IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Idaho State Historical Society

Strategic Plan FY 2027-2031

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As defined in Idaho Code, section 67-4112 (3), the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) includes the Idaho State Museum, and the Idaho State Archives and State Records Center. It operates in public trust state historic sites, including the Old Idaho Penitentiary, John and Ann Doney House, the Lorenzo Hill Hatch House, Franklin Relic Hall, Franklin Cooperative Mercantile Institution, Rock Creek Station and Stricker Homesite, and Pierce Courthouse. Our mission is authorized through seventy-four state statutory mandates.

ISHS preserves and protects the records, artifacts, and places that tell Idaho's story—not only as stewards of the past—but as champions of a future rooted in integrity, community, and collective vitality. Through education, outreach, and responsible government, ISHS fosters a deeper understanding of our heritage, empowering Idahoans to see themselves in history, to care for their communities, and to participate fully as informed citizens.

Mission

Idaho State Historical Society preserves and promotes Idaho history.

Vision

Our vision is to make history essential and accessible through dynamic and gratifying services that inspire, enrich, and engage all Idahoans.

Values

- **Guided by the Facts:** We preserve, interpret, and share Idaho's history through rigorous, research-driven practices that meet the highest professional standards. Our collections care, archival work, and educational programs are grounded in verifiable sources, ensuring that our decisions, exhibitions, and public resources reflect accuracy, credibility, and scholarly integrity.
- **Working Smart in Every Arena:** We navigate complex environments with strategic thinking, strong partnerships, and sound judgment. By understanding policy, anticipating challenges, and providing trusted historical expertise, we strengthen Idaho's future.
- **History You Can Rely On:** We are committed to presenting Idaho's history fully and fairly, offering balanced interpretations that reflect multiple perspectives. Through transparency, insights from audience surveys, community dialogue, and accountability in our work, we maintain the public's trust—ensuring our resources serve as a reliable foundation for civic understanding and informed decision-making.

Advancing the State

The agency aligns its services with the Governor's policy priorities and his vision to:

> *"make Idaho the place where our children and grandchildren choose to stay, and for the ones who have left to choose to return."*

ISHS Core Programs

Idaho State Archives and State Records Center (ISA)

- Collections & Outreach
- Government & Historical Records Management
- Reference and Research Services

Idaho State Museum (ISM)

- Collections & Exhibitions
- Education Programs
- Visitor Experiences
- Capitol Curation Program

Old Idaho Penitentiary And Historic Sites (OIP)

- Exhibitions
- Education Programs
- Visitor Experiences

Administration

- Finance and Budget
- Fundraising and Membership
- Marketing and Communications
- Maintenance and Operations
- Governance
- Archaeological Survey of Idaho

Stakeholders

The agency provides a distinctive portfolio of services that respond to state and federal mandates and provide educational value to a variety of unique stakeholder groups, including:

- **Professional and Partner Networks:** Historical and Cultural Entities, Architectural and Archaeological Entities, Professional Researchers, Consultants, National Organizations, Non-Profits, and Special Interest Groups, such as veterans' groups.
- **Advocates:** Members, Volunteers, Donors, Staff, Trustees, Foundation for Idaho History, Affiliate Boards.
- **Public:** Citizens, Tourists, Families.
- **Educators:** Professors, University Staff, Pre-K-12th Educators, Homeschool Networks, Students.
- **Government Entities:** State Agencies, Federal Agencies, Federal Delegation, Tribes, Legislators, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, County/City/Municipal Entities, Community Leaders.
- **Media:** News outlets, influencers, journalists.

Strategic Goal 1: Outreach

Inspire and mobilize Idahoans through meaningful statewide outreach that builds lasting relationships, broadens participation, and amplifies the value of history in civic life.[i]

Objective 1.1: Strengthen community-centered engagement by activating the agency's collections, programs, and expertise through outreach initiatives that reflect the distinctiveness and vitality of Idaho's people and places.[iiiii]

Objective 1.2: Deepen strategic partnerships with government entities by creating targeted opportunities for collaboration, education, and historical context that support informed policy and shared stewardship of Idaho's legacy.

Objective 1.3: Strengthen internal processes to leverage external communications by identifying, informing, and engaging all stakeholder groups, and amplifying our existing program impact.

FY 27-31 Benchmarks

- By FY 27, continue to streamline and coordinate execution of outreach efforts across divisions and in coordination with ISHS Trustees.
- By FY 27, execute America250 outreach with relevant stakeholder groups and complete reporting.
- Through FY 28, each ISHS Trustee/FIH Board member/and staff will engage with at least one partner/professional network stakeholder or one government entities stakeholder per judicial district to provide understanding and information about ISHS and its essential role in government.
- By FY 28, Complete the Idaho Highway Historic Markers modernization program.
- Through FY 30, increase the agency's statewide outreach activities by 3% yearly.
- Through FY 30, strengthen community engagement by actively inviting government entities and advocate stakeholder groups to participate in agency programs.

Strategic Goal 2: Education

Elevate the impact of ISHS's educational offerings by delivering compelling, curriculum-aligned, and inquiry-driven learning experiences

that foster evaluative thinking skills, inspire self-reflection, and promote a shared understanding of Idaho's distinct histories.[iv]

Objective 2.1: Create and deliver transformative educational content by expanding the depth and reach of ISHS's educational resources to spark curiosity and provide historical context to contemporary issues.[v]

Objective 2.2: Integrate with Idaho's educational system by partnering with educator and government entity stakeholders to align content with state standards, support classroom instruction, and offer professional development rooted in comprehensive and evidence-based historical interpretation.

Objective 2.3: Empower audiences to be co-creators of knowledge by designing participatory learning experiences that invite reflection, dialogue, and storytelling, amplifying various voices and encouraging Idahoans to see themselves as part of Idaho history.

Objective 2.4: Cultivate self-discovery and investigative learning by providing access to and information about ISHS's collections, positioning Idahoans to become inquisitive about their own stories and the state's history.

FY 27-31 Benchmarks

- By FY 27, deliver ISHS's portfolio of America250-related projects.[vi]
- By FY 27, upgrade the agency's website to align with the State of Idaho template and meet ADA compliance, enhancing access to catalogs, educational, and historical resources.
- By FY 27, steward Idaho's oral history initiative in alignment with agency collecting efforts.
- By FY 28, deliver a completed reimagined Old Penitentiary experience that aligns with educational objectives as outlined.[vii]
- Through FY 31, engage with external stakeholders from each of Idaho's judicial districts through programs and activities to illustrate the extent and value of ISHS collections and educate these groups about how best to access these materials.
- By FY 28, plan, execute, and deliver educational programs and activities that result in participation from Idahoans across at least 50% of counties and 50% of Idaho's higher education institutions.
- By FY 28, the ISM and OIP will implement a shared framework for grades 4–8 curriculum-based educational programming, including a common educational philosophy, aligned learning outcomes, program development standards, and evaluation tools. This framework will establish a consistent process for designing, delivering, and assessing educational experiences that support Idaho curriculum-based education standards and advance student engagement at the ISM and OIP.

Strategic Goal 3: Responsible Government

Earn and maintain the public's trust and support by consistently demonstrating transparency, integrity, excellent customer service, and efficiency in agency operations to ensure services, resources, and decisions are accountable, equitable, and responsive to the evolving needs of Idahoans.[viii]

Objective 3.1: Optimize internal systems for transparency and efficiency by evaluating internal processes to identify opportunities for streamlining operations, reducing redundancies, and improving service delivery.

Objective 3.2: Build transparent relationships with the public and stakeholders to gather feedback on agency priorities and operations.

Objective 3.3: Execute work of core program areas to the highest professional and disciplinary standards, positioning ISHS as a trusted steward and subject matter authority by upholding the most rigorous practices in historical preservation, collections, archival, and records management, research, interpretation, and finance and operations.

FY 27-31 Benchmarks

- By FY 27, select and ingest born-digital pilot collections for preservation and webhosting via Preservica Digital Preservation software, create documentation for ingestion processes.
- By FY 27, complete onsite surveys of historical records across agency divisions to identify historical records that have permanent long-term historical value and warrant transferring to ISA preservation and access.
- By FY 27, develop Standard Operating Procedures for applying, implementing, and transferring agency records in accordance with the ISHS retention schedule for long-term preservation and access.
- By FY 27, develop and deliver training to ISHS staff on how to apply ISHS retention schedule to agency specific records across divisions.
- By FY 27, pack and relocate materials housed in the State Records Center to the completed Collections and Archives Stewardship Facility.
- By FY 28, begin transfer of agency historical records into permanent holdings at the ISA.
- By FY 28, complete the assessment, planning, and implementation activities necessary to integrate the OIP into ISM's AAM Accreditation, establishing a museum system and demonstrating ISHS's commitment to nationally recognized professional best practice.
- By FY 28, generate sufficient private funding to maximize and leverage public funding to execute the Old Pen Reimagining project.
- By FY 28, pack and relocate ISM Artifact Collections to completed Collections and Archives Stewardship Facility in accordance with the terms of the awarded contract (RFP 1126), ensuring the continued responsible stewardship and preservation of state records and historical artifacts.
- By FY 28, align internal evaluation systems to better track agency program impact to make agency offerings more effective.
- By FY 29, Reconcile the Archaeological Survey of Idaho (ASI) collections and create systems approach for ASI management and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) compliance.

- In FY 30, the ISHS museum system consisting of ISM and OIP, successfully achieves AAM reaccreditation, validating organizational excellence through nationally recognized standards and best practice.
- Through FY 30, strengthen the agency's public-private partnership and broaden citizen involvement by increasing our membership base in accordance with performance measures.
- Through FY 31, optimize ISHS budget self-sufficiency and maximize taxpayer investment by evaluating and optimizing ROI for agency programs.
- Through FY31, strengthen organizational capacity by investing in employee development, recruitment, retention, and compensation strategies within available resources.

Performance Measures

Goal	*Measure*	*Performance Target*	*FY Deadline*
Goal 1: Outreach	Statewide outreach activities completed.[ix]	-- -- -- -- --	FY 27 FY 28 FY 29 FY 30 FY 31
Goal 1: Outreach	Growth of public newsletter subscribers.[x]	5.0 %	FY 27 – FY 31
Goal 1: Outreach	Growth of website traffic.[xi]	4.4 %	FY 27 – FY 31
Goal 2: Education	County representation across educational activities.[xii]	50% of Idaho counties	FY 27 – FY 31
Goal 2: Education	Higher education representation across agency-wide programs, activities, events, and outreach.[xiii]	50% of higher education institutions	FY 27 – FY 31
Goal 2: Education	Educators participating in educational activities at the OIP and the ISM.[xiv]	1,439 educators 1,466 educators 1,493 educators 1,523 educators 1,550 educators	FY 27 FY 28 FY 29 FY 30 FY 31
Goal 3: Responsible Government	Growth in annual average of agency memberships.[xv]	825 850 875 900 925	FY 27 FY 28 FY 29 FY 30 FY 31
Goal 3: Responsible Government	Growth in the annual average agency membership retention rate.[xvi]	54.5% 55% 55.5% 56% 56.5%	FY 27 FY 28 FY 29 FY 30 FY 31

ISHS Key Internal Factors

- Curatorial services preserve and protect the state's irreplaceable legacy collections;
- Programs and services of the Idaho State Archives collect, preserve, and provide access to historic records to inform the work of government and support the interests and decisions of the people of Idaho;
- Dynamic educational services build 21st-century skills and directly support Idaho school curriculum;
- Preservation and stewardship of ISHS's historic sites reveal a sense of place critical to personal and community identity;
- Government records management and archival services are essential to state agencies and official jurisdictions.

ISHS Key External Factors

State Facilities Ownership and Leasing Issues

The timeline for evacuation of the ISM artifact storage facilities on the former Idaho Transportation Department's land in downtown Boise will not be completed until FY 27 at a minimum, and we will need to maintain access and use of these facilities until that date.

State Records Center State Mandates

The Office of the Attorney General's litigation hold remains in effect, impacting statewide records management practices and the revenue that the State Record Center would generally earn from routine destruction procedures.

Fund Development

The agency derives half of its annual financial support through non-general fund sources. It is a challenge to secure private ongoing operating support as perception is that government funds meet agency needs. The agency's approach to ongoing funding and project development is strategic. Government support is critical for buildings, collections care, and personnel. Private sources best leverage public funds in the spirit of public-private partnership.

- ISHS marketing focused on building public awareness to expand its ongoing supporters;
- ISHS can best leverage project-based private funds for education, exhibitions, and collections access services;
- Changes in records management at state agencies may impact cost recovery efforts;
- Fund development for the agency's rural sites is limited;
- Fund development for on-site initiatives for the immediate future will focus on major site reinterpretation at the Old Idaho Penitentiary;
- Changes in federal grant criteria may impact federal grants for the OIP exhibitions campaign;
- Potential state general fund budget reductions will result in the need to generate additional, ongoing agency program revenues.

ISHS Statutory Authority Summary

Idaho Code 67-4126 states that the agency shall:

- ❖ Identify, preserve, and protect sites, monuments, and points of interest in Idaho of historic merit. **(67-4114)**
- ❖ Protect archaeological and vertebrate paleontological sites and resources on public land. **(67-4119)**
- ❖ Govern the agency and administer the powers and duties of the board. **(67-4126)**

- Appoint a director of the society as provided herein and advise then in the performance of their duties and formulate general policies affecting the society. **(67-4126 [1])**
- Encourage and promote interest in the history of Idaho. **(67-4126 [2])**
- Collect, preserve, and exhibit artifacts and information illustrative of Idaho history, culture, and society. **(67-4126 [3])**
- Facilitate the use of Idaho records for official reference and historical research. **(67-4126 [6])**
- Be responsible for records management services for state government. **(67-4126 [7])**
- Accept archival material from governments. **(67-4126 [8])**
- Establish such rules as may be necessary to discharge the duties of the society. **(67-4126 [10])**
- Identify historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural sites, buildings, or districts and to coordinate activities of local historic preservation commissions. **(67-4126 [14])**
- Serve as the Geographic Names Board of the state **(67-4126 [15])**
- Carry out the preservation and protection of the state's historic, archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage resources. **(67-4114)**
- Provides for the creation of an Idaho Archaeological Survey and designates the State Archaeologist as director. **(33-3902)**
- Assigns responsibilities to the agency for consultation, determination of appropriate actions, and providing for re-interment of human remains that have been disturbed. **(28-501)**

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[i] ISHS defines outreach as the agency's proactive, statewide engagement with multiple stakeholder groups to foster connection, relevance, and participation with Idaho history.

[iii] ISHS's programs and activities occur on site, in the field, and virtually. This represents applied and informally learning opportunities. Programs and activities may also include outreach efforts. ISHS events have similar intended outcomes, in addition to driving revenue potential and expanding the agency's audience. ISHS's rentals are enterprise focused and are primarily driven for revenue generation.

[iv] ISHS defines education as the active process of delivering accurate, engaging, and thought-provoking historical content that informs, inspires, and equips stakeholder groups to think critically, reflect deeply, and contribute meaningfully to civic life.

[v] Educational resources include exhibitions, digital content, programs, and publications, among others.

[vi] This portfolio includes exhibitions, a publication, and an oral history initiative.

[vii] In FY 25, ISHS began the process of engaging with stakeholders to conceptualize new exhibitions for the Old Idaho Penitentiary. Phase one includes the entry experience and site-wide interpretive signage; phase two includes opening of "City Behind Walls" exhibition.

[viii] ISHS defines responsible government as the ethical commitment to serve the public with integrity, efficiency, transparency, and accountability. It means managing public resources wisely, generating revenue, making data-informed decisions, and ensuring all agency actions are aligned with required state and federal laws, values, and expectations of Idahoans. Through this commitment, ISHS strengthens civic trust and models excellence in public service.

[ix] Current projections reflect the baseline established in FY 26. ISHS aspires to conduct outreach in person while approving travel in accordance with travel policies and the governor's priorities; however, to execute this work effectively and efficiently, ISHS also conducts virtual outreach.

[x] This measure reflects the success of outreach and communications strategies in building lasting public relationships. It aligns with **Objective 1.3** by maintaining regular communication with stakeholders, ensuring they stay informed and engaged with ISHS priorities. As an effectiveness measure, it validates whether ISHS's storytelling and resource-sharing efforts resonate with Idahoans. Growth in newsletter sign-ups indicates greater effectiveness in retaining existing stakeholders and attracting new stakeholders and reflects successful content creation and communication strategies.

[xi] This measure is a key indicator of the agency's effectiveness in expanding its digital reach and engaging a broader statewide audience. It aligns with **Objective 1.1** by monitoring the increase in website visitors; the agency can assess the impact of its

outreach and communication strategies, ensuring that more Idahoans access collections, programs, and resources online. It also supports **Objective 1.3** by validating the effectiveness of internal communications upgrades (e.g., ADA compliance, content optimization) in driving engagement.

[xii] This measure ensures ISHS meets its FY 28 benchmark of engaging 50% of Idaho counties, directly supporting **Objective 2.1** and **Objective 2.2** by guaranteeing equitable access to curriculum-aligned programs statewide. By tracking county participation, ISHS demonstrates the effectiveness of its efforts to expand reach and integrate with the educational system, validating that its initiatives are successfully engaging diverse communities across Idaho and meeting strategic benchmarks. By maintaining 50% annual representation, ISHS demonstrates its commitment to fostering statewide reach and engagement.

[xiii] This measure aligns with **Objective 2.2** and **Objective 2.3** by strengthening collaborations with universities. Sustained engagement with higher education institutions supports **Objective 2.4** and its efforts to enhance self-discovery through access to collections and investigative learning tools. This measure indicates the effectiveness of our educational offerings and helps assess how effectively educational programs attract and engage educators, reflecting their quality, relevance, and value to the academic community.

[xiv] This measure supports **Objectives 2.2** and **2.3** by tracking educator participation in ISM and OIP programs and activities. Participation demonstrates educators' access to relevant ISHS educational resources and reflects the effectiveness of standards-aligned programs that support educators in teaching Idaho history.

[xv] This measure supports **Objective 3.2** by expanding the agency's supporter base, which fosters community trust and engagement. Membership growth reflects successful outreach and customer service, directly tied to earning public trust through equitable resource access. This output measure validates the effectiveness of marketing, front-desk sales, and partnership strategies in making ISHS's offerings responsive to Idahoans' needs.

[xvi] This measure aligns with **Objective 3.3** by demonstrating sustained member satisfaction and trust in ISHS's programs. Higher retention signals that the agency meets member needs through professional stewardship, transparent operations, and quality programming, which are critical to maintaining public trust. This outcome measure also ensures financial stability, enabling ISHS to deliver on benchmarks like the Old Pen Reimagining project and collections transfers.