

## IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT PAVES THE INNOVATION FAST LANE

**ABOUT TRANSPORTATION, IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF.** The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is responsible for the state's transportation infrastructure. ITD manages ongoing highway construction, operations, maintenance, and plans for the future needs of Idaho and its citizens. ITD includes the Highway Division that oversees the state highways and bridges. The department has approximately 1,650 employees spread among six regions.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In February 2011, ITD Director Brian Ness wanted to create a results-focused work culture that would produce effective and accountable state government. He wanted ITD to operate in a more business-like manner and address budget limitations by empowering employees to find cost-effective solutions to everyday problems and eliminate organizational waste in every area possible.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** Char McArthur, the Chief Administrative Officer at ITD, sought help in 2016 from the Operational Excellence (OE) professionals at Idaho's TechHelp, a member of the MEP National Network™. The TechHelp OE team, along with ITD Continuous Improvement professionals first defined a training road map for leaders within the agency that listed 10 major areas of focus. Phase one was for the OE Team to consult/train senior ITD leaders in using lean methodologies to identify problems and opportunities that could be addressed by ITD's Rapid Innovation Teams.

In phase two, the TechHelp OE team cascaded the Principles of Lean throughout the organization to over 150 ITD leaders and potential leaders. TechHelp trained ten teams from various business units and regions in lean tools. The OE team worked closely with ITD Leadership to create a culture of continuous improvement among participants. Each team was given a sizable organizational problem or opportunity and was asked to find and implement a solution given time and resource constraints. Each team consisted of a facilitator, two champions (designated senior leadership team members), and a TechHelp coach. The facilitator and champions provided tools, discussions, and suggestions that helped teams arrive at effective decisions. As coaches, TechHelp OE specialists guided team members on how to apply lean tools and processes and how to facilitate teamwork.

Under the leadership of Ness and McArthur, TechHelp worked with ITD to create an employee-driven innovation program that as of Dec 31, 2020 has implemented more than 1169 innovations, created 678 customer-service improvements, and saved about 231,270 contractor and employee hours (published by ITD.) The department was recognized in 2016 and 2019 by the Idaho Technology Council as a finalist for Innovative Company of the Year.

## RESULTS



\$10,800,000 in cost savings



\$720,000 in new investment



400 created or retained jobs



Empower ITD employees and put forward innovative improvement opportunities.



Team members learned how to apply lean tools and processes, improving organizational efficiency.

## CONTACT US



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**TECHHELP**  
Idaho Manufacturing Specialists

"TechHelp has the best relationship skills! They were relatable with all groups in our organization from our boots on the ground to our office workers who answer phones to our financial managers to our executives. We appreciated their down-to-earth style."

-Laura Meyer, Continuous Improvement Facilitator / Business Analyst