



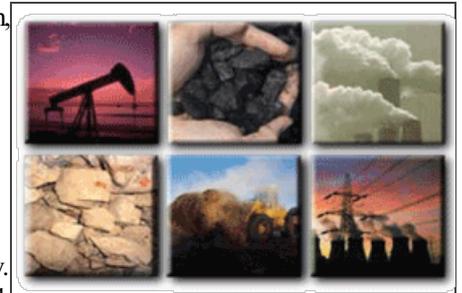
After his keynote address at the recent Pacific Northwest Economic Region summit in Boise, Idaho's Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter (r) greets Canada's Minister of State for Sport, Gary Lunn.

## Regional economic summit mulls energy innovation and collaboration

by [Marilyn Whitney](#), *INL Communications*

Nuclear energy, the Western Energy Corridor and advanced vehicle demonstrations were hot topics of discussion among Pacific Northwest leaders last month. The group had gathered for an annual regional economic meeting, which Idaho National Laboratory co-sponsored.

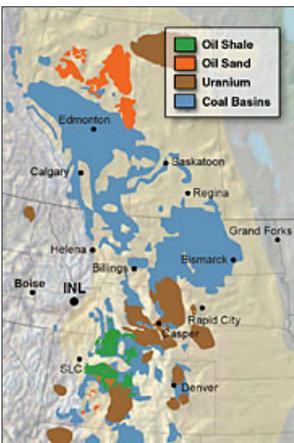
More than 500 government officials and industry representatives from Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and four Canadian provinces gathered for the annual [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region](#) (PNWER) summit July 12-16 in Boise. Participants attended presentations, panel discussions and working groups to address a wide range of issues including energy and the environment, trade and economic development, agriculture, homeland security, transportation, invasive species, work-force development and healthcare.



*Learn more about the [Western Energy Corridor's strategic resources](#).*

Energy issues received particular emphasis at this year's conference. As the gold sponsor of the summit, INL supported sessions on energy and the environment and national and homeland security. INL Lab Director John Grossenbacher facilitated a series of panel discussions on emerging regional interests in nuclear energy, opportunities in the Western Energy Corridor and advanced vehicle demonstrations. INL panelists included Dave Hill, Mike Hagood, Jim Francfort, Gerald Sehlke and Julio Rodriguez.

PNWER is recognized by both the U.S. and Canada as the model for regional and bi-national collaboration. The organization works to remove barriers, promote policy and stimulate positive action to enhance the region's economic competitiveness and preserve the region's environment. During the conference, PNWER's 14 working groups met to develop action plans to address the region's key priorities.



**The Western Energy Corridor contains world-class energy resources. [Click map for larger image.](#)**

This year's summit included the initiation of an energy institute to provide lawmakers with training and information on the region's energy challenges. Legislators from five states and four Canadian provinces, including more than 30 Idaho legislators, launched the Energy Horizon Legislative Institute using curriculum developed by the University of Idaho. The Institute is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and may serve as a model for a national institute.

In his keynote address, Gov. C. L. "Butch" Otter emphasized the importance of regional partnerships and encouraged PNWER members to continue collaborating to develop solutions at the local and regional levels. Other keynote speakers included Congressman Walt Minnick, Boise Mayor Dave Bieter and several of the region's leading industry chief executive officers. Dean Allen, CEO of McKinstry -- a firm that designs, builds and operates sustainable, efficient facilities -- spoke of the need for "a quiltwork of energy solutions and a community-based approach to energy efficiency and energy independence."

In a meeting with media representatives, Grossenbacher and Saskatchewan's Minister of Crown Corporations Ken Cheveldayoff spoke of [INL's collaboration with Saskatchewan](#) to promote a diversified energy approach and increase energy security in the region.

"As Saskatchewan expands its efforts to develop sustainable energy strategies, it makes sense to partner with research institutions such as INL," said Cheveldayoff. "Energy interests with INL are mutual, clean, sustainable and secure energy supply."

Grossenbacher said that "solutions to global challenges must begin locally. Building partnerships with universities, government and industry through PNWER is extremely important to INL as we seek to understand the art of the possible and bring the best minds and capabilities to bear on these important issues."

In tandem with the PNWER summit, the [Pacific Northwest Economic Development Council](#) (PNEDC) also held its annual meeting in Boise.

PNEDC provides a forum for exchange of information, professional training and networking for economic development professionals. INL's Nancy Bergmann, serving as PNEDC president, organized this year's conference. Hill, INL's deputy lab director for Science and Technology, spoke as part of a panel on the intersection of energy, economic development and entrepreneurship. INL's Richard Holman contributed to a discussion of work-force needs in the alternative energy arena.

Conference participants attended several policy tours including trips to Boise's Platinum LEED certified Banner Bank Building, Micron Technology, the National Interagency Fire Center and the Idaho Wine Country. Nearly 40 members of PNWER and PNEDC travelled from Boise to southeast Idaho for the policy tour of INL, where they visited the historic Experimental Breeder Reactor-I and the Advanced Test Reactor.

**INL Presentations:**

[Advanced Vehicle Demonstrations](#)

[Western Energy Corridor](#)

**Read or watch media coverage of the conference.**

[Associated Press](#)

[Idaho Business Review](#)

[Idaho Statesman](#)

[Spokesman Review](#)

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