

Journal of Rural and Community Development

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Citation:

Winchell, D., G. (2013). Indigenous rural renewal in the Inland Pacific Northwest: The emergence of American Indian tribes in regional economic development. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 8(3), 174-197.



Publisher:

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Editor:

Dr. Doug Ramsey

Open Access Policy:

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Indigenous Rural Renewal in the Inland Pacific Northwest: The Emergence of American Indian Tribes in Regional Economic Development

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Abstract

The marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in the Inland Pacific Northwest destroyed successful salmon-based tribal economies, while failed federal policies for sustainable economic development on reservations and lack of tribal autonomy led to poverty for American Indians. Federal policies eventually recognized tribal self-government, but it took the legalization of tribal gaming to produce significant economic change. Extremely successful tribal gaming operations produced a rapidly expanding sophistication for tribal investment and a new tribal economy. By 2000 median American Indian /Alaskan Native incomes were higher than non-Indians in most rural counties, and American Indian tribal governments were the largest employers with the most discretionary revenues for investment in many rural counties. A new rural that incorporates tribal governmental and business success has emerged with dramatic new Indigenous rural futures.

Keywords: American Indian; Native American; economic growth; Indigenous economies; resilient communities

1.0 Introduction—Contexts for Economic Success

Although much of the literature on American Indian economic development is framed by descriptions of persistent poverty and the inability of tribes to expand their economies, all tribal economic development began with sustainable and economically self-sufficient tribal economies prior to contact with European cultures. Contemporary economic development models and assessments have often overlooked these contexts of success and applied post-contact constructs of more traditional local economic development analysis including colonial and post-colonial economic models, while only limited efforts have been made to seek an Indigenous context within each tribe to define successful tribal economic development. Mr. Billy Frank offered one such Indigenous perspective during his presentation at the 2011 Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers in Seattle:

We Indians have always been here. We are here now. We will always be here. We don't necessarily need to build or invest to create short-term revenues. We need long term, sustainable relationships with the natural environment. We need to try to buy back our lands, and control and monitor all of our usual and accustomed areas. Seven generations, 150 years, is a short time for us (Frank, 2011).

Recent assessments of contemporary tribal economies have centered on what can be done—generally through US federal grants and loans from agencies including the Economic Development Authority (EDA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Indian Health Services (IHS), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) that fund housing, infrastructure, transportation and community facilities and business development on reservations. Recently, recreational development activities that include tribal casinos and resort facilities have been tribally controlled with no federal funding support. Mr. Frank discussed the notion held by many tribal leaders that casino revenues have been a gift for tribes to become self-determined, to purchase back the lands that were taken from them, and to re-establish sustainable tribal traditions, cultures and successful economies.

This paper will identify new and emerging tribal economies that have often been ignored within rural areas, yet as this study will document, successful tribal government operations and tribal economic and business developments represent some of the most significant and positive economic change in rural areas across the nation. American Indian tribal governments have become leading forces in regional development. The successful transformation of American Indian tribal governments as effective institutions is the result of the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA, 1975) that granted tribal control and support for each tribe's governmental operations. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA, 1988) allowed tribes to establish gaming enterprises and operate those businesses. Two studies documented the failed federal economic policy (US GAO, 2004) and the success of tribal gaming operations (National Indian Gaming Commission, 2003). The questions posed for this article are: "How can tribes continue to build on their successes?" and "How can tribes establish Indigenous contexts and use Indigenous values and traditions for strategies and plans that will guide and promote alternative rural futures for their own economies and for more successful and sustainable rural regional economies?"

The dynamics of American Indian economies has been of dramatic shifts from successful and sustainable Indigenous economies prior to European contact to reservation economies that were cut off from significant aboriginal lands and resources to become dependent upon failed federal programs, and finally to a re-emergence as a result of successful tribal government operations, tribal businesses, and tribal gaming. This article will examine these contexts for change and assess American Indian progress toward prosperity and leadership in the rural regional economies of the Inland Pacific Northwest through a case study of six American Indian reservations surrounding Spokane, Washington.

2.0 Successful Tribal Economic Development in the Pacific Northwest

American Indian tribal governments in the Pacific Northwest have effectively addressed tribal economic development within individual tribes and in collaboration with each other through the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), and also with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). ATNI operates as a regional congress of tribal elected leaders and staff with over 50 member tribes in seven states, and along with NCAI was formed in the late 1940s and early 1950s to become effective voices to address the common issues of tribes. The NW tribes formed ATNI in response to the need for tribes to work together and share success,

as well as create a common voice around critical issues. ATNI also played a strong role in the creation of NCAI. Coeur d'Alene tribal member Joseph R. (Joe) Garry served as both the President of ATNI and the first President of NCAI (as well as an Idaho state representative) during the 1950s and 1960s (Fahey, 2001). ATNI has actively brought economic development issues to the forefront of tribal concerns through its Economic Development Committee, with long-term co-chairs Antone C. Minthorn, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, active since the 1970s; and Michael Marchand, Colville Confederated Tribes, active since the 1980s. Mr. Minthorn has served multiple terms as President and Vice President of ATNI and Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, and was instrumental in successful economic development grants, research, and program development to support individual tribes and the common interests of all ATNI member tribes. Mr. Minthorn identified the ATNI Economic Development Committee's goal to reach and exceed parity with non-Native residents and economies of the Northwest set in 1980 when the Reagan administration took power (personal communication, 1987).

Mr. Marchand has served as Chair of the Colville Confederated Tribes and the co-chair of ATNI's Economic Development Committee, vice-chairman of ATNI, and board member for the ATNI Economic Development Corporation. The ATNI Economic Development Committee and its Economic Development Corporation have initiated major positive actions through research, critical issues and policy analysis, and support for collective and individual tribal economic initiatives. One effort engaged all member tribes in documentation of tourism and business activity through an EDA grant, and led to the publication of a guide to tribal tourism (Chehak & Halliday, 1996). Entering the 21st century tribes across the NW are now becoming recognized as major forces especially within rural (but also urban) economies in the Pacific Northwest.

2.1 Indigenous Economies

American Indian economies in the Inland Pacific Northwest were centered on the salmon that traveled hundreds of miles up the Columbia River and its major tributaries. King salmon over 100 pounds each were so plentiful that stories describe being able to walk across the river on their backs. Fishing villages at the narrowest points along the river at Celilo Falls and Kettle Falls served as centers for tribes to catch, process and distribute fish. The salmon were dried, tied into bales and shipped for exchange as far away as the Great Plains in Montana and the Dakotas. In combination with camas roots, other plants and animals of the region, local tribal economies followed a successful and sustainable seasonal round of harvest and storage (Ross, 2011).

The marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in the Inland Pacific Northwest started with early explorers and fur traders, and an insatiable demand for resources and land. Soon after contact and some conflict, treaties were established that diminished tribal lands and set the framework for destruction of the tribal economies. The end of the successful tribal economies on the Upper Columbia can be dated to June 1941, when Native Americans held a Ceremony of Tears at Kettle Falls, marking the end of fishing there. Tribes watched as the completion of Coulee Dam blocked the river while waters behind the dam flooded their lands including Kettle Falls to produce Lake Roosevelt. The dam itself, built without fish ladders, stopped the salmon from continuing upstream to over 1,100 miles of natural spawning habitat (Ortolando and Cushing, 2000, p. 59). This destroyed the successful salmon-based tribal economies

of the upper Columbia Tribes, while the subsequent failed federal policies for sustainable economic development on reservations and the lack of tribal autonomy and recognized self-governance would lead to generations of poverty for American Indians living on these reservations throughout the twentieth century.

The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA, 1934) recognized tribal sovereign powers and structures for tribal governments, empowering tribes to create constitutions for autonomous self-government, but it was not until after the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA, 1975) that tribal governments became established as effective, tribally led sovereign governments, and that tribes began to make gains in rural economic development through their own decision-making and control of their own lands and resources.

Only after the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA, 1988) was passed did Tribes across the nation develop extremely successful tribal gaming operations that produced a rapidly expanding capacity for tribal business operations and investment, and a re-emergence of successful and effective tribal economies. By 2000 median American Indian/Alaskan Native incomes began to shift toward parity with non-Indians in most rural counties in the Inland Northwest, and significantly, American Indian tribal governments emerged as one of the largest employers, often with the most discretionary revenues for investment. A new rural regional economy that includes tribal governments and tribal businesses, particularly tribal casino gaming, has taken hold across the Pacific Northwest. Innovative tribal governments, businesses and investment with long-term goals for sustainable tribal lands, successful economies and communities offer dramatic new alternatives building on Indigenous rural futures for the region.

2.2 Contrasting Results and New Directions in Tribal Economic Development

The origins for this paper came from a meeting with Michael Marchand (personal communication, September, 2005) when he served as tribal chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes, who delivered two reports that demonstrated striking, yet very different data on tribal economic development (Marchand, 2005). The first was a report by the US Government Accounting Offices (US GAO, 2004), a report that essentially documented the failure of the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) initiatives to promote tribal business and economic development. The second report documented the tremendous successes of tribally owned casinos that during almost the same time period created over 100,000 permanent jobs and significant profits to tribes. Continued tribal economic development assessment and expanded literature review shed considerable light on changing tribal economic development and strategies for their success.

The GAO report's intended purpose was to assess the difference in performance between American Indian tribal governments that operated under new frameworks for self-governance with those more standard tribal government structures. In fact, the outcome also demonstrated that the critical issue was not self-governance, but a failure of these programs to impact poverty due to the complex federal grant process of application, review, approval and monitoring. The study found that Indian tribes participated in grants from EDA for business, public works and infrastructure to support community and economic development, and to create plans for economic development, but those plans and programs have had only mixed success in generating jobs and private sector investment (US GAO, 2004, p. 4).

The GAO study began with an assessment of 2000 Census Data regarding the status of American Indian reservations, finding that: “American Indian tribes are among the most economically distressed groups in the United States, with per capita income of \$9,300 in 1999, less than half the national level of \$21,600; and 30 percent of American Indian households with incomes at or below poverty, compared to 12 percent for the US population” (US GAO, 2004, p. 6).

The study assessed 143 EDA programs from 1993 to 2002 that funded \$112 million in grants to 143 Indian tribes and tribal organizations. \$54 million funded 63 enterprise projects designed to create income and jobs, and of the 59 projects assessed, 25 had not begun operation, while 3 were completed with zero results. For the remaining 31, half were profitable or covering their costs, while the remainder were being subsidized or had failed (US GAO, 2004, p. 20). Under the enterprise grants, the 60 total projects included 26 for industrial development; 10 commercial development projects; 20 cultural and community centers, and 4 natural resources projects. Details show that many of the projects completed had cost over-runs of more than twice the original funding.

EDA also provided \$22 million for infrastructure including roads and sewer systems on reservations, \$30 million in grants to support economic planning, and \$5 million in loan funds for business development. All were controlled under stringent EDA program review and guidelines, and tribes had to demonstrate strong potential for short-term business success. The results did not show significant differences in terms of tribal self-governance or regular tribal government structures, but did indicate major differences between tribes that had opened and operated tribal casinos that earned more than \$10 million annually and those that had no gaming or had gaming operations earning less than \$10 million annually. More importantly, the findings indicated that over the nine year period, despite over \$50 million invested, less than 5,000 total jobs were created, and only 400 of those were permanent. Although not assessing blame for these failures, one major cause suggested by tribal leaders and researchers across the country was the control of these projects, often including micro-management and detailed review and approval at every step in the process that produced delays and uncertainties. The grant process itself seemed to doom these projects to failure.

Within months of the GAO report, a second major study on tribal economic development was released and distributed to tribal leaders that showed very different results. This study, *Tribal Government Gaming, The Native American Success Story*, (National Indian Gaming Association, 2004), described the tremendous successes of tribal casino developments, empowered through the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA, 1988). This study described efforts by tribes to successfully create their own tribal casino enterprises under tribal control and decision-making, although with oversight by a commission created under the act, and found that the same ten year period had brought dramatic revenues to tribes, \$19.5 billion in 2004, and created more than 100,000 jobs for both tribal members and non-Indians across the nation. One major difference appeared to be the locus of control that enabled tribes to control economic initiatives through corporations linked to tribal governments that demonstrated their capacity to successfully initiate complex economic investments and developments.

Perhaps not so surprising, the sharply contrasted results of these two studies confirm the difficulties for effective and autonomous tribal economic development within a historically paternalistic and controlling system of federal regulations and over-

managed opportunities. The findings also provide the clear recognition that tribal governments as sovereign nations are very capable of successful governmental and business operations, can in fact succeed, and that these new institutions are leading new and emerging tribal economies, often in rural regions where previously marginalized and disempowered reservations had been subject to meager federal support and persistent poverty. Through effective decision-making and expansions of tribal government, and linked to opportunities for investments not controlled by the federal government, tribal casino development has not only been successful, it has been the catalyst for resurgent rural renewal around tribal enterprises, resort and tourist developments, and has provided support for cultural knowledge and renewal through previously unfunded tribal language and cultural programs.

2.3 American Indian Economic Development Literature

Economic development on reservations has been the subject of extensive interest and research dating back to the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA, 1934), where discussions of tribal governments sought to incorporate models for successful self-sufficient tribal economies (See Deloria & Lytle, 1984). Collier proposed a 45 page bill initially that was the most comprehensive legislative request on American Indian issues ever submitted, although it did not initially include an emphasis on tribal economic development. Collier made revisions to address economic enterprises including a model organization to create “corporate structures” of decision-making that emphasized a tribal business. The revised bill provided that “once it (the tribe) had adopted its constitution and bylaws defining the powers and limitations of self-government, (it could) petition the secretary of the interior to issue a charter of incorporation. This charter would permit the tribe to establish a corporation that could engage in business, acquire property, obtain loans, and do all things necessary to the conduct of a business agency” (Deloria & Lytle, 1984, p. 78). Legislators led by congressmen Wheeler and Howard maintained assimilation perspectives, and sought to limit the authorities of tribal governments (Deloria & Lytle, 1984, p. 125). Extensive debate was held by tribes, and then by Congress, and the resulting 9 page bill barely resembled Collier’s initial proposal (Deloria & Lytle, 1984, p. 140), but it did create several alternative models that came from the BIA for tribes to emphasize the self-governance role, or to include a corporate structure within their constitutions.

In the Pacific Northwest, the corporate version became the preferred choice for tribes, and IRA tribal governments are named ‘business councils’ although also fully responsible for carrying out the duties of tribal governments. Each tribe developed its own specific version of a tribal constitution that established clear powers to govern the reservation and carry out sovereign powers, as well as establish businesses. Under the law each constitution was required to be approved by a majority of enrolled members of the tribe. The initial IRA set a deadline of four years for tribes to adopt a constitution, or to remain under administrative regulations overseen by the BIA. Tribes that had a successful election within that time were termed IRA tribes and operated under IRA constitutions. Delays in development of constitutions and the elections placed many NW tribes beyond the four year deadline, so although not technically IRA tribes, they operate under IRA style tribal constitutions. The powers of tribal governments were for the first time recognized and formalized under these constitutions, including the power to control land, resources, and finance, although with oversight and review by the Secretary of the Interior.

Research on tribes continues to emphasize the significance of sovereignty for tribes and confirmed that after the IRA tribes would not become an artifact from the past, but essential sovereign governments within contemporary American culture as unique sovereign nations with powers that maintain and expand upon a legacy of tribal culture and history, and that tribes would also hold powers of corporate structures for business and economic development. Vine Deloria (1969; 1985a; 1985b) was perhaps the most consistent author seeking to re-establishing a dialogue of contemporary reservation issues and establishing more clear legacies for tribal sovereign powers to serve as the basis for effective tribal sovereign nations (Deloria, 1985b; Deloria & Lytle, 1983).

Although a considerable body of literature simply established the legal and historic frameworks for American Indian tribal governments as sovereign nations, only a few books such as D'Arcy McNickle's (1973) *Native American tribalism: Indian survivals and renewals*, recognized the persistence and on-going success of tribal peoples despite over a hundred years of genocidal policies aimed at destroying Indian culture and full assimilation of American Indian peoples. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, through her non-fiction writings (Cook-Lynn, 2007) and her long term editorial role in the journal *Wicazo-Sa*, was persistent in efforts to focus American Indian Studies not only in tribal history and the past, but on the powers of sovereignty as the basis for tribal renewal and permanence.

Gilbreath (1973) provided the first detailed assessment of tribal economic problems with a case study of the Navajo Nation economic processes and the devastating impacts of federal and formalized tribal policies that thwarted tribal business and economic development. The importance of persistent poverty related to tribal governance, law, history and culture, and the difficulties for effective strategies to create successful tribal economic development has been the subject of a range of perspectives on the issue (Champagne, 2006; Duffy & Stubben, 1998; Frantz, 1999; Graham, 2004; Guyette, 1996; Miller, 2008; O'Brien, 1993; Ortiz et al., 1980; Sluyter, 2001; Trosper, 1996; Vinje, 1996; Wilkins, 2002; Wilkins & Lomawaim, 2002).

2.4 The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development

Our knowledge of American Indian economic development has been greatly expanded and enhanced over the past two decades by The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/>). Started by Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt in 1987 in the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, the program also collaborates with the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of Arizona and is affiliated with the Harvard University Native American Program. For more than two decades this effort has conducted extensive interviews and research with tribal leaders to identify effective policies and actions for successful tribal business development.

The mission for the Harvard project is: "to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained, self-determined social and economic development is achieved among American Indian nations through applied research and service".

The Harvard Project carries out "research, education and the administration of a tribal governance awards program" (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/>) that includes direct interaction with tribes.

The major findings of their research highlight what makes tribal enterprises successful (Cornell, 2006). Four major findings emerge as central to success in tribal economic development:

SOVEREIGNTY MATTERS

When Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently out-perform external decision makers—on matters as diverse as governmental form, natural resource management, economic development, health care and social service provision.

INSTITUTIONS MATTER

For development to take hold, assertions of sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of governance. Nations do this as they adopt stable decision rules, establish fair and independent mechanisms for dispute resolution, and separate politics from day-to-day business and program management.

CULTURE MATTERS

Successful economies stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture.

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change. Such leaders, whether elected, community, or spiritual, convince people that things can be different and inspire them to take action.

(<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied/>)

The Center has published many of their research products on-line through, along with academic presentations, books and articles that came from their work on the project (Cornell & Kalt, 1995; Cornell & Kalt, 2000; Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2007; Jorgensen et al., 2000; Jorgensen, 2007; Begay et al., 2007). The Harvard Project was also involved in early research on the role of tribal government as contributing to economic success (Cornell & Kalt, 2010; Taylor & Kalt, 2005) and the impacts of tribal gaming (Cornell et al., 1998; Cornell & Kalt, 2003).

As part of his analysis, Cornell (2006, p. 7) identified ten important factors affecting tribal enterprise outcomes. He assessed these categories by the extent of tribal influence or control in each: external economic conditions; market behavior; competition; external regulatory environment; federal/provincial policy; clarity about enterprise objectives; composition, purpose and power of corporate boards; independent resolution of disputes, community education, and good business practices. He stressed tribal capacity in government and tribal corporations as having a clear link to economic success (Cornell, 2006, p. 8).

The Harvard Project has been well received by tribes and has established an annual conference in which tribes across the nation exchange information on best practices and what makes economic projects succeed. The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development is another group organized around identification of economic success on reservations, holding an annual “Rez” conference. The

National Center's Visions Statement is: "Committed to American Indian Self-Sufficiency by Leading Economic Development and Promoting Commerce in Indian Country". (<http://res2012.biz/>).

Much of the Kennedy Center's research explores the roles for tribal governments, tribal corporations and tribal enterprises including casinos in relation to tribal culture, and also indicates that tribes have not simply operated their casinos as independent enterprises for business profit, but have generally reinvested profits in community programs, structures, and services, as well as the acquisition of traditional lands. Cornell (1988) actively completed research on tribal government changes and a revival of American Indian communities, in part through economic development, a recurring theme also examined by Taylor and Kalt (2005) and Cornell and Kalt (2010). Early studies described the impact of tribal gaming on tribal economic development that highlighted the potential role for expanded business success within reservation economies (Cornell & Kalt, 2003; Cornell et al., 1998).

2.5 Reservation Economies: From Persistent Poverty to Parity?

Part of the impetus for this article is to assess a long-time goal for parity between tribes and non-Indian communities expressed by NW Tribal leaders, and to see if in fact American Indian successes in tribal government, tribal enterprises and casinos have shifted long-term poverty on reservations. Leichenko (2003) in his article "Does Place Still Matter? Accounting for Income Variation across American Indian Tribal Areas," offers a detailed analysis based on census data indicators of the persistence of poverty on reservations, and offers some insight to the issues and causes. Leichenko (2003, p. 367) notes that increasing regional differences in income seem to be getting worse for rural areas and potentially for American Indian reservations as a result of globalization, and "...tribal areas may be among those that are most likely to be left behind because of lower levels of human capital, poor access to markets, poor infra-structure, and other constraints."

Leichenko's research did identify the complexity of tribal economies, and the persistence of subsistence, non-cash exchange and obligations that remain important aspects of community analysis, an important feature for Inland Northwest tribes. Poverty remains persistent, but it can be explained by locational, structural, and demographic factors such as market size, the presence of natural amenities, industrial composition, and the percentage of retirees in the population (Leichenko, 2003, p. 366).

Kodras (1997, p. 87 in Leichenko, 2003, p. 366) found that the locational disadvantages experienced by tribal populations result from deliberate federal-level decisions such that "the historical choice of remote location has isolated the reservation from urban markets, and the legacy of federal neglect has left an infrastructure base insufficient for development." Leichenko (2003, pp. 366-367) also described the significance of tribal culture and cultural independence as impacting tribal economic development and that there has been no systematic examination of these factors (see also Pickering, 2000; Pickering & Mushinski, 2001; Mushinski & Pickering, 2000; Frantz, 1999; Duffy & Stubben, 1998; Vinje, 1996; Trospen, 1996; Anderson, 2009).

A number of geographic studies have examined the role of tribal gaming enterprises (Darian-Smith, 2004; Davis & Otterstrom, 1998; Lew & Van Otten, 1998; Meyer-Arendt & Hartmann, 1998; Smith, 2002; Winchell et al., 1997), and the fact that tribes have viewed casino revenues as possibly temporary, and have looked for re-

investment of revenues in sustainable community enterprises. Piner and Paradis (2004) demonstrate this in their analysis of the Yavapai-Apache Nation casino and resort operations. Successful tribal gaming operations have brought expertise in business and management skills within tribal corporations and tribal governments, and brought a new revenue stream to enable tribal governments to establish culturally relevant strategies for sustainable development and build successful reservations.

2.6 Tribal Contributions to State Economies

Several assessments of tribal economies have been completed as policy analysis reports in addition to academic research, in part as a result of state concerns that tribes were not paying their “fair share” of taxes, especially with increased gaming revenues. Washington was one of the first states to complete such a study (Tiller and Chase, 1998), and the findings indicated the significance of tribal economies within Washington, documenting tribal contributions to the state economies. Tiller and Chase (1998) found 27 federally recognized tribes, and 91,000 Native Americans in the state of Washington contributed \$1 billion annually to the state’s economy. Tribal enterprises in 1997 spent \$865.8 million for supplies and services, while Tribal governments paid \$51.3 million in federal employment/payroll taxes, and \$5.3 million in state employment/payroll taxes. Tribal enterprises employed 14,375 Washington citizens including non-tribal employees, but the average annual wages for tribal employment were \$18,800, only 40% of state average of \$32,400 (Tiller and Chase, 1998).

Oregon’s ECONorthwest (2007) completed a similar study which found that nearly \$675 million in economic output comes from the nine tribal casinos that employ over 5,000 residents with a \$185 million annual payroll, and total benefits approaching \$1.5 billion in economic output and 15,221 jobs (ECONorthwest 2007, pp. 1-2). Both studies indicate tremendous growth and a strong role for tribal governments and casinos within each state’s economy.

2.7 Strategic Planning, Indigenous Planning and Comprehensive Plans for Tribal Restructuring

Tribal economic development is critically linked to tribal sovereignty and tribal control of planning and decision-making. Strategic decision-making by tribes is recognized throughout the Harvard Project research results, but has been further identified in the planning literature (Jojola, 2008; Zaferetos, 1998; 2004a; 2004b; Winchell, 1996).

Jojola identified strategic planning to guide decision-making with regard to economic and community development as essential for long-term tribal sustainability, with the primary responsibilities resting within tribal government (Jojola, 2008, p. 118, see also Zaferetos, 2004a).

Jojola (2008, p. 44) noted that only after initial successes did tribes seek to re-invest in long-term, culturally relevant strategies and planning for economic development, and noted Graham’s (2004) point that initial economic development efforts by tribes often failed to establish systematic, long-term approaches. Jojola (2008) argued that both strategic planning and comprehensive planning are needed within a context of Indigenous planning for successful, sustainable economic development.

Zaferetos (1998; 2004a; 2004b) emphasizes the need for tribes eventually to establish regional contexts for development. Zaferetos (1998) described the

complexity of the powers for tribal sovereignty, but suggests that to advance sovereignty, as long as that sovereignty is not challenged through relations with states and local governments, regional alliances and participation can strengthen tribal sovereignty and sustainability (Zaferetos, 2004a; 2004b). Finally, Winchell (1996) described a tribal comprehensive plan structure that includes standard Anglo planning elements in addition to elements for tribal history and culture; language; dispossessed land; and broader tribal frameworks to promote traditional knowledge, language and culture within successful contemporary reservations. These planning frameworks identify strategic planning and a unique set of expanded elements for tribal comprehensive plans to offer a means for tribes to expand tribal knowledge of key reservations issues including economic development, and create tribal goals and policies that can be established to guide tribes toward a sovereign future through such plans.

2.8 Prosperity and Rural Reservations

More recently there has been new interest in re-examining such as Isserman et al.'s (2009) rural community assessment of "prosperity" in rural counties as exceptions to rural poverty at the national level. Through this analysis of rural prosperity, only 300 rural counties out of 3,143 were more prosperous than the nation, and none of these had high minority or immigrant populations (Isserman et al., 2009).

The tremendous success of tribal governments and tribal enterprises including casinos has clearly impacted many rural counties, but so far major shifts in prosperity led by Native American economic renewal has not been reflected in census data. The following case study will seek to explore the fact that new tribal government employment, tribal enterprise and casino success is important in reservation and rural regional economies, and may begin to impact previous conditions of reservation poverty. As rural reservation economies continue to expand, indicators of that new prosperity in rural counties led by reservation successes should emerge.

3.0 Tribes of the Inland Northwest: A Case Study of Economic Change

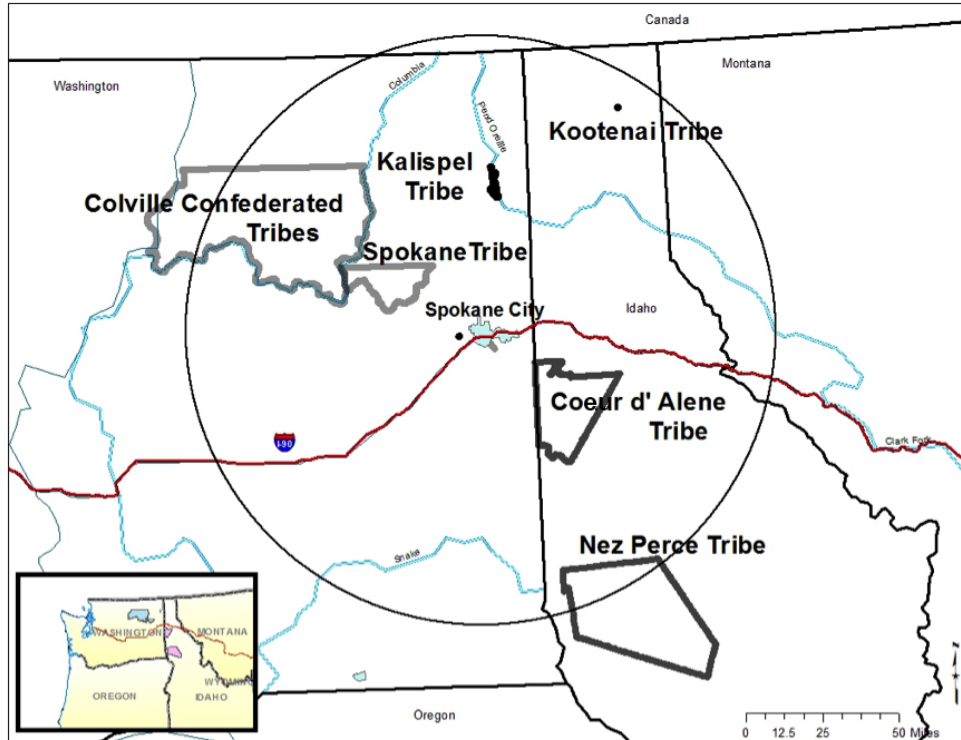
The following case study begins with a brief description of the Tribes of the Inland Northwest, including a description of governance structures and business enterprises. This is followed by a description and analysis of casinos and prosperity indicators in the Inland Northwest.

3.1 Tribes in the Inland Northwest

Six federally recognized American Indian reservations lie within a 100 mile radius of Spokane, Washington, and were selected for a case study to assess the economic impact of tribal economies within the region (see Figure 1). These reservations are generally rural in nature, but all have successfully expanded their tribal government and tribally owned enterprises, and all operate casinos. The five tribes nearest to Spokane, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Colville Confederated Tribes, the Spokane Tribe, and the Kalispel Tribe all lie on the Upper Columbia watershed and speak Interior Salish dialects. These five tribes collaborate on several inter-tribal initiatives for natural resources and fisheries management under the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT). The Nez Perce Tribe to the south lies within the Snake River watershed, and tribal members speak

a Sahaptin dialect. All six tribes operate successful tribal casinos, although there are considerable variations in size of facilities and distance to urban populations.

Figure 1: American Indian Tribes within 100 mile radius of Spokane, WA.



The salmon-based economies of the Upper Columbia tribes ended with the completion of the Grand Coulee dam, while the Snake River retains a reduced wild salmon population that is able to survive passage through fish ladders at several dams along the lower Columbia and Snake rivers. All six tribes maintain ties to salmon and fishing along the Columbia River, and the five UCUT tribes operate fisheries programs that produce kokanee salmon for each reservation's streams, lakes and rivers.

The six tribes had established successful indigenous economies prior to contact with Europeans, followed by complex historic struggles in each tribes' unique relationship with the United States to establish reservations within limited boundaries, and subsequent further diminishment of reservation lands. The federal treaties with the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe were not initially ratified, and major segments of each reservation was taken away in the final reservation boundaries. Two tribes, the Nez Perce and the Coeur d'Alene, were dramatically impacted by failed or limiting treaties and allotment under the Indian General Allotment Act (1887) that appropriated remaining tribal lands for non-Indians (see Morrissey, 1997, pp. 62-96).

The 2010 total reservation population was 35,293 (See Table 1), but less than a third of those living on the reservations identify themselves as American Indian/Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) according to US Census Data. Both the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the Nez Perce Tribe reservation lands were diminished from initial treaties and impacted by the Indian General Allotment Act, so although these reservations have

the largest total populations, these two reservations have less than 20% AI/AN populations living within the reservation boundaries.

Table 1. *Inland Northwest American Indian Reservations 2010 Population*

	2010 Total Rez Pop	2010 AIAN	2010 Percent AIAN
Coeur d' Alene Tribe, ID	6,760	1,247	18.4%
Colville Confederated Tribes, WA	7,687	4,616	60.0%
Kalispel Tribe, WA	231	185	80.1%
Kootenai Tribe, ID	82	65	79.3%
Nez Perce Tribe, ID	18,437	2,310	12.5%
Spokane Tribe, WA	2,096	1,661	79.2%
Total Population	35,293	10,084	28.6%

The four remaining tribes were less impacted by allotment, and most of these reservation lands remain in trust status as tribal lands or are trust lands held by individual tribal members. Two of these reservations have small land bases, the Kalispel Tribe in Washington and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Populations for these two reservations were around 80% American Indian/Alaskan Native in 2010. The two remaining tribes, the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Spokane Tribe are large reservations of mountains and forested lands. The Colville Confederated Tribe is approximately 1.4 million acres, the size of the state of Connecticut, but has an AI/AN population that is 60.0 % of the total, while the Spokane Tribe is 79.2% AI/AN. Even this population data reflects the on-going struggle within each reservation to support and maintain a sustainable American Indian population, culture, and reservation community.

3.2. Tribal Governments and Business Enterprises in the Inland Northwest

Tribal governments for these six tribes reflect different tribal-specific histories, cultures and evolving powers for each tribe, now carried out through tribal constitutions that identify a general council (all tribal members over age 18) that meets annually, and a business council (tribal government) that conducts the business of the tribe as the elected government. Framed by tribal constitutions each tribal government expanded dramatically after the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act (ISDEAA, 1975) which identified a failed federal policy that did not support effective self-governance, and actions to address that failure. As Cornell and Kalt (2010, p. 3) state:

...the federally-recognized American Indian tribes have operated since the mid-1970s under formal policies of self-determination. These translate into

extensive powers of internal self-government. Like a U.S. state, tribes are subject to federal law, but operate under their own constitutions, administer their own judicial systems, and implement self-managed tax and regulatory regimes. Vis-à-vis other federal, state and municipal governments, tribes in the current era of self-determination expect and demand government-to-government relations, rather than assuming the earlier role of a dependent subject to paternalistic management by non-Indian governments.

Under self-determination the Colville Confederated Tribes, for example, grew from a tribal government staff of less than ten employees in 1972 to more than 500 by 1980, and in 2005 employed around 2,000 people through its tribal government and diversified businesses operated through the Colville Tribal Enterprises Corporation (CTEC) that include a timber mill, plywood and pole plants, four grocery stores and a credit union (Marchand, 2005).

By 2007 all six reservations had expanded very successful tribal governments to offer a wide range of services to tribal members and the surrounding region. The Coeur d'Alene tribe's wellness center, for example, is a public facility with multiple swimming pools, gyms, weight and training rooms, as well as meeting rooms and supporting offices for physical therapists, health care providers and human services programs. This facility is open not only to tribal members but to all residents of the region.

The six tribes also operate successful businesses both for profit and to serve and meet the needs of rural reservation residents. The Colville Confederated Tribes operates four grocery stores in each rural district center on the reservation by providing access to quality foods at the reasonable prices of a larger store, but also operates a fleet of 40 houseboats to rent to tourists, 60-foot power boats that sleep up to 14 people each with media centers, barbecue grills, kitchen, and jacuzzi facilities on board. The Colville Confederated Tribes and the Spokane Tribe have extensive timber holdings within their reservations, and both operate sustainable yield forestry, wildlife management and fisheries programs that employ tribal members and others that also promote hunting and fishing subsistence activities on the reservation.

Just as many of the programs, services and business operations of the tribes serve both tribal members and residents from the surrounding rural areas, employment at these facilities is significant with these rural regions, and both American Indian and non-Indian employees benefit from these programs. Employment in tribal government and related services and businesses in 2007 comprised 4,508 jobs (See Table 2). All six tribes have Tribal Employment Rights Organizations (TERO) programs to support hiring American Indians based on treaty rights, and policies to support tribal education and employment training. Employment in tribal government reflects the long-term impacts of these policies, where 3,122 employees (69.3%) are American Indian, and 1,386 employees (30.7%) are non-Indians. Although the total employment is less significant at the regional scale, within the rural areas of these reservations tribes are often the largest or one of the largest employers.

Table 2: *Inland Northwest Tribal Government and Tribal Enterprise Employment, 2007*

	Non-Indian		American Indian		Total Workers
	Workers	%	Workers	%	
Coeur d'Alene Tribe	238	52.4%	216	47.6%	454
Colville Confederated Tribes	868	28.8%	2,150	71.2%	3,018
Kalispel Tribe	277	63.2%	161	36.8%	438
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho	23	43.4%	30	56.6%	53
Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho	181	32.0%	384	68.0%	565
Spokane Tribe	76	18.2%	342	81.8%	418
TOTAL	1,386	30.7%	3,122	69.3%	4,508

Source: Speaks, 2009. NW Regional BIA Labor Force Statistics Handout

3.3 Tribal Casinos in the Inland Northwest

Gaming is a traditional cultural activity within the six tribes, and both the Spokane Tribe and the Colville Confederated Tribes initiated Bingo and Casino style gaming prior to agreements negotiated under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA, 1988). Over time these tribes have agreed to operate under the IGRA through compacts with their respective states, as have the four remaining tribes, and all operate successful casinos and resort facilities. The largest casino, located in Airway Heights, is operated on tribal trust lands held by the Kalispel Tribe (Washington) just west of Spokane City. Two small dots on the map (Figure 1) west of Spokane show the tribal trust land where the Northern Qwest Casino is located and a proposed casino on trust land owned by the Spokane Tribe. The Northern Qwest Casino opened in December 2000 as a 58,000 square foot casino with 400 video lottery terminals and a buffet restaurant (Kalispel Tribal Planning Department, 2011). These facilities were expanded by 2011 to include 481,000 square feet for public use, a seven story AAA 4 Diamond 250 room hotel, Spa, and Restaurant; 14 food and beverage establishments; multiple entertainment venues, a six story 1,600 stall parking garage, and 22,000 square feet of conference space (Kalispel, Tribal Planning Department, 2011). The Average Daily Attendance at the casino facilities was 7,500 persons for 2010. The Kalispel Tribe as a result of casino revenues employs approximately 2,000 people and has donated over \$5 million to local charities by 2010; purchases roughly \$1.1 million of local goods and services every month; and has completed a 7,700 square feet, \$18 million Wellness Center on their rural reservation that offers medical, dental, child care, and recreational opportunities for the tribal members and the surrounding community (Kalispel Tribal Planning Department, 2011).

The Coeur d'Alene tribal casino also includes a 300-room guest hotel, resort, convention and gaming center, plus an adjoining world class 18 hole golf course, and is undergoing major expansion. The Nez Perce tribe and the Kalispel tribe of Idaho offer slightly smaller casinos with resort hotels and conference facilities, while the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Spokane Tribe operate even smaller casinos in more rural areas, but with high recreational tourist potential.

The 2007 BIA Labor Force Study (Speaks, 2009) also identified employment in tribally operated casinos as a separate category, and identified a total of 3,001 jobs (see Table 3). Within these tribal casinos 2,217 jobs (73.9%) were held by non-Indians, and only 784 jobs (26.1%) were held by American Indian workers. Tribes in the area continue to expand casino operations with great success, and have also instituted training programs for tribal members and the greater community for gaming jobs. Despite these efforts, tribal employment in gaming remains low. These are generally well paying jobs, and contribute to the year-round employment, especially in more rural regions subject to large seasonal shifts in employment.

Table 3: *Inland Northwest Tribal Casino Employment, 2007*

	Non-Indian		American Indian		Total Workers
	Workers	%	Workers	%	
Coeur d'Alene Tribe	586	70.5%	245	29.5%	831
Colville Confederated Tribes	179	52.2%	164	47.8%	343
Kalispel Tribe	1,082	87.3%	158	12.7%	1,240
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho	156	97.5%	4	2.5%	160
Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho	89	34.5%	169	65.5%	258
Spokane Tribe	125	74.0%	44	26.0%	169
TOTAL	2,217	73.9%	784	26.1%	3,001

Source: Speaks, 2009. NW Regional BIA Labor Force Statistics Handout

The combined employment within tribal governments, tribal enterprises and tribal casinos in 2007 totaled almost 7,500 workers. The total reservation population for the six tribes in 2010 was 35,293, but only 10,084 (28.6 %) of those were American Indian. Tribal governments, tribal casinos, and increasingly successful economic and community development projects now form a new and stable component of rural regional economies. Opportunities to overcome a negative historic and often ongoing conflicts between American Indian tribes and Anglo communities exist as tribal success creates new and emerging roles for tribes, tribal enterprises, and tribal member owned businesses within rural and regional economies.

3.4 American Indian/Rural County Prosperity Indicators

A long-time goal of northwest tribal leaders has been to achieve parity with the non-Indian economies. With the expansion of tribal government and the successes of tribal enterprises, especially tribal gaming, that goal is much closer to being reached, although persistent poverty on reservations remains, especially in the more rural areas (Leichenko, 2003). Revenues and jobs created by tribal casino operations and tribal governments in rural areas are changing the economies of the six tribes, but although the assessment of the 2000 census data indicates improvements, the tribes continue to reflect higher levels of poverty on reservations than surrounding counties.

Prosperity indicators for the six reservations were used to compare the total reservation population with the AI/AN population on the reservation, and with the county or counties the reservations lie in. The prosperity characteristics as used by Isserman et al. (2009) are: median income, per capita income, percentage of the drop-out rate for those over age 25, percentage of unemployment, and percentage below poverty. Even for the total populations living on reservations, the "total" residents reflect greater prosperity across all indicators than the AI/AN only population. In some cases, median incomes are close, and the Spokane Tribe AI/AN only population has a higher median income than the total reservation population, but per capita incomes are all lower. The drop-out rates are lower for AI/AN populations on the Spokane Tribe and the Kootenai Tribe, but unemployment rates are higher for all reservations except the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, which has a small total population and all tribal members seeking employment are working.

The final assessment of prosperity indicators was to compare total reservation and AI/AN on-reservation populations for the six tribes with the indicators for the county or counties that include the reservations. The results (See Tables 4 and 5) show a difference in predominantly rural counties (Lewis, Boundary, and Benewah in Idaho; Ferry and Pend Oreille in Washington), where reservation populations were more similar to the rural population compared with the larger and more urban counties (Okanogan and Stevens counties in Washington; Nez Perce and Kootenai in Idaho). For the county populations, Okanogan County, Washington, has the greatest AI/AN population at 4,524 (11.4%), while Ferry County, Washington, has the greatest percent AI/AN at 17.8%.

AI/AN on-reservation populations have higher median incomes than the county for Benewah County, Boundary County, and Lewis County, Idaho, but for no counties in Washington. In all cases, AI/AN on-reservation populations are not too different than county median incomes. This is not the case for per capita income, which is generally lower for AI/AN on-reservations population, with the exception of the Kootenai Tribe and Boundary County.

Drop-out rates for AI/AN populations are higher in all cases except the Kootenai Tribe and Boundary County, Idaho, where small numbers and a history of strong tribal programs encourage educational attainment. Unemployment rates show a great disparity, with AI/AN on-reservation populations commonly double and as much as six times higher than the surrounding county, as the Kalispel Tribe in Washington (29.5%) compared to Pend Oreille County (5.1%). The exception again is Boundary County, Idaho, compared to the Kootenai Tribe, in part because of lower numbers of tribal members.

Table 4. *Populations for Rural Counties and Reservations of the Inland Northwest, 2000*

Jurisdiction	Total Population	AIAN	% AIAN
Coeur d' Alene Tribe, ID	5,778	756	13.1
Kootenai Co, ID	108,685	1,393	1.3
Benewah Co, ID	9,171	857	9.3
Colville Confederated Tribes, WA	7,034	3,779	53.7
Ferry Co, WA	7,260	1,289	17.8
Okanagon Co, WA	39,564	4,524	11.4
Kalispel Tribe, WA	90	84	93.3
Pend Oreille Co, WA	11,732	317	2.7
Kootenai Tribe, ID	101	96	95.0
Boundary Co, ID	9,871	523	5.3
Bonner Co, ID	36,835	297	0.8
Nez Perce Tribe, ID	16,154	1,885	11.7
Lewis Co, ID	3,747	144	3.8
Nez Perce Co, ID	37,410	1,854	5.0
Spokane Tribe, WA	1,451	1,213	83.6
Stevens Co, WA	40,066	2,331	5.8

Poverty level rates are also higher for AIAN on-reservation populations than the County totals, with the exception of the Kootenai Tribe and Boundary County, Idaho. In almost all cases, tribes seem to lag behind in these indicators, and despite their successes in government and tribal enterprises, including tribal casino operations, great disparities remain, and especially for the more rural or isolated reservations, poverty remains persistent as a condition of rural reservation life.

4.0 Conclusions

Despite the persistence of poverty on American Indian Tribes in the Inland Pacific Northwest, as indicated by the prosperity indicators assessment, the 2000 reservation economies had not overcome decades of economic dependence and distress. It will remain to be seen if data from the periods since 2000 demonstrate movement toward parity, but reservation and rural economies certainly have increased in prosperity with the increases in total tribal government, business and casino employment. This paper has demonstrated that American Indian reservations in rural areas have been or are being transformed by the successful operations of tribal governments and tribal enterprises, and by casino facilities that have brought an infusion of cash and jobs. Tribes have become important players within the rural regional economy, and are now often in the lead in new innovations and investment in rural facilities and business operations. They have become leaders in resort and recreational

establishments, and their re-investment in homes, education, language and cultural knowledge is reframing rural economies and rural regional histories as tribes reassert their influence and partner across rural areas for more successful and sustainable development.

Table 5. *Prosperity for Rural Counties and Reservations of the Inland Northwest, 2000*

	Median Income	Per Capita Income	Drop Out +25(%)	Un- employment Rate (%)	Below Poverty (%)
Coeur d' Alene Tribe, ID	\$34,988	\$16,421	15.7	12.7	15.6
AIAN Only	\$32,619	\$10,023	26.3	18.8	28.5
Kootenai Co, ID	\$37,754	\$18,430	12.7	5.1	10.5
Benewah Co, ID	\$31,517	\$15,285	20.2	12.4	14.1
Colville Confederated Tribes, WA	\$27,826	\$12,185	23.6	21	26.8
AIAN Only	\$28,050	\$10,120	24.8	27.2	27.1
Ferry Co, WA	\$30,388	\$15,019	17.3	7.0	19.0
Okanagon Co, WA	\$29,726	\$14,900	23.4	10.9	21.3
Kalispel Tribe, WA	\$23,125	\$6,973	20.0	28.6	23.4
AIAN Only	\$23,125	\$6,822	20.8	29.5	24.0
Pend Oreille Co, WA	\$31,677	\$15,731	19.0	5.1	18.1
Kootenai Tribe, ID	\$32,000	\$16,291	9.3	3.1	11.9
AIAN Only	\$31,500	\$15,776	8.6	0.0	14.8
Boundary Co, ID	\$31,250	\$14,636	14.4	5.8	15.6
Bonner Co, ID	\$32,803	\$17,263	20.0	4.3	15.5
Nez Perce Tribe, ID	\$30,710	\$14,768	18.4	9.2	14.2
AIAN Only	\$30,463	\$10,369	19.2	13.4	26.0
Lewis Co, ID	\$31,413	\$15,942	15.8	4.9	12.0
Nez Perce Co, ID	\$36,282	\$18,544	14.5	7.3	12.2
Spokane Tribe, WA	\$27,949	\$10,151	25.4	19.8	28.7
AIAN Only	\$29,310	\$9,724	24.9	22.3	28.7
Stevens Co, WA	\$34,673	\$15,895	14.6	5.7	15.9

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ernest Rasmussen, EWU MURP Student; Margo Hill, JD, EWU Director of Tribal Planning; and Dr. Patrick Jones, Director, EWU's Institute for Public Policy for their assistance and support in development of this paper. Partial funding for this research came from a federal grant awarded to Eastern Washington University's Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis from the Small Business Administration, *Accelerating Economic Development in the Inland Pacific Northwest*. Federal grant number: SBAHQ-11-I-0043.

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