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**Fiscal Policy Center Launched**  
*New center will look at Idaho budget and tax policy*

A new center headed by a longtime expert in the state's finances is being launched to help Idahoans understand and participate in policies that affect their economic wellbeing.

The Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy will provide factual, easy-to-understand information about the state's budget and economic policy. The Center is a program of the Boise-based nonprofit organization, Mountain States Group, and was made possible by a grant from the Northwest Area Foundation. Michael Ferguson, former Chief Economist for the State of Idaho, has been chosen to lead the Center.

Chris Tilden, Executive Director of the Mountain States Group, said "We are extremely grateful to the Northwest Area Foundation for making this project possible. It is important that citizens be involved in government, but understanding how government finance works is complicated. Few people understand the state's budget like Mike Ferguson. He is the perfect choice to lead this effort. Our aim is for the Center to become the most trusted source for information about the way Idaho pays for the services we all depend on."

Michael Ferguson spent over 25 years serving the citizens of Idaho as the state's Chief Economist, providing revenue forecasting and economic analysis. He worked for the last six Governors of Idaho before retiring in October, 2010. "I am really excited about this opportunity. I look forward to helping the public and Idaho's elected decision makers by providing helpful and easy-to-understand information that hasn't been readily available before," Ferguson said.

The Center will publish a "primer" explaining the way the Idaho state budget is developed each year as well as a report about the state's tax structure when the Center formally opens this fall. The reports will be published on a new website that will also be unveiled in the fall, and widely circulated to policymakers, the media, and citizens.

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*The Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy is a nonprofit program providing citizens and policy makers with clear, concise, fact-based information and analysis about Idaho tax and budget policy. The Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy receives funding from the Northwest Area Foundation, and is a program of Mountain States Group, Inc., a 501(c)3 community resource organization.*