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Idaho's Web Portal – idaho.gov -- Ranked Second Best Nationally

BOISE – The State of Idaho's official web portal – idaho.gov – has been ranked as second best of 11,227 government websites in the nation in an extensive e-government study conducted by the National Policy Research Council (NPRC) in collaboration with Computerworld.

Highest grades generally went to web sites on which a wide range of services could easily be found on the home page instead of being buried several pages deep. Idaho's web portal, along with Indiana's state home page, was given 'A' grades only behind Michigan which received the top grade of 'A+'. Following closely were Utah and Nebraska with 'A-'.

"Providing citizens with convenient access to information and services is what a responsive government should be doing. It is very gratifying to learn that we are not only doing that, but that we are doing it exceedingly well. I commend the Department of Administration and all of the state agencies who work to provide this information online for this wonderful recognition," said Governor Jim Risch.

Idaho's web portal was launched in 2000 and is a self-funded model using nominal user fees generated from applications, and no taxpayer dollars. Idaho.gov currently provides 60-online services.

"Thousands of Idaho citizens use the state portal 24/7 to obtain government information and services. They can file and pay their taxes, renew professional licenses, register vehicles, check road conditions, and help protect their children by searching the Correction Offender database," said Pam Ahrens, Director of the Department of Administration. "Our web portal is easy to navigate, services are organized around our citizens, and they can find the information they need quickly."

The Idaho Transportation Department is on pace to handle more than 1 million internet transactions during 2006, and state e-commerce transactions by citizens and businesses are poised to top \$80 million by year's end. The Idaho Tax Commission has seen a 680% growth in online tax payments during its busiest month (April) over the past five tax seasons.

NPRC reviewers visited each web site, judging portals on 25 criteria, including whether people could use them to pay taxes, bid for contracts, find government jobs and contact local officials. Points were assessed for usability, citizen responsiveness, and accessibility for disabled visitors, information tools, and interactive permits and payments. (Contact Rich Steckler, 332-0102 ext 12). ###