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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

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Rupert ready for a C.H.A.N.G.E.

RUPERT-For the last six months, a team of community members in Rupert has been working to complete a community health assessment in order to take steps to reduce obesity in the community. Last week, the team learned that its hard work will be rewarded with a nearly \$9,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare.

A team of concerned community members from Minidoka Memorial Hospital, Minidoka School District, Minidoka County, the City of Rupert, University of Idaho Extension, local business owners, private citizens, and South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) has been working to complete the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) C.H.A.N.G.E. Tool. The C.H.A.N.G.E. tool (which stands for Community Health Assessment aNd Group Evaluation) is a "data collection tool and planning resource for community members who want to make their community a healthier one." The goal of the C.H.A.N.G.E. tool is to identify the assets and needs of a community to find places where policy, system, and environmental changes can be implemented to affect positive and long lasting change in the community.

After completing the community assessment, the team discovered that Rupert has many assets, such as a very active parks and recreation department with services for people of all ages, many local fun run and biking events, a school health nutrition program that has introduced whole grains and more fresh fruits and vegetables, a one- mile long walking path, an active extension and 4-H program that encourages fitness and healthy eating, a community focused hospital with adequate medical staff, an annual community Health Fair, active Family Health

Services clinic, and Public Health District offices. One major need identified by the group was a lack of wellness policies with local employers.

By completing the C.H.A.N.G.E. tool, the community of Rupert is eligible to apply for various grants to implement the changes the team has identified. Recently Minidoka Hospital (on behalf of the C.H.A.N.G.E. Team), in cooperation with SCPHD, applied for and was awarded a grant for \$8,600 to implement an “Employer Wellness Institute.”

Based on the Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce’s “Leadership Institute,” the C.H.A.N.G.E. Team will work with local subject matter experts to provide a series of seminars to Rupert area business owners with the goal of providing them information and sample policies to improve the health and wellness of their employees.

Along with the “Employer Wellness Institute,” the C.H.A.N.G.E. Team will work to develop and implement an electronic Wellness Tool that will allow community members to assess their level of fitness, get recommended beginning fitness programs, and find links to local resources to increase physical fitness.

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