

Kirkham ready to take over as STAR director

Idaho National Laboratory is a unique and diverse place. Not only is INL the nation's lead nuclear energy research and development laboratory, but it also is a world leader in broader clean energy R&D and the effort to protect and make more resilient the nation's critical infrastructure against man-made and natural threats.

It takes an incredible number of moving parts to ensure that the lab functions well. Behind the globally recognized science and research are the leaders and game changers with the vision and talent to solve our world's most complex problems.

This month, I am featuring Dana Kirkham, the Science, Technology and Research (STAR) director for the Regional Economic Development Eastern Idaho (REDI).

Kirkham will take over the STAR job full time next month, when her term as mayor of Ammon expires. Kirkham was elected Ammon mayor in 2013, and also served two terms on the Ammon City Council.

Formerly, Kirkham worked as a support staff member at Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) headquarters and at the U.S. Consulate in Germany.

Kirkham holds a Bachelor of Science degree in political science from Utah State University. She and her husband, Ryan, live in Ammon. They have two children.

Q: How do you describe to people your new job at Regional Economic Development Eastern Idaho (REDI)?

A: An amazing opportunity with focus on bolstering our state's science, technology and research economy working with the brightest minds in Idaho. To witness firsthand this innovative work in our region, and then share our story on a state, national, and global stage; it doesn't get much better.

Q: Why is your job important?

A: Because science and technol-



Amy Lientz
INL



Dana Kirkham will start her new job as the STAR (science, technology, and research) director for Regional Economic Development Eastern Idaho next month when her term as Ammon mayor expires. (submitted photo)

ogy are the foundation and the future of eastern Idaho.

Q: What do you see as eastern Idaho's greatest economic strengths?

A: First, the people. We are the second largest workforce in Idaho. We house incredible anchor tenants like Idaho National Laboratory, Fluor Idaho, the Navy, and the FBI. Couple that with our academic partners within 80 miles of each other and booming industry in medicine, manufacturing, and agriculture (to name a few). It's the perfect opportunity.

Q: Challenges?

A: We all know them. Now it's time to fix them.

Q: When you envision eastern Idaho's economy in a decade, what do you see?

A: A vibrant, sustainable environment that has tremendous opportunity for our children and grandchildren to stay in eastern Idaho.

Q: How will your past experienc-

es, as mayor of Ammon and a member of the City Council, as well as your time working for the CIA, help you in this new endeavor?

A: I understand the federal climate and I understand the local climate. Both have taught me the necessity of competency and persistence.

Q: What did you enjoy most about your political career?

A: Solving problems.

Q: What did you enjoy least?

A: Saying "No." I would much rather say "How."

Q: What are some of the things that would surprise eastern Idahoans about science and technology businesses in the region?

A: That it's all around us. It's in every industry — from farming to lithium batteries — and in many ways Idahoans are on the ground floor of these advancements.

Q: How do we become more innovative?

A: We challenge ourselves to step

IDAHO GAME CHANGERS

out of the norms. We try new ways of doing things in both the public and private sector.

Q: What are the economic trends we should be looking for?

A: Nationally, baby boomers are retiring later and causing a disruption in the incoming workforce. We see the opposite happening in our area — a significant part of the workforce will be retiring in the near future causing a workforce vacuum. We are actively working to have a skilled workforce ready to fill this void.

Q: Did you always want to do what you are doing? If not, what did you want to be growing up?

A: No, I always thought I would be the first female anchor of the nightly news, but Katie Couric beat me to it.

Q: Which talent would you most like to have?

A: Patience (I know you're thinking that's not a talent, but it is).

Q: Who is your favorite writer?

A: Oh, so many: Michener, McCullough, Plato, Sue Monk Kidd, too many.

Q: Best book you've read in the last year?

A: "When Breath Becomes Air," by Paul Kalanithi.

Q: What do you value most in your friends?

A: Trust and humor.

Lientz is director of the Partnerships, Engagement and Technology Deployment for Idaho National Laboratory. Her organization is responsible for governmental affairs, technology transfer, economic and workforce development, university programs, STEM and Public Affairs, and community giving. A favorite part of her job is to interact with engineers and scientists who innovate, create and solve big problems, and then share their success stories with others to help inspire more discovery. For more information and success stories, go to inl.gov.

East Idaho Employment and Staffing Agencies

Business	Address	Phone	Website
American Staffing Inc	1278 S Woodruff Ave, Idaho Falls	208-529-3349	https://americanstaffinginc.net
BBSI	950 Pier View Dr, Idaho Falls	208-542-5024	www.barrettbusiness.com
Development Workshop	555 W 25th St, Idaho Falls	208-524-1550	http://www.dwinc.org
Elwood Staffing	765 S Woodruff, Idaho Falls	208-522-2300	www.elwoodstaffing.com
Express Employment Professionals	300 S Freeman Ave, Idaho Falls	208-529-2661	www.expresspros.com
Extreme Staffing	1920 E 17th St Suite 203, Idaho Falls	208-529-5627	www.extremestaffingllc.com
Gem State Staffing	150 1st St, Idaho Falls	208-528-8900	www.gemstatestaffingjobs.net
IES Custom Staffing	1846 1st Street, Idaho Falls	208-552-4775	www.iescustomstaffing.com
Nuclear Placement Services	482 Constitution Way, Idaho Falls	208-785-2287	N/A
Transitions Inc	1920 E 17th St # 209, Idaho Falls	208-542-6063	N/A