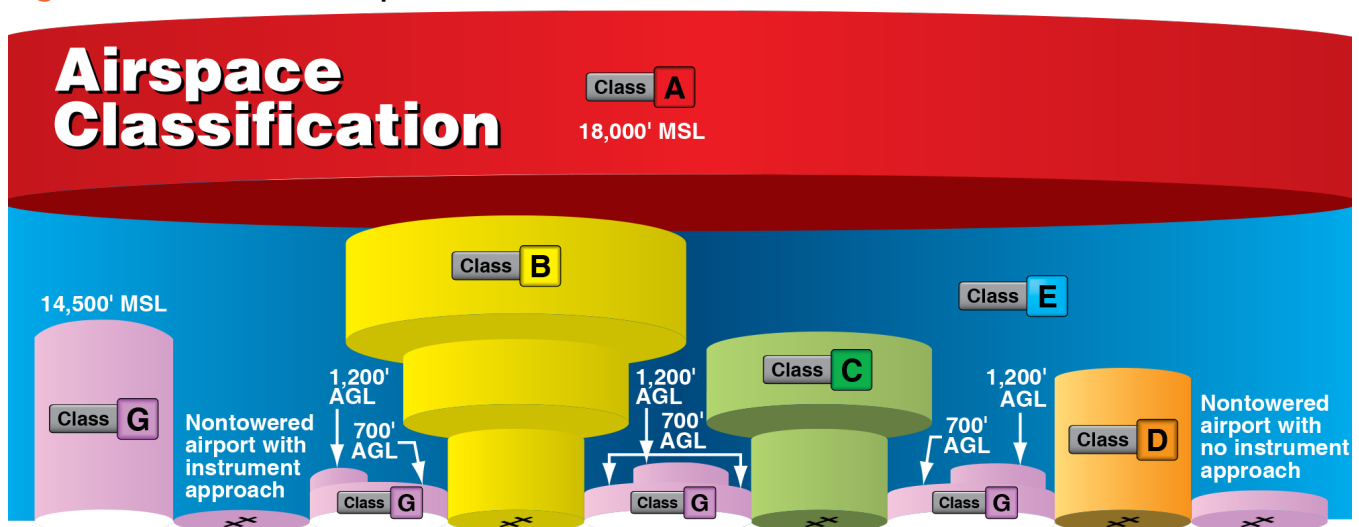
3.3. Airspace and Approaches

The two categories of airspace in the United States are regulatory and nonregulatory. The four types of airspace that make up these two categories are controlled, uncontrolled, special use, and other. The categories and types of airspace are dictated by the complexity or density of aircraft movements, nature of the operations conducted within the airspace, the level of safety required, and national and public interest.

As shown in Figure 3.6, controlled airspace consists of five different classifications within which air traffic control (ATC) service is provided. When overlapping airspace designations apply to the same volume of airspace, the operating rules associated with the more restrictive airspace designation apply.¹⁵

- **Class A:** Airspace from 18,000 feet mean sea level (MSL) up to 60,000 feet MSL. This class of airspace is primarily used for aircraft during cruise and transitioning phase.
- **Class B:** Airspace surrounding the nation's busiest airports from the surface up to 10,000 feet MSL. As such, it has more restrictive operating rules than subsequent classes.
- **Class C:** Airspace surrounding smaller types of airports from the surface up to 4,000 feet MSL above the surface elevation. These airports have an operational control tower, are serviced by a radar approach control, and meet a minimum number of operations or passenger enplanements.
- **Class D:** Airspace surrounding smaller types of airports from the surface up to 2,500 feet MSL above the surface elevation. These airports have an operational control tower but are not serviced by a radar approach control. They do not have to meet a minimum number of operations or passenger enplanements.
- **Class E:** Controlled airspace not classified as Class A, B, C, or D. In most areas, this airspace begins at 1,200 feet above ground level (AGL) and extends up to 18,000 feet MSL.

Figure 3.6: Federal Airspace Classifications



Source: FAA, Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge

Uncontrolled airspace, or Class G airspace, is the portion of the airspace that has not been designated as Class A, B, C, D, or E. In general, Class G airspace extends from the surface to the base of Class E airspace. Even though ATC has no authority or responsibility to control air traffic in Class G airspace, visual flight rules (VFR) still apply. Nonregulatory airspace includes several types of special use areas. Typically, these areas are used for military operations, restricted due to national security, or reserved for similar uses.¹⁶

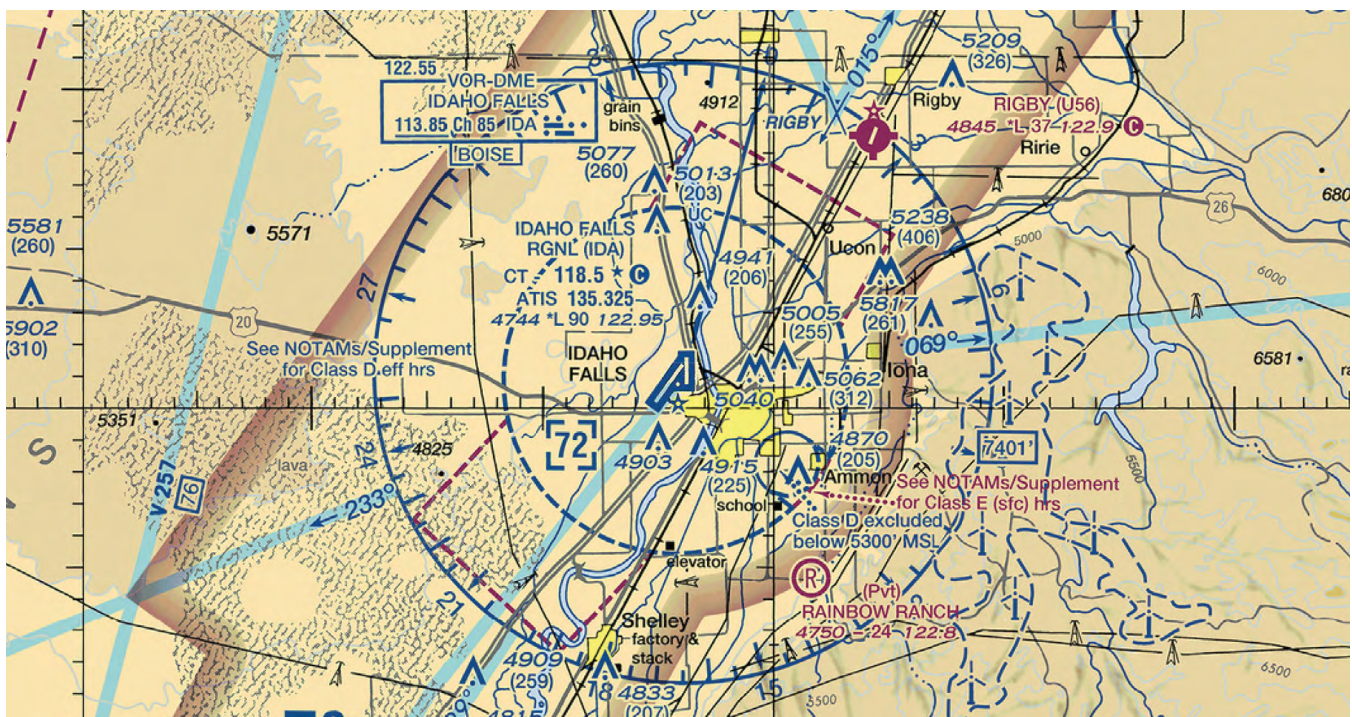
3.3.1. Airspace at Idaho Falls Regional Airport

The airport has an airport traffic control tower (ATCT) with published daily operating hours of 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Between those hours, Class D airspace is in effect. When the control tower is closed, the Class D airspace becomes Class E airspace.

As shown in Figure 3.7, the Class D airspace is centered over the airport with a radius that extends five nautical miles. It begins at the surface and extends up to 7,200 feet MSL or 2,500 AGL. The small circle shown at the southeast edge of the Class D airspace indicates where it drops below 5,300 feet MSL to accommodate the helicopter landing area at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center.

It is important to note that the Class E airspace extends beyond the Class D airspace to the northeast and southwest to protect the Runway 3/21 instrument approaches. These Class E extensions begin at ground level, are seven nautical miles wide, and vary in length between two to four nautical miles. Outside of the Class D airspace and Class E extensions, there is a larger Class E surface that begins at 700 feet above ground level and extends northeast for approximately 30 miles to Sugar City and southwest for approximately 60 miles to American Falls. Additionally, there is a national security area that begins approximately 26 nautical miles west of IDA and surrounds the INL Advanced Test Reactor site. The aeronautical chart indicates pilots should remain above 6,000 feet MSL in this area.

Figure 3.7: Aeronautical Chart for Idaho Falls Regional Airport



Source: Sky Vector

3.3.2. Instrument Approach Procedures for Idaho Falls Regional Airport

As shown in Table 3.2, there are eight published instrument approach procedures (IAP) for Idaho Falls Regional Airport. These multiple approaches incorporate a wide range of navigational aids and equipment to provide pilots with several options for landing at the airport during inclement weather.

Table 3.2: Instrument Approach Procedures

Minimum Altitude* and Minimum Visibility** by Aircraft Approach Category					
Category	A	B	C	D	E
Runway 3					
Runway 3: LOC BC					
S-LOC 3	336 ft & 1 mile				
CIRCLING	456 ft & 1 mile	556 ft & 1 mile	656 ft & 1.75 miles	676 ft & 2.25 miles	676 ft & 2.5 miles
Runway 3: RNAV (RNP) Z					
RNP 0.11 DA	306 ft & 0.875 mile				
RNP 0.30 DA	402 ft & 1.125 mile				
Runway 3: RNAV (GPS) Y					
LPV DA	200 ft & 0.75 mile				
LNAV/VNAV DA	258 ft & 0.75 mile				
LNAV MDA	356 ft & 1 mile				
CIRCLING	456 ft & 1 mile	556 ft & 1 mile	656 ft & 1.75 miles	676 ft & 2.25 miles	
Runway 3: VOR					
S-3	556 & 1 mile		556 & 1.625 miles		
CIRCLING	556 & 1 mile		656 & 1.75 miles	676 & 2.25 miles	
Runway 21					
Runway 21: ILS or LOC					
S-ILS 21	250 ft & 0.5 mile				
S-LOC 21	385 ft & 0.5 mile		385 ft & 0.625 mile		
CIRCLING	456 ft & 1 mile	556 ft & 1 mile	656 ft & 1.75 miles	676 ft & 2.25 miles	676 ft & 2.5 miles
Runway 21: RNAV (RNP) Z					
RNP 0.11 DA	276 ft & 0.5 mile				
RNP 0.30 DA	385 ft & 0.625 mile				
Runway 21: RNAV (GPS) Y					
LPV DA	250 ft & 0.5 mile				
LNAV/VNAV DA	281 ft & 0.5 mile				
LNAV MDA	365 ft & 0.5 mile		365 ft & 0.625 mile		
CIRCLING	456 ft & 1 mile	556 ft & 1 mile	656 ft & 1.75 miles	676 ft & 2.25 miles	
Runway 21: VOR					
S-21	665 ft & 0.5 mile		665 ft & 1.5 miles		
CIRCLING	656 ft & 1 mile		656 ft & 1.875 miles	676 ft & 2.25 miles	

*Altitude shown in feet above ground level

**Visibility shown in statute miles (One statute mile is equal to 5, 280 feet)

Source: FAA Airport Data and Information Portal (approach plates valid July 14 to August 11, 2022)

3.4. Aircraft Accident History

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency that investigates civil aviation accidents and incidents in the United States. The agency maintains the Aviation Accident Database & Synopses which includes records dating as far back as January 1, 1983. This information, which is publicly available at the NTSB Case Analysis and Reporting Online (CAROL) database, lists a total of 29 reports associated with IDA. As shown in Table 3.3, the most recent incident took place September 21, 2015.

Table 3.3: Accident Report Summary (1983–2021)

Date	NTSB #	Purpose	Injuries	Fatalities	Conditions	Phase of Flight
9/21/2015	WPR15IA263	Aerial Survey	2	0	Dawn/Visual	Takeoff
6/28/2015	GAA15CA145	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Taxiing
8/11/2014	WPR14LA341	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Takeoff
9/19/2013	WPR13LA416	Business	3	0	Day/Visual	Landing/Approach
6/22/2013	WPR13FA281	Personal	1	2	Day/Visual	Takeoff
7/11/2012	WPR12CA311	Personal	0	0	Dusk/Visual	Landing/Touchdown
5/12/2012	WPR12CA202	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
6/10/2011	WPR11CA262	Instructional	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
9/28/2010	WPR10IA482	Personal	0	0	Dusk/Visual	Landing Roll, Go Around
7/5/2009	WPR09LA336	Personal	1	0	Day/Visual	Takeoff
12/21/2008	WPR09CA066	Personal	0	0	Night/Visual	Landing Roll
9/30/2008	SEA08LA216	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Taxiing
5/20/2008	LAX08CA091	Personal	0	0	Night/Visual	Landing Roll
2/3/2005	SEA05CA043	Instructional	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
7/17/2003	SEA03CA162	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Taxiing
3/17/2003	SEA03LA047	Instructional	0	0	Day/Visual	Go Around
8/5/2002	SEA02FA146	Instructional	0	3	Day/Visual	Traffic Pattern
6/23/2002	SEA02LA105	Aerial Photo	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
3/23/2002	SEA02LA057	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
11/10/2000	SEA01FA017	Maintenance Check	0	2	Day/Visual	Orbiting
10/16/1999	SEA00LA002	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
7/22/1997	SEA97LA174	Agricultural	0	0	Day/Visual	Takeoff
11/17/1993	SEA94LA033	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
9/3/1993	SEA93LA190	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Landing Roll
5/9/1987	SEA87IA093	Personal	0	0	Day/Visual	Go Around, Landing Roll
12/7/1985	SEA86LA029	Positioning	0	0	Day/Inst.	Landing Approach
11/6/1985	SEA86LA024	Corporate	0	0	Day/Inst.	Landing Approach
5/20/1983	SEA83LA102	Personal	1	0	Day/Visual	Takeoff
3/16/1982	SEA82DA038	Personal	0	0	Day/Inst.	Landing Approach

Source: NTSB Case Analysis and Reporting Online (CAROL) Database

3.5. Grant History

The FAA provides grants to airports through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to assist with funding capital improvement and planning projects. As summarized in [Table 3.4](#), the airport has received a total of \$90.6 million in AIP funding from 1984 to 2021.

Many airports have also recently received funding to provide economic relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sources of this funding have included the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) of 2020; and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. In addition, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law November 15, 2021, which resulted in \$25 billion in new funding becoming available for airport infrastructure, terminals, and air traffic facilities. [Table 3.5](#) lists the federal grants IDA has received as a result of these laws.

Table 3.4: Airport Improvement Program Grant History (1984–2021)

Sequence No. & Fiscal Year	Brief Project Description	Amount
001-1984	SRE; apron; improve building and drainage; acquire land for approaches	\$564,005
002-1985	ARFF vehicle; groove runway; extend runway; improve airport drainage	\$998,983
003-1986	Noise mitigation; rehab runway; improve drainage; acquire land	\$472,607
004-1986	Airport master plan study	\$80,000
005-1987	SRE; improve access road; noise mitigation; acquire land for development	\$504,092
006-1988	Acquire land for approaches; improve access road	\$397,749
007-1989	Improve access road; acquire ARFF safety equipment	\$557,045
008-1990	Improve ARFF building	\$762,134
009-1991	Construct apron; install signs; acquire security equipment and land	\$1,755,674
010-1992	Improve runway safety area	\$2,468,701
011-1992	Improve runway safety area	\$1,500,000
012-1993	Improve runway safety area	\$2,859,720
013-1994	Acquire SRE	\$366,105
014-1995	Rehab apron; rehab runway lighting	\$2,424,775
015-1997	Airport master plan study, conduct miscellaneous study	\$298,545
016-1997	Rehab runway	\$2,079,487
017-1998	Rehab runway	\$867,912
018-1999	Improve safety area and service road; acquire land; ARFF vehicle	\$530,249
019-2000	Improve terminal building	\$156,128
020-2000	Rehabilitate taxiway; acquire security equipment; expand apron	\$678,059
021-2001	Improve terminal building	\$2,828,469
022-2001	Install runway vertical guidance system; acquire SRE	\$373,385
023-2003	Modify access road; rehab apron	\$1,423,213

Source: FAA and 2010 Idaho Falls Regional Airport Master Plan

Sequence No. & Fiscal Year	Brief Project Description	Amount
024-2004	Rehab taxiway, runway, and apron; conduct study; remove obstructions; acquire wheelchair lift; install vertical visual guidance system	\$5,461,921
025-2005	Rehab apron and taxiway; remove obstructions; expand apron	\$3,239,040
026-2005	Expand apron	\$848,486
027-2006	Expand apron; install runway vertical visual guidance system 17/35	\$5,391,619
028-2007	Acquire SRE; construct SRE building; rehab runway 2/20	\$600,000
029-2008	Rehab runway 2/20; runway incursion markings	\$8,066,071
030-2008	Rehab runway 2/20	\$633,961
031-2009	Construct SRE building	\$534,266
032-2009	Update airport master plan study	\$318,250
033-2009	Construct SRE building	\$793,300
034-2010	Construct SRE building	\$625,000
035-2010	Acquire ARFF vehicle	\$663,689
036-2011	Improve runway 2/20 safety area; install fencing; rehabilitate apron	\$1,766,524
037-2012	Acquire SRE; construct apron; expand terminal building	\$753,507
038-2013	Expand terminal building	\$2,316,501
039-2014	Construct access road; construct apron; construct taxiway	\$1,888,760
040-2015	Expand apron	\$2,070,282
041-2016	Expand terminal building; rehabilitate runway 2/20; rehabilitate taxiway	\$1,064,269
042-2016	Acquire land for approaches	\$583,424
043-2017	Install guidance signs; rehabilitate Taxiway A, connectors, and Taxiway C	\$7,813,597
044-2018	Expand Terminal Building	\$3,455,367
045-2019	Acquire SRE	\$700,000
045-2019	Modify Terminal Building	\$848,191
046-2019	Reconstruct Runway	\$500,000
046-2019	Construct Taxiway	\$1,438,822
047-2020	Modify Terminal Building	\$12,185,559
050-2021	Update Airport Master Plan Study	\$701,987
051-2021	Seal Runway Pavement Surface and Pavement Joints	\$361,271
052-2021	Acquire ARFF Vehicle and Safety Equipment	\$742,453
Total		\$90,611,167

Source: FAA and 2010 Idaho Falls Regional Airport Master Plan

Table 3.5: COVID-19 Response Grant History (2020–2021)

Sequence No. & Fiscal Year	Federal Response Act	Amount
48-2020	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act	\$2,279,821
49/54-2020	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act	\$1,790,343
55-2021	American Rescue Plan Act	\$2,558,077
2022	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	\$1,806,687
Total		\$8,434,928

Source: FAA

3.5.1. Idaho Airport Aid Program Grants

The State's Aeronautics Fund distributes grants to Idaho airports via the Idaho Airport Aid Program (IAAP). It is a trustee and benefit program that provides matching funds to municipal governments for public airport improvements.

The IAAP is administered according to Idaho Administrative Code IDAPA 39.04.04, and requests for funding are submitted to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Division of Aeronautics and the Idaho Transportation Board (ITB) for approval. Only public entities, such as a city, county, airport authority, political subdivision, or public corporation, that own or lease and operate a public-use landing facility are eligible for IAAP funds. Additionally, an airport owner must have a state approved airport plan (section 200.01) and protective zoning (section 200.04) in place to participate in the IAAP. However, the IAAP can provide funding for those items if an airport needs to develop or update these items.

Grants are mainly awarded for scheduled projects or purchases of maintenance and safety supplies. However, small project awards are also distributed for unscheduled or emergency projects. All allocations must meet high priority needs and achieve maximum benefit and use of available funds. Airport projects funded with state and local dollars are prioritized by the following rating system:

1. Aircraft Operations Safety
2. Protects Prior Public Investments
3. Assures Maximum Use and Benefit of Federal Funds
4. Aircraft Landing Projects
5. Preservation of Existing Aircraft Landing Facilities
6. Development of Aircraft Landing Facilities
 - Large geographical area with no air accessibility
 - Additional new sites in urban areas where landing sites are rapidly becoming non-existent
 - Recreational area development where land availability is becoming difficult to obtain

The State Aeronautics Fund is mainly funded by Idaho's aviation fuel tax.¹⁷ However, aircraft registrations, pilot registrations, sale of aeronautical charts and directories, federal reimbursements, and other miscellaneous items also provide additional sources of revenue for the fund. Table 3.6 lists the IAAP grants IDA has received dating back to 1946.

Table 3.6: Idaho Airport Aid Program Grant History (1946–2019)

Fiscal Year	Brief Project Description	Amount
1946-1966	Airport development projects	\$21,745
1973	Land acquisition; rehab and strengthen runways, taxiways, and aprons; entrance road improvement; obstruction removal	\$30,000
1973	Airspace easements; mark runways and taxiways	\$8,000
1973	Airport master plan study	\$1,000
1975	Land acquisition; rehab and strengthen runways; construct aprons	\$20,000
1977	Acquire land; terminal expansion; SRE; fencing	\$80,000
1980	Acquire land; passenger loading bridges	\$8,436
1984	Acquire land; construct light apron tie downs and T-hangar taxilanes; markings; fencing; SRE; terminal building water line	\$12,081
1993	Soil remediation from crop dusting residue	\$22,500
1996	Nonprimary Entitlement (NPE) match	\$22,500
1996	Signs; security; SRE; land acquisition	\$38,000
1998	Airport master plan study; initial pavement study	\$30,400
1999	Air carrier apron repair; snowplow blade; historic hangar repair	\$25,000
2000	Security light upgrade; parking lot; security fence	\$15,000
2001	Rehab TW C; expand cargo apron; fencing; relocate segmented circle	\$45,000
2001	Improve airport terminal; acquire SRE; install Runway 20 PAPI	\$45,000
2004	Acquire wheelchair lift; conduct misc. study; install RW vertical/visual guidance system; rehab apron; rehab RW and TW; remove obstructions	\$45,000
2005	Expand general aviation apron	\$25,500
2007	Acquire SRE; construct SRE building phase 1; rehab RW 2/20 design	\$25,500
2008	Rehab RW 2/20; RW incursion markings	\$25,000
2009	Construct SRE building; update airport master plan study	\$20,000
2010	Construct SRE building	\$20,000
2011	Improve RSA RW 2/20; install perimeter fencing; rehab apron	\$20,000
2012	Acquire SRE, construct apron; expand terminal building	\$25,000
2017	Install guidance signs; rehab TW A and connectors; rehab TW C	\$25,000
2018	Expand terminal building	\$15,000
2019	Modify terminal building, acquire SRE, construct TW	\$15,000
Total		\$679,662

Source: 2010 IDA Airport Master Plan and ITD-Aeronautics

3.6. Economic Impact

An airport’s economic impact is essentially a measure of the financial effect it has on the state and local economy. As part of the update to the Idaho Airport System Plan, ITD Aeronautics also updated the Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis (AEIA) which discusses the economic impact of Idaho airports—both on a statewide basis as well as for individual airports. It is important to note that this report was completed July of 2020, but the data is from 2018 prior to COVID-19 impacts.

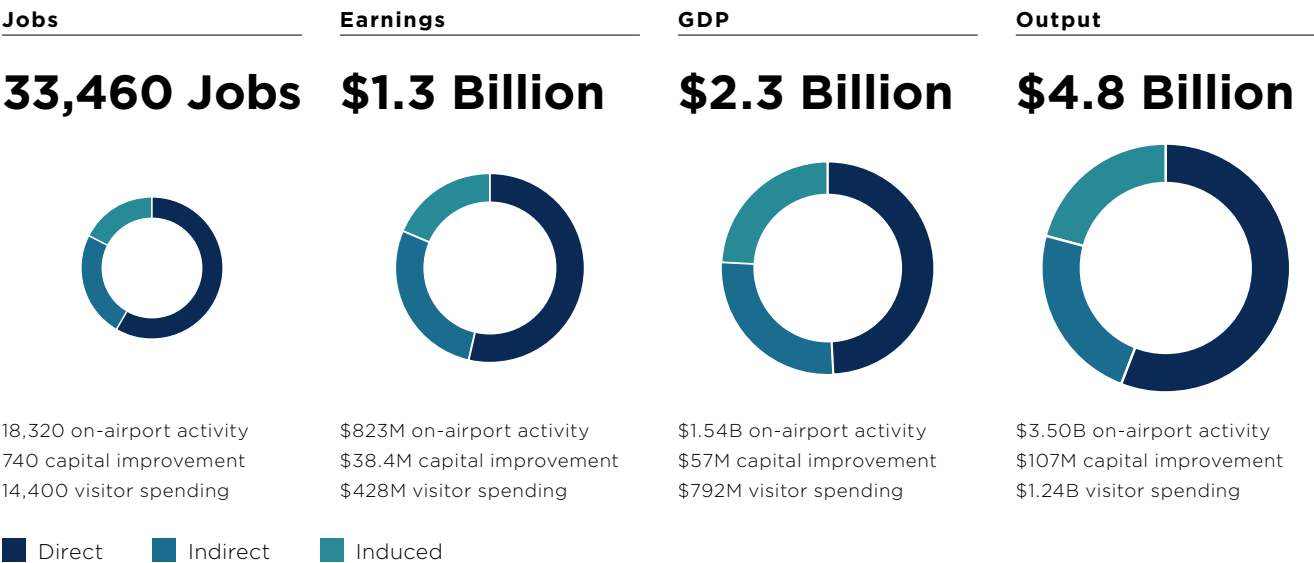
There are three types of economic impacts discussed in this report: direct, indirect, and induced. Direct impacts are attributed to on-airport activity such as car rentals, concessions, and fuel sales as well as capital improvements and off-airport visitor spending. Indirect impacts are typically the result of interactions between businesses and suppliers of goods and services (e.g., purchases from suppliers) while induced impacts are associated with respending income earned within a community. (Both indirect and induced impacts are considered to be multiplier effects.) An airport’s total impact is the sum of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts which are expressed in the following four ways:

- 1. **Jobs or Employment:** The number of people employed at businesses associated with the airport.
- 2. **Earnings or Labor Income:** Wages, salaries, and benefits received by those employees.
- 3. **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The dollar value of final goods and services. It does not include the value of intermediate goods and services used to produce the final product.
- 4. **Output:** The economic activity generated by the operation of the airport and all related activities including the dollar value of intermediate goods and services.

3.6.1. Economic Impact of Idaho Airports

Figure 3.8 shows the economic impact of the 75 airports in the Idaho Airport System. For 2018, the total economic output of these airports exceeded \$4.8 billion. They also contributed nearly \$2.4 billion to Idaho’s GDP and supported more than 33,460 jobs with a resulting \$1.3 billion in earnings.¹⁸

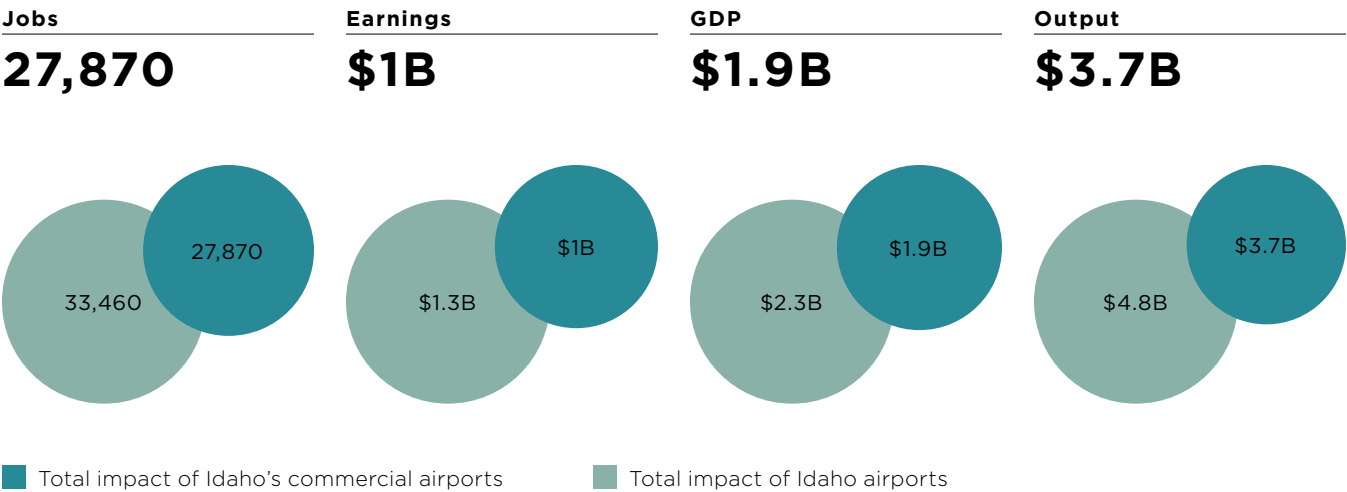
Figure 3.8: Economic Impact of Idaho Airports, 2018



Source: 2020 Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis Update

According to the 2020 Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis, the total economic output of the six commercial airports was \$3.7 billion for 2018. It also states these airports contributed \$1.9 billion to Idaho’s GDP and supported 27,870 jobs with a resulting \$1 billion in earnings. [Figure 3.9](#) shows the economic impact of Idaho’s commercial service airports.¹⁹

Figure 3.9: Economic Impact of Commercial Airports in Idaho, 2018

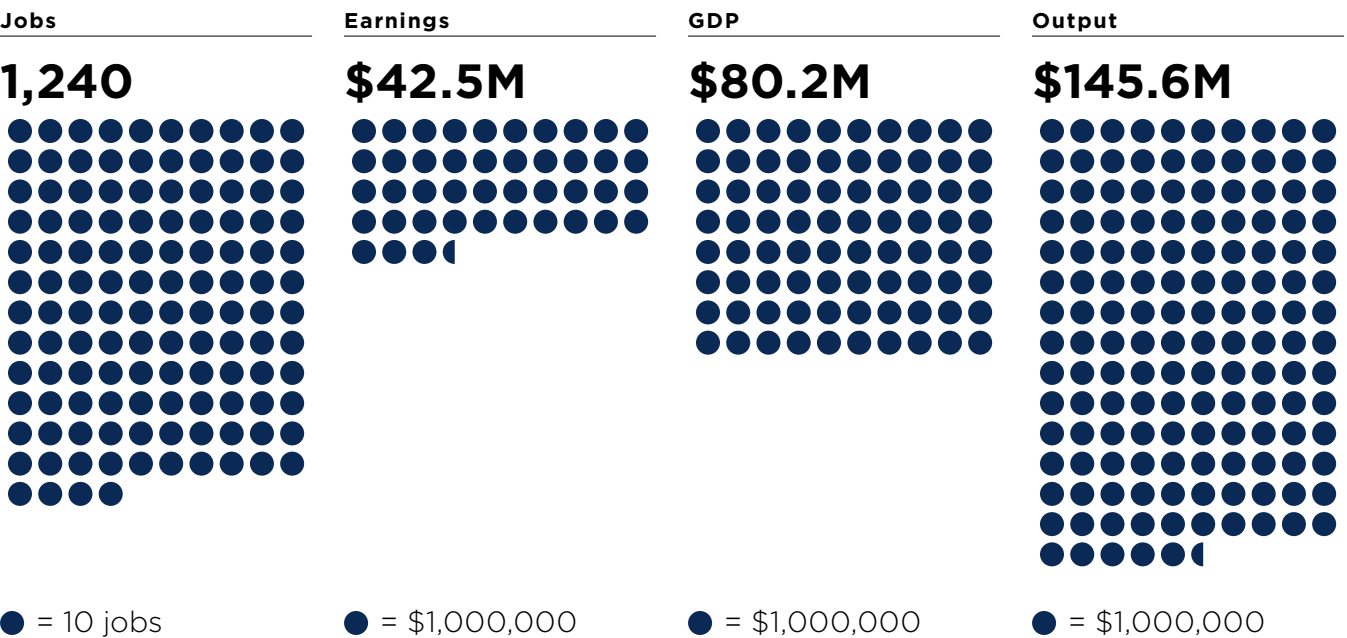


Source: 2020 Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis Update

3.6.2. Economic Impact of Idaho Falls Regional Airport

The 2020 Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis included airport-specific impacts for each airport in the Idaho system. This analysis shows the economic output for Idaho Falls Regional Airport was \$145.6 million for 2018. It also shows the airport contributed \$80.2 million to Idaho’s GDP and supported 1,240 jobs with a resulting \$42.5 million in earnings ([Figure 3.10](#)).

Figure 3.10: Economic Impact of Idaho Falls Regional Airport, 2018



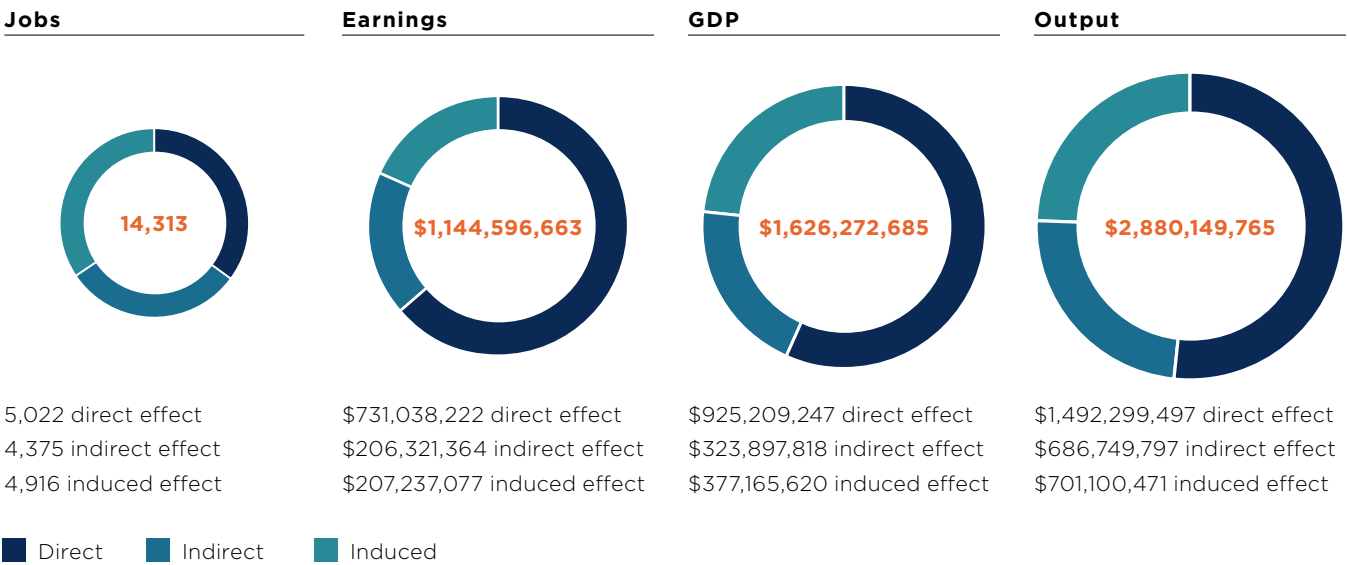
Source: 2020 Idaho Airport Economic Impact Analysis Update

3.6.3. Economic Impact of Idaho National Laboratory

As previously mentioned, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) employs approximately 5,022 people which makes it the largest employer in Idaho Falls, and one of Idaho’s largest employers. For fiscal year 2020, it was Idaho’s 7th largest private employer, and the 10th largest when compared to both public and private businesses. This is in addition to the nearly \$240 million the company subcontracted to Idaho businesses. INL’s total economic output for fiscal year 2020 was \$2.88 billion, representing more than 3.44% of Idaho’s total output, while its impact on Idaho’s total labor income was more than \$1.14 billion, representing 1.4% of Idaho’s total personal income (Figure 3.11).²⁰

The company’s impact within eastern Idaho includes approximately \$157.3 million spent in the region with \$135.7 million in spending specifically at small businesses. In addition, the company awarded \$127,900 in community grants and \$75,700 in economic development grants for fiscal year 2021.²¹

Figure 3.11: Statewide Economic Impact of Idaho National Laboratory, Fiscal Year 2020



Source: Idaho National Laboratory Economic Impact Summary, FY 2020

3.7. Socioeconomic and Demographic Review

The socioeconomic characteristics of a community may influence the demand for air travel within an airport’s geographic region. This data can also be helpful in identifying trends that may impact current and future aviation operations; especially in the preparation of aviation demand forecasts. It is also helpful in making sure the community’s long-term needs are taken into consideration as part of the airport planning process.

The Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which consists of Bonneville, Jefferson, and Butte Counties, is the geographic focus of this socioeconomic overview.²² Much of the data was obtained from Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.; an independent firm that specializes in long-term economic and demographic projections.

3.7.1. Population Rates

According to Woods and Poole, the population within the Idaho Falls MSA was 153,107 for 2020 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.9% between 2000–2020. The population is projected to have a CAGR of 1.1% through 2040. As shown in Figure 3.12, the majority of the population within the Idaho Falls MSA is 34 years of age or younger.

Figure 3.12: Age Distribution, 2020



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

3.7.2. Household Income

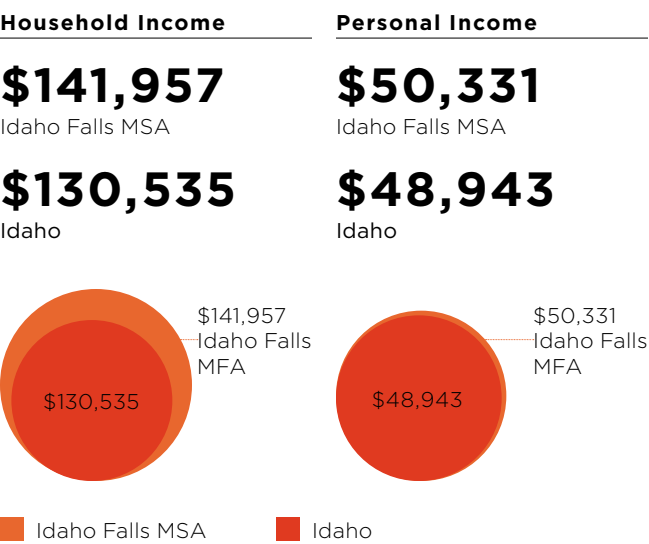
According to Woods and Poole, the average (i.e., mean) household income for the Idaho Falls MSA was estimated to be \$141,957 for 2020 while the total per capita personal income was \$50,331. Figure 3.13 shows the average incomes for the Idaho Falls MSA in comparison to the average household and personal incomes for Idaho.

3.7.3. Top Employers and Industries

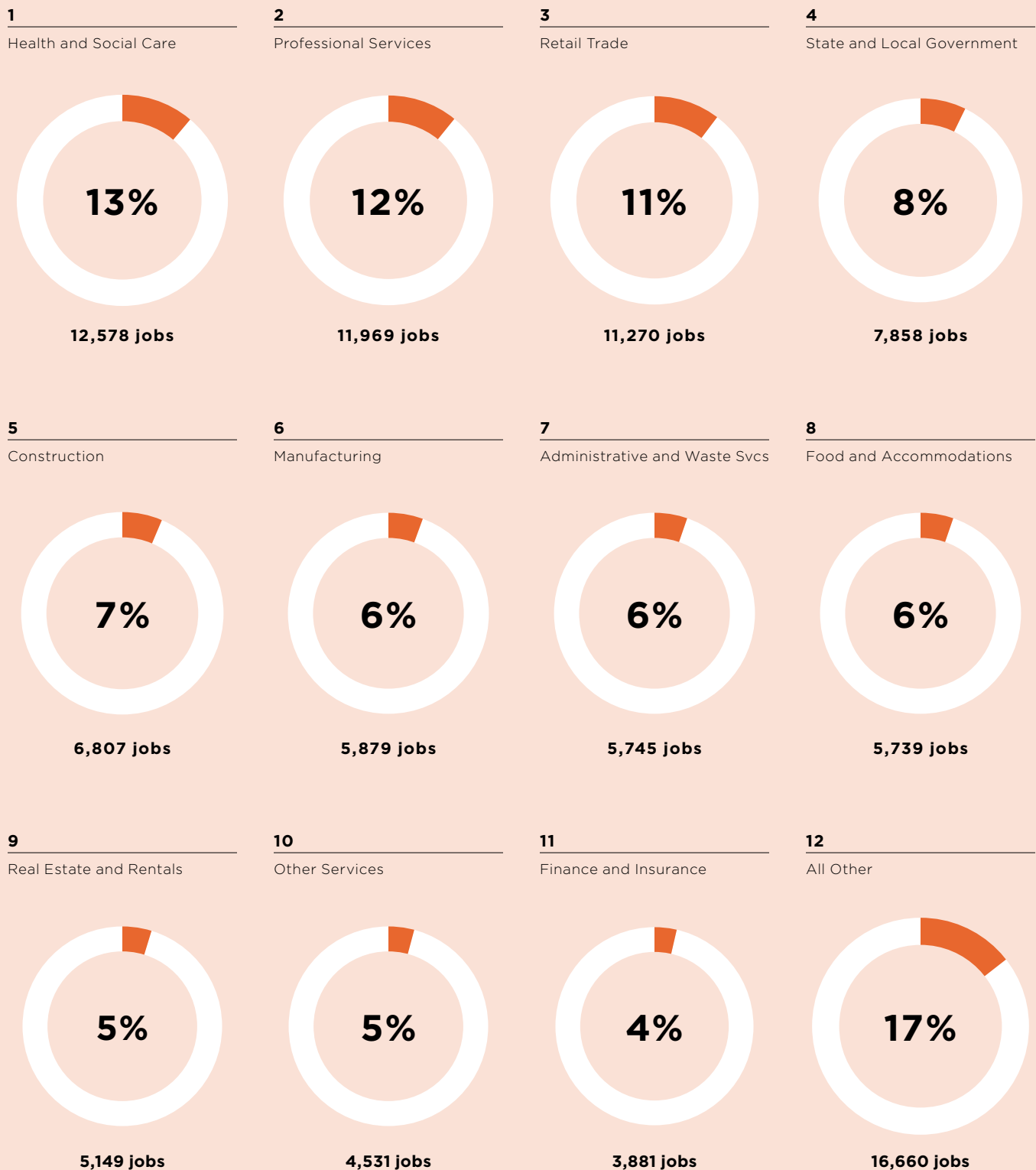
According to Woods and Poole, the top five industries within the MSA for 2020 were health care and social assistance; professional and technical services; retail; state and local government; and construction. Figure 3.14 shows the top industries in which people are employed within the Idaho Falls MSA.

The Woods and Poole data also lists industries in terms of earnings for the MSA. The top five for 2020 were professional and technical services; retail; health care and social assistance; administrative and waste services; and state and local government. Figure 3.15 shows the top industries in terms of earnings for the MSA.

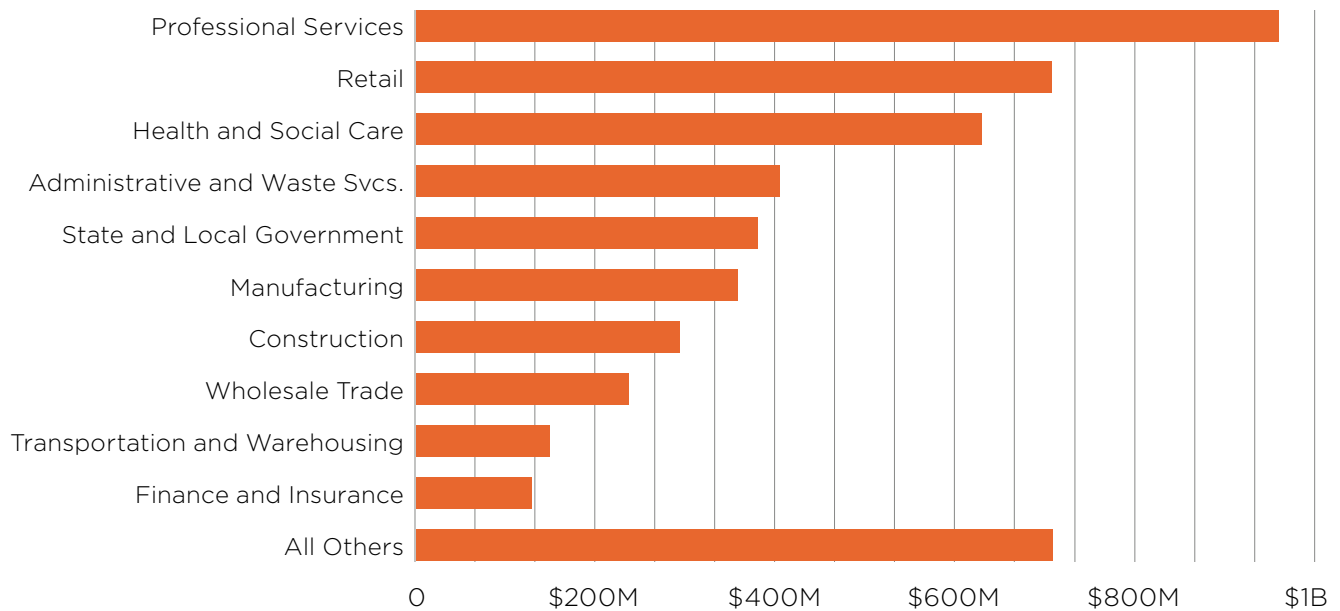
Figure 3.13: Average Incomes, 2020



Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Figure 3.14: Top Industries by Employment, 2020**Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area Employment by Industry**

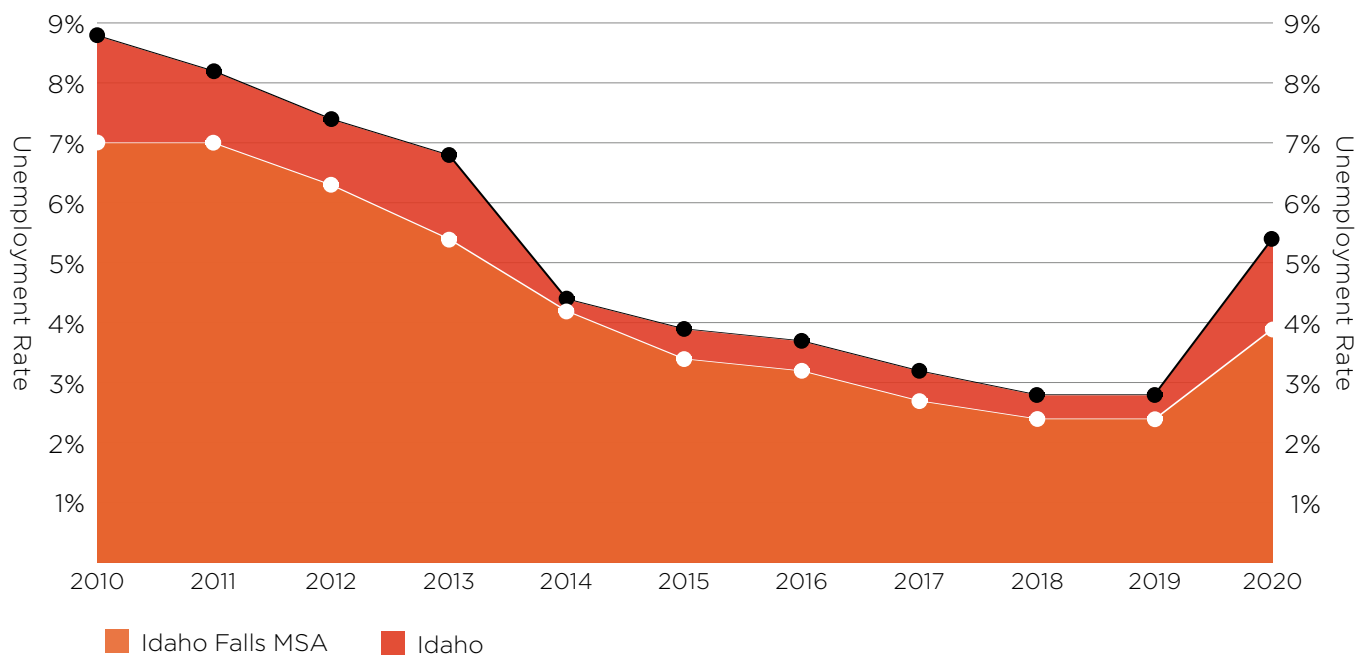
Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

Figure 3.15: Top Industries by Earnings, 2020

Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

3.7.4. Unemployment Rates

Unemployment within the Idaho Falls MSA was declining at a steady pace until 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused rates to increase for 2020. As shown in [Figure 3.16](#), while the unemployment rates for the MSA have followed a similar trend to those for the whole state, they have remained lower than the statewide unemployment rates.²³

Figure 3.16: Unemployment Rates, 2010-2020

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

3.7.5. Looking Ahead

Idaho Falls was named the Best-Performing Small City for 2021 by the Milken Institute. According to the organization's report, *Best-Performing Cities 2021: Foundations for Growth and Recovery*, Idaho Falls experienced significant short-term job growth of 4.7% from October 2019 to October 2020. This was largely due to the high-profile employers in the region.²⁴

“Idaho Falls is also considered one of the best places to live in Idaho due to its natural amenities, safety, and low cost of living, as well as access to high-quality jobs.”

—Milken Institute

Several new projects and recent announcements indicate Idaho Falls will continue to experience economic growth despite the impacts and uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include national and regional chains expanding to Idaho Falls such as the new 180,000 square-foot Costco store that opened August 2020 as well as the 187,000 square-foot RC Willey store that is expected to open in late 2022. Other notable construction projects include a new 19,000-square-foot Summit Orthopaedics building that opened in January 2022, and a new 48,000 square-foot event center at Snake River Landing that is expected to be completed by October 2022. In addition, the College of Eastern Idaho will soon begin construction of an 88,000 square-foot, two-story Future Tech facility with an estimated cost of \$40 million. The building, which will house its cybersecurity, solar power, battery technology, agriculture technology, and radiation safety programs, should be completed by early 2024.

Growth and expansion are also evident at the Idaho Falls Regional Airport. This includes a recent renovation and remodel of the terminal building that increased the number of gates from three to six. The airlines have also added new nonstop routes including an Allegiant Air route to Portland as of May 2021, American Airlines routes to Phoenix and Dallas-Fort Worth as of June 2021, and an Alaska Airlines route to Seattle as of June 2021.

Additionally, several recent announcements from the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) show the company is continuing to grow—as will its role as a major employer and contributor to the local economy. These include a partnership with PNW Hydrogen to combat climate change and bring the nation closer to a carbon-free future that come with \$20 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy as well as a partnership with the city of Idaho Falls to potentially turn the fields near MK Simpson Boulevard into a hub for research institutions in hopes of spurring a focused expansion of businesses and amenities in the area.

Another notable high-tech project involves a partnership between UAMPS and Portland-based reactor producer NuScale. The companies plan to build a first-of-its-kind nuclear reactor at the Idaho National Laboratory desert site west of Idaho Falls. The project, which was announced in 2020, involves building six module reactors that could produce a total 462 megawatts. The project received \$1.4 billion in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, and the plant is expected to be running by 2029. These examples, and more, have city officials expecting a major population boom with the number of residents potentially doubling within a decade.²⁵

Endnotes

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