



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **IDAHO RECEIVES \$55,000 FROM FITNESS CHALLENGE**

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter announced today that Idaho is receiving \$55,000 from Virgin HealthMiles for winning a national fitness competition against other states. The money will go toward combating childhood obesity in Idaho.

Virgin HealthMiles provides incentive-based healthy lifestyle programs to government entities and corporations in the United States. Governor Otter's team recently won the company's "Capitol Steps Challenge," which raised awareness about America's obesity epidemic by pitting state teams against one another in a fitness competition.

The Governor and First Lady Lori Otter led a team of 40 state agency directors, administrators, and senior-level staff in the Capitol Steps Challenge. From January 1-14, 2009, every member of Governor Otter's team wore a pedometer and uploaded their number of steps taken onto the Virgin HealthMiles Web site for tabulation. The team with the highest average of steps per team member over the two-week period was the winner.

Sean Forbes, president of field operations for Virgin HealthMiles, and Tom Abshire, senior vice president of marketing and customer engagement for Virgin HealthMiles, are presenting the Governor and First Lady with a plaque and award for the team's victory during a **10 a.m. press conference today in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Courtroom at the Borah Building in Boise**. The check itself is coming in the mail on a later date.

Idaho's team went head-to-head with other governors' teams from across the country, including the states of California, Texas, Florida, Utah, North Dakota, Indiana, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Vermont, Alaska, Alabama, Kentucky, and Virginia. In the end, Idaho came in just ahead of the Alaska team led by Governor Sarah Palin.

The Governor said the prize money would be used to highlight the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle for young Idahoans. Each participating state received \$5,000 from Virgin HealthMiles, with a \$50,000 prize to the winning team.

"The result of the Capitol Steps Challenge says a lot about the individuals leading our state agencies," Governor Otter said. "My Cabinet members and I are committed to promoting a healthier Idaho for all our citizens. That commitment was reflected in the result of this competition, but the people of Idaho are the real winners. I thank Virgin HealthMiles for its innovative approach to improving Americans' health."

Dick Armstrong, director of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, will work with other state agencies to determine how the \$55,000 will be allocated among the state's existing nutrition programs and obesity prevention efforts.

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