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Main Street

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Band & Guard Mount Ft. Keogh 1880 copyright LA Huffman

Miles City is famous for being a “cowboy” town, but ironically, it was the military that created the southeastern Montana town. As more pioneers moved to the frontier and the railroad moved west, the military was brought in to reduce conflicts with the Indians. Originally established as a military camp after the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Miles Town was founded to meet the needs of the soldiers who were under the command of General Nelson Miles. Though drinking, gambling, dancing and prostitution were the earliest forms of entertainment, it didn’t take long for General Miles, a temperance man, to kick the saloon owners out of the fort property.

Trapping, lush grasslands and reliable river transportation brought economic development and “reputable” businesses to the area. The original Miles Town site was officially formed on February 22, 1877. In June of 1878, Miles Town moved to the newly contracted military reservation boundary at the Tongue River, where the modern Miles City is based.

Miles City soon became a stopping place on the long cattle drives from Texas. The railroad came to town in 1881, solidifying Miles City as a transportation focal point and leading cattle market. With the rise of the cattle industry, it seems only fitting that the Montana Stockgrowers Association has its roots in Miles City where it began as the Eastern Montana Stockgrowers Association in 1883, the same time the Montana Wool Growers Association was formed.

Miles City remains a true western town to this day. Once the horse trading and livestock center of the country, today there are weekly livestock auctions and the annual Bucking Horse Sale for rodeo stock buyers and breeders; keeping the spirit of the west alive.

In this issue of **Main Street Montana**, our focus is resilience of the Miles City economy. We’ll take a look at a local business that is thriving, how the Miles Community College is meeting the demands of local business and industry, the opportunities coming to Miles City and the energy development that will benefit southeastern Montana and the rest of the state.



Keith Kelly

Keith Kelly, Commissioner
Department of Labor & Industry

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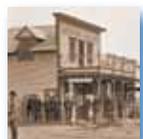
"Street view, Miles City, MT" 1881, Photograph by F. Jay Haynes courtesy of HAYNES FOUNDATION COLLECTION Montana Historical Society Research Center Photograph Archives

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The 2009 spring edition of Main Street Montana is brought to you by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.



The Montana Department of Administration provides administrative, financial, legal and policy guidance to all divisions and programs; serves as liaison to the public, Governor's Office, legislative branch, tribal nations, federal and local governments, and private business.

The State Workforce Investment Board is responsible for advising the Governor on the creation, implementation and continuous improvement of a comprehensive statewide workforce development system, designed to train the maximum number of unemployed and underemployed Montanans as possible.



The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau gathers data, performs research and analysis, hosts the Montana Career Information System; produces career information on the State's industry and occupational employment activities such as wages, labor force statistics, and unemployment at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.



The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Weights and Measures Bureau inspects, tests, and certifies all weighing or measuring devices used in commercial transactions.



The Montana Department of Commerce, Energy Promotion and Development Division works directly with the Governor, the Governor's Office of Economic Development and other state agencies to help facilitate processes related to permitting, siting, workforce, and financial assistance.

Miles City Job Service Workforce Center focuses on developing and maintaining a high quality workforce system for Southeastern Montana by providing services to demand-driven businesses and job seekers, government officials and entities, the public and its own employees.

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Building Codes Bureau gathers establishes and enforces minimum building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical, energy, elevator, and boiler codes, as well as accessibility regulations.



Editors: Casey Kyler-West (Far Right)
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ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN MONTANA

Author: Chantel McCormick

One of Montana's most exciting opportunities for economic growth is energy development.

Our world class energy resources—wind, oil & gas, biomass, geothermal, and significant amounts of coal—are second to none in the United States. They also make us a leader in helping the nation wean itself from addiction to foreign oil while creating economic growth opportunities here in Montana. We can provide more than our share of the energy resources America needs and help address global climate change in a manner that respects and protects the wild places that make Montana so special. We can and we will lead the way.

Nowhere in the state is this great opportunity more apparent than in Eastern Montana, where we find the nation's most abundant coal reserves and wind-power potential strong enough for power generation.

Montana is coal country. Governor Brian Schweitzer is aggressively encouraging responsible development of coal in Montana. His energy plan will utilize new and advanced technology to develop coal-derived synthetic fuels, gasification technologies, and electrical generation that hold promise of achieving near-zero emissions. Through the use of "Clean Coal", we intend to take advantage of our status as holder of the nation's greatest coal reserves to help ensure energy security for America while creating high-wage jobs in areas of the state facing economic dislocation. The State of Montana is taking a proactive role to bring together developers, industry representatives, and the federal government, while providing permitting facilitation and coal feedstock.

A perfect example of the State's role in energy development is the \$7 billion Many Stars Coal-to-Liquids project. When the Australian-American Energy Company (AAEC) came to Montana in 2007 to explore our coal resources, we identified a once in a lifetime opportunity. The resulting partnership between the Crow Tribe and AAEC will use clean-coal technology to produce 50,000 barrels per day of alternative transportation fuels that contain no sulfur or aromatics, and are non-toxic and biodegradable. Montana will benefit greatly from the thousands of construction and operational jobs and significant economic development that Many Stars will create. Development of this project

will progress in various stages over the next several years with the expectation that full operation will commence in 2016.

Montana is also wind country, leading the nation in wind energy power potential from the center of North America's wind heartland. Wind energy is clean and renewable and provides the green complement to Montana's world-class coal, oil, and natural gas reserves. Much of Montana's wind has yet to be tapped and represents a great investment opportunity. We have made great strides in our wind energy production over the last few years. Since 2005, four industrial size wind projects have come online: the Glacier Wind project (106.5 MW in Toole County), the Horseshoe Bend project (9 MW in Cascade County), the Diamond Willow project (19.5 MW in Fallon County) and the Judith Gap project (135 MW in Wheatland County). These projects have moved Montana from a ranking of 50th to 15th in the nation in wind energy output. Currently, the state is monitoring about 50 potential projects of varying size throughout Montana. These projects could result in another 4,000 to 5,000 MW of clean, green Montana wind generation.

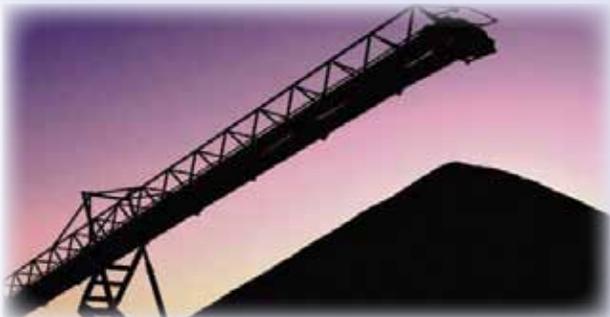
The primary energy focus of the Schweitzer administration is to secure a long-term, sustainable, reliable and affordable energy future for our citizens and businesses, and to secure both construction and long-term economic growth from energy development in targeted areas of the state. In addition, we understand our obligation to the nation to help secure energy independence. We do not intend to "build a fence around Montana", nor will we accept the mentality of "rip and run" rapid development of the past. We know that we can have quality jobs, clean air and water for future generations, and fulfill our national domestic energy development obligations. We can do it, and do it right! Proper energy can and will provide the economic development, and energy security Montana needs, and be done in a manner that protects the Montana quality way of life.



Chantel McCormick
Senior Energy Development Specialist
Montana Department of Commerce

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ENERGIZING MONTANA



MTCC CAMPUS CORPS: GOING THE EXTRA MILE!

Author: Dean McGovern, Executive Director, Montana Campus Compact

Students at Miles Community College are learning something special—serving their community is fun, educational, and very rewarding. Nursing and radiology students are taking the extra step to enroll in the Montana Campus Compact's Campus Corps (MTCC) program to enhance their training, develop professional skills, and engage themselves in worthy projects in Miles City. During the past year, sixteen students served patients in need at Deaconess Billings-Miles City Clinic, the Veteran Affairs Hospital, the Holy Rosary Hospital, and the Miles City Community Health Center.

As part of their course work, students engaged in service-learning—an increasingly popular teaching style in which faculty guide students to integrate community service with the academic content of a particular course. For example, nursing students at Miles Community College not only learn physiology and biochemistry of human health, but serve their community by conducting blood screenings, immunizing infants, administering flu vaccinations, and performing basic physical examinations for at-risk youth and low-income families. The civic reflection that is woven into service-learning helps students understand larger societal issues such as poverty, representative democracy, diversity, and social justice.

“Our students really get the hands-on experience that it takes to be a successful health professional,” said Erin Niedge, the recruitment officer and community service director for MTCC programs at Miles Community College, “and the Education Award that MTCC Campus Corps members receive helps finance their education and keeps them enrolled.”

MTCC's Campus Corps is an AmeriCorps program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and supported by the Governor's Commission on Community Service. Students who choose to enroll complete a number of hours of community service and receive an education award when they finish their hours. These awards can be used to pay tuition, repay academic loans, or other educational expenses. The service is part-time and usually complements their academic major or course of study. College students enrolled in Campus Corps gain valuable professional skills, learn about the people and institutions in their communities, cultivate relationships, and serve as part of a large network of more than 100,000 AmeriCorps members helping local communities across the country each year.

In the coming year, Miles Community College plans to utilize the program in two additional academic majors. Students in the Building Construction Management program will assist with modular home construction to benefit people in the Miles City area. As part of their service-learning experience, each student will participate in building a home from ground to roof. Additionally, faculty members in the Heavy Equipment Operations program will encourage their students to serve as Campus Corps members as they take on the education and training needed to address the critical workforce shortage currently facing the construction industry.

The Montana Campus Compact manages its Campus Corps program to bolster the public service commitment of higher education around the state at four-year, two-year, public, private, tribal, and community colleges. MTCC's Campus Corps members serve from nineteen college campuses in sixteen communities in Montana including: Billings, Bozeman, Browning, Butte, Crow Agency, Dillon, Harlem, Havre, Helena, Glendive, Great Falls, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula, Pablo, and Poplar.

For more information about Montana Campus Compact programs, please call 406-243-5177 or visit www.mtcompact.org



MTCC Campus Corps Members present in the Nursing Arts Laboratory at Miles Community College



MTCC Campus Corps Members conduct Health Fair at Miles Community College



MTCC Campus Corps Members answer questions about Melanoma



MTCC Campus Corps members present to nursing students

CHANGING THE FACE OF EDUCATION

Author: Casey Kyler-West

The labor market is changing, new jobs in alternative energy are being created every day and technology is changing the way existing companies are doing business. But what isn't changing is the need for a trained workforce. "That's what community colleges are for, we're here to respond to meet workforce needs and provide training opportunities," says Miles Community College President Stephanie Hicswa.

While the traditional four year colleges and universities and two year vocational schools are a valuable tool for educating the workforce, the community colleges have more flexibility and can offer more short term training opportunities. "Montana has a university culture, but not everyone is suited for the university. I'm hoping the culture of Montana changes in response to the changes in the workforce," says Hicswa. For example, Miles Community College can partner with a local industry to provide training for heavy equipment operators. Local contractors provide the necessary equipment while the school can set up internships with the contractors. The community colleges also give students the ability to earn core credits before they transfer to a four year or vocational school.

Hicswa also believes it's important not to saturate the labor market with too much training for the same occupation; "We always keep in mind when we're looking at a new program that we may have to eventually phase it out and bring another one in so we continue to have good placements." Providing local businesses with the facility to upgrade current employee skills is another way Miles Community College and other schools are meeting the needs of business and industry.

For Miles Community, the largest area of growth the school has seen is in its online courses.

Students no longer have to sit in the classroom to earn credits; online classes are giving students the flexibility to work their studies around their life and take classes from anywhere in the state. While online courses may not be applicable for short term training, they can help students earn credits for a two or four year degree.

Another major shift in education is the age of students. According to Hicswa, many of the students enrolling are baby boomers. "These people aren't ready to retire, but they want to downshift in their careers. They have kids in college and many are taking care of their elderly parents or looking for a better work/life balance."

As the first female president for Miles Community College, Hicswa wants to keep the school on the cutting edge. The school is currently waiting for approval from the Board of Regents to add a biofuels program. Though it is not governed by the Board of Regents, Hicswa says the school does have a symbiotic relationship; "We work really closely with our Board of Regents to make sure our programs match the state's goals for Montana's students."



Miles Community College President
Stephanie Hicswa
Photo Courtesy Darren Pitcher



Chemistry Class Photo Courtesy Darren Pitcher

WIRED FOR SUCCESS IN INDIAN COUNTRY

Author: Casey Kyler-West

During this past year one of the dominant news stories has been the climbing unemployment rate. As the national rate continues to creep towards ten percent and Montana's has held steady at six, those unemployment rates are low compared to the unemployment rate on the reservations. Montana's reservations have unemployment rates higher than 50%. While the lack of jobs is a key factor, it isn't the only barrier.

Some of the barriers include the distance to training, the cost of travel and the lack of short term training in the immediate area. Funding from the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Grant is changing that. The purpose of the grant is to provide training in a variety of fields related to energy for the unemployed or underemployed in the 32 counties and six reservations in eastern Montana.

Through the WIRED Grant, local Job Service offices have been able to team up with community colleges and colleges of technology to arrange short-term training. Since July 2007, the program has trained 510 Native Americans. One WIRED participant is encouraging others to sign up for training. "I believe a program such as this one is good for all Native Americans who want to learn a good trade, but do not want or are unable to enroll in college full time," says Garret Briere.

The WIRED Coordinators are also working with local tribes and tribal colleges to bring in different types of training. For example, Billings coordinator John Rife worked with the Crow Tribe Tribal Employment (TERO) office and the Crow Tribe Department of Transportation to bring heavy equipment operator training to the Crow Agency. The Tribe donated the classroom space and their excavating equipment for participants to operate during the training.

In Cutbank, WIRED Coordinator Fred Greco is working with Bear Traxx Trucking, a new startup company out of Browning, to provide training. In collaboration with Opportunities Inc. from Havre, Northern Plains Resources, Blackfeet Housing, and Blackfeet TERO, the first class graduated 15 participants from the CDL training course.

Tescha Hawley of the Fort Belknap 477 Employment and Training Program has been working closely with the Job Service in Havre to coordinate training opportunities. "This program has been very beneficial for the clients of the Fort Belknap 477 Employment and Training Program. Several clients were able to access training services and gained skills in welding and a commercial truck driver's license. Because of this training, our clients were able to obtain employment with a specialized

skill or trade. With unemployment rates at 70.7% on the Fort Belknap Reservation, these types of services are extremely important for us," noted Hawley.

Montana applied for and received the \$15 million WIRED Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and Industry in 2006. Though funding made available through the WIRED Grant will end in 2010, it isn't the only funding source for training. The relationships developed between the local Job Service offices, economic developers, community colleges and businesses will remain in place, bringing even more training opportunities to unemployed and the underemployed in Montana.



Graduates of the 1st Bear Traxx CDL Training Course



Graduates of the CDL Training course in Havre

WIRED IN CUSTER COUNTY

Author: Mike Bissell and Steve Olson

Providing training for those who need it the most is the goal behind the “Workforce Innovations and Regional Economic Development” (WIRED) grant. The grant, provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, is intended to develop the workforce of the future via creative collaboration between education, workforce and economic development in the 32 counties of North Central and Eastern Montana designated to receive WIRED funding.

“This training was in place long before anyone thought an economic stimulus package would be necessary. WIRED money helps us provide training to those who need it the most, but don’t have the resources to do it without help,” said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. “Many of those who have completed or are completing the training will be available for the jobs created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.”

The Miles City Job Service Workforce Center administers WIRED funding for Custer, Carter, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Rosebud and Treasure Counties in southeastern Montana. Since July 2007, more than 120 participants have received training; of those, 56 were American Indians with the majority coming from the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Tribes. Training has occurred or will occur in the following fields: heavy equipment operation, building trades, construction flagging, CDL (truck driving), energy auditors, weatherization, energy mechanics, bio-fuels basics, electrician, gas compressor operator and plumber/pipefitter.

Local employers are a valuable resource for on-the-job training. A portion of the on-the-job training contracts have been developed in partnership with the Workforce Services Division’s Apprenticeship and Training Program. Structured short term training utilizing local regional training facilities are being used to reach the goals of the WIRED project. The variety of employment skills being developed via on-the-job training contracts continues to expand as opportunities to do so are identified and developed.

It is not uncommon for participants in the WIRED program to experience a significant increase in income as a result of their training. Most often, these individuals continue to live in the local communities



Welding Class at Dawson Community College



WIRED Participant taking welding test at Dawson Community College



WIRED Participants taking welding test at Dawson Community College

and bring additional dollars to their communities via new or improved employment opportunities. The participants in the WIRED program come from a cross section of backgrounds with a variety of goals. Denna Amsden completed the Heavy Equipment Operator course in 2008 and says the class was just what she needed, “The WIRED program has changed my life,” said Amsden. “The career opportunities open to me are beyond what I ever imagined and the future is looking good.”

A side benefit of the WIRED program is the increased interaction between education and workforce development professionals. “These partnerships have increased the mutual understanding of the people and processes which are crucial elements in arriving at innovative solutions to meet our customer’s training goals,” says Mike Bissell, manager of the Miles City Job Service Workforce Center. “We have worked with a variety of training providers in our area including Miles Community College, Sage Technical Services, MSU Extension Bozeman and MSU-Billings College of Technology.”

WIRED efforts throughout Eastern Montana have resulted in additional exceptional outcomes for the citizens of those communities. Due to inclusionary nature of the WIRED program’s standards, many individuals who are looking for opportunities to pursue life long learning have been able to move themselves forward on the path of self development, self sufficiency and an overall improved quality of life for themselves and their families.

The contributions of regional and local education and business partners have proven instrumental to the ongoing growth of the WIRED program’s success. Their unselfish commitment of time, energy and resources to the WIRED program will result in positive outcomes for many years.

THE RECOVERY ACT AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR MONTANA

Author: Casey Kyler-West

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009, provides \$787 billion in stimulus spending designed to stabilize the U.S. economy and prevent further job losses. Despite the debate over the size of the ARRA and the specific programs funded, the ARRA funding will have a considerable stabilizing impact on Montana's economy. With the unemployment rate increasing dramatically since the start of the recession in December 2007, most Montanans look forward to more jobs and economic recovery.



Barbara Wagner

Montana will receive at least \$1.66 billion from the ARRA through tax cuts, increased unemployment insurance benefits, and federal to state government transfers. Much of this \$1.66 billion was recently appropriated by Montana Legislature in HB 645 (2009), which passed the Legislature on April 28, 2009. Montana will also receive additional funding through projects funded directly through federal agencies. For example, Montana is slated to receive \$3 million for fish and wildlife projects and \$17.5 million for Bureau of Land Management projects funded through the Department of the Interior.

Approximately 37% of the \$787 billion of stimulus included in the ARRA comes in the form of tax cuts to businesses and households. The estimated tax relief for Montanans is about \$575 million. This figure includes approximately \$200 million in tax relief immediately realized through reduced tax withholding by employers, which began benefiting roughly 400,000 Montana households on April 1.

Montana's share of the ARRA also includes about \$207 million in increased unemployment insurance benefits. Starting February 22, 2009 and continuing until December 26, 2009, unemployed workers drawing benefits are receiving an additional \$25 each week. Unemployed workers are also allowed to receive benefits for extended periods of time. Not only

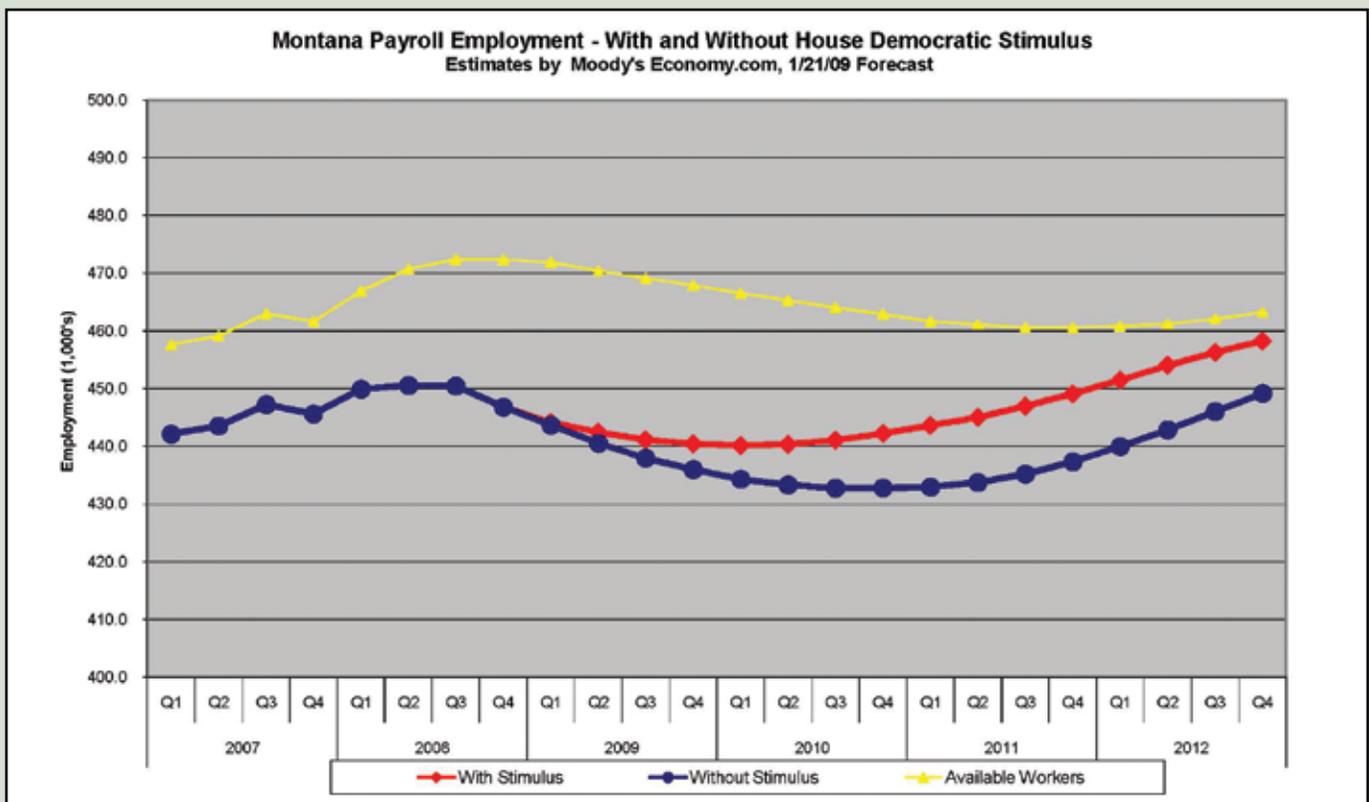


Figure 1

does this additional \$100 per month help keep food on the table for families affected by the recession, it also helps prevent further job losses in impacted communities. When a business closes due to the recession, it not only affects the businesses suppliers, customers, and workers, it also harms other businesses in the community where workers spend their wages. The \$207 million in increased unemployment benefits is expected to save 1,100 jobs in 2009.

The portion of Montana's ARRA funding that required approval by the Montana Legislature was appropriated through HB 645 (2009), which contained \$880 million of federal money for building projects, schools, the university system, energy and conservation, and human services. HB 645 (2009) also included funding to help the distressed wood products industry and for additional worker training.

According to the economists at Moody's **Economy.com**, the stimulus package will save approximately 11,700 Montana jobs from being lost. **Figure 1** shows the Montana employment projections with and without the ARRA stimulus funding from 2007 through 2012. The top line in the chart shows the estimated available labor supply, with the difference between the labor supply and the number of jobs equal to the number of unemployed Montanans. Without the ARRA stimulus package, the national economic problems were expected to cause 17,700 Montana job losses from the peak in the third quarter of 2008 to the low in the third quarter of 2010. With the stimulus, the recession is expected to end earlier and not be as severe, with job losses of only 10,300 from the 2008 peak to the low in the first quarter of 2010. By the third quarter of 2011, the difference in the projected employment with and without stimulus is expected to be 11,700 jobs.

Significant attention was given in the ARRA to measure the actual benefits of the stimulus funding by requiring federal and state agencies to report the funding spent and jobs saved and created with the ARRA stimulus funding. Agencies receiving stimulus funds must report quarterly on the jobs created and on the contracts awarded; these reports will be published online and are available for public viewing through the federal website, www.recovery.gov.

The ARRA is expected to provide a welcome stabilizing impact both nationally and in Montana. Some of the stimulus spending is already being spent through reduced payroll withholding and increased unemployment insurance. Spending on larger infrastructure projects will likely begin soon. In the short-term, the stimulus impact is sure to be positive as the spending increases put Montanans back to work and raise demand for Montana products. With the stimulus funding, the economy is expected to recover sooner than otherwise, starting to recover at the start of 2010.

In the long-term, however, the increased federal government debt resulting from the ARRA may slow economic growth. The economists designing the ARRA stimulus package attempted to alleviate the long-term negative impact by directing some of the ARRA funding into infrastructure improvements and increased worker training, both of which improve economic productivity and lead to faster growth. The long-term impacts of ARRA will likely be an interesting topic of debate for both policy-makers and economists for some time.

While considerable attention has been given to the amount and details of the ARRA stimulus package, there are other important actions by the federal government to improve the economic situation. For example, the authority and lending capability of the Federal Reserve has dramatically expanded since the start of the recession in an attempt to address the problems in financial markets. As of February 26, 2009, the newly-created lending programs through the Federal Reserve had expanded the Fed's balance sheet by over \$1.4 trillion from two years prior. This expanded lending includes the purchase of mortgage-backed securities to stabilize home mortgage lending, \$246 billion in lending to corporations, expansion of various lending facilities, and the federal bailouts of AIG, 'Bear Stearns', Freddie Mac, and Fannie Mae. Because much of the Federal Reserve's stabilization efforts are in the form of loans, most of the funding should be recovered and not borne by the taxpayer.

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MILES CITY SADDLERY

Author: Casey Kyler-West

Miles City was the end of the trail for many of the longhorn cattle drives from Texas in the late 1800's.

The pioneers settling the area grazed their herds on the rich grasslands from the Yellowstone to the Missouri and beyond. Since cowboys needed saddles, it wasn't long before Miles City had its own saddle shop. In 1894, Al Furstnow opened Furstnow's Saddle Shop and in December of that year Charlie Coggshall bought into the shop. Cowhands from the open range from Billings to Dickinson patronized the shop, which employed dozens of men who specialized in the various aspects of saddle making.

The relationship between Coggshall and Furstnow ended in 1899, and they were rivals well into the 20th Century. The two shops built thousands of saddles in the following decades. Buckaroos took pride in riding a custom rig from a Miles City shop, and if they got in a wreck, they knew where to get it repaired.



Miles City Saddlery

In 1909, the Miles City Saddlery was formed when three of Coggshall's employees bought him out. Over the years the store expanded, adding cowboy boots, hats and western clothing. Though the inventory expanded, the saddle making that made the store famous eventually stopped during the Great Depression when the demand for new saddles declined. Some cowboys who had purchased new saddles had to bring them back during the Depression because they had no way to pay for them. Furstnow's eventually closed because unlike Miles City Saddlery, Furstnow's had not expanded its inventory.

Today, Miles City Saddlery is owned by Jack and Mary Lou Diebel. They purchased the store in 1989 from Tat and Tamara Cain, who had owned the store since 1962. "We heard the Cains were selling the store and we didn't want to see the town lose the business, so we bought it," said Mary Lou. In 1997, the Diebels brought the saddle making tradition back to the store with hand-made custom saddles. "We're proud of our name and we started making custom saddles again to carry on the store's tradition," said Mary Lou.



Miles Saddles Produced by Miles City Saddlery now on Display in the store's Museum.

Today saddles made throughout the years that have been donated back to the store are on display in the small museum upstairs. "We're proud to keep the history going," said Diebel.

While the rest of the year remains steady, the store's busiest times are during the May Bucking Horse Sale and Christmas. This year the Montana Stockgrowers Association is celebrating its 125th anniversary in Miles City, so that will bring more customers to the landmark store. The Miles City Saddlery is also celebrating a special anniversary; this year marks the store's 100th year in business.

Though the Miles City Saddlery has a rich history, Mary Lou Diebel says it's the people and the community that keep the store going. "It's nice to see your neighbors when they come in to shop." Miles City still has cowboys, and many of those cowboys still saddle their horses with Miles City rigs.



Miles City Saddlery carries the latest in Western Styles & Fashion

DISCOVERY POND

Author: Casey Kyler-West

The idea of housing several different departments in one location has been around since the late 1800's.

Macy's was the largest department store of its kind in 1878, today the retail giant Wal-Mart has claim to that title. Discovery Pond in Miles City may not be a national retail giant, but it is a viable part of the Miles City economy.

John Scheuering opened Discovery Pond in 2000 after he retired from 33 years of teaching. When the store opened its doors it originally housed two departments, pets and toys. As more space became opened up Scheuering added children's books and eventually children's clothes to the store's inventory. "If one department slows down another



Discovery Pond

While other small businesses across the country may be struggling due to the economic downturn, the Discovery Pond is actually thriving. "We are at 150% of last year," says Scheuering. "In fact, the economic downturn has actually helped us because people aren't going to Billings to shop; they're staying home and shopping locally."

Scheuering strongly believes that small merchants are the backbone of the local tax base. "It's up to us to offer an alternative to the big box stores; we offer the nostalgic toys that many parents remember playing with when they were kids." Instead of competing directly, Scheuering offers a different inventory and keeps his inventory down in order



Pet Department



Store Owner John Scheuering with Store Manager Jenny Paxson

one picks up; none of these departments could survive on their own in a town this size," says Scheuering.

In 2003, the old JCPenney's building on Main Street became available and Scheuering jumped at the chance to have more space. Today the store has expanded even more and includes a sandwich shop and an art gallery. The art gallery was added after Scheuering was approached by a co-op to put the art gallery upstairs. Although the co-op no longer runs the art gallery, Scheuering liked the atmosphere it created for the store and decided to keep it, featuring only local artists. With the addition of sandwiches, local residents as well as those just passing through can check out the art while eating their lunch.



Children's Toy Department

to lower his costs. "It's important to be realistic about what's going to work in a town this size; know your customers and what they want."

Though Scheuering could have opened Discovery Pond anywhere, Miles City is his home, saying "We have a real loyal customer base, people are really supportive here and its home." Scheuering will eventually add a preschool and tutoring program, something the store once had but stopped when his wife passed away. The question is, what will he add next?

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

McDonalds



Billings Clinic



Walmart



Friendship Villa Care Center



Stockman Bank





USTER COUNTY AT A GLIMPSE

Author: Aaron McNay

Total population: 11,149
(Census, 2008)

Median age: 42.3 (Census, 2007)

Median household income: \$36,296
(Census, 2007)

Average unemployment rate: 3.8%
(BLS LAUS estimate, 2008)

Top five industries in terms of employment:

- 1) Accommodation
- 2) Ambulatory Health Care Services
- 3) Credit Intermediation & Related Activity
- 4) Food Services and Drinking Places
- 5) Social Assistance

For information on employment by industry, new businesses, labor market information, job projections, and hourly pay by occupation visit www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

Or call the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau (406) 444-2638, or mail P.O. Box 1728, Helena, MT 59624.

Montana Health Network



Eastern MT Industries



Albertsons



Holy Rosary Healthcare



Sanjel



IN CUSTER COUNTY

Albertsons, Friendship Villa Care Center, McDonalds, Stockman Bank and Wal-Mart photos courtesy Casey Kyler-West. Billings Clinic, Eastern Montana Industries, Holy Rosary Healthcare and Montana Health Network photos provided courtesy of each business. Sanjel photo courtesy Sandy Hays.

*This list includes only private industry employers subject to Unemployment Insurance. Railroads and city, county, state and federal government agencies (including public school districts and universities) are excluded.

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS IN CUSTER COUNTY

Albertsons



Albertsons Joe Albertson opened his first grocery store in 1939 in Boise, ID; the company expanded and opened its first store in Montana in the 1950's. The Miles City Albertsons store opened in 1991 and employs between 65 and 75 people.

As technology continues to evolve, so does the store operation. **Albertsons**, like other grocery stores, reorders its inventory automatically thanks to technology. The store has also cut down on paper use due to e-mail.

Albertsons Deputy Store Director Dale Urich believes it's important to be involved in the local community. "We really try to be part of the community, we participate in quite a few events like the March of Dimes Walk and Relay for Life. We encourage classes to tour the store; we're here for the community. The people of Miles City are what make it worthwhile to do business, we're all neighbors."

Billings Clinic



Billings Clinic opened its Miles City location in 1996 and currently employs 67 people, including nine physicians and four midlevel providers. Based in Billings, **Billings Clinic** provides care to a 500 mile radius. "We are proud to serve the Miles City region with physician

services as well as contribute to the economy of Miles City and the surrounding region," says Billings Clinic spokeswoman Julie Burton.

Burton also says **Billings Clinic** believes the key to retaining quality employees is the direct relationship they have with their leader and physicians. "Great service to patients comes from strong working relationships with employees and we work to foster that every day," says Burton.

As the demand for quality health care increases, so does the demand for a skilled workforce. Often times job seekers don't realize the opportunities in both clinical and non-clinical work experience. **Billings Clinic** encourages current employees and job seekers to check out both their local community and technical colleges to enhance their skill sets.

Eastern Montana Industries



Eastern Montana Industries was established to provide services to individuals with disabilities in southeastern Montana in 1971. Today **Eastern Montana Industries** employs 90 people in Miles City and 40 people in Glendive.

Eastern Montana Industries currently operates a vocational program in Miles City that employs 75 individuals with disabilities and provides five group homes for 36 individuals. The company also contracts with vocational rehabilitation to assist those with disabilities obtain and/or maintain employment in the community. "We feel this is a valuable service that needs to be continued in Miles City," says **Eastern Montana Industries** spokeswoman Sue Nielson.

Technology has added a valuable element to **Eastern Montana Industries** over the years. It has streamlined information sharing, assisted in payroll management, and enabled timely communication with various contacts around the state.

Friendship Villa Center



Will Lantis believed the elderly were not receiving the quality care they deserved and founded Lantis Enterprises. He purchased his first long term facility in Bridgeport, Nebraska in 1972.

A year later, he opened the Friendship Manor in Miles City, which later became the **Friendship Villa Center**.

Although the philosophy of treating seniors with respect, dignity and kindness has never wavered, technology has enhanced the staff's efficiency and accuracy. The **Friendship Villa Center** is in the process of converting to electronic charts for the residents in the Nursing Home and patients in Home Health.

Friendship Villa Center believes the key to retaining employees is to have open communication between supervisors and staff. "When staff feels they are being listened to and have a voice in things, they are much happier. Supervisors should not ask staff to do anything they are not willing to do themselves," says **Friendship Villa** spokeswoman Shirley Byrne.





Holy Rosary Healthcare



In 1910, at the request of the community, the Milwaukee Railroad and the doctors associated with the railroad, the Presentation Sisters assumed management and operation of the County Hospital in Miles City. In 1915, the Sisters purchased the hospital. 99 years later, **Holy Rosary Healthcare** is still tending to the healthcare needs of Miles City and the surrounding communities.

Today, thanks to technology, people don't have to travel as far for their healthcare needs. "Technology is constantly present in healthcare, looking toward the latest technology in all aspects. We're doing more and more from a distance perspective. We can offer more locally because of our tele-health connections to physicians in other communities," says **Holy Rosary Healthcare** Director of Development Jackie Muri.

Holy Rosary Healthcare's impact on the healthcare delivery system reaches beyond Miles City. More than half the people receiving care in Miles City are from outside Custer County.

McDonald's



Dick and Mac McDonald opened their first restaurant in San Bernardino in 1940.

Now nearly 70 years later, **McDonald's** is the leading global foodservice retailer with more than 31,000 local restaurants serving more than 58 million people in 118 countries each day. More than 75% of **McDonald's** restaurants worldwide are owned and operated by independent local franchisees.

Montana Health Network



The **Montana Health Network** is a consortium of healthcare providers located across Montana. Because many of the grants require a rural location, the **Montana Health Network** is located in Miles City with employees also located in Billings and Glasgow.

The **Montana Health Network** has a total of 136 employees and CEO Janet Bastian believes flexibility is key in retaining employees. "From our perspective, I think that flexibility is a number one. We try to be as flexible as possible with work schedules, competitive salaries and benefits," says Bastian.

Technology is allowing the **Montana Health Network** to apply most of its work into web based applications, working virtually with its other offices. Because many of its staff members are part of a temporary staff pool, the new electronic age has given the **Montana Health Network** the ability to keep all of those people under its umbrella.

Sanjel



Sanjel USA, a subsidiary of a privately owned Canadian-based international oilfield service company, encompasses operations across the entire Rocky Mountain region of the United States. With the office located in Miles City, Montana is one of six district offices in the U.S. providing oilfield services including acidizing, cementing, coiled tubing, fracturing and nitrogen..

Sanjel has been in Miles City for nine years. One of the reasons Miles City was chosen is the quality of the available workforce. "People in Miles City have an excellent work ethic, good values and are dependable," says **Sanjel** spokesman Tyler Cook.

Stockman Bank

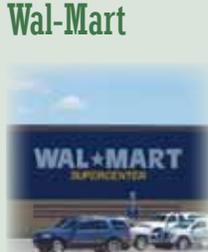


Billy Nefsy founded **Stockman Bank** in 1953; today the bank has 23 locations state-wide and employees 434, of which 112 work in Miles City. Family owned and operated, **Stockman Bank** is different from its corporate competitors. "We really see ourselves as family," says Bank President Stan Markuson.

As to why the bank's headquarters remain in Miles City, Markuson says, "Miles City is still very much an old west town with the history to prove it. People here are friendly and welcoming to newcomers and have a strong sense of community." To keep that sense of community going, **Stockman Bank** encourages its employees to get involved and be active in their communities.

Markuson says the key to retaining **Stockman Bank** employees is giving them opportunities. "We believe strongly in encouraging our employees to grow within the company. This involves challenging them, empowering them to make their own decisions, and providing the tools and products to make them successful," says Markuson.

Wal-Mart



The **Wal-Mart** in Miles City opened its doors in 1998. With 238 employees, the major retailer is one of the largest employers in Custer County. For store manager Barbara Moore, who came from a metropolitan area, Miles City is a welcome change of pace. "This is a great community to raise

your children, I like smaller communities. I like knowing almost all my customers," says Moore.

During the 2009 fiscal year, **Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.** spent \$39,363,724 for merchandise and service with 284 suppliers in Montana. As a result of the relationship between **Wal-Mart** and these suppliers, the retail giant supports 11,639 supplier jobs in the state of Montana.

WE ARE MONTANANS REFLECTIONS

Author: Sheryl Olson



Janet R. Kelly, Director
MT Department of Administration

While moving to Seattle from Washington DC in 1981, Janet R. Kelly stopped in Miles City to visit a friend, and as the saying goes, the rest is history. After a whirlwind romance, she married native Patrick Kelly and settled into western life in Miles City.

Armed with a new Masters of Business Administration in International Business, and a passion for politics and public service, Kelly began to seek out ways to use her talent and interests in her new hometown. For several years, she taught business at Miles Community College. Shortly thereafter, she ran as the first female candidate for Custer County Commissioner, a position she held for the next 16 years.

“Unlike running for public office on the east coast, Montanans are willing to elect candidates without a lot of name recognition or financing,” she says. “Even though I was relatively new to the community, I was able to connect with voters by traveling throughout the county to meet them and listen to their concerns.”

In 2005, Montana elected Brian Schweitzer, another relatively unknown candidate, as Montana’s 23rd Governor. Shortly therefore, the Governor appointed Kelly as the Director of the Department of Administration. Setting up a second home in Helena, Kelly and her husband maintain their connection to Miles City.

“When the Governor approached me about serving in his administration,” she says, “I realized that I could use all of the experience I had gained as a county commissioner, coupled with my interest in government and politics, to serve an even broader array of people. It seemed like a natural transition to go from administering a county government to a state agency with over 500 employees.”

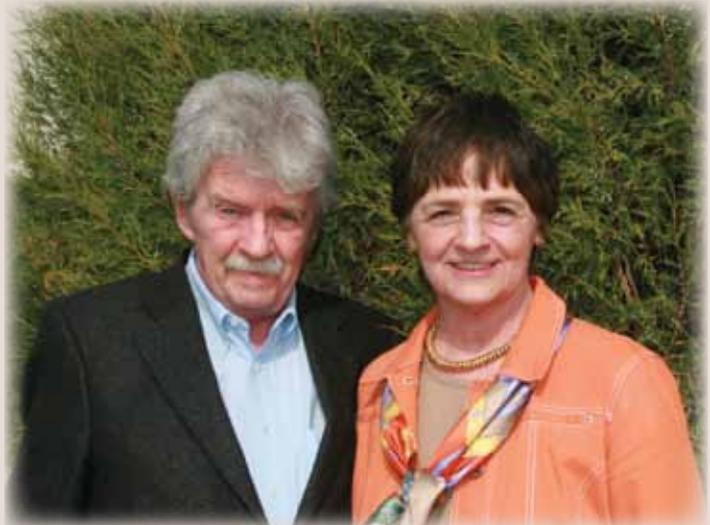
As a department director, Kelly is responsible for carrying out the goals of the Governor. “Governor Schweitzer has been a national leader on energy issues, information technology, education, government efficiency, and relations with Montana tribes,” says Kelly. “These are all initiatives that the Department of Administration can impact through our programs and resources.”

Most Miles City residents probably do not realize how much the Department of Administration affects life in their community. The department’s computer network makes live audio and video connections possible for Miles Community College. State architects and engineers keep the college well maintained.

The department also processes the payroll and provides a health care system for all state employees in the community. It regulates and examines the banks in town and administers the procurement laws that put snowplows and Highway Patrol cars on the local highways. It also provides accounting and auditing assistance to city and county governments. A workers’ compensation management program started under Kelly also works to control the costs of workers’ compensation for state employees throughout the state.

“Miles City is a community that represents everything that is good about western life,” says Kelly. “It is a welcoming place, with hard-working people who treasure their independence. Government plays a stabilizing role for the community in providing its citizens with services they appreciate.”

As director in her second term, Kelly is continuing to emphasize workforce development, efficiency in operations, and using Montana’s computing power to enhance the quality of life for all Montanans. “Montanans are the customers we serve every day we come to work in state government,” she says. “And every day we focus our resources and decisions on how we can help our state grow and maintain the quality of life that is so important for us.”



Patrick & Janet Kelly

CUSTER COUNTY: COWBOY COUNTRY

Author: Aaron McNay

Every May, thousands of people descend on Miles City to attend the annual Bucking Horse Sale.

According to the Miles City Star, the three days of bronc riding and street dancing is so popular that the population of Miles City doubles during the Bucking Horse Sale. However, the “Cowboy Mardi Gras” is not the only reason people travel to Miles City. Wonderful recreational opportunities such as fishing and hunting also draw visitors from all around the country.

With a population of 8,127 in 2007, Miles City is Montana’s 10th largest city. Custer County, where Miles City is located, is Montana’s 17th most populous county and had an estimated population of 11,149 in 2008. Custer County’s numbers peaked in 1984, with a population of 13,242 and has been slowly declining. However, even with a gradual decline in population, Custer County remains one of the more heavily populated areas in Eastern Montana.

As with most counties located in Eastern Montana, agriculture remains vital to Custer County’s economy. In 2007, Custer County had a total agriculture output of \$73 million, an increase of 80% since 2002. Custer County was also the third largest source of livestock sales in Montana, selling nearly \$64 million worth of livestock products in

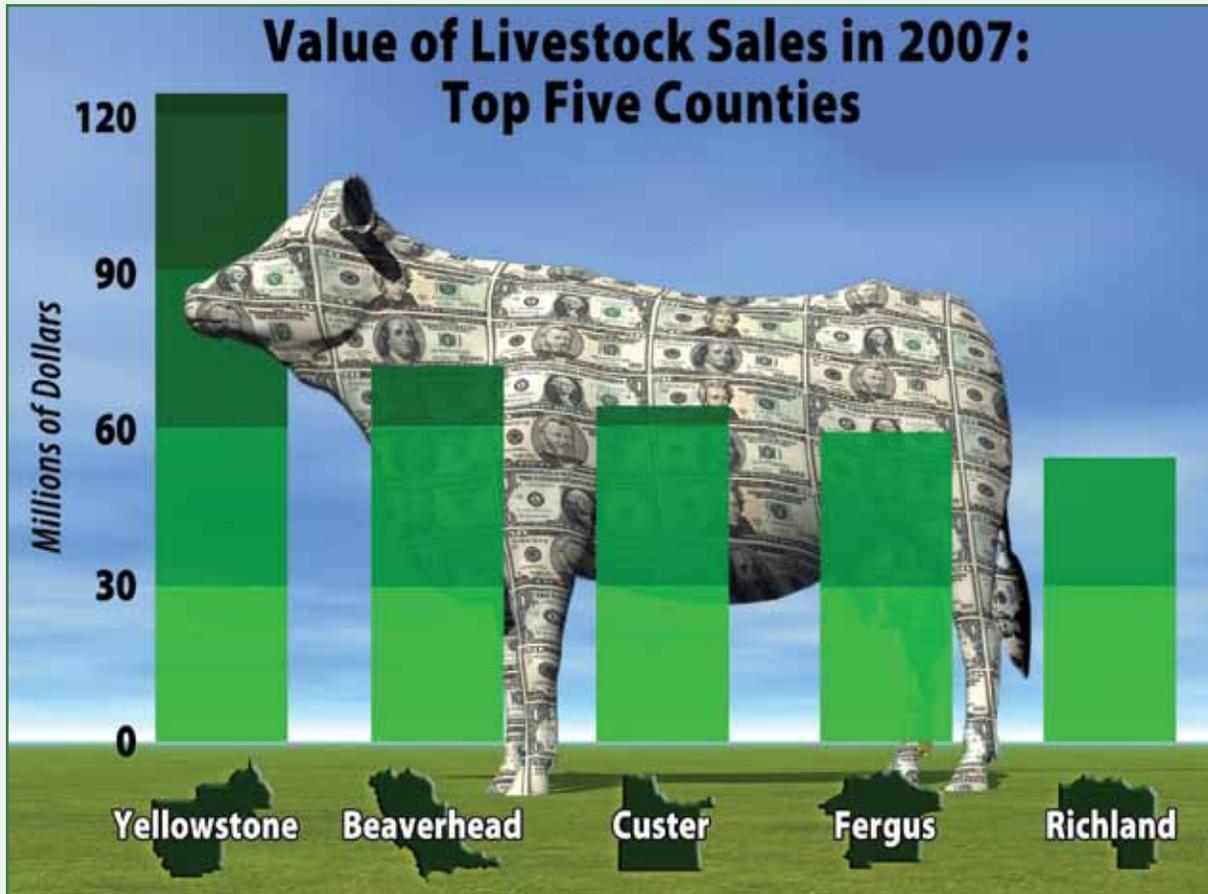
2007. Most of the livestock value originated from the sale of cattle and calves, which constituted 85% of the total agriculture value in the entire county.

One of the highest paying industries in Custer County, the Public Administration sector is also the largest, employing 1,061 people. Other significant sub-sectors included the Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Service sectors. In total, these four sectors employed nearly 70% of all non-agriculture workers in Custer County.



Aaron McNay, Economist

From 1969 to 2006, per capita income in Custer County increased from \$3,694 to \$27,757, an average annual growth rate of 5.6%. During the same period, the statewide per capita income growth rate was 6.2%. While the below average income growth rate has resulted in a lower per capita income for Custer County, the economic crisis has had very little impact on the county. In fact, the unemployment remains well below the State’s unemployment rate of 6.1% and the national rate of 8.9%.



NEW STATE FACILITY COMING TO MILES CITY

Author: Mike Boyer

There's a new State building under construction on the east side of Miles City.

When it is finished, it will be unique in the eastern portion of Montana and provide critical services to State government and the businesses and citizens of Montana. The building will be a state-of-the-art data center that will work in concert with another new facility under construction in Helena to assure reliable delivery of critical services.

For many years leading up to the 2007 Legislative session, the Montana Department of Administration (DOA) officials had been concerned about the existing State data center operated by the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD). The data center and related support areas occupy most of the basement of an aging and underpowered building in Helena.

Critical public safety and citizen services depend on the ITSD data center. The demand for critical government services convinced State leaders that two data centers were essential to assure Montana citizens that their government could serve them under virtually any circumstances.

The 2007 Legislature funded the construction of two data centers to address this need. The Helena State of Montana Data Center (SMDC) will replace the existing facility on the Capitol Complex with a new building on state property on the east side of Helena. In addition, the legislature authorized a second, smaller data center for "eastern Montana." This second facility would share the routine workload and provide all critical systems services when the Helena SMDC experiences either a planned or an unplanned outage. It needed to be in a different seismic risk zone and far enough from Helena that a single disaster would not affect both sites.

Since the legislature did not specify an eastern Montana location, or even define "eastern Montana", community and site selection soon became a complex issue. As building requirements and designs were developed, several communities expressed interest in the selection process for the second data center. The State knew it needed access to multiple providers of high-speed telecommunication services. That requirement helped focus their attention on the Billings, Forsyth and Miles City communities along the I-94 corridor where those services were already in place

"The Schweitzer Administration has long talked about the importance of economic development in eastern Montana," said Janet R. Kelly, Director of the Department of Administration. "This project will help foster that development."

A wide range of factors, including the availability of communications, cost of land and services, security factors, suitability of the site itself, and potential economic impact on the community were considered in the selection criteria. The State held public forums in each community and gathered public comment for consideration in the decision. More than 300 people attended the Miles City meeting to show their support for locating the data center in their community.

In April 2008, the State announced that it had selected Miles City as the community to host the data center and that it would be built on State land adjacent to the Pine Hills Correctional Facility. Design was completed and in November 2008, a construction contract awarded to Fisher Construction, Inc. of Billings. In early March 2009, on-site work began with completion scheduled for fall 2009.

The data center building will be approximately 8,500 square feet, and house computer equipment, including servers, data storage and network gear. The design includes redundant power, cooling and telecommunications to ensure the highest possible reliability. Security is a high priority and extensive safeguards are being built into the facility to protect valuable equipment and, most importantly, to protect confidential information from accidental or malicious acts.

What is the benefit to the Miles City area? Since most support for the data center and its contents will come out of Helena, there will be very modest direct employment impact on the local economy by hosting the data center. However, the data center will be an "anchor tenant" for some key telecommunications infrastructure that can serve other's high-tech needs as well. This puts Miles City on the "high-tech map" and the Miles City Chamber of Commerce has already received inquiries from individuals and companies about possible relocations to Miles City.

"The new construction of the data center is a source of community pride for Miles City," said John Laney, Executive Director of the Miles City Chamber of Commerce. "In these shaky economic times, it is a timely step for us to help attract new businesses to our area."

Building the Miles City data center is a win-win undertaking. The State wins by having a high quality data center that will ensure the reliable delivery of critical State services. Miles City and eastern Montana win by taking a giant step forward into tomorrow's high-tech world.



FEDERAL TAX CREDITS SAVE MONTANA EMPLOYERS MILLIONS

Author: Christy Robbins

Montana employers saved nearly \$3 million dollars in 2008. The savings were made possible by the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). To make things easier for employers, WOTC requires little paperwork and actually reduces an employer's cost of doing business.

The tax credit (WOTC) allows for up to a maximum credit of \$2,400 during the first year of employment on the majority of targeted groups and a maximum credit of up to \$9,000 on others during the first two years of employment. The credit is available to private, for-profit employers who hire from specific targeted groups. The number of new hires who can qualify the employer for this credit is unlimited. The targeted groups in which apply are as follows:

- Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Ex-Felons
- Designated Community Residents
- Summer Youth
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Food Stamp Recipient
- Veterans
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referral
- Long-term Family Assistance Recipient (AFDC/TANF)
- Disconnected Youth

The success and growth of this tax credit for private-sector employers relies on a strong public and private sector partnership to assist those most in need find and retain employment while gaining on-the-job skills and experience. The WOTC benefits employers and increases economic growth and productivity. Use of the program has substantially increased in recent years as Congress has expanded several target groups' qualifications and/or increased the credit available to employers.

To apply for certification the employer needs to submit an IRS Form 8850 and an ETA 9061. These forms must be completed on or before the job is offered to the potential employee and submitted to the Department of Labor & Industry, WOTC Unit, 1327 Lockett, Helena, MT. 59601, within 28 days of the employee's start date. For more information (forms etc.) contact Christy Robbins at (406) 444-9046, (800) 726-0615, crobbins@mt.gov or <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/wotc/wotc.asp>.



Christy Robbins

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MORE THAN JUST DATA

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT STIMULATES MONTANA'S ECONOMY THROUGH UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

Author: Margaret Ore

Montana is slated to receive more than \$200 million in federal stimulus dollars to fund unemployment insurance benefits through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The ARRA contains three benefit programs in addition to regular UI benefits: Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC); Extended Benefits (EB); and Federal Additional Compensation (FAC).

EUC pays up to 33 additional weeks of unemployment benefits if an individual remains unemployed after exhausting their regular unemployment claim. EB kicks in when the state's unemployment rate reaches a certain level, and pays up to 13 more weeks to unemployed individuals who have exhausted their regular and EUC claims, and continue to be unemployed. FAC adds \$25 to each weekly unemployment insurance payment for regular, EUC, and EB benefits. EUC and EB programs are federally funded and do not affect the Montana Trust Fund or employer experience rating.

As part of ARRA, the 2009 Legislature added three UI benefit expansion law provisions: use of an alternate base period; allowing part time workers to seek part time work; and adding up to 26 weeks of benefits to dislocated individuals undergoing job retraining.

Since July 2008, the Unemployment Insurance Division has paid out \$156.6 million in regular benefits, \$33.3 million in Emergency Unemployment Compensation, \$7.4 million in Federal Additional Compensation, and \$500,000 in Extended Benefits. Montana's five-year average has been between \$70 million and \$90 million each year in UI benefits. Economists estimate that each dollar of unemployment benefits turns over at least 2.5 times and is an effective way to aid local economies.

INTERAGENCY RAPID RESPONSE

Author: Casey Kyler-West

There's no question that times are tough for some Montana families.

Despite the fact that Montana is faring better than the rest of the nation during the economic crisis, there are still families being impacted by current tough times. From January 1 through May 15th, 2009, nearly 4,000 Montanans were laid off in various industries throughout the state. During that time, Workforce Center staff in the local communities contacted 237 businesses and offered information on services provided under Rapid Response.



After the fire in Miles City

That's why, in January, Governor Brian Schweitzer directed various agencies to step up their efforts when it comes to timely, targeted assistance. "Montana's rapid response activities must be elevated to the level of critical service. Our Rapid Response program must work closely with business, industry and labor organizations to coordinate all possible proactive strategies-including economic development for addressing re-location," said Governor Schweitzer.

Still in its infancy stages, the Interagency Rapid Response was put to the test in March. Though the rapid response was designed around both large and small layoffs for business downturns, agencies were able to quickly mobilize during the downtown fires in Bozeman, Whitehall and Miles City. All three events were catastrophic, not only for the businesses and their employees, but for the community as a whole. "When tragic events like these fires happen, the last thing we want people to worry about is where their next paycheck is going to come from. We want to make sure they have all the resources they need to keep a roof over their head and food on the table while they rebuild," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly.

Each community affected by a fire pulled together, and with help of state, local and federal resources, were able to get the businesses and their employees the assistance they needed. At each Rapid Response, Disaster and Emergency Services organized a petition that the business owners could sign which enabled the Governor to request low interest disaster loans from the federal government. The Bozeman community also responded in a strong manner by

creating a relief fund. Northwestern Energy donated \$50,000 to the people and businesses impacted. First Security Bank donated \$25,000 and the community at large gave an additional \$75,000. In May, two checks in the amount of \$500 each were sent to the businesses and their employees who were impacted by the explosion.

In Whitehall, a local attorney donated free advice and a local restaurant hosted the meeting space for the community meeting. The local economic development group and the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce

attended to discuss the actions they were taking.

During both the Bozeman and Whitehall rapid response meetings, both businesses and employees impacted attended the same meeting. In Miles City, businesses and employees had different needs and concerns, and the groups met separately. The timing of the Miles City Rapid Response was arranged to coincide with the Career and Service Fair to increase the number of avenues and opportunities for those in need.

But what is Rapid Response? The U.S. Department of Labor provides funding to states to provide traditional services that connect laid off workers to unemployment insurance, career counseling and job search assistance. Interagency Rapid Response expands that by bringing in other agencies such as the Department of Public Health and Human Services, Commerce, the Office of Public Instruction, Higher Education, Transportation, the State Library and other agencies that can offer services or may be able to offer employment opportunities. Programs like food stamps, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), and reduced price school lunch program can provide some financial relief so the dislocated worker can pay for gas, health insurance and other expenses they may incur while looking for another job. "These are programs that the workers and their employers paid taxes for and we strongly encourage them to utilize all that are appropriate while they get back on their feet," says Department of Public Health and Services Deputy Director Hank Hudson.



A Job Service Representative helps a dislocated worker



Miles City Job Service Workforce Center booth at a local job service fair

STIMULUS DOLLARS REVITALIZE SUMMER YOUTH JOBS PROGRAM IN MONTANA

Author: Jennifer Lawson

More than 700 youths across Montana will now have work experience and job preparedness training this summer thanks to new funding from Montana's Department of Labor and Industry provided by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"It's great to see our stimulus dollars at work helping teach 21st Century job skills to those who face challenges and typically feel they have nowhere to turn." Commissioner Keith Kelly, Department of Labor and Industry said. "No one should fall through the cracks during these tough economic times, especially our young people."

The injection of more than \$2 million federal stimulus dollars in Montana's Summer Youth Employment Program will revitalize a program that hasn't existed in most areas around the state for nearly a decade. A good example can be found in the Havre area, where approximately 50 young Montanans will have summer jobs and job readiness counseling, with \$130,000 federal stimulus dollars.

"We haven't had a Summer Youth Employment Program here in this area in about 7 years." said Darrel Hannum, of the Havre Human Resource Development Council. "This program meets a huge need. These kids are so excited and thankful to have work and to be giving back to their communities."

The Summer Youth Employment Program is being funded for all 56 counties through 10 District offices located in Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Glendive, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown and Missoula.



RECOVERY.GOV

MONTANA'S SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM HELPS MONTANA'S 'AT RISK' YOUTHS

Youths eligible for the program must be from a low-income home and between the ages of 14 and 24. The participants must also meet certain barriers to employment, which could include: school dropout, foster child, pregnant or parenting, or have disabilities.

Missoula's district office is putting \$300,900 federal stimulus dollars to work, employing approximately 100 youths from its 3 counties while also providing career path counseling and general development of work skills needed to maintain employment.

"This is exciting. We haven't had a summer jobs' program here in about 10 years." said Maggie Driscoll of the Missoula Human Resource Development Council. "This is a great opportunity for young people who wouldn't otherwise be able to find work."

Statewide, the summer jobs range from non-profit and city-county conservation projects to jobs with school districts, health facilities and mechanic shops, as well as business and retail positions. Montana's plan calls for development of skills needed in "green" jobs, and several participants will be employed in this area.

The stimulus dollars will help pay each worker, while teaching valuable job skills for future employment. Each employer-sponsor organization and company meets specific hiring requirements that the youths are not replacing other workers.

Apprenticeship Programs can be sponsored by employers, employer associations, or labor/management groups (JATC's) that can hire and train in a real world working situation.

Currently there are over 660 sponsors (employers of apprentices) – Union & Independent and 1,500 registered apprentices working in 50 different occupations scattered throughout 53 of the state's 56 counties.

recovery.mt.gov

Montana's
Reinvestment Projects



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RISING FROM THE ASHES

QUALITY JOBS, QUALITY LIFE, SUSTAINABILITY: MONTANA'S STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Author: Leisa Smith, State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) Director

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) is a 34 member Governor appointed board committed to engaging the workforce system in anticipating and responding to businesses' current and emerging needs for skilled workers; encouraging alignment among workforce development, post secondary education, and economic development; and advancing workforce development policies by providing recommendations to the Governor and other state leaders who support economic development efforts in Montana.

The SWIB recently redesigned their committee structure to better align with Governor Schweitzer's workforce priorities along with US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Aside from the regulatory Workforce Investment Act Committee, the SWIB hears reports from the Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, Youth Council, Career Cluster/Big Sky Pathways Committee, and the Incumbent/New Worker Committee. During the 2009 Legislative Session the Incumbent Worker Program received funding to expand from what was a two-year pilot program in the Billings area to a state-wide program.

Dave Morey, Bureau Chief for the newly formed 21st Century Workforce Technology, Apprenticeship and Training Bureau stated, "The Department of Labor and Industry's commitment to serve Montana's workers and employers is greatly enhanced by the Incumbent Worker Training program. In the 21st century we must serve small businesses and their employees with skill training that promotes economic growth and prosperity and avert business failure and layoff. We are eager to add this program to our list of services to the people of Montana."

The Incumbent Worker Program addresses small employers who are typically not eligible for other programs, to bridge the training gap for incumbent workers and job needs. The program will provide access and funding for training services to small business with fewer than 20 employees. Other programs offered by the state are targeted to larger businesses or workers who are unemployed. This program target those currently employed but with opportunities for career advancement or greater pay once training and/or certification is completed.



Leisa Smith



Blackfeet Chairman Earl Old Person and Working Friends One-Stop Director George Kipp accept the first ever certified Native American one-stop from Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly

Montana's workforce Board members serve two year terms and interested persons may apply on the Governors website or you may contact Patty Keebler @ pkeebler@mt.gov (406-444-3862) for application assistance.

<https://app.mt.gov/cgi-bin/governor/appointment.cgi>

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact SWIB Staff: Leisa Smith, Director @ 444-1609, Dan Bernhardt, Program Specialist @ 444-4480 or Danielle Nettleton, Administrative Assistant @ 444-2607.

THE GREENING OF OUR FUTURE

Author: David Cook, Building Codes Bureau Chief

The scope of the transformations taking place in our world today will soon outweigh any remaining skepticism regarding the significance, permanence or magnitude of the green movement.

Employers It is widely acknowledged to be a rapidly maturing evolution of theory and practice where dynamic changes in public policy and methods will be required and opportunities and challenges will change the course of industries and individuals.

The Department of Labor and Industry is poised to be on the forefront of this evolution considering the reach that the green movement has with respect to jobs, training, building standards and other aspects commensurate with the department's goals and mission. Green creates a "shift", a new set of variables that result in vigorous changes to existing business conditions and processes.



On the issue of jobs and training, the emergence of new industries, measureable job growth in existing industries, displacement of workers in declining industries and new skill requirements result directly from green policies. This shift must be met with a workforce that has had specialized training in green technologies, methods and concepts. In addition, a conduit of talent must be established and maintained through collaboration with business, education facilities, trade associations, and the department to ensure that workers are available to meet the demands of these green jobs.

The department's responsibility towards building standards is also affected by the greening of building codes. The shift here is building codes traditionally have concentrated on how the environment has affected the building, i.e. the influence of snow loads, wind, fire, seismic and other environmental factors. With green building we are challenged to evaluate how the building affects the environment with a conscious effort to reduce negative environmental effect and at the same time encourage positive environmental impacts.

To meet these challenges, the department has encouraged staff to supplement their knowledge and awareness of

green building. Bureau Chief David Cook has recently become a Certified Green Professional by a nationally recognized organization that has developed green standards. Currently Mr. Cook is the only building official in Montana to hold this certification.



Dave Cook

Building officials need to recognize new green methods, materials, and concepts.

Presentation of green concepts into the built environment often leads to code officials not having an established "standard" for gauging the construction. Knowledge of green building allows the code official to properly and effectively evaluate new materials and methods within the intent of the building code, which also enhances the Bureau's mission to collaborate with design professionals, builders and other stakeholders.

The Bureau has already seen measureable advantages to this collaboration through reduced permitting time, less regulatory stance for green projects under construction, and improved confidence in government processes.

In addition, a more collaborative built environment leads to more code compliant construction, which in turn lends itself to a safer jobsite with fewer work-related injuries, lower unemployment, less loss of economic strength, and more opportunity for expansion and need for additional workers. This is a win-win to be celebrated by the Department and the customers it serves.



ARE WE GETTING THE AMOUNT OF GASOLINE WE ARE PAYING FOR?

Author: Tim Lloyd, Weights and Measures Bureau, Business Standards Division

The number of complaints about gas pump accuracy has doubled from last year, but Montana consumers will be happy to know that the State of Montana Weights and Measures Bureau is on the job.

In 2007, Bureau inspectors tested nearly 14,000 gas pumps and found that only about two percent did not meet the tolerance requirements. Montanans are fortunate, considering the national average is about six percent “out of tolerance,” which means that 98% of devices here test within a narrow range plus or minus.

One explanation for this accuracy is that Montana’s gas pumps are relatively new because of changes in the underground storage tank law during the late 1990’s. Another reason is that Bureau inspectors test at least 85% of all gas pumps each year. Finally, the Bureau has an effective registered service provider program that allows us to track who is adjusting gas pumps, when, and why. Only Bureau inspectors or service providers registered with the Bureau may legally test, adjust, or repair gas pumps, and a wire seal coded to the registered service provider or to the Bureau must be placed on the device when the work is completed.

Additionally, both inspectors and registered service providers submit written reports to the office. Since gas prices have risen, the Bureau has noticed a trend where gas station owners are having their pumps serviced more often to ensure that they are not giving gas away. The required documentation, the placing of traceable wire seals, and the fact that Bureau inspectors may show up at any time to test or re-test gas pumps clearly deter people from tampering with the devices.

“The Bureau enforces a “LEVEL playing field,” meaning no advantage to either the buyer or seller, and we do much more than just test gas pumps,” says Bureau Chief Tim Lloyd. “We are responsible for licensing, inspecting, testing and certifying all commercial weighing and measuring devices used in Montana; we enforce laws and regulations pertaining to quantity control of prepackaged goods and quality control of petroleum products; and we maintain the State Metrology Laboratory which houses state mass and volume standards, calibrates the mass and volume standards used by our field inspectors, registered service providers; and the lab certifies devices and standards used internally by various industries and businesses.”



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE

AUGUST

OSHA’s most often cited hazards-what to look for and how to correct	Aug. 12	Billings
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety & Health Inspections	Aug. 13	Billings
OSHA Forklift Operator Training Requirements	Aug. 19	Kalispell
Conducting Effective Workplace Accident Investigations	Aug. 20	Kalispell
OSHA Fall Protection Requirements in Construction	Aug. 26	Missoula

SEPTEMBER

OSHA Confined Space Entry Requirements	Sept. 9	Missoula
OSHA Trenching and Excavation Requirements	Sept. 10	Missoula
OSHA’s most often cited hazards-what to look for and how to correct	Sept. 16	Helena
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety & Health Inspections	Sept. 17	Helena
Introduction to Federal OSHA, the Montana Safety Act and the Montana Safety Culture Act and the Part they each play in Montana Businesses	Sept. 24	Helena AM
Complying With OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements	Sept. 24	Helena PM

OCTOBER

OSHA Requirements for Safe Guarding Machinery	Oct. 8	Missoula AM
OSHA Requirements for Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout)	Oct. 8	Missoula PM
OSHA Trenching and Excavation Requirements	Oct. 15	Miles City

UPCOMING EVENTS



Miles City Fourth of July Parade 1913 Courtesy the Miles City Historical Society

ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESS CLINICS

City	Date	Location	Sponsor	Phone	Fee
Helena	Sept. 2	Red Lion Colonial	Chamber	447-1941	\$50
Butte	Sept. 10	War Bonnet Inn	Chamber	723-3177	\$40
Lewistown	Sept. 23	Harry's On the Hill	Chamber/JSEC	538-8701	\$35/30**
Great Falls	Sept. 24	CM Russell Museum	Chamber	761-4434	\$45/55*
Polson	Oct. 7	Lake County Health Dept.	(Job Service) JSEC	883-7885	\$40/35**
Missoula	Oct 8	Quality Inn	Chamber	543-6623	\$40/55*

Registration fees are set by the local sponsor to cover facility costs, including lunch. For more information or to register, please contact your local sponsor.

**Higher prices indicated are for participants that are not current chamber members and ** are for 2 or more attending participants.*

The Governor's Conference on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Safety & Health September 30th - October 2nd, 2009 at the Hilton Garden Inn Missoula, MT

Workshops presented are directed toward workers' compensation and safety & health issues. Participants include employers, adjusters, insurers, attorneys and injured workers. For more information Contact Diana Ferriter 406-444-1574 diferriter@mt.gov or Karen Doig 406-444-1389 kdoig@mt.gov.

Check out our extended menu of events on
<https://app.mt.gov/cal/html/event?eventCollectionCode=doli>

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