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## Jobs, Homes and Quality of Life

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and How TitleOne Is Helping the Cause *- Page 94*



{Spotlight}

# Jobs, Homes and Quality of Life

Why Homeownership Is Booming in Idaho,  
and How TitleOne Is Helping the Cause

by Maria Patterson



Idaho has a lot going for it these days. Just ask Mark Tidd, CEO of Boise-based TitleOne Corporation, with 13 locations serving 14 counties throughout the state. From affordability to lifestyle, Idaho's allure is attracting many out-of-state homebuyers, drawn by the promise of an all-around better quality of life. In this exclusive interview, Tidd shares just why Idaho is booming, and how his firm supports the rise in homeownership by playing a key role at the closing table.



Scott Thiel, Chief Title Officer



Mark Tidd, CEO

**Maria Patterson:** First off, tell us how your career path led to your current role at the helm of TitleOne.

**Mark Tidd:** I had gone to work for a national construction engineering company right after school. They shipped me off to Virginia, then to the West Coast where I worked in the Bay Area. My wife and I were about to have our first son and we spent a lot of time thinking about where we wanted to raise our kids and decided to go back home to Idaho. I started subscribing to the Idaho Sunday paper and saw a job for a comptroller position at a small title agency. I then became the CFO of a larger title agency that was in the process of merging three regional agencies within Idaho.

One customer I had who was a partner in a large commercial brokerage firm asked if I ever thought about going out on my own. Six months later, I formed TitleOne. We opened for business in July 2000 with 17 employees.

**MP:** How has the firm grown since then?

**MT:** Over the 17 years we have been in business, with the recession right in the middle, we've grown from a single county title agency to a statewide title company. We serve 14 counties out of 13 offices with 220 employees. We joined Title Resource Group, a subsidiary of Realty, in 2016.



**MP:** Tell us about growth in your state. Why are people moving to Idaho?

**MT:** The No. 1 reason is the quality of life. A lot of our lifestyle centers around recreation—skiing, hiking, mountain biking, world-renowned fly fishing, and more. Most of our migration comes from California and Washington. When you compare commute times to work here to those in Seattle or the Bay Area, there's no comparison. Here, you have more time to do things, and great things to do.

The other big factor is affordability, starting with housing. We have so many people from other areas selling their homes and coming here and bringing cash to buy a house. Thirty percent of our clients are from out of state. You can get much more for your money here.

**MP:** Is Idaho prepared to accommodate this influx of new residents?

**MT:** Yes. In the last four to five years, we've seen a big increase in jobs. There was a period of time last year where we led the nation in job growth. A lot of large, privately owned companies have moved into the state. HP has its laser jet division based out of Boise. Micron Technology has its headquarters in Boise. Albertsons is a homegrown company that has had its headquarters here forever.

**MP:** Have the demographics of homebuyers changed over the last five years?

**MT:** We see homebuyers from every demographic. We see a lot of grandparents who want to be closer to their children and grandchildren, and baby boomers looking to retire. And



**Amy Beck, Escrow Officer**

on the flip side, we see a lot of boomerang kids—those who are moving back home in their early 30s. They may have left the state to start a career and now want to come back home and raise their kids in Idaho. With all the folks moving in from out of state, we rank high nationally in net migration. From the closing standpoint, we've been able to accommodate out-of-state clients by taking advantage of tools such as electronic signatures to make the process easier while in transit.

**MP:** How has the boom in Idaho impacted the nature of closing real estate deals?

**MT:** The biggest impact is the sheer volume of transactions that we now have. This has helped us generate the resources to make sure we have the most current technology, and has also led us to take a slightly different approach to closing deals—it has motivated us to provide more efficient closings and work with customers across the entire state.

**MP:** How have you equipped your team to create this level of efficiency while maintaining quality?

**MT:** We made a fairly large investment in 2012 in a new paperless production software that is workflow-driven. This allowed us to continue to drive our process to be more efficient and customer-friendly. We've got the right workforce in Idaho, as well. Our team is well educated, and, along with industry experience, that has enabled us to anticipate the challenges coming at us. While from the customer's

## Peace of Mind = More Business

TitleOne customers trust the firm to effectively handle closings, allowing them to focus on what they do best: serving clients and building business.

*"TitleOne's culture is totally focused on the customer, so they will always go out of their way to make sure the transaction is seamless for buyers and sellers. I never have to worry about things getting done correctly. TitleOne employees truly function as a team. They're also willing to go above and beyond, even if it means signing transactions outside of business hours, or at an offsite location. I've had TitleOne escrow officers come to clients' offices, homes and even the hospital when circumstances required flexibility."*

**MELINDA MCCASLIN**  
Branch Manager  
Guild Mortgage

*"What I love most about TitleOne is their consistent, error-free process. In the hundreds of transactions I have conducted with them, they always ensure that any arising issues are resolved prior to closing, making me look good even if I've made a mistake. They jump through hoops to ensure that my questions are answered, my clients are happy and that I never have to worry that the ball is being dropped. They execute precisely every single time."*

**KIT FITZGERALD, GRI**  
REALTOR®  
Equity Northwest Real Estate

*"We rely on TitleOne's services in many facets of our business, from market and title research to title reports and escrow services. These services are essential to our ability to make informed, in-market decisions. Working with TitleOne has been instrumental in our success in Idaho."*

**STEVE KLINGMAN**  
President  
Hayden Homes

*"What sets TitleOne apart is the quality of their personnel. In particular, we work with Scott Darling and Scott Thiel ('The Scotts') in the Boise office. Their level of experience and acumen within their roles enables them to operate not just as service providers, but also as trusted advisors. We can call them and ask their advice on how to structure a transaction, set up concurrent escrows, must-way closings, and make our counterparts comfortable with complicated transactions, title matters, or issues of lien priority—and TitleOne is not only able to say, 'Yes, we can handle this,' but 'Yes, and here are two or three ways to accomplish the goal.' This level of expertise and professionalism exceeds by a significant margin what I have experienced within the title and escrow industry."*

**MIKE BROWN**  
Co-President  
Real Estate Investment and Development  
LocalConstruct

perspective, certain situations may feel like a surprise, we can respond quickly and provide a good solution.

**MP:** How has regulatory compliance changed the way you do business?

**MT:** The regulatory and compliance onslaught has certainly affected us. The trickle down from Dodd-Frank has a huge impact on us, along with TRID. I think we did a really good job of getting out in front of TRID with our customers, REALTORS® and lenders. Closing disclosure timing was a big part of it and we played a major role in educating REALTORS® on this requirement. We learned a lot, so by the time we had to implement TRID, it was slightly less painful...but not without pain, for sure. Even today, there are some companies in the closing world that interpret the rules differently. We still continue to be proactive about education with our clients and have constant, proactive communication with lenders, even though it's been 18 months since TRID was rolled out.

**MP:** How does TitleOne work with real estate professionals and their clients to help ensure smooth closings?

**MT:** We truly want to make a difference in people's lives, starting with our team, so we provide a great culture. When you have a team that's all



Christy Gerber, Escrow Officer

on the same page, it makes the closing experience better for our clients, as well as their clients.

Our clients, REALTORS® and lenders are putting trust in us to take great care of their customers. Our goal is to deliver an unforgettable experience for their client so they continue to get referrals and so they can continue to have the confidence that every time we handle a transaction, it will be a great experience for their clients and for them. At the end of the closing, we hope we truly provide peace of mind and generate a high level of trust.

**MP:** Why are education and technology a big part of what you do?

**MT:** Education allows us to share our expertise with our customers in a variety of areas, and also helps our clients be the best real estate

agent or lender they can be. We just added short video vignettes to our website on a variety of topics about the closing process that REALTORS® can email to their customers. Our website is a big part of our history. A year after we started the company, we were able to deliver online property information—no one else was doing that at the time. This marked us as innovators in the Boise area.

**MP:** How does what you do at TitleOne help generate real estate business in the market overall?

**MT:** It goes back to peace of mind. What we hope for at the end of the day is to provide enough confidence to real estate professionals so that they know we will take great care of their clients, which means they don't have to spend as much time focused on the closing. This provides them with more time to do what they do, which is take care of their clients and sell homes. There is a real, quantifiable time savings when you have a relationship built on trust. That has a real monetary value.

**MP:** What's in store for the future of TitleOne?

**MT:** Today, we are a statewide title company, but our vision is to become the leading title company in the Northwest. We're really excited about what's ahead. **RE**

For more information, please visit [www.titleonecorp.com](http://www.titleonecorp.com).

## Why Idaho?

The real estate market is booming in Idaho as a variety of demographic groups migrate to the state for many reasons, such as:

1. Idaho leads the nation in job creation (BVEP, MVEDC and the Department of Commerce for the city of Boise)
2. Boise was ranked as the No. 2 best state capitol to live in (WalletHub, Feb. 2017)
3. Boise was ranked as the No. 12 best place to live (U.S. News & World Report, Feb. 2017)
4. Meridian, Idaho, was ranked as the No. 1 place to find the newest homes for sale (Curbed, Feb. 2017)
5. Boise was ranked among the top 25 performing cities in the U.S. (Miliken Institute, Dec. 2016)



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