

CEO Speaker Series

THURSDAY, December 8, 2016

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Energy Innovation Laboratory
775 University Boulevard, Idaho Falls

Morning Coffee With

Dr. Mark Peters

Laboratory Director, Idaho National Laboratory
President, Battelle Energy Alliance, LLC



Idaho National Laboratory (INL) is the nation's leading center for nuclear energy research and development, working specifically in the areas of energy, national security, science and environment, and is one of only ten multi-program national laboratories owned by the U.S. Department of Energy. Geographically, with nearly 570,000 acres of operational site in the Arco desert, INL is the largest laboratory facility. Employing nearly 4,000 scientists, engineers and support personnel, INL is the fifth largest employer in Idaho and significantly impacts the economy of not only eastern Idaho, but the entire state.

Dr. Mark Peters is the Laboratory Director at Idaho National Laboratory with responsibilities for management and integration of a large, multipurpose national laboratory, with a mission focus in nuclear energy, national and homeland security, energy and environmental science and technology. Previously, Peters was the Associate Laboratory Director for Energy and Global Security at Argonne National Laboratory, where he was responsible for the management and integration of the laboratory's science and technology portfolio, strategic planning, Laboratory Directed Research and Development program, technology development and commercialization.

Peters held an adjunct faculty appointment in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Northwestern University and was a senior fellow in the Northwestern Argonne Institute of Science and Engineering from 2013—2015. He serves on several advisory boards and councils including several that support innovation and economic development. He is an active member of professional organizations including the Geological Society of America, where he served as a member of the Committee on Geology and Public Policy, as well as the American Nuclear Society, and the Mineralogical Society of America.

Dr. Peters received his doctorate in geophysical sciences from the University of Chicago and his bachelor's degree in geology from Auburn University. He also completed the Strategic Laboratory Leadership Program at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.



Michelle Holt, CEO
Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce

CEO One-On-One

“The Chamber of Commerce is a benefit. Membership helps us gain business clarity to define opportunities. We are grateful for community support, and Chamber participation is one way that we give back.”

Dr. Mark Peters

In preparation for our upcoming CEO Speaker Series Event – Morning Coffee with Dr. Mark Peters, Director of Idaho National Laboratory and President of Battelle Energy Alliance, LLC, I sat down with Mark to find out a little more about the leader behind Idaho National Laboratory. INL is the nation’s leading center for nuclear energy research and development, working specifically in the areas of energy, national security, science and environment. Dr. Peters smiled and said, “When we come to work every day we are saving the world”.

INL is the fifth largest employer in Idaho with nearly 4,000 employees and more than 350 interns. With a \$1Billion dollar operating budget and more than \$130M dollars in spending with Idaho’s small businesses, INL has a significant impact on the economy of not only eastern Idaho, but the entire state. Dr. Peters said, “INL is actually growing. We hired 500 employees last year and are on track to do the same this year.”

Dr. Mark Peters came to INL in late 2015 and was fast approaching his first anniversary at the time of our interview. Dr. Peters serves as a senior advisor to the Department of Energy on nuclear energy technologies, research and development programs, and nuclear waste policy. In 2015, Dr. Peters was honored as a Fellow of the American Nuclear Society for outstanding accomplishments in the area of nuclear science and technology.

I was very curious about the unique role that Dr. Peters balances serving as both the Laboratory Director for INL, and President of Battelle Energy Alliance, LLC – the INL’s Prime Contractor. He very humbly replied, “In doing my job as Director, I am fulfilling my President’s role.” He did acknowledge the high level of accountability that is required in his dual roles. “I am accountable to the LLC Board, the Laboratory complex, and the marketplace. I share that accountability with our outstanding Leadership Team. It is important to surround yourself with really talented people.”

To that end, Dr. Peters shared how he determines the best path forward for his organization. “Strategy and Focus. Re-define the strategy and focus on a few that are important, then address the challenges. There is a big premium on output. We need to operate well. This is a high hazard field. Issues happen, but we owe it to our employees to do that well, keeping them safe.” When I asked more about how he manages such a dynamic organization, his most telling response of “Don’t react. Clarify first.” told me a lot about the kind of leader Dr. Peters is.

We discussed the significant number of strategic partnerships, both public and private that the INL maintains, and Dr. Peters again referenced the importance of strategy. “The partnership needs to make sense for both organizations. Trust is key, and is developed face to face. If you trust each other, you can go a long way. We have a talented team, led by Amy Lientz in External Partnerships, developing those relationships.” This ties with Peters’ most important business principle for the INL organization; “Excellence and collaboration. Inside and outside the Lab.” Dr. Peters went on to say, “Our most important role is to give back to the community.”

Most impressive to me were Dr. Peters’ comments about the biggest mistake he made in business. “Early in my career, I mimicked my mentors instead of being myself. As you mature you learn it’s more important to be you. Take pieces from those mentors, but learn to be you. Lead in your own style. Go with your instinct.”

When I asked Dr. Peters if he would do anything differently, knowing what he knows now, his reply made me laugh. “I love what I do. Working with great people. Things have just worked out. But if I wasn’t here, I’d want to be a General Manager for an NFL Football Team. I love just being around football. Go Bears! We’ll see what they do this year.”

CEO Speaker Series Presented By:

