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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **VRT adds Franklin-Smeed route to provide service to social service agencies in Nampa-Caldwell area**

BOISE – (May 31, 2011) – [Valley Regional Transit](#) (VRT) is adding a new "pilot" bus route called the Route #55 Franklin-Smeed to provide transportation services to key social service agencies along Franklin Boulevard and in the Sky Ranch business park. The new route begins operation on Monday, June 6, 2011.

The Route #55 Franklin-Smeed is a pilot project made possible by a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, which was awarded to the [Idaho State Independent Living Council](#) (SILC). The grant will provide funding for the new bus route for six months, and VRT and the City of Caldwell officials are seeking long-term funding for the route.

"The route serves some residential areas in Caldwell, ties into the main bus routes for Caldwell and Nampa on Blaine and Cleveland streets, and loops over to a number of social service agencies including the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the Veterans Administration and the Idaho Department of Labor," said Mary Barker, service development manager for VRT. "The route also serves the Vineyard Senior Center and Canyon West Health and Rehabilitation Center."

Adds Robbi Barrutia, Executive Director of the SILC, "The purpose of the Medicaid Infrastructure grant project is to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Our goal at the SILC is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities so that they can live independently. The pilot project will provide a key transportation link to the agencies that assist individuals with disabilities as well as everyone in the community."

Unemployment levels in Canyon County have been hovering in the 11.5 percent range, according to Idaho Department of Labor officials, so the Job Service office in Caldwell has been busy serving Canyon County citizens.

"We are very pleased with the new Franklin-Smeed bus route," added Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas. "Citizens will now have better access to the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, Job Service and the Veteran's Administration offices."

Information about the Route #55 will be available at the social service agencies, on the VRT website, [www.valleyride.org](http://www.valleyride.org) or by calling RideLine at 345-RIDE(7433).

Riders and area residents are encouraged to complete the Route #55 Comment Card to help VRT, SILC and the City of Caldwell assess the pilot project. The Comment Cards can be found on the buses and at the social service agencies along the route.

To set up interviews for this story, please contact Mark Carnopis at VRT, (208) 846-8547 ext. 4215, or contact Robbi Barrutia, Executive Director of the SILC, (208) 334-3800.

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