



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 4, 2013  
13:01

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### **GOVERNOR TAPS RETIRING ISP DIRECTOR TO ASSESS IDAHO SCHOOL SAFETY**

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter announced today that **Colonel Jerry Russell**, who is retiring as Idaho State Police director this month, has agreed to assess and recommend possible safety and security improvements in Idaho's public schools.

Russell will work with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna's Department of Education and local law enforcement and school leaders to analyze the state of security in Idaho schools in the wake of the December 14<sup>th</sup> shootings of students and staff at Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School.

"Like everyone else, that heartbreaking tragedy made me think first and foremost about the safety of my own grandchildren and all the students in Idaho's schools," Governor Otter said. "That's why I've asked Idaho's 'top cop' to take on one more job for me."

Russell is exceptionally well qualified for the task. He served 26 years with the Oregon State Police, rising from patrol officer to bureau commander before becoming chief security officer for Idaho's Fourth Judicial District in 2001. He became an exercise design specialist for the Idaho Military Division in 2003, and was deputy director for operations at the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security from February 2004 until being appointed Idaho State Police director in January 2007.

Assessing and recommending security improvements at Idaho's schools will require a thorough assessment of existing safe school laws and policies, as well as evaluating "best practices" and promising ideas being used at schools both within and outside Idaho. Russell's focus as ISP director on building strong collaborative relationships with local law enforcement agencies throughout Idaho will help facilitate that process.

"It's an extremely sensitive issue and an extremely important project, one that requires a great deal of attention to detail," Russell said. "The first thing I'll do is take a hard look at what's out there and determine what needs to be done."

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