

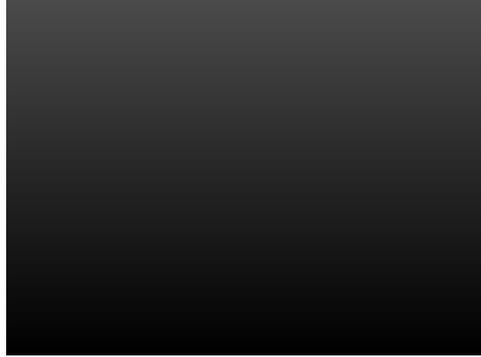
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Melaleuca Celebrates \$1 Billion in Annual Sales

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IDAHO FALLS, Idaho -- The Idaho Falls community is celebrating the first billion dollar business in the eastern half of the state. Health and wellness company Melaleuca reached the major milestone seconds after 5:08 p.m. on Tuesday.

State and local leaders called it a success story that shows the ease of doing business in Idaho.

The celebration was a far cry from when the company reached \$1 million and simply wrote it on a blackboard.

It looked like midnight on New Year's Eve, but consider it an early Christmas gift for eastern Idaho; a billion dollar gift, that is.

"(It's) great for Idaho to have another billion dollar company," said Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter.

CEO Frank VanderSloot said it doesn't mean the global business has arrived. It's size still pales in comparison to competitors like Procter and Gamble.

"All it means, really, is our boat floats," said VanderSloot. "We've got liftoff. It means things work, the model works, our products are in high demand."

But it's good news for the Gem State too. The milestone brought a video message from U.S. Senator Jim Risch in Washington D.C., and Gov. Otter and Lt. Gov. Brad Little all the way from Boise.

"In tough times, success is a wonderful thing to celebrate," said Little.

"That's going to tell a lot of companies with hopes and dreams about their future, that Idaho is the place to be," said Otter.

VanderSloot said Melaleuca has benefited from the business-friendly attitude of Idaho Falls, but the city is also benefiting.

Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce President Rob Chiles said not many cities of 57,000 can boast a billion dollar business.

"As the company continues to grow, they continue to bring more people to the area, and just make the economy here much better," said Chiles.

Many at the event said they fully expect to be back within the next five years to celebrate Melaleuca's second billion dollars.

Melaleuca started in 1985 with eight workers. It now employs 3,200 people worldwide.