COEUR d’Alene - A website providing data about Kootenai County that is intended to help businesses, individuals and organizations make more informed decisions was unveiled Tuesday to the public.

The website, located at www.kootenaicountyindicators.ewu.edu, will serve as a tool providing the most current data.

The site includes information related to the people and demographics of Kootenai County and the specific areas of health, education, environment, recreation and tourism, economic vitality, housing and transportation.

"You now have a community mirror," said Patrick Jones, executive director of Eastern Washington University’s Institute of Public Policy and Economic Analysis. "This is what life is like, at least as far as we can measure."

The information is neutral and accurate, and the site is designed to make it easy to find, he said.

"We spent a lot of time doing data checks," he said, as he gave a tour of the website. "A goal is to allow people to find what they want in three clicks."

It's called the Kootenai Community Indicators Project, and the public got a first look at The Coeur d'Alene Resort.

The project was developed by EWU, the Inland Northwest Community Foundation and United Way of Kootenai County.

Caryl Johnston, United Way executive director, said, "Having this site in our community will help us to showcase where we are doing very well as a community, as well as help us to take a look at where there are areas we may want to improve."

Users can drill down in the "people" category to find population growth, average household size and voting rates, among other indicators.
Similarly, in the economic vitality category users can find income levels, county property tax revenue, labor force participation rates, employment information or bankruptcy numbers.

The education category has 21 of the so-called indicator areas in which the county can be evaluated.

Jones said the site has more than 130 indicators combined from the different data categories.

Depending on the data, the county is compared in many cases with Spokane, Ada County, the state of Idaho, and the U.S.

"The value of the site will make itself apparent over time," Jones said.

Students and university staff members will constantly update the data.

The site will evolve, too, to include more indicators as needed.

"It’s always on, and always current," he said.

Johnston added, "I think it's a really big asset to our community."