**IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW** 

# CEC 2016 Of Influence





#### CEO of Influence 2016

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### On a mission to bringing health information to all Americans,

he built a successful health information empire from a handful of passionate people. Today, he reaches billions.



#### Shaun Menchaca

He lives and breathes what he peddles - and is a passionate believer in what he's done, where he is now and where he's going

#### Maureen O'Toole

She first discovered Girl Scouts when she was 6. And now, after taking the lead in sports, getting multiple college degrees, serving in the Army, she's come full circle.





#### Rev. Bill Roscoe

He's been called many things: soldier, carpenter, father, husband, coach, minister - and 'angel amona us.

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He came from Montana, has fly-fishing fever, is a die-hard Red Sox fan, a triathlete and devoted family man - and is dedicated to his vision for the City of Twin Falls.



#### Brad Wiskirchen

From a lawyer to a partner to a CEO times three, he now serves as CEO of one company, is a community leader and never misses his kids' games or performances.



#### Ken Wyatt

"Put an end once for all to this discussion of what a good man should be, and be one." - Marcus Aurelius





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#### Letter from the **Editor**



Including this year's group, the Idaho Business Review has saluted 39 Idaho leaders in six years. I have had the pleasure of talking with all but one – Steve Appleton was honored posthumously in 2012. They have shared their life stories, offered tips on leadership and inspired through their sense of community and outreach.

I am happy to introduce you to our CEO of Influence honorees for 2016.

**Darrel Anderson** is the leader of Idaho Power – but he started his relationship with the company years ago when he was its auditor. He's a champion to the Women's and Children's Alliance and other nonprofits and last year spearheaded the "Just Drive" campaign, for road safety.

Jack Gustavel decided to start his own bank in 1993 – now he oversees 11 branches throughout Idaho. He remembers going hunting after school when he attended Boise High School, was inspired by his grandfather and his father and takes his entire family on annual holiday vacations.

**Don Kemper** is the founder and leader of Healthwise. This summer, after 40 years at the helm, he will retire. Today, the company employs about 280 people. He has made his mark on the community, too – there's even a foothills trail named after him: Kemper's Ridge.

Shaun Menchaca got his idea for the Portneuf Wellness Comples in Pocatello – a "park on steroids" – while visiting the Simplot Complex in Boise. He grew up in the idyllic Thousand Springs area in Hagerman and today he lives and breathes his work in wellness.

**Maureen O'Toole** was a Girl Scout at age 6 – now she leads the Girl Scouts of the Silver Sage Council. Being a leader is something she has gotten used to, from leading in sports to the Army. Read her story and find out why she doesn't wear mascara to work.

A Vietnam War veteran, Rev. Bill Roscoe started out his career in construction. Now he's helping others to rebuild their lives. Under his watch, revenue at the Boise Rescue Mission has grown by more than 271 percent. And, did I mention, he rides a motorcycle?

Twin Falls City Manager Travis Rothweiler, a fourth-generation Montanan, is proud of his part in bringing growth to Twin Falls. Now, he's looking forward to revitalizing the downtown – when he's not training for the next triathlon, that is.

**Brad Wiskirchen** moved from being a successful attorney at Holland & Hart, to, at one point, leading three technology companies at once. Now, he is focused on one – Kount, where, as his son puts it, he "catches the bad guys on the Internet."

**Ken Wyatt** grew up in White Plains, New York, a self-described "neighborhood kid." These days, at 44° Vodka, he, along with his partner, oversees a vodka empire that stretches around the globe – that's a pretty big neighborhood. He says it's just the beginning – "stay tuned."

Now that I've made the introductions, I invite you to read their stories in these pages. You will, once again, come away with tips and lessons learned on life and business. You will be awed, inspired, and proud to know the 2016 CEO of Influence honorees.

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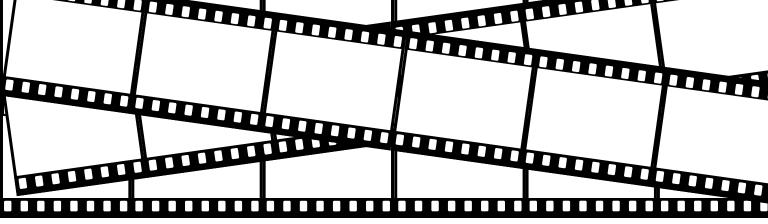












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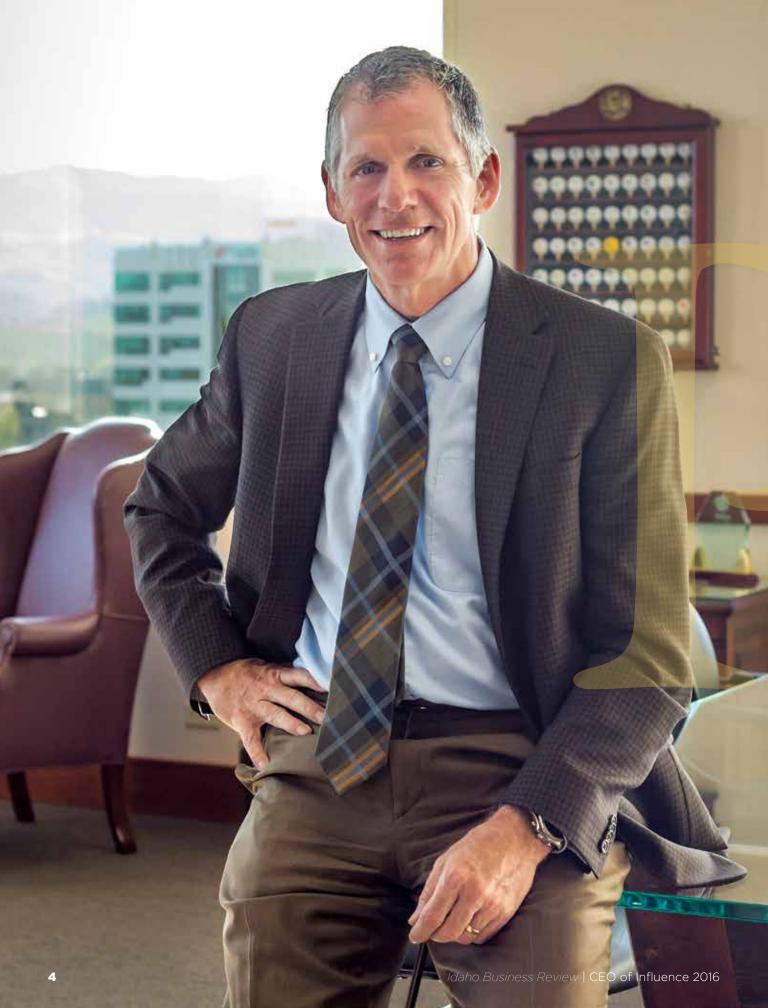
With more than 1,000 attorneys in 19 offices across the U.S. and Asia, Perkins Coie represents thousands of companies across all industries and stages of growth. Since 1997, we have served many of Idaho's great companies from our Boise office. Our experienced team, supported by our national and international capabilities, service a full range of needs for enterprises doing business in Idaho. We actively support leaders through participation in the Boise Valley Economic Partnership, Idaho Technology Council, Boise Young Professionals, Hackfort and other initiatives. Our attorneys and staff regularly share their skills and resources to help those in need. We support many charitable organizations such as Opera Idaho, Friends of Zoo Boise, and Go Lead Idaho.

Perkins Coie is honored to recognize the leaders who have shaped Idaho's business and community landscapes. Their efforts can inspire everyone to achieve our highest potential.

Congratulations to the 2016 "CEO of Influence" honorees!







## **POWER CHARGER**

He leads Idaho Power, which is 100 years old and keeps keeping the lights on. His eye is on the future: cloud seeding, electric cars and remember – 'Just Drive.'

#### By Sharon Fisher

Special to Idaho Business Review

"Power" has many definitions – nearly 20, according to Merriam-Webster. Consequently, it's not surprising that when you think "Idaho Power," it can mean many things.

But with great power comes great responsibility, and nobody is more aware of that than president and CEO Darrel Anderson.

#### **ELECTRIC POWER**

The most obvious meaning of "power" for Idaho Power is electricity. The company, celebrating its centennial this year, was formed in the early part of the 20th century by the consolidation of about 50 independent power companies in southern Idaho.

"This business is very capital-intensive," Anderson says, requiring equipment such as power lines and power plants – currently \$6 billion in capital assets. "If you've got 50 companies trying to do this, you've got competing lines running down the same street." Consequently, many companies ran into financial difficulties, so first they consolidated into five, and then in 1915/1916 came together as Idaho Power.

Today, Idaho Power covers 24,000 square miles. "All the way east to Pocatello, Blackfoot, and Salmon, west all the way to west of Ontario, and north to Riggins," Anderson explains. Altogether, it amounts to 520,000 customers, or more than a million people.

Anderson was the second financial person to run Idaho Power, the first being his mentor J. LaMont Keen. With degrees in accounting and finance, Anderson worked for Deloitte & Touche for about 15 years, and in the process got to know Idaho Power by being its auditor. After Anderson worked briefly at the Sisters of Saint Mary of Oregon as CFO, Keen offered him a job as one of four controllers. As Keen rose through the ranks, Anderson followed – all

the way up to CEO, after Keen retired in 2014.

That means, though, that Anderson isn't a technical person. But he says it hasn't been an issue. "In public accounting, you get exposed to a lot of industries and have to pick up what they do very quickly," he says. "You may not know the intimate details, but you need to know what they do and how they go about doing it. Do I know all the laws of physics? I know enough to be dangerous. Do I know how electricity flows, can I quote you the formula? Nope." What's most important is surrounding himself with "really smart people," he says.

Idaho residents enjoy some of the lowest-cost power in the nation. That's thanks to water. "The big driver to our price structure continues to be the 17 hydro projects along the Snake River," which typically provides more than half of the power Idaho uses in a year, Anderson says. "That forms the basis for low-cost power and gives the region a competitive advantage," because power plants using other technologies, such as gas, cost the same to build and run here as anyplace else.

The source of the electricity is actually what Anderson considers the company's biggest challenge. "We are moving through an evolution, from a public policy perspective, of climate change and the impacts of carbon," he says. "Utilities are right in the crosshairs from a lot of folks if you're carbon emitters. And we are – we have coal plants, we have gas plants."

So Anderson is faced with the difficult balancing act of transitioning from carbon sources while still maintaining low energy costs. "We are moving to what I call a 'carbon-light' environment," he says. "It's not zero, because that's not feasible. The challenge we have is it took us 40 years to get here. Back in the 1970s, coal was the greatest thing – good, cheap, and plentiful. So now, 40 years later, we're saying it's

not that great an idea, so how do we transition out of this to not bankrupt our customers?"

While some would like Idaho Power to take a bigger role in renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, that's tough. "Storing electricity today in the quantities you need isn't feasible, and cost-prohibitive," Anderson says. "We have what I would argue is the best storage device today: Brownlee Reservoir, because you can store the water, run it through turbines when you need it, and start and stop it without having significant impact on the equipment. With gas and coal, it's harder to do that."

It's a testament to how well Anderson threads that needle that organizations that butted heads with Idaho Power in the past on this issue feel they can work better with it now. "It's no coincidence that Idaho Power began its long transition away from coal and began listening instead to its own shareholders and customers at about the same time Mr. Anderson assumed the company's leadership," says Ken Miller, energy program director for the Snake River Alliance, a clean energy advocacy group. "He is presiding over the most important evolution of one of the most important companies in the history of our state. This is a corporation that, until just a few years ago, was dug into a path toward a completely unsustainable energy future and business model. Is Idaho Power getting off coal as quickly as it needs to? Not fast enough for us, but turning around a century-old corporation like this one doesn't happen overnight."

#### **ECONOMIC POWER**

And that leads to another role for the company – as the economic engine for the state. As a regulated monopoly, Idaho Power sees its rates set by the Public Utilities Commission, which allows the company to earn up to a



regulated rate of return, typically around 9 or 10 percent. "It doesn't guarantee you get to earn it, but you can strive to earn a certain rate," Anderson says.

Idaho Power's last general rate case filing was in 2012. "Customers would be surprised by how much we spend trying to keep costs down rather than going for a price increase," Anderson says. "Anytime we raise the price, it's going to have an impact on our customers, on families, on businesses, and it impacts the economy. It takes money out of the economy that could be used for other things."

That's particularly true when it comes to attracting new businesses and growing existing ones. "We have companies that are here because of low power prices," Anderson says. "If all of a sudden I escalate those prices, that's going to have an impact, and they may go somewhere else. The ripple effect has a bigger impact."

Anderson notes that, while many utility companies aren't seeing growth, Idaho Power is growing at 2 percent per year. "For a utility, that's a pretty good number," he says.

The focus on economics is particularly important these days because consumers have more options, even though Idaho Power is a monopoly. "Customers do have choices," Anderson points out. "They can choose to use more or less energy. A business person has a choice to expand the business or not. Companies have the choice whether to locate here or not. We can play a role in some of those preferences."

Consequently, Anderson is working to help make Idaho Power more responsive to its customers. One way is through collecting usage data with the company's new smart meters. By analyzing that data, the company can make pricing and business decisions that are intended to get customers to behave in a particular way. For example, by implementing time-of-day pricing, Idaho Power could encourage consumers to use power at off-peak times, such as by running dishwashers and washing machines at night, by lowering prices at those times. He admits, though, it's easier to develop incentives when people are paying 30

cents per kilowatt hour, as in California, than with the 9 cents they pay in Idaho. "It's a big step for us," Anderson says. "Can we change behavior? We're going to find out."

#### **POLITICAL POWER**

While Anderson doesn't talk about it much, some of the other power that he and Idaho Power hold is the ability to influence politicians. His letters of recommendation for this award, for example, included one from Idaho Lt. Gov. Brad Little. "One of the positions for which I appreciate him most is as a partner in economic development, a champion for bringing new businesses to our state and helping existing businesses expand," Little writes.

With \$1 billion in revenues and 2000 employees, the company is one of the largest in Idaho. That carries some weight. "We look at it very judiciously," Anderson says. "What's important for us is to ensure that the policies that get adopted, the laws that get passed, aren't necessarily going to have a negative impact on what we're trying to do."

Water, for example, is critically important, not because Idaho Power actually consumes the water per se but because it's needed to power the turbines, Anderson says. Keep in mind that the 1982 Swan Falls Idaho Supreme Court decision, which gave Idaho Power rights to more water above its dam than it had originally, paved the way for the recent Snake River Basin Adjudication, political writer Randy Stapilus wrote in 2009. For its part, the Snake River Basin Adjudication was praised by the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia in 2014, who complimented Idaho for being the first state to complete its water adjudication.

"If you look back over the years, one of the things that has been contentious is defense of our water rights," Anderson says. "It's important that as those issues come up, that is one thing we have to stand behind." Water is important to agriculture, recreation, and consumption, as well as to power generation, he continues. "You can't live without water. For Idaho to continue to grow and expand, water's going to be very

important for that. Will there be battles in the future over water? I hope not, but I wouldn't be surprised."

#### PHILANTHROPIC POWER, COMMUNITY LEADER

Anderson considers his responsibility to extend to philanthropy as well. As a veteran of grade school magazine and candy bar fundraisers himself, he's sympathetic to groups and individuals working to raise funds. "I remember being that person on the other side asking for someone to buy stuff," he says. "I remember the 'no's. They weren't much fun. If people are doing it, I'm going to buy what they're selling."

Organizations that Anderson has supported include the Women's and Children's Alliance, where he serves as president of the board of directors, as well as muscular dystrophy events and the Albertina Kerr centers for the disabled when he worked in Portland. "You work with folks with different challenges, it puts life in perspective," he says. "Some of the things you're dealing with every day aren't very important."

"Under his guidance, we took on and successfully completed a \$1.8 million capital campaign," says Beatrice Black, executive director for the WCA and herself a 2013 CEO of Influence. "Having a champion like Darrel has helped raise awareness of the issues we deal with in a way that would not have been possible without his passionate support and candor."

Anderson's philosophy on philanthropy extends to the company as well, though he makes it clear that Idaho ratepayers aren't funding it. "Any of our charitable giving is below the line," he says. "Customers don't pay for it. Stockholders pay for it."

And that philanthropy goes down to the community level. "Big or small, we have people in all these communities," Anderson notes. "People look to our employees to help out. There's time, talent, and treasure. If you've got any of those things, it's important that people do that. There's a lot of need out there today. Everyone can give



something, even if it's an hour of your time."

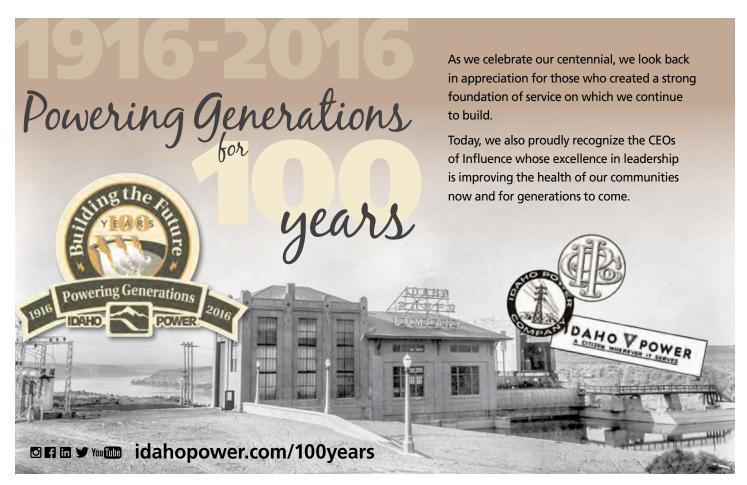
One of Anderson's credos at Idaho Power is "safety," and that goes beyond the utility itself. He spearheaded a community initiative called "Just Drive" last year to bring attention to the safety risks of distracted driving caused by people using cell phones. Under the initiative, executives and government officials sign a "Just Drive" pledge, and implement an attentive driving policy for their companies or civic organizations. "We are beginning our second year of this valuable effort and are seeing an increased

awareness of the issues around distracted driving," he says.

Anderson credits his wife Lori for much of his success. "I subscribe to the notion that you need a strong foundation at home to be successful," he says. "If it's rocky at home and it gets challenging at work, your life becomes really difficult. No matter what's going on here, the fact that I've got that strong foundation at home is very valuable and I feel really lucky. People have told me along the way that it gets lonely at the top – it can be, but that's why a supportive spouse is amazingly important." Married for 27 years, the couple

has two grown children, 24 and 22. "She stayed home to raise our kids," Anderson says. "If she hadn't decided to do that, it would have put a lot more stress and strain on me."

At this point, Anderson, who just turned 58, has been with Idaho Power for 20 years. What's next? "This might be my last official job," he muses, though he might work with nonprofits or teach in a college. "Twenty years here puts a lot of miles on you. You only have so many miles on you. There comes a point in time when you have to decide, do you work to live or live to work? I'm focused on working to live."





## **BANKING ON IT**

Encouraged to be a dentist, he chose instead to take care of business – and money. Today he leads the bank he founded and grew to 11 branches. And along the way, he has doled out tips, wisdom and advice on how to live life to the fullest – a lesson learned by the teacher. He is a world traveler and is currently on the precipice of launching an entrepreneurial business that is literally going to the dogs. And that's a good thing.

#### By Shannon Paterson

Special to Idaho Business Review

Jack Gustavel's parents thought he should be a dentist. Gustavel was not convinced.

"My brother (Terry) did go on to be a prominent dentist in Boise. I went to school and found out that wasn't for me, so I switched to business," says Gustavel, and the rest, as they say, is history. Or to be more specific, history in the making.

When Gustavel founded Idaho Independent Bank in 1993, it was the first new state-chartered bank in Idaho in 20 years. Today, as IIB's chairman and CEO, Gustavel oversees 11 branches throughout the state that employ nearly 200 people and hold a total of \$550 million in assets. IIB was rated in the top 10 percent of community banks in the nation (with less than \$2 billion in assets) by U.S. <mark>Ba</mark>nker Magazine. Starting the bank was a <mark>ch</mark>allenge, and Gustavel admits there have been tough times along the way. But he knows from experience that most challenges simply require a little innovation and a lot of hard work – a lesson passed down along family lines.

#### THE GUSTAVEL FAMILY LEGACY

The Gustavels, throughout many generations, have been known for their work ethic and determination. Jack Gustavel's great grandfather, Julius A. Zittel, was orphaned in Germany at the age of 11. He decided to emigrate to the United States, where he went on to become a renowned architect, designing a number of government buildings, schools and Catholic churches in the Spokane area. He died the year Jack was born.

"So I never really did know him, but I know a lot about him," says Gustavel. "He was an inspiration."

Roland "Gus" Gustavel, Jack's father, was also a major influence in his life. He worked in the airline industry and moved the family several times while the family was young. Once they arrived in Boise, however, Jack's father decided to put down roots, telling his employer that he'd found the place he wanted to raise his children. For young Jack Gustavel, it was a "perfect" place to grow up. He played sports, and remembers hunting pheasant after school. His father, whom Jack referred to as "Gus" instead of Dad, was coach of his and his brother's football teams.

"He was really good and positive and a good inspiration for me," says Gustavel. "He would say that your character is everything. That your integrity and your word is your bond, and if you say you're going to do something, you did it, and you did it well."

Staying true to your word is a lesson Gustavel has worked hard to instill in his own children and grandchildren. After seeing a sign at a Coeur d'Alene middle school which read, "Life is a game that must be played," he was inspired to start a list of life lessons. That list eventually became the Gustavel Family Creed - 29 bits of wisdom and advice such as: "Be the best you can be and commit yourself to constant improvement;" and: "Give others the credit for their accomplishments, and sometimes even yours." The intent is to be a helpful sort of guide about how to live life to the fullest, but of course, says Gustavel, it is not the be-all, end-all for the subject. A note at the bottom of the list encourages the family to "add to this as you grow and become more sophisticated. Love, Dad."

#### INTEGRITY - NOT JUST A BUZZWORD

Staying true to his principles has earned Gustavel a great deal of respect during his 54 years in the banking industry. Colleagues describe him as honest, fair and hardworking.

"I have had the privilege of working with Jack for over 22 years," says Yvonne Hanneman, vice president and human resources administrator at Idaho Independent Bank. He is an "effectual leader with extremely high ethical standards, honesty and integrity. Jack built Idaho Independent Bank from the ground up and because of his leadership it is a strong well-respected institution that is here to stay," she says.

He looks at the bigger picture – but also pays attention to details. "I was very surprised when I found out years ago that he proofreads many internal and external documents for content, grammar and punctuation," Hanneman says. "Although extremely busy, he cares that much about the quality of everything he is involved in."

His style is "to lead by example with an emphasis on superior service, high ethical standards, quality, and trust." Since founding IIB, his vision for the company has always been to be "The Idaho Bank." And, in his own words: "Details matter."

Gustavel has an open-door policy and makes it a priority to celebrate employee successes, regardless of his own busy schedule.

"Mentoring is important, but (it's the) little things (that really count). I call them up on their anniversary with the bank, or, when they get promoted, I send a card. I try to develop a lot of goodwill and family



photos by Patrick Sweeney

atmosphere within the bank," Gustavel says. "We are a relationship bank. The relationships start within the bank, and that carries over to our customers."

The rapport between IIB and customers has proven to be invaluable over the years. When the financial crisis began to intensify in 2008, Gustavel says relationships between the bank and clients were a big part of the reason his bank survived, even though IIB did not accept federal TARP money.

"While many of our competitors or peers and even larger banks went out of business or got recapitalized, we just had enough of these good relationships where character prevailed. We made it because of the hard work of all of our people and trying to work with our customers to salvage the situation," says Gustavel. He spent many nights and weekends in the office, finding ways to restructure IIB for the better.

Gustavel says he knows from experience that taking a hard look at operations can pay off.

That experience dates back to his tenure from 1974 to 1992 at First National Bank of North Idaho (now Wells Fargo). Gustavel was president and CEO there, and worked hard to reduce the bank's reliance on long-term, fixed-rate, residential real estate loans. By the time the Savings and Loan crisis of the 80s and 90s hit, sending interest rates as high as 20 percent, the bank was well-positioned to weather the storm. Many competitors were recapitalized.

"That's what would have happened to us if we weren't diversified. So making that one move was really important," Gustavel says.

#### **GIVING BACK**

In addition to his 9 to 5 banker's hours, Gustavel spends time serving his community through professional and business associations as well as civic organizations and nonprofits. He is a member of the board of directors of Blue Cross of Idaho and was its chairman from 2004 to 2010. He was also a director of the Portland Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of

San Francisco from 1978 to 1984. In addition, Gustavel was a director of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, a director of Avista Corporation, a New York Stock Exchangelisted energy and utility company that services Washington, Oregon, and northern Idaho, a director of Mines Management, Inc., treasurer of the Idaho Bankers Association, and a member of the Comptroller of the Currency Regional Advisory Committee for the Thirteenth National Bank Region.

He also is a past president of the Kootenai County Division of the American Heart Association and past president of the North Idaho College Foundation.

### PUTTING MEMORIES IN THE BANK

With founding a successful bank under his belt, it is evident that Gustavel knows a thing or two about good investments. But the best one he's ever made, he says, is investing in memories for his family. Every year during the holidays, he takes his wife, children and grandchildren on a two- or three-week vacation. So far, they have been to locations such as Hawaii, Costa Rica, Mexico and Puerto Rico. They've been on a safari in Africa. The getaways have been such an important bonding experience that Gustavel decided to offer a trip to each grandchild upon graduation from high school. They can travel with a cousin or a sibling and can choose anywhere in the world as their destination, but with one caveat: Grandpa comes along. His first trip was with granddaughters Brynn and Brooklynn to France and Portugal; next year, he'll travel to Australia with his twin grandsons. With 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, he is likely to become a real globe-hopper.

Of Gustavel's four grown children, several have played a key role in the bank's development and growth. His son, Kurt, is president of Idaho Independent Bank. Daughter Jill is IIB's assistant vice president

and credit administration officer. Another daughter, Lynn, helped him start the bank, but is now taking time off to raise her triplet sons. Daughter Brooke is married to a helicopter pilot and living in Tokyo.

Gustavel says his wife of 54 years, Judy, has been a great source of support. In fact, she had a hand in creating IIB's distinctive look. When Gustavel founded the bank, Judy, who had a background in design, helped come up with the bank's logo. She is always offering to help someone in need, says Gustavel, who calls her a "loving partner" who is "caring and protective of her family."

"Growing up you just knew that family was a priority and he has always been there for his kids, grandchildren, and everyone in his extended family – including at work – with a piece of advice, encouragement, and the occasional leg up when you need it," says Kurt Gustavel. "I am thankful for having him not only as a father, but as a mentor, advisor, and friend. His example has definitely influenced and inspired me to work to be a better person, father, and husband."

#### **KEEP MOVING, YOUNG MAN**

Gustavel's priorities – family, hard work and self-improvement – are clear to everyone who knows him. But he is always on the lookout for motivating ideas, thoughts and life lessons worthy of adding to the Gustavel Family Creed. Most recently, Gustavel found inspiration where he least expected it – at the bedside of a dear friend in poor health. During the visit, he couldn't help but marvel at the spirit and energy of his friend's 90-year-old mother, who was there tending to her ailing son.

"She was vibrant, and healthy, and happy, and laughing. And I asked her, 'What's your secret to life?' She said, 'Keep moving, young man. Keep moving. Keep moving, young man.' It struck home (because) what I want to do and what I aspire to do is to keep moving, keep involved. Stay positive.



photos by Patrick Sweeney

Try to do more positive things. Do things with the family."

The idea of committing oneself to constant improvement (which is listed as No. 26 on the Gustavel Family Creed) is never far from Gustavel's mind. He delights in learning on the job, but doesn't hold back from trying new things outside the world of banking. Inspired by his Labrador Retrievers and their penchant for gnawing on their bedding, he

is developing a dog bed that can withstand a high level of wear-and-tear.

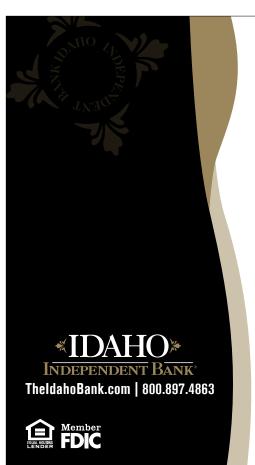
"It's a really durable, good-looking dog bed that's very difficult to destroy," he says. Gustavel and his business partner have spent the last several months creating a prototype of the new product and are getting ready to begin production.

While he advises his loved ones not to rely on wishful thinking and to "make your

own luck," Gustavel acknowledges that a great part of his own personal success can be attributed to good fortune. He's thankful he was born into an extraordinary family at a time of great opportunity.

"It was lucky I grew up in Boise and have lived and worked my entire adult life in Idaho. It is lucky that I have a wonderful, healthy family," says Gustavel.

"Lucky me."



## Congratulations from *The Idaho Bank®!*

### Jack W. Gustavel

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

We celebrate our leader and mentor, Jack, and all of the 2016 CEO of Influence honorees for their leadership, vision, and commitment to excellence in our community.





## **HEALTH HERO**

On a mission to bringing health information to all Americans, he built a successful health information empire from a handful of passionate people. Today, he reaches billions.

#### By Stephanie Hansen

Special to Idaho Business Review

One day in 1971, a young lieutenant in the U.S. Public Health Service heard a speech that altered the course of his career, which in turn affected the way Americans think about their health today. That young lieutenant was Don Kemper, founder and CEO of the influential health information nonprofit Healthwise.

On that day, Kemper listened as Vern Wilson, administrator of the Health Services and Mental Health Administration, said that the greatest untapped resource in healthcare is the patient, and a light bulb switched on.

"I thought, 'Well, that makes sense. Maybe I'll spend my life trying to tap that resource," he says.

So he did.

Over the past 40 years, Kemper has dedicated his life to ensuring that American citizens are well informed when making decisions about their health. To that end, he's founded Healthwise, published several books, and made a huge impact on the American public's access to their own medical records.

Now, as he moves toward retirement this summer, Kemper can look back on a career of public service marked by a dogged persistence to improving people's lives through information.

#### **EARLY LIFE**

The son of an oil man, Kemper was born in Rayne, Louisiana, and moved around often during his early years as his father secured leases for drilling. Eventually, the Kemper family moved to a home just a few blocks from Corpus Christi Bay, where Kemper fondly recalls spending many afternoons fishing from the pier.

When Kemper's father was promoted to a new position in Houston, the family moved to Bellaire, a suburb of Houston, where Kemper attended "one of the best high schools in the country at the time." As a high-school student, he ran track, edited the school yearbook, and had his first leadership experience as "head birdkeeper" for the school's mascot.

"We had a huge papier mache cardinal and all the other schools tried to steal it," he says. "We had a fairly rough group of kids who would protect Colonel Charlie. So that was my first real role in leadership."

#### HEALTHWISE'S HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Today, instead of leading a group of high school mascot protectors, Kemper leads a group of employees in their efforts to improve Americans' ability to make decisions about their health. Thanks to Kemper, Healthwise is known nationally, both for its efforts in pursuing its mission and for its reputation for being an employee-friendly workplace.

The organization's mission grew out of a simple idea. When Kemper heard the speech that changed his life, he happened to have a young baby at home. Someone had given him a copy of Dr. Benjamin Spock's book, "The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care," a how-to guide to raising children, which could be found on nearly any new parent's bookshelf at the time.

"I thought, 'Maybe the U.S. government should develop a medical self-care guide for every family in the U.S.' And I, as a lowly lieutenant, tried to get the government to do that," he says.

The project never got off the ground. Recalls Kemper: "It fell flat."

But even as his commission in public service ended without any progress, Kemper never forgot about his idea, and after finishing his master's degree at Georgia Tech, he enrolled in a Master of Public Health program at University of California at Berkeley. After graduation, he sent applications all over the country, and got a response from a man in Boise. He says he had to look the city up on a map, but when he flew out for the interview, he knew he'd found the place for him.

"My prospective employer met me in cowboy boots in a pickup truck," he says. "He had just come back from a meeting with the governor, and I thought, 'You can get things done here."

He took the job, and spent several years working for Health Systems Incorporated, an experimental nonprofit organization focused on improving healthcare.

He never lost sight of his goal to improve access to health information, so he created a series of community workshops aimed at helping citizens understand how to take care of themselves and their families. The workshops eventually turned into a TV and radio program, and finally, he was also able to bring his original vision to life, creating the "Healthwise Handbook" self-care guide, which was eventually so popular it could be found in one of every 10 households in the United States.

That self-published book produced the venture capital for Healthwise, and allowed Kemper and his team to build the Healthwise Knowledge Base, a comprehensive information repository for consumer health information that can now be found mostly online. Websites like WebMD.com and many insurance companies license the information from Healthwise, and the repository has been accessed more than 1.75 billion times, according to a ticker in the Healthwise lobby.

#### **CULTIVATING A CULTURE**

Kemper recalls the early days at Healthwise,



when it had maybe five employees. At the time, he had jokingly hung a poster in his office of a very large orangutan with the words, "If I want your opinion, I'll beat it out of you." Though this was never his true leadership philosophy, Kemper says he realized after a while that he was probably sending the wrong message.

Today, as you walk into Healthwise, very different physical symbols of the organization's culture greet you. Anyone entering the building passes through three moon gates that highlight the three pillars of Healthwise's culture: respect, teamwork and doing the right thing. (Kemper jokes that visitors are sometimes tempted to walk around the moon gates instead of through them, if they don't feel like being respectful that day.)

Though Kemper credits his wife, Molly Mettler, senior vice president of mission at Healthwise, with developing the culture, his employees say it embodies Kemper's personality, too.

"Some have said that Healthwise is a reflection of Don," says Pat Truman, Healthwise editor. "For me, it's true. Healthwise is smart and funny, friendly and caring, passionate and compassionate, careful and adventurous. Don is, too."

Kemper says respect is a gift to his employees, not something that must be earned, and Healthwise's leadership stresses the importance of achieving goals through collaboration. Equally important is Healthwise's insistence that employees are focused on doing the right thing.

"We tell people, if you do something for a client, for a supplier, for a coworker or for yourself because you think it's the right thing to do, we'll back you up," he says. "We give people the autonomy to do the right thing, and that makes such a difference."

In addition to trust and respect, employees also have access to gyms, healthy snacks and generous health benefits, and meetings are often held while walking outside rather than sitting in conference rooms. They can even bring their dogs to work.

This culture has won Healthwise countless awards, including the American Psychological Association's Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award, and inclusion as one of The Wall Street Journal's 10 Top Small Businesses.

These awards, and Kemper's reputation, have generated buzz from many places.

"I know of no other CEO in the Treasure Valley who has had more influence, not just locally but nationally and internationally," says Jim Everett, retired CEO of Treasure Valley Family YMCA and 2011 CEO of Influence. "He is a master at building a team and an aligned culture. Employee engagement, retention and joy are unmatched. The commitment to the mission is inspiring."

### HEALTHWISE TODAY AND TOMORROW

Though it began with just three employees and a few thousand dollars, Healthwise now employs about 280 people, with an operating budget of about \$35 million. But despite its growth and influence, the organization has stayed true to its original values.

The secret, Kemper says, is the gift of a simple mission. Healthwise's singular focus is on helping people make better health decisions, and this focus helps Kemper and the rest of its leaders stay aligned.

"That gives a lens for looking at the world, so all the changes in policy and technology are viewed from that fairly simple perspective," he says.

Kemper humbly credits much of the success of Healthwise to the ability to hire smart, passionate people and stand back while they do their work.

"We've been able to hire people who are good thinkers, who get things done," he says. "My job is to rally them around ideas when the time is right."

But his employees say he does much more than that.

"Don is a leader, CEO and visionary who walks the talk," says Jim Giuffre, president and chief operating officer of Healthwise, who was one of Kemper's first employees. "He is humble yet confident about his achievements, and uncompromising when it comes to fairness in treating people with dignity, respect and TLC."

Another of Kemper's defining philosophies is moving ideas to action.

"There are thinkers, and there are doers," he says. "Until you can connect the two things, that doesn't really create value. Action and vision together can change the world."

Kemper also believes in looking around the corner, thinking about how changes in the world at large will affect Healthwise and its mission. This ability to see what's coming next is one of the qualities that sets him apart from his peers.

"Don Kemper is a visionary – for his organization and for his industry," says Nancy Napier, who has known Kemper for almost 15 years and has studied Healthwise as part of her role as executive director of the Centre for Creativity and Innovation at Boise State University. "He's consistently identified, and often been able to act upon, trends that many others miss or do not see until much later."

For example, Kemper was able to foresee how the Internet would affect the way people access and use information, and focused efforts to moving the information from the handbooks to an online domain. He also led the charge for including health education in electronic medical records, so that doctors can share important information with patients when filling out prescriptions.

Looking forward, Kemper says he senses two main shifts in the future for Healthwise today. The first is the increasing importance on pre-visit information gathering, when patients become educated about their condition and what questions they should ask before visiting the doctor.

The second is the concept of the social determinance of health, or the factors that affect people's health, such as exercise, healthy habits, and support from friends and family. He believes the future of Healthwise includes finding ways to combine the social determinance of health



with healthcare, encouraging doctors and other health teams to inquire about housing, food availability and other factors that affect the patient's health in broader ways.

While trying to predict the future could be a scary job for some people, Kemper says he doesn't have any trouble sleeping at night.

"I'm not a worrier," he says. "Life just comes and you deal with it as you get it. If you follow the basic principles of trying to do the right thing, being respectful and looking at your teammates to get things done, it all works out."

#### **WANDERLUST**

When he's not crusading for better access to health information, Kemper enjoys spending time with his five children and four grandchildren. He and Mettler, who plans to retire with him this summer, enjoy traveling together. They've traveled all over the world, and they're headed to Machu Picchu this spring, then to Scotland after their retirement this summer. They plan to spend six months at the Findhorn Foundation, an intentional community that focuses on self-knowledge and sustainability.

"That's going to be a chance for me, for the first time ever, to have enough time just to work on myself and how my life is," he says.

Back in Idaho, he enjoys hiking with Molly and their dog Tuva. Those hikes sometimes take him to the foothills, where one of the trails now bears his name – his employees petitioned the city last year to name one of the trails Kemper's Ridge Trail.

And so, in many ways, Kemper has made his mark on the city he had to look up on a map 40 years ago.

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## HEAD HONCHO OF WELLNESS

He lives and breathes what he peddles - and is a passionate believer in what he's done, where he is now and where he's going.

#### By Stephanie Hansen

Special to Idaho Business Review

While attending his son's soccer game at the Simplot Complex in Boise, Portneuf Health Trust CEO Shaun Menchaca got a glimpse of what was missing from southeastern Idaho.

"I knew we needed something better in our community," he says. "It was time we built something for all of our community that was world-class."

That simple idea grew into what is now the Portneuf Wellness Complex in Pocatello, a sprawling 80-acre outdoor facility that is perhaps the crowning achievement of Menchaca's career thus far.

The facility, which Menchaca calls a "park on steroids," opened in September 2015 and houses a stocked seven-acre lake, two miles of walking and biking trails, sports fields, volleyball courts, and the largest amphitheater in Idaho, which brings national acts like Lynrd Skynrd and Keith Urban to its stage.

Since building the complex, Menchaca has fielded praise from all directions, from community members to visitors from places like Denver, Los Angeles and beyond. In fact, the woman who installed the ticketing equipment at the amphitheater told Menchaca that it was her favorite complex, and she's installed equipment at world-class venues all over the country.

"That is a comment that's going to stick in my mind for the rest of my life," Menchaca says.

#### PUSHING THROUGH CHALLENGES

But while residents sing its praises today (the complex has more than 6,000 "likes" on Facebook), Menchaca recalls the early days when the complex was just a dream, and he had to fight through layers of opposition

from the community, political leaders, and even his own colleagues to get them to see his vision.

In fact, he recalls the exact words one colleague said when he raised the idea: "There is no way in hell!"

But Menchaca says he was never deterred. "I don't really take 'no' very easily," he says. "I've always been kind of a scrapper. I try to do what we can do to make things happen and progress the organization forward."

That attitude helped him persevere through years of research, community outreach, political maneuvering and fundraising – about \$10 million worth – until the project was underway. Today, Menchaca is helping to finish up the final piece, a world-class mountain bike course, which is set to be complete in May.

#### **MORE THAN A JOB**

While the wellness center is probably the most visible part of Menchaca's role, his organization is focused on improving the wellness of all residents of southeastern Idaho, whether by funding public health projects using grant funds or consulting with smaller clinics on business strategy. Menchaca has also championed the creation of the Letsbewell.org website, which encourages Bannock County residents to compete with one another through health challenges aimed at improving the overall health of the community.

For Menchaca, wellness is more than a job. A die-hard exercise junkie, he works out at least six days a week, whether hiking, biking, or heading to the gym, often early in the morning or late in the evening to accommodate his work schedule.

"I gotta tell you, I love work," he says. "Work is in the middle of my personal life, in a good way. I love those kinds of things – going outdoors, wellness programs."

His passion for wellness combined with his leadership strategy have earned him the respect of his coworkers and subordinates.

"Shaun is kind, generous, and laser-focused," says John Abreu, chief financial officer of Portneuf Medical Center. "I have seen Shaun advocate on behalf of patients, community, and the organization in a way that is thoughtful, well-balanced and visionary."

#### LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Menchaca says there are some hallmarks of any great leader, including trustworthiness, authenticity, and the ability to influence others to share a common vision. But, he says beyond those qualities, there's not much else that is universal about leadership.

"I don't think there's a magic bullet leadership handbook," Menchaca says. "There is some well- known advice that can be ignored in favor of what works for each person."

For Menchaca, that means placing trust in his team and encouraging them to build their own leadership abilities. That perspective has gained him praise from his small team

"Shaun is by far the best boss I've ever had," says Suzanne Riley, who has worked as Menchaca's executive assistant for the past five years. "He has very high expectations and doesn't accept mediocre performance, but with his leadership and guidance, he makes me want to perform above what I thought my own potential was."

Riley says Menchaca never micromanages,



but shows trust in his employees and encourages them to build their own leadership experience. Riley says he encouraged her to join the Pocatello-Chubbock Leadership Association, and to serve as president of the leadership board this year.

#### A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Growing up among the fish hatcheries and open fields in Hagerman, Menchaca spent his days dirt biking, fishing and shooting pellet guns.

"It was a great place to grow up, and I'm proud of that heritage."

As the youngest of five, he got bossed around quite a bit by his older siblings. He says he was always the one tasked with changing the channel on the TV and fetching things for everyone else. He jokes that growing up with older siblings helped him develop his servant leadership skills.

At school, he could drive his teachers crazy with his constant chatter.

"I was that kid that liked to talk and was excited," he says.

Today, it's easy to imagine Menchaca as the talkative kid in class, especially when you get him talking about his passion projects. Ask him about the wellness center, for example, and he could go on for hours about each feature.

But despite all the talking as a youngster, he listened, too. As a young man, Menchaca learned important business lessons by observing his father, a small-business owner who passed away in March.

Menchaca's father, Juan Menchaca, was a veteran who had gone to beauty college in Boise and once styled the hair of Miss Sweden in the Miss Universe pageant. He and his wife Joyce owned a beauty school and several local salons across the Magic Valley area.

Menchaca recalls driving up to one of the salons one day, and asking his father why he parked so far away from the door when he owned the place. His answer was that any good business owner should leave the best parking spots for the customers.

He also always said that if a businessman ever wanted to know how to improve his business, he should ask his employees.

"Looking back on this now, I see that as kind of visionary," Menchaca says.

Those lessons of respect for the customer and the employee are ones that Menchaca tries to put to use in his work today.

Though there are only three full-time employees at Portneuf Health Trust, Menchaca tries to build a culture around living the mission and creating an enjoyable workplace for them and for others they work with.

"I think that humor and fun and making people want to come to work creates such a better team and environment, and you get so much more out of them," he says. "I think that makes for a great company and I hope that's the kind of company we've created."

#### **HONING IN ON HEALTHCARE**

Menchaca's interest in healthcare was sparked when he was in high school, as he listened to his older sister talk about her job as a director of healthcare records. She told him stories about misuse, problems, and miscommunication – issues that still plague healthcare systems today, Menchaca says – which inspired him to study health information management at Boise State University to see if he could make a difference.

But Menchaca graduated in the 90s into a depressed job market, so he ended up taking a job at Future Shop, a now-defunct electronics retail company. He didn't last long during his training before he came to the realization that healthcare was truly where he wanted to be and left that job to pursue his passion.

Not long after he quit, a friend called him and mentioned a finance job at Saint Alphonsus Foundation, which became his first experience in healthcare. After a few years, he transitioned into a role as the business manager for Saint Alphonsus Orthopedic Institute, which turned out to be a very difficult role for him, since he was stuck in the middle of a somewhat contentious business relationship.

"I look to that as a little bit of a failure, because I wasn't able to accomplish anything," he says. "That was really a frustrating thing for me."

But he says that experience taught him more than a lot of the roles he's taken before or since about communication, how to work with physicians, and how to find common ground and deal with people who are at odds with one another. And he learned valuable lessons that he might not otherwise have had from the experience.

When a development director position opened up back at the Saint Alphonsus Foundation, he returned there for several years before being recruited to serve as executive director at the Portneuf Healthcare Foundation in 2009.

It was during that time that an unexpected court decision changed the course of his career. The foundation was in the middle of planning the Portneuf Medical Center's move to a new campus when the Supreme Court of Idaho made a ruling that restricted the ability of public agencies in Idaho to finance public projects, essentially shutting off access to the financing they had anticipated.

"It was a very difficult thing to go through, knowing we needed to build a new hospital and we had no access to financing," he says.

The solution they came up with was to create a new governance structure for the hospital, which opened up a need for a new entity to own the community's portion of the hospital. That entity became the Portneuf Health Trust, and after a bit of lobbying, Menchaca became its CEO.

#### A DUAL-SIDED COIN

Menchaca says there are dual sides to his current role: making sure Portneuf Medical



Center operates appropriately, and making a meaningful impact on the community at large through the trust.

In both of those roles, engaging the community and other stakeholders in the decision-making process is crucial to his success.

"The wellness complex didn't just happen," he says. "We spent a lot of time looking at data and talking to the community to see what the community needed and find out where the gaps were."

To have those conversations, he held focus groups with community and businesses leaders, people in senior centers and even jails, in hopes to get a total view of the community perspective.

While so much collaboration could exhaust many others in his shoes, Menchaca says he jumps up out of bed every day to get to work. He loves what he does and feels

honored to do it.

The only things that stress him out at the end of the day are thoughts about whether he made the right decisions that day, treated everybody correctly and created opportunities for everyone to come out on top. Any other issues tend to work themselves out, he says, so he tries not to get stressed about other details.

After all, stress is bad for one's health.



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## GIRL SCOUT LEADER

She first discovered Girl Scouts when she was 6. And now, after taking the lead in sports, getting multiple college degrees, serving in the Army, the National Guard and the Reserves, and raising three children, she's come full circle.

#### By Chris Langrill

Special to Idaho Business Review

Maureen O'Toole, the CEO of the Girl Scouts of the Silver Sage Council, doesn't wear mascara when she goes to work each day.

There's a perfectly good reason for that.

"We have 2,300 volunteers, 4,200 girls," O'Toole says, "and they'll start telling you what Girl Scouts has meant to them: 'And then I finished high school ... and then I didn't get into crime ... and then I got a college degree.' When they start telling you how the Girl Scouts has impacted them and brought their family together – holy smokes. ... And I'm not someone who gets overly emotional, but I just start crying."

If that makes you think that O'Toole is just an old softie, think again.

She has served as a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army. During her time in the Army she earned multiple Meritorious Service Medals and a Thomas Knowlton Award for excellence in military service.

Growing up, she was the captain of her tennis teamk and the captain of the track team. Later, she walked on to the cross country team at the College of William and Mary and, you guessed it, she became the captain of that team.

O'Toole was the first female from William and Mary to make it to the NCAAs in cross country. She also coached and ran for the Army and auditioned for the U.S. Army Olympic Team.

So, no, O'Toole isn't a softie.

But she doesn't wear mascara to work.

It's just that the Girl Scouts mean so much to her.

"I've lived in countries where girls were prostituted by their parents to pay bills for other children, where tens of thousands of girls and young women disappeared into trafficking every year," O'Toole says. "So I've lived in countries where a girl's life had no value, no value at all."

Because of this, she has a special appreciation of what Girl Scouts can do for each generation growing up in America.

"When I look at what we do in Girl Scouts and the opportunities for girls and women in the United States, that's where I want to influence," O'Toole says. "We live in a country where we not only want you to go to school, we want you to get a degree.

"So you live in a country where you can create your destiny, you can create your future, and I want girls to understand that. I have two bachelor's degrees, one master's degree, a military version of my master's degree, I've run two small businesses. You can do whatever you believe in."

"In the three years since Maureen has been the acting CEO for this Council she has put together a great team of professionals who are truly passionate about what they do every day: building girls of courage, confidence and character! She leads our team by example every day. Our membership is increasing as our volunteers understand they have a voice and we are listening. Our visibility in the community is higher than I have seen in my 33 years in working with the Girl Scouts, and we are financially stable." - Sandy Wilson, director of business services for the Girl Scouts of the Silver Sage, in a letter recommending O'Toole as a CEO of Influence

O'Toole was born on the Westover Air Reserve Base in Massachusetts.

"My dad was career Air Force," she says.
"My parents had four kids in three years, and I have a twin sister, so I'm the youngest in the family by five minutes."

Her young life was one that was constantly on the move, literally.

"We moved probably on the average of every 18 to 24 months," O'Toole says.

Her father served in Vietnam, and when he returned the family was reassigned to England. Until tragedy struck.

"His plane wrecked," O'Toole says. "My father's body was crushed from the neck down. So they had to reconstruct his legs, and they tried to reconstruct his right arm, but all they could do was put it back together with steel rods. He never really regained the use of his right arm, but he was kept on active duty service."

The family returned to Westover and O'Toole's mother was presented with a nearly impossible task.

"My mom, who was only 27 at the time, was trying to figure out what you do with four kids this young (from age 5 to 7) and a husband who is in a body cast," O'Toole says. "So she put us in Scouts, and we



became Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Really, for us, that gave us a sense of identity and purpose and friendship. Because when you move every 18 to 24 months you've got to start again."

O'Toole, who at one time was so shy she would hide in the hamper when company came over, began to gain some confidence.

"Really, for me, Girl Scouts was the one thing where everywhere we moved I had the same sense of identity," she says. "You had instant friends. Instant friendship, a sense of community, identity. So I did Scouts."

And she continued on through an eventful life.

"I retired from the military 3½ years ago, and I went back and became the CEO for Girl Scouts," O'Toole says. "So you end up where you started at age 6, as a Girl Scout. Fascinating."

"I have been with Girl Scouts of the Silver Sage Council for 17 years and have worked under two previous CEOs. Thanks to Maureen's leadership, our Council has flourished. Girl and adult membership is up, donations are up, but most importantly, the perception of Girl Scouts in the community has changed from ... negative and non-existent ... to a positive and respected position." - Martha Snyder, volunteer support/Visions manager, Girl Scouts of Silver Sage

You could make the argument that O'Toole spent her whole life preparing to become the CEO of Girl Scouts of Silver Sage.

She received a bachelor's degree in

cultural anthropology from the College of William and Mary in 1985. From 1985 to 2012 she served in the Army, the National Guard and the Army Reserves.

While raising her three children – Michael, Mary Kate and Sean – she worked as a private music instructor and as a teacher in the Idaho Public School system.

"The focus, once I had kids, was you don't want to move, because I lived in 15 states growing up," O'Toole says. "I went to three middle schools, four grade schools, so I wanted my kids to have stability."

As a result, she has worked with children, around children, for most of her adult life.

O'Toole has also read books that have helped her mold her leadership style.

"Mine is democratic," she says. "'This is where we're going.' The leader sets the vision with the input of everybody else. 'This is where we're going. Do you understand why we're going this way?'"

O'Toole is big on vision, hope and communication. It's a system that seems to be working.

The Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council enjoyed a 113 percent increase in revenue growth in the first year under O'Toole's leadership. For two consecutive years she has witnessed double-digit membership growth despite a national decline in membership.

She admits the Council had "some serious financial issues" when she took over, but net income growth has gone up 229 percent during her tenure.

"Prior to Maureen's arrival our local Silver Sage Council was nearing insolvency. What Maureen has done is nothing short of miraculous. In her relatively short tenure she has built a strong team and led

with integrity, high energy and in a way (that) inspires others. Maureen has the Girl Scouts thriving again in this community, and we are all the beneficiaries." - Jim Everett, retired CEO of Treasure Valley YMCA, and a 2011 CEO of Influence

When looking for some inspiration of her own, O'Toole doesn't have to look far.

"My dad is this constant source of resiliency and strength," she says. "He never quits. 'Never ever quit. You can do it, you can do it, you can do it, you can do it.' ... They told him he would never walk again and he ended up running 10 marathons.

"And then my mom is one of the most gentle, caring compassionate people on the planet. She is, without a doubt, the smartest woman I know. ... So those are my two favorite leaders."

Needless to say, family is important to O'Toole.

"When you moved as much as we did growing up family really becomes your nucleus," she says.

Away from work, she treasures her time with family members. She loves watching "silly movies" with them.

She also enjoys spending time in the garden, running, hiking, biking, playing tennis

"I like to be outside," she says.

But perhaps her greatest mission in life is to inspire. O'Toole has a gift for inspiring others and she's determined to continue using that gift.

"I look at people and I can quickly identify (their) strengths," she says. "I'm not going to focus on what you don't have. I'm going to focus on what you're good at, and I want you



to focus on that and go create the world you want. Go do it. I believe in you. Go."

"Leaders must be visionary and lead with mission. This is simply in Maureen's blood. She is a determined

leader who has developed many of her staff to a new level while also connecting with the girls she serves. She has an incredible talent (for) identifying gifts and talents in a way that can

only build each girl's soul to be more confident and positive (about) fulfilling their dreams." - Connie Miller, president and CEO of Icon Credit Union and a 2014 CEO of Influence.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THIS YEAR'S CEO OF INFLUENCE HONOREES

### Here's to the power of good influences.



**Darrel Anderson**VICE CHAIR, Saint Alphonsus
Health System Board of Directors

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## ON A RESCUE MISSION

He's been called many things: soldier, carpenter, father, husband, coach, minister - and 'angel among us.'

#### By Chris Langrill

Special to Idaho Business Review

Most of us have struggled with the all-too-familiar situation.

You're leaving the grocery store in your car, and there's a homeless person holding up a sign asking for money.

What do you do?

If you're the Rev. Bill Roscoe you hand that person a meal ticket to the Boise Rescue Mission.

Roscoe has been the presi<mark>dent and CEO of the mission for about 14 years, and *his* mission is to offer people real help when they need it – and when they're willing to accept it.</mark>

"It's a matter of philosophy," Roscoe says. "My philosophy is that I can give that guy a few bucks and he'll do what he will with it, or I can give my money to the Rescue Mission and I know that if he comes to our door he's going to get a lot more than three dollars is going to get him.

"My friend in California says, 'We offer real change, not spare change."

For decades, that is what Roscoe has tried to do: offer real change.

It's not always easy, but it can be rewarding, Roscoe says.

And his work has not gone unnoticed.

"The time and energy I have seen him devote to his efforts is incredible, and it comes from a genuine desire to transform the lives of those in need," Lori Otter, Idaho's first lady, wrote in a letter recommending Roscoe for a CEO of Influence award. "Bill is an angel among us and a true example of a life well lived."

#### **FINDING HIS WAY**

Roscoe grew up in New England, the eighth of nine children. When he was 10 years old his parents moved to California, and he spent the rest of his school years in northern California.

"Then I joined the service right out of high school," Roscoe says. "I joined the Army and a year later I was in Vietnam. I served as a combat engineer and an infantryman and did the tour of duty." When he got out of the Army he went to the carpenters' apprenticeship program through the local union, where his dad was a member. "My dad was a carpenter his whole life. So I became a carpenter and worked in the trade for almost 20 years."

Unlike his father, however, Roscoe wasn't cut out to be a carpenter his whole life.

He had another calling.

"In 1976, I was certainly dealing with (post-traumatic stress disorder) from the Vietnam experience," he says. "I was drinking, excessive drinking, maybe an alcoholic, smoking marijuana, just a very messed up young guy. And on the one hand I had bought a house

#### **CHANGING COURSE**

Roscoe continued to work in construction. He spent time with his family: his wife, Sandra, their children, Bill and Cynthia ... and later they became legal guardians of two great nephews, Mark and Matthew.

"I had a lot of fun with the kids," Roscoe says. "I coached baseball for probably about 10 years, with the three sons I had playing baseball. I enjoyed that a lot."

But as the 1980s came to a close and the 1990s began to bloom Roscoe felt something pulling him toward a career change.

"I was really wanting to be in full-time ministry," he recalls. "I was an associate pastor ... and I was working in construction and

"This is the most generous community on the face of the earth. I've said that since I got here and I'll say it when they plant me up in Veterans Cemetery."

on the GI Bill. I had a beautiful wife and I had two babies. I was a carpenter and was making really good money. But on the other hand I was walking around the house at night with a .357, really just paranoid and anxious that someone was going to break in and hurt my family. And then I had some nightmare experiences related to the war. So I went through that process for four years before I became a Christian."

building apartment houses, but I really longed for an opportunity to serve God more directly with all of my time and all of my energy."

Roscoe was on the board of directors of the rescue mission in Santa Rosa, Calif., and he helped conceive the idea of a program that would help the children living on the streets of Sonoma County.

"We designed this program and it occurred to me that I would love to be the program director," he says. "And so I applied for the



job, and lo and behold, they hired me."

On Martin Luther King Day in 1991 Roscoe went to work full time as the director of youth ministries at Redwood Gospel Mission. He's been in one role or another at different rescue missions ever since that day.

"It was quite a dramatic change, as you can imagine," Roscoe says. "The salary was quite different than what I was making as a project superintendent. We had a big house overlooking the lake in Clear Lake, Calif., that we had to bail out of and get a smaller place. We lived in a single-wide (trailer) for a little while. But it was all according to God's plan, as we know today. Looking back, that was the best decision we made."

For the next decade Roscoe worked at a handful of different ministries, along the way moving from Colorado and then back to California.

In 2002, he received a call from the Boise Rescue Mission, inquiring whether he'd be interested in coming to Boise.

"Well, my wife's office was next to mine, and we didn't have very fancy phones," Roscoe says. "So I went next door to my wife's office and I asked her: Do you want to take a ride to Boise and talk about the job up there? And she said, 'Why not? We've never been to Boise."

#### A LOVE AFFAIR

It didn't take the Roscoes long to know that Boise was the place for them.

"I've got to be honest with you, it was a matter of minutes after we left the hotel and walked into downtown Boise that we were in love," Roscoe says.

As the Roscoes drove back to California, they prayed and decided that if the job was offered they would accept it.

"Now, after 14 years, here we are," Roscoe says. It's been a very fruitful 14 years for Roscoe and the Boise Rescue Mission, one of considerable growth.

"When I arrived here ... our budget was right around \$1 million," Roscoe says. "Our budget for this fiscal year is almost \$6 million."

Roscoe is tasked with overseeing that budget and more than 130 employees. That's not something he takes lightly.

"We really work hard to be transparent as an organization and we're very careful stewards of the gifts we receive," he says. "We're accountable to our donors and we're accountable to God, and we don't want to disappoint either one."

Talk to Roscoe for very long and the conversation inevitably turns toward his immense appreciation of the kindness that people across the Treasure Valley have shown the Boise Rescue Mission, which has seen revenue growth expand by more than 271 percent during Roscoe's tenure.

"Here we are with four rescue missions, basically, with two in Boise and two in Nampa, a beautiful office space and warehouse in Boise for all of our storage goods," he says. "We have transitional apartments in Nampa and Boise. We've got a wonderful transitional program for veterans. It's an amazing thing, and that speaks

"We really work hard to be transparent as an organization and we're very careful stewards of the gifts we receive. We're accountable to our donors and we're accountable to God, and we don't want to disappoint either one."

to the community. This is the most generous community on the face of the earth. I've said that since I got here and I'll say it when they plant me up in Veterans Cemetery."

#### **LASTING IMPRESSIONS**

Asked to name someone who has influenced his life, Roscoe begins checking off a long list of people. He starts with a doctor in Redding, Calif., who served in Africa for 25 years and taught Roscoe about the true meaning of compassion. He moves on to a rescue mission director who taught him about human resource management, and then bosses and friends in Colorado who also helped make him the man he is.

Finally, he becomes emotional as he talks about one of his current colleagues.

"Our chief operating officer, Jean Lockhart, is a brilliant woman," Roscoe says. "She's an MBA, and she is brilliant. Jean has love and compassion like I have never seen before. Here's an example: She was called in one night in the middle of the night because one of our ladies was suicidal and talking about taking her own life. And Jean went to City Light and talked with the lady and counseled and comforted her and got her to go to bed. And then she slept on the floor of that lady's room for the next two nights to make sure she couldn't get up unaccounted. That's compassion.

"I want to be like her," Roscoe says while laughing through tears.

When he's not putting in his time at the rescue mission he tries to find time to golf – "I can't play golf, but I keep trying," he says – or riding his motorcycle.

"A lot of people wouldn't expect that, but I do ride a motorcycle. I've got a big, black Yamaha that is a fun, fun motorcycle."

He also enjoys spending time with his family (he has six grandchildren), reading, and doing yard work.

"I love planting and I love watching things grow," he says.

#### **GIVING AND RECEIVING**

Roscoe says he was a little taken aback when he



learned that he was named a CEO of Influence.

"I think I work hard and do a pretty good job, I'll give myself that," he says. "But to be recognized like this is really quite an honor, especially with the recommendations that came in that I saw from people around the community; that just amazed me."

He has Sarah Zimik to partially thank for that. Zimik is the chief development officer of the Boise Rescue Mission and she is the one who nominated Roscoe for recognition by the *Idaho Business Review*.

"I've worked with Bill for almost 14 years,"

Zimik says. "So I've been able to watch him in action as the leader of our nonprofit. He's just been able to take our program to another level."

Zimik says she asked Roscoe if he had requested any letters of recommendation for his CEO of Influence nomination. He told her he had a couple.

"He's a modest person, and that's why I wanted to bump it up," Zimik says.

And so she reached out to a few more leaders in the Treasure Valley. Needless to say, she didn't have to twist many arms.

She received back a number of letters

singing praise for Roscoe. Letters from Otter and Lockhart. From Bryan Taylor, the Canyon County prosecuting attorney. From Doug Armstrong, the president and general manager of KTVB News Group. From Vikki Chandler, Nampa's finance director, and from Sandra Dalton, a senior vice president with UBS Financial Services.

"It's OK for him to be modest," Zimik says, "but I wanted the committee to know what a great leader he is."



## Vistage congratulates Maureen O'Toole and the other 2016 CFO of Influence Award Winners.

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#### CONGRATULATIONS REV. BILL ROSCOE!

On being selected one of Idaho Business Review's 2016 Most Influential CEOs. The board, staff and guests of Boise Rescue Mission Ministries all thank you for your faithful service to our community and to homeless and hurting men, women and children across the Treasure Valley.



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## MANAGER SUPREME

He came from Montana, has fly-fishing fever, is a die-hard Red Sox fan, a triathlete and devoted family man – and is dedicated to his vision for the City of Twin Falls.

#### By Elizabeth Kasper

Special to Idaho Business Review

From his office on Second Avenue East, Twin Falls City Manager Travis Rothweiler can see a lot of history. The municipal offices are situated amid the lattice-like pattern of streets that has made up the heart of downtown Twin since its inception in 1904. Magic Bowl across the street, recently renamed Magic Town Center, has been a downtown staple for decades. His office shares a corner with Waite Electric Company, which got started in the 1960s.

These days, though, Rothweiler is doing a lot of looking into the future – while being mindful of the past, he's quick to add.

"Every day, people here come to work to create a better Twin Falls," he says. "Our job is to preserve the things that made it great, and to make those things better. That's why I enjoy coming to work."

Family tradition wouldn't have put him here, however. If his parents had their way, Rothweiler would still be living in Big Sky Country.

#### **MONTANA MAN**

Rothweiler, a fourth-generation Montanan, is a disappointment to his parents for one reason: he left and didn't come back.

When talking about his childhood in Great Falls, Rothweiler fondly uses words like "idyllic" and "almost make-believe." He and his parents, a teacher and a clothing store manager, lived within four blocks of all four of his grandparents. Rothweiler caught the fever for fly-fishing as a boy, scouring the Ruby, Big Hole and Beaverhead Rivers for big catches alongside his father and grandfathers. He attended school in Great Falls and only went as far as Montana State University in Bozeman for college.

Not sure what he wanted to do with his

career, Rothweiler toyed with being an attorney, an architect – "but calculus was not a friend of mine" – and a teacher. Then, as a sophomore, he became involved in student government. He had joined a fraternity, the Gamma Kappa chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha, and part of membership meant that he needed to be involved in something school-related outside of Greek life. He became a Greek senator for the Associated Students of Montana State University, and eventually served as student body vice president and then interim student body president. That's when he started to see his future unfolding.

the majority leader, and interned for the city of Bozeman.

Then, at age 28, Rothweiler truly left his Montana roots: he came to Idaho to be the city administrator for Jerome.

#### **IDAHO IDENTITY**

For eight years, Rothweiler oversaw the day-to-day goings-on for Jerome. He is most proud of the growth of economic expansion he saw during his tenure and the team environment he helped build among the city leaders.

Slowly, he says, he "transitioned into an

"Every day, people here come to work to create a better Twin Falls. Our job is to preserve the things that made it great, and to make those things better."

"All those experiences showed me I really wanted a career in politics," Rothweiler says, "but I really don't like the whole political arena. What I found was that local government was the place I felt I could really contribute."

He graduated with a political science degree and earned a master's in public administration in 1998, and during school and post-graduation, he worked in all levels of government. He worked for a senator in Washington, D.C., serving as assistant to

Idahoan." It was in Idaho that he met his wife, Amy.

It didn't start well. The two were set up on a blind date that both would describe as disastrous, and each agreed there wouldn't be a second date. Six months later, Rothweiler was putting together a workshop for Jerome employees and ended up hiring Amy to help, knowing of her background in organizational development. At the end of her contract with the city, in January 2003, the two decided to give another date a try.



He met her parents the week of Valentine's Day and they were engaged a week later. On March 28, the pair eloped to the Jerome County Courthouse.

"This was after we had everything paid for the wedding," Rothweiler says, laughing.

The Rothweilers had an official wedding ceremony in August, which the groom says is how he married the same woman twice in one year without getting divorced.

In 2008, the family moved to the "big city" and Rothweiler became the assistant city manager in Twin Falls. In April 2011, he was promoted to city manager.

#### **FAMILY FIRST**

Rothweiler says his number-one motto is "family first." He and Amy, a high school counselor, have two boys, 8 and 6. His dream is to take the boys to Fenway Park to watch his beloved team play.

"They have to be Red Sox fans," he says matter-of-factly. "They can be closet fans of someone else, but their college tuition might be on the line."

Rothweiler says the first time his wife ever saw him cry was when the Sox won the World Series for the first time in 86 years.

An athlete himself, he is currently training to compete in an Iron Man triathlon for the first time in June. He was encouraged by watching his wife compete in a similar event.

"We were cheering Mom on and she was so excited, and we were so proud," he says. "I wanted to be that way, too."

Besides feeling great, Rothweiler says being active is something that lends itself to his professional goals.

"I won't win. But my goal is to finish in 12 hours," he says. "I feel like, just to say I competed and finished is something others can look to. Part of our strategic plan is to be a healthy community, and as a leader, I should probably work hard to live those values we're trying to teach."

#### **TODAY IN TWIN FALLS**

On a day-to-day basis, Rothweiler admits he sits through a lot of meetings, but it's all part of a bigger plan. Shortly after becoming assistant city manager, he introduced the city leaders to the ideas of High Performance Organization, a framework for management that is designed to improve organizational performance and make it sustainable. Rothweiler received training on the topic at the University of Virginia in 2003, and he attended the university's Senior Executive Institute in 2007. Using these principles, the city has developed what they call the "One City" initiative.

"One City fully describes my vision for the city of Twin Falls: to be an organization that empowers all, collaborates fully, communicates extensively and strives for excellence in the delivery of services to all our customers," Rothweiler says.

This lends well to Rothweiler's extensive – "some would say annoying" – use of sports metaphors. A city, he says, is like a team, and that's how you produce quality results: by working as a team.

"I believe that leadership is the work of all, regardless of their official role within the organization," says Rothweiler.

With these ideas in mind, Twin Falls is taking a long-lens approach to the future: the current "game plan" is the City of Twin Falls' 2030 Strategic Plan, of which Rothweiler was an integral designer. The plan was formed in 2012 to help Twin Falls keep pace with changing times and be able to attract, maintain and serve members of the community. The city, in its capacity as a commercial, educational and health care hub and as county seat of the region, serves approximately 75,000 customers daily. They're planning for quite a population influx, too - the plan estimates nearly 70,000 people will call Twin Falls home in 2030, up from the current 46,500.

One of the most important cogs in

this wheel of progress is the Economic Development Ready Team, Rothweiler established and created. The team's objective has been to vet potential business expansion and promote growth, and team members include the Twin Falls Urban Renewal Agency, the College of Southern Idaho and the Greater Twin Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, among others. The team has seen significant "wins" for their efforts, including bringing Glanbia Cheese, Clif Bar Inc., and Chobani Greek Yogurt to Twin Falls, the last of which built the world's largest Greek yogurt facility right in the city.

"Chobani was a ray of hope during the recession," Rothweiler says. "Its presence has really raised the quality of life in Twin Falls."

Community leaders cite Rothweiler's contributions in particular as essential to projects like the Chobani acquisition.

"With Travis' dynamic leadership, our community has experienced upwards of \$1 billion in capital investments by private companies and the creation of some 5,000 jobs," says Shawn Barigar, mayor of Twin Falls.

Another main focus is revitalizing downtown. Much of the city's growth of late has happened on the north side of the city, near the edge of the Snake River Canyon, and the older sections of Twin Falls have fallen on harder times. Plans for downtown include razing the old Rogerson building, which Rothweiler describes as currently "hanging together with duct tape," and creating a public gathering place, featuring farmers' markets, concerts and a splash park. It's a hard vision for some long-time residents to catch, but Rothweiler believes it will become even better than the "rich gem" it was years ago.

"It takes a willingness to look beyond yourself, to see what is in the best interest of the organization and to find a way to help it accomplish its vision, mission and dreams," says Brian Pike, deputy city manager and former police chief. "I believe Mr. Rothweiler has been, and will continue



to be, instrumental in influencing the direction of our city."

Rothweiler is also excited about Twin Falls hosting the summer games of the Idaho Special Olympics later this year. It will be the first time Twin Falls has hosted the event.

Lots of change is coming to the area, and it's that kind of measurable success that

Rothweiler says makes his work in local government so satisfying.

"If you can support and celebrate public service, it's the place you can see the fruits of your labor," Rothweiler says. "We hustle, we scrap, we do everything we can as a team, recognizing that the work we're doing is far bigger than we are as individuals."

Any success he's had, he says, has come as a team win, not by himself alone.

"I don't put out fires. I don't arrest bad guys. I don't work at waste treatment facilities," he says. "Together, we're preserving a history, but also preparing for a community to transform as time moves on. That's the piece of public service that I get really excited about."





## HIGHFLYING ACHIEVER IN IDAHO TECHNOLOGY

From a lawyer to a partner to a CEO times three, he now serves as CEO of one company, is a community leader and never misses his kids' games or performances.

#### By Sharon Fisher

Special to Idaho Business Review

Kount is not what you'd call a household name. Though it holds a fistful of awards for innovation, chances are you've never heard of it. At the same time, if you buy things online, you've probably used it.

"Let's say you're buying something from Staples," says CEO Brad Wiskirchen, adding that many people don't realize Staples is second only to Amazon as an e-commerce retailer. "You buy it from Staples, Staples takes your information, sends it to us, and in 250 to 350 milliseconds – faster than a blink – we tell them, 'This is likely to be a fraudulent transaction."

But how does it know?

Well, that's where the innovation part comes in. "We see millions of transactions and we see hundreds of data points," Wiskirchen says, such as where the person is, what device they're using, and how they've behaved historically. "We evaluate those across all the transactions we see, and we're able to see whether it's Brad from Boise, or in Kazakhstan."

Wiskirchen's young son, though, has a different way of describing what he does for a living.

"'My dad catches the bad guys on the Internet," Wiskirchen says.

#### **OVERACHIEVER**

Wiskirchen ("Like 'whisker-chin," he explains) is what you might call an overachiever. He's not just a CEO; he was CEO for three companies at once. In addition, one of them was Keynetics, the largest privately held tech company in Idaho, according to the Idaho Private 75 analysis of the top 75 private companies in Idaho. Kount didn't just get a venture capital infusion; it got \$80 million, which

is said to be the largest venture financing in Idaho history, from CVC Capital Partners. When he sent in his application for CEO of Influence, he included letters of recommendation from seven people – four of them fellow CEOs or presidents. He served on the board of the Salt Lake City branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco for five years, acting as chairman his final two years. He passed his bar exam on the first try. He has served on a staggering number of boards.

And all this while raising two children, which Wiskirchen and his wife waited to have until he left the law practice of Holland & Hart, where he served as a business attorney for a number of Boise companies, mostly in the technology sector. "As an associate of a national law firm, you work a lot of hours," he explains. "I still work a lot of hours, but I have more control over which hours." For example, he says he doesn't miss their sports games or ballet performances. "If I have to fly from San Francisco and then fly back the next morning, I do it."

At this point, however, Wiskirchen is CEO of just one company, Kount. "They wanted me to concentrate exclusively on growing the account," he says. "When someone gives you \$80 million, they want you to be a good steward."

#### **STORYTELLER**

Wiskirchen, 47, who doesn't espouse the jeans-and-t-shirt look that you expect to see in a high-tech company, likes to tell stories. One of the stories he likes to tell is how he came to be CEO of Keynetics, which is where his venture into high tech started.

It was about a month after Wiskirchen had graduated from law school at the

University of Notre Dame. He was attending a lecture by Bayless Manning, former dean of the Stanford Law School, about a leveraged student loan program. "He came up to me afterwards and he said, 'Can I introduce myself?' and I said, 'I know who you are, sir.' And he said, 'I've given this presentation before and no one's ever nodded where they should nod, frowned where they should frown, and smiled where they should smile, until today, and I want to take you to lunch.'"

So they went to lunch and Manning asked Wiskirchen what he thought of the plan. "I said, 'Pretty good.' He said, 'So that implies you'd change it." Wiskirchen explained what he would change. "I could tell he wasn't pleased, and I thought, 'I've just antagonized him, like a fool." Then Manning called him. "I thought you were a flippant young man until I got home and realized you were right. Can we have lunch again?' We had lunch virtually every Friday from 1996 until he died two years ago."

Manning, along with Tim Barber, Barber's wife Eileen, and Geoff Hoyl, were the founders of Keynetics, a holding company for retail digital goods, which eventually moved to Boise. "Several years later, they asked me to take over as CEO, and I declined," Wiskirchen says, because he wanted to make partner at Holland & Hart. "One year to the day, they came back and said, 'You made partner. Now would you be interested in running Keynetics?' So I agreed."

#### **CORPORATE STRUCTURE**

So how do the three companies fit together? Keynetics is a holding company for the other two, Clickbank and Kount.

Clickbank is an online retailer of digital goods such as electronic books



and memberships, largely produced by "infopreneurs," Wiskirchen describes. "We help people turn their avocation into their vocation. During the day, they're an elementary school teacher or an auto mechanic. Selling books at Clickbank, they make more money than during their day jobs, and they can leave that by the side and do what they're most passionate about."

What kind of books? "Anything you can plug 'how to' in," Wiskirchen says. "'How to attract hummingbirds to your yard.' We have tens of thousands of titles." The company has transactions in 180 countries every day, he says.

But in the process of running Clickbank, the management team realized it did one thing better than any of its competitors, and that was to detect and prevent fraud. So they set up another company, Kount, to focus just on that. "Kount is basically the spawn of Clickbank," he says. It now serves as the exclusive fraud control for Chase, which controls more than half of the world's "card not present" - in other words, Internet - transactions, as well as being the exclusive fraud control for Braintree, which is a division of PayPal. "There's a globally pervasive need for the service we render," he says. "Online fraud is growing at an almost unfathomable rate."

#### **TECHNOLOGY? IN IDAHO?**

Idaho is not typically thought of as a high-tech hotbed, but Wiskirchen likes it. "I think it's a great place to be," he says. "People from New York and San Francisco ask, 'Why are you in Boise?' and they come here and see why and that it's a great place."

While as CEO of a privately held company he doesn't have to reveal his salary, Wiskirchen says staying in Boise hasn't hurt him. "I'm paid well. It hasn't been limiting to my career," he says. "I have every opportunity with these companies that I would in Seattle or San Francisco, and I get to do it from the luxury of Boise, Idaho."

That said, it can be a challenge to find technical employees in Idaho. "It's why we have our Colorado office," Wiskirchen explains, because the company couldn't hire enough technical workers in Boise. Nor is he a technologist himself. "You surround yourself with brilliant tech experts," he says. "You steer the ship. Business is a team sport. I'm fortunate to have made good choices for team members, and they have created fantastic companies that are morally compelling."

However, Boise State is now producing more computer science graduates than it did 10 years ago. "If we were starting with those companies now, we wouldn't have to set them up remotely," Wiskirchen says. "I'd think we could get the talent in Boise." To help develop that talent, the company – located across the street from Boise State – hires "all kinds of interns," he says.

Idaho also offers other advantages. "I actually feel like Idaho provides you with direct access to decision makers," Wiskirchen says. "In California or Seattle, it'd be difficult to get through to the mayor or governor. If I need that in Idaho, or the director of the Department of Commerce, they're a phone call away. I rarely haven't been able to get in with them within a day or so."

Not to mention all the other CEOs. "You just know each other," Wiskirchen says. "It's a small town. You know each other from the Arid Club, or from committees, nonprofit boards you're on, clubs you're in, the Chamber of Commerce. It's a small enough town that you end up serving on the same committees as people."

And the other CEOs recognize it. "He's an amazing example to the rest of us in serving in the community," says Gardner CEO and a 2015 CEO of Influence Tommy Ahlquist, who's no slouch in that area himself. "His comments are always so thoughtful, so well thought out, and he's really inspiring to be around."

In particular, Ahlquist praised Wiskirchen's contributions to Idaho 2020, which Ahlquist formed to help business leaders deal with

issues facing Idaho. "When he speaks, everyone stops and listens because he has such wonderful insight," he says. "That's what I appreciate most about him."

#### **PHILANTHROPY**

As Ahlquist mentioned, Wiskirchen is involved in several civic and professional organizations. "Personally, I do it based on what I'm passionate about," he explains. For example, his daughter studies ballet and his son is in Boy Scouts, so he supports Ballet Idaho and the Boy Scouts. "It changes as your family changes and your personal situation changes."

Similarly, when Wiskirchen left Holland & Hart, he dropped several legal groups and started joining technology groups instead. That's also how he came to serve on the board of the Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve Board is broken into 12 districts, with Idaho in the 12th, the San Francisco Fed. But the San Francisco Fed includes nine states, and amounts to about a third of the U.S. gross domestic product, so it's broken into five branches: Salt Lake, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland.

"I reported monthly on the Internet and digital media sector, and on the economy in the state of Idaho," Wiskirchen says. Other members included CEOs from companies such as Nordstrom, Chevron, and Costco, as well as bankers.

Members are allowed to serve two terms, after which Wiskirchen was replaced by Skip Oppenheimer, CEO of Oppenheimer Companies Inc. "Brad was very highly respected and made a major contribution to that body's work including as the president the past two years," Oppenheimer says. "He provided briefings and helpful guidance to the Federal Reserve on some of the critical issues relating to cybersecurity, to list just one of his accomplishments. His combination of strategic thinking, brainpower, concern for others' welfare and energy are a powerful combination."



One beneficiary that's stayed constant is the Idaho Food Bank, which Wiskirchen has supported since 1997, when he was chair of Attorneys Against Hunger during his first year as an attorney. "There's such a compelling need," he says.

Keynetics also supports philanthropic organizations, both financially and through service projects, and employees vote on which ones to support. "As a company, I'm

not involved at all," Wiskirchen says. "I used to be, but I found I would go to meetings and I would say, 'I know the executive director' and miraculously everyone would vote for the things I voted for. It was almost like I had a veto. So I took myself off the committee."

So what's next? "My first, second, and third career priorities are just growing Kount," Wiskirchen says. "I'm not worried about the next step. I figure it'll take care

of itself if I take care of the task at hand appropriately. If I do this job right, I don't have to worry about things. I suspect I'm employable."

And what will be the next step for Kount, which is already growing 50 percent faster than expected? "To be determined," Wiskirchen says succinctly. "There are two options: Be acquired, or take it public. Time will tell which one we choose."







## **LIBATION LEADER**

"Put an end once for all to this discussion of what a good man should be, and be one." - Marcus Aurelius

#### By Chris Langrill

Special to Idaho Business Review

Once you know Ken Wyatt's life story, it's not all that surprising to find out one of his favorite books is "Meditations" by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius.

"He was a man who spent (years) on the frontiers of the Roman Empire and expanding the empire through warfare," Wyatt says. "He put his thoughts into this book, about living and life and what it takes to do things. He was very much a doer."

Ken Wyatt is also very much a doer. It's in his bloodlines.

"My dad is an extremely hard-working person, and I've spent a lot of my life just trying to emulate his work ethic," Wyatt says. "He grew up on a farm in Virginia, and then got to college through ROTC, served in Korea, and then after Korea he just felt like he needed to work two jobs, and there were a lot of things I benefited from because of that. ... And, to this day, I always kind of hold him up as an example: Am I working hard enough?"

#### **'A NEIGHBORHOOD KID'**

Wyatt grew up in White Plains, N.Y., with two brothers (both of whom have retired from careers in law enforcement).

"I'd describe myself as a neighborhood kid," Wyatt says. "You hung out with other guys in the neighborhood."

Wyatt played sports, but didn't aspire to be a pro athlete.

"I wanted to be an astronaut, and I was just fascinated by all the stuff in the space program," he says. "I was big into science and continued that interest through college."

Wyatt attended Williams College in Massachusetts, where he began to form a philosophy that shaped his career.

"Unlike a lot of my friends, who were in

college and were looking into banking and insurance sales and obscure things, I was always interested in real products that came from a place," Wyatt said. "I think that came from my parents and their farming heritage, having spent time on family farms as a kid and seeing things grown in the ground, whether it was corn or tobacco. So, I was always interested in working with real stuff, as opposed to something abstract."

Wyatt graduated with degrees in chemistry and economics.

#### **BECOMING A BUSINESSMAN**

True to his nature, Wyatt has always worked with real products.

years at Remy Martin, USA, then serving in the same role for a couple of years at Moet Hennessy and almost five years at Anheuser-Busch/In Bev.

"After working for a number of years at large beverage companies, I felt like I could go out and do it on my own," Wyatt says. "Luckily, my partner (Ron Zier), who had also worked for years at some large beverage companies, felt very similarly."

The two looked at the popular upscale vodkas on the market and thought they saw a niche. There was Grey Goose (produced in France), Stolichnaya (Russia), and Ketel One (Netherlands), but really nothing Americanmade that was competing with these brands.

"My dad is an extremely hard-working person, and I've spent a lot of my life just trying to emulate his work ethic ... to this day, I always kind of hold him up as an example: Am I working hard enough?"

"My first job in the industry was working for Pepsi," he says. "So I started in the soda business and worked there for a number of years."

After a few years with Pepsi he moved on to the alcoholic beverage industry, first serving as a marketing director for four "We set out to kind of outdo the foreign competition and demonstrate that we could make as quality of a product here in the U.S.," Wyatt says. "Obviously, when you start looking around the country Idaho is the natural place to do that, because you have all the raw materials and ingredients: water,



everything here is in abundance. You have corn, you have wheat, you have potatoes, you have huckleberries, you have cherries, you have fruit, you have grapes."

And so, the neighborhood kid from White Plains, N.Y., had a new home: Idaho. And that is where he launched his new product, 44° North Vodka.

#### **'ANOTHER VODKA?'**

"I think the biggest issue we've had in establishing the company is just not having people look at us and say, 'another vodka?'" Wyatt says. "So, the biggest challenge was differentiating the brand from all the other products out there on the marketplace and getting people to recognize what made our product special. A lot of that was our marketing approach and a lot of tenacity, which is probably how I overcome most things in life."

Dylan Amundson can attest to that. Amundson is the brand and business development manager

And that enthusiasm is contagious.

"He's just a hard-working guy," Amundson says, "the kind of guy you'd go to great lengths for."

Amundson says he's seen Wyatt promote not only his vodka, but the whole state of Idaho.

"He's the ambassador for all things Idaho," Amundson says. "He's always traveling, and he takes Idaho with him wherever he goes."

Because of all that traveling, 44° North is now distributed in 45 states. Last year, the company produced 425,000 bottles of vodka, and it has to grown at a 15 percent clip for the past several years.

The company, which was named for the best latitude to grow potatoes in the northern hemisphere, now produces five different varieties of vodka.

- Idaho Potato Vodka
- Mountain Huckleberry Vodka
- Rainier Cherry Vodka
- Sunnyslope Nectarine Vodka
- Magic Valley Wheat Vodka

"There's just this love affair I have with this place, which has been tremendous to me. I'm glad to be recognized, but I'm just going to have to do more to present Idaho to the rest of the country, which we do every day. We're very proud to do that."

at Drake Cooper, the advertising agency that helps market 44° North Vodka.

"I don't think I've worked with anybody in my tenure who is more passionate about his product," Amundson says. Wyatt has helped build a little empire of his own, and he's done it on his own terms.

"You just get up every day and just go to work," he says. "I tell people every day it's all about the work and nothing else matters.

There's a lot of fluff, but it's all in the work and the results."

#### A NEW STATE OF MIND

Listening to the 53-year-old Wyatt speak, it's readily apparent that he's come to love his adopted state. And while he holds on to some of his East Coast roots – he's still an avid New York Jets fan – he's become an Idahoan through and through.

That's a big reason he was so honored to hear that he had been named a CEO of Influence.

"Man, it's really special, because Idaho is very special to me," Wyatt says. "I've lived in other parts of the country and I've had other awards and honors. But this is the most significant, and I'm just glad and pleased that it's Idaho because it's so central to the story of our business and the investments we make here in the state and the support we've received in the state.

"The friendships that I've developed here I know will be lifelong. There's just this love affair I have with this place, which has been tremendous to me. I'm glad to be recognized, but I'm just going to have to do more to present Idaho to the rest of the country, which we do every day. We're very proud to do that. ... It's just a tremendous honor. It's one of those emotional things."

As he travels and promotes his product, he stresses to his clients that 44° North Vodka is an Idaho product. He talks about Idaho's agricultural communities that create the ingredients in his vodka. He tells clients the boxes the vodka is shipped in are manufactured in Idaho. He talks about his relationship with Drake Cooper.

"We're promoters of what goes on here in the state," Wyatt says. "It's a business, but it's also a bit of a crusade. We're in an industry with a lot of major competitors around the world, multibillion dollar companies, and we've carved out a nice little foothold. And we're going to build on that.

"I hope we make people proud here ... because we really appreciate the support that we get from the state of Idaho. It's been an



enormous honor to have that support and it's something we take very seriously."

#### **FAMILY TIES**

Wyatt is proud of the vodka he produces, but he's even more proud of the two children he helped raise.

His son, James, attends Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and his daughter, Caroline, is going to school at his alma mater, Williams College.

"In life, the thing I'm most proud of are my kids," Wyatt says. "They're great young adults.

They think for themselves, which sometimes is difficult. They're smart and they have great senses of humor, which I think they probably got from me, because I can be a jokester. But they're also very nice people. So whenever I have time with them I always come away feeling very good about that."

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

What does the future hold for Wyatt? That remains to be seen. He has hinted about producing more brands with an Idaho theme.

"Stay tuned," he says.

In the meantime, he'll try to squeeze as much out of his life as he can.

"The biggest challenge in life is just having the time to do all the things you want to do, right?" Wyatt says. "To me, that's the biggest challenge."

So, he'll read. He'll ski. He might even consider teaching.

Just don't expect Wyatt to slow down.

It's not in his nature, after all.

"I don't really see myself as someone who is ever going to retire."



## Contributors



## PETE GRADY Photographer

Pete Grady started his career in photography 35 years ago working in the Los Angeles nightclub, theatre and movie industries photographing established and aspiring actresses, actors and comics including Gallagher, Steve Martin and Pat Paulsen. He is published in regional and specialty magazines and newspapers and serves corporate clients as well.



## STEPHANIE HANSEN

Writer

Stephanie Schaerr Hansen is a graduate of Brigham Young University's print journalism program. She has been published nationally in Newsweek and in local and regional publications, including *The Weekly News Journal* in Burley and Where magazine in Washington, DC. Now based in Denver, Stephanie spends her free time exploring the Rockies.



#### CHRIS LANGRILL

Writer

Chris Langrill is a longtime Idahoan and a Boise-based freelance writer. He worked at the Idaho Statesman for more than 20 years, most of which was as a member of the Sports department. As a reporter, his primary beat was pro sports (Boise Hawks, Idaho Stampede, Idaho Steelheads) but he also covered several Boise Open golf tournaments, the Race to Robie Creek, Ironman, Twilight Criterium and Idaho Stampede and Caldwell Night rodeos. He has won Idaho Press Club awards for feature writing, sports writing and headline writing. Langrill enjoys spending time with his wife, Chereen, and their two dogs, Lulu and Murphy.



## SHARON FISHER

Writer

Sharon Fisher is a Kuna-based writer and principal consultant for Gem State Community Development. Her corporate clients include the Economist Intelligence Unit, Greenough, Oracle, Cisco, HP, Laserfiche, and Exact. Locally, in addition to the Idaho Business Review, her work has appeared in Idaho, Boise, Eagle, 2C, Boise Weekly, This is Kuna, and the Kuna-Melba News. She has served as an intern with the Idaho Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee. Currently, she sits on the Ada County Historic Preservation Council. She holds a bachelor of science in computer science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a master of public administration, a graduate certificate in geographical information analysis, and a graduate certificate in community and regional planning from Boise State University. Her most recent book is Images of America: Kuna by Arcadia Publishing. She likes explaining things and going to meetings.



#### Elizabeth Kasper

Writer

Elizabeth Kasper is a graduate of Brigham Young University's print journalism program. She is a native Idahoan, but now lives in sunny Arizona. Her work has been published nationally and locally, and she now enjoys freelancing from home.



**Shannon Paterson** 

Writer

Shannon Paterson Reagan is a content development specialist, social media marketing planner and freelance writer who loves a good story. She loves hiking, biking and skiing and has a particular fondness for hunting huckleberries and morel mushrooms in the Idaho mountains, although she will never reveal her favorite foraging locations. Shannon and Michael, her husband of 14 years, live in Boise with their two active and creative kids: Kellan, 9, and Ella, 5.

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