

NEW CHALLENGES IN IDAHO FOR OLDER WORKERS



Mark Slusser has worked as a power engineer in Idaho for nearly three decades. However, he has plans to retire during the month of July. And, as he leaves his position, known for improving power systems for the company he works for, he will be taking everything he learned with him. And, the major concern is that a replacement has not yet been found. Most likely, the replacement that is finally chosen will not have nearly as much experience and expertise under their belt and will have to ask tons of questions to get the job done. Slusser, who is 59 years old, is one of the many baby boomers who have finally reached the retirement age. More importantly, the Idaho Power company currently employs about 2,000 workers, all of whom could retire at this very moment if they wanted to. And, within the next ten years, it is believed that the amount of employees they have who are able to retire will be at about 60 percent. Darrel Anderson, who works as the president and chief financial officer, says that this is something they have seen for a while now and they have been working on the issue at hand. Right now, the population in Idaho is not necessarily aging as fast as the nation's population is but it is expected that this will change over the next few years and that could cause some problems in the workplace. By 2021, there will be about 100,306 individuals in Idaho that are anywhere from 60 to 64 years of age. This will actually be an increase of 35 percent within the span of 13 years, from 2008 until 2021. In the meantime, residents between the ages of 65 and 69 are expected to grow within that time by about 71 percent. The aging of the population in Idaho is believed to have been caused by a number of reasons. There are a lot of people who are already retired that are moving to Idaho. And, there are students in Idaho that go to college somewhere else and then end up staying in that location instead of coming back to the state of Idaho. The unemployment rates in the state are going to end up falling because there are not enough workers to fill the necessary positions, which is not something you see very often. Within the next ten years, Idaho could be facing a serious workforce shortage. Some of the state leaders are hoping to set up a plan that would enable companies with a large decline in workforce to be able to get training money for potential employees who may not have the skills or the expertise needed for the particular position. The Idaho Workforce Development Council has set plans to meet up sometime during the month of May to discuss the option of doing this.

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