

# The Proof is in the Planning

*A holistic approach to land use issues provides comprehensive solutions.*

storyEM STAFF photographyERIC JACKY

On any given day, you'll find attorney Joe Borton on the move around the Valley making connections with colleagues, dropping in on Meridian City Hall, or coaching his sons' baseball teams. But he's no average Joe. Last winter he launched Rose Law Group Borton, a company with a new twist on land use and development.

"The response from the community has been very inquisitive and very positive," said Borton from his Boise office.

Borton's innovative concept is to house a group of land use and development experts, planners, attorneys, and project managers all under one roof. Borton reflects pride in

his firm's unique business model, and says he thrives on its fast-paced yet friendly work environment.

"Clients get better, quicker solutions. It's a win-win for the client and the municipalities we work with," said Borton. The new firm has already initiated work on several dozen development projects totaling over 10,000 acres of Treasure Valley property.

His team has quickly made its mark as the state's only one-stop shop for land use and zoning—a departure from the traditional attorneys-only model. "This saves clients so much time, and it spares them the logistical angst that can complicate land use planning

projects," said Borton. The practice also focuses on real estate development, business litigation, and local politics.

Borton's legal background is in litigation practice, with dozens of cases on a wide array of business and employment matters. His expertise processing land use entitlements, coupled with his experience in local government, make him uniquely qualified to launch and lead the firm. Borton, who was raised in Idaho, practiced law locally in the Treasure Valley for eleven years prior to opening the new firm. He was elected to the Meridian city council in 2006 and became president in 2007. He remains active in local land use politics and legislative activities as an elected official and land use attorney.

To ensure responsible growth practices, Borton says his company focuses on several factors early on. "We let the community know what we want to do and get their input right from the start. And with every project, we do everything possible to mitigate the impact on the environment—focusing on public utility, transportation, roads and other factors," he said.

Borton says that his firm constantly strives to encourage a number of measures toward responsible growth in all of its projects, such as energy efficient design and landscaping to reduce water consumption.

The company is currently working with Eagle's North Star Charter School to achieve LEED certification for its new facility, which is scheduled to open near the Legacy development in Fall 2009. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project meets the highest green building and performance measures. LEED buildings are recognized for being environmentally responsible and healthy places to live and work. The buildings reduce waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

"The LEED standard is a great model for the kids," explained Borton. "It's a win-win for the next generation. They want to know what the certification means and how it was accomplished. We can show them that efficient use of resources can reduce our carbon footprint." **em**

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