

Office of Performance Evaluations

News Release: Idaho's Legislative Oversight Office Receives Prestigious Award

September 29, 2011

(Boise) The Idaho Legislature's Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) will be honored with the 2011 Alva and Gunnar Myrdal Government Evaluation Award, presented by the American Evaluation Association at its annual conference on November 4 in Anaheim, CA.

The American Evaluation Association has about 6,800 members in the United States and 60 other countries. The Myrdal Government Evaluation Award recognizes an individual or group whose evaluation work is highly influential in government context. In the award's 35 years of history, it has typically been given to individuals. OPE is only the second group to receive this honor.

The award recognizes OPE for the work it completed in the past six years, which led to changes in policy and legislation as well as improvements in agency performance. One of the reports highlighted in the award nomination was the 2009 performance audit of Idaho's transportation department, which recommended better ways of managing Idaho's infrastructure assets and saving millions of dollars in highway construction, maintenance, and preservation.

"This award underscores the role of independent evaluation in government where policies are debated, laws are enacted, programs are implemented, and outputs are tallied," said Rakesh Mohan, director of OPE. "However, not until independent evaluators assess the value of these policies and programs, would the public know how well their tax dollars are being used."

OPE is an independent, non-partisan agency of eight full-time staff. Its mission is to promote confidence and accountability in state government through evaluations of state agencies, programs, and policies. The office's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are used by the legislature to make policy and budget decisions and by agencies to improve performance.

OPE works under the general direction of an eight-member bipartisan committee—the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee—equally divided between the two political parties and the two houses of the legislature. OPE receives its evaluation assignments from this oversight committee but conducts all evaluations independently.

"We have been fortunate to have the full support of the legislative leadership and the oversight committee, the cooperation of the governor and agency officials, and the media's interest in our work," said Mohan. "They made this honor possible for us."