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INSIDE:

**Top 10 jobs in Big Sky Country**  
**Giving a voice to Main Street**  
**How travel and recreation benefit Montana**  
**Equal pay for equal work**



SUMMER 2013

## A note from the Commissioner

As Montanans, we don't shy away from hard work. In fact, we are known throughout the country for our work ethic. But there are times when some may not have the training or the necessary tools to get the job done. As the Labor Commissioner it is my job to ensure that workers and job seekers have access to the necessary tools and training they need to find or keep a quality job and Montana businesses have a skilled workforce to meet their needs; which is why workforce development is vital to growing our State's economy.

Montana is in a unique position moving out of the recession. Our unemployment rate is declining, but that doesn't tell the whole story. In Eastern Montana, the unemployment rate is so low that employers are having a hard time finding skilled workers to fill job openings. However in Northwestern Montana the exact opposite is true. The unemployment rate is still high enough that workers must learn new skills as the economy in that region changes.

That's why the Department of Labor and Industry is working closely with the Governor on the Main Street Montana Project. The Project, which is featured in this issue, is a way to gather Montana's innovators and business leaders to hear their ideas to expand economic opportunities in our state.

In addition, the Department is leveraging its partnerships with two-year schools and businesses to provide the necessary training workers need to either obtain employment or advance in their current career. These partnerships are vital to workforce development.

As I mentioned earlier workforce development is crucial, but equal pay for equal work is just as important. That's why it is my honor and privilege to chair the Governor's Equal Pay for Equal Work Taskforce. In Montana, for every dollar men earn, women who are doing the same work earn \$0.67. Although there are many factors that contribute to the wage gap, it is time to close it once and for all.



In this issue of *Main Street Montana* we are focusing on workforce development. We'll take a look at how recent legislation allows veterans to apply relevant military training, service or education to certification or licensure in the private sector. This is a major milestone that eases the transition into civilian life for many Montana veterans. We'll also take a look at how Unemployment Insurance impacts the State's economy, beyond the headlines; introduce you to a woman who wants to keep the art of blacksmithing alive, and what the top ten occupations are in Montana.

There is no greater honor than working for the people of Montana, and I am excited about the opportunities coming to the Treasure State.

—PAM BUCY, *Commissioner*

Montana Department of Labor & Industry



Montana Department of  
**LABOR & INDUSTRY**

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ment. For example, the movie starlet working as a retail salesperson learns soft skills such as showing up on time, working with difficult people, and developing a sales pitch—all of which will be helpful in her future movie star career. In fact, research by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry suggests that the soft skills developed during entry-level jobs are critical to a workers' success. Many employers consider soft skills, like work ethic and critical thinking, to be more important to worker retention than the technical knowledge and skills learned through educational programs.

One of the greatest challenges in workforce development is to take the youthful dreams of movie stardom and transform them into career goals involving available jobs. For example, those interested in becoming an actor or actress may find greater success and personal fulfillment in becoming a radio announcer, public speaker, or teacher where they can enjoy being in front of an audience. Career counselors can use resources like O\*Net or the Department of Labor and Industry's Career Resource Network to identify jobs that require similar aptitudes. For example, it may be obvious that a current bookworm may be interested in a career as a librarian, but it may not be as clear that the organizing skills of the pep club president would be put to good use as a convention planner. These tools, along with knowledge of how many jobs are available, can help career counselors and workforce planners guide individuals into careers that fit the worker's aptitudes and also keep the worker gainfully employed throughout their career. 🌟

# Everyone Wants to be a Movie Star

There isn't a high demand for movies stars in Montana, but there are other occupations in the Treasure State that have job openings. We list the top ten. **BY BARBARA WAGNER, Chief Economist**

**T**he bright lights and red carpet. The fame and the lifestyle. The bank account. Everyone dreams of being a movie star. But movie star jobs are hard to come by in Montana. Only about 70 actors and actresses were employed in Montana in 2012, with many of them working at a fairly low average wage of \$9.76. Therefore, budding starlets often end up in less glamorous jobs as waiters, cashiers, or secretaries as they wait to be discovered.

While most would consider the starlets transition to a common waitressing job as life cruelly crushing dreams, economists view the situation as being caused by the forces of supply and demand. While movie star jobs are hard to come by, there are many jobs available for waitresses, food workers, and office clerks.

The table at right illustrates the most common jobs in Montana, along with their hourly wage. Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, and Bookkeepers are the most common jobs in Montana. Many of the occupation on the most common jobs list are entry level jobs with lower wages than the statewide average

wage of \$38,000, but the list also includes the higher-paying jobs of registered nurses and truck drivers.

Although entry-level jobs are generally lower-paying, the skills developed in such positions are critical for workforce develop-

## Top Ten Occupations for Employment in Montana

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYED	AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE
1 Cashiers	14,580	\$20,243
2 Retail Salespersons	14,090	\$26,550
3 Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	10,860	\$31,941
4 Secretaries (Excluding Legal, Medical, and Executive)	10,610	\$28,316
5 Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	10,520	\$19,428
6 Waiters and Waitresses	8,730	\$18,309
7 Registered Nurses	8,350	\$59,919
8 Janitors and Cleaners (Excludes Maids and Housekeeping)	7,610	\$23,857
9 Office Clerks, General	6,010	\$26,692
10 Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	5,970	\$39,949

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012.

# Graduation Matters to Montana Businesses

BY ALLYSON HAGEN, Communications Director, Montana Office of Public Instruction

In 2010, State Superintendent Denise Juneau launched a statewide initiative, Graduation Matters Montana (GMM), to increase the number of high school students who graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. Thirty-three communities have launched a local Graduation Matters initiative, which means 70 percent of Montana's high school students attend a school where the school district, main street businesses and community organizations are working together to develop strategies to increase the number of students who graduate from high school.

Montana businesses are critical to this work. In the past year, more than 250 local businesses and community organizations have joined local GMM teams. These businesses are actively involved in promoting local GMM work by displaying posters in their offices, sponsoring events, and providing middle school and high school students with opportunities for leadership development and career exploration.

It's easy to see why. Montana business leaders understand the link between an educated workforce and a strong economy. Current economic projections show that 62 percent of all jobs in Montana will require some postsecondary training beyond high school in 2018. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, the lost lifetime earnings in Montana from dropouts this year alone total nearly \$830 million. Simply put, improving graduation rates makes dollars and sense.

Current corporate partnerships with GMM include State Farm Insurance, which has contributed to the development of a School-Business Partnership Toolkit, and Optimum Cable, which contributes gift incentives for students who pledge to graduate from high school. First Interstate Bank and Northwestern Energy have supported our efforts to bring Graduation Matters communities together annually to attend trainings and share best practices.

In 2012, the Office of Public Instruction received a three-year, \$450,000 grant from the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation to launch the GMM Challenge Fund, which provides up to \$10,000 each year to communities with a local Graduation Matters initiative. This year, State Farm Insurance contributed an additional \$15,000 to the Challenge Fund.

"Investing in community-based efforts focused on improving the achievement of all students is the single-most important investment

we can make in our children," says Mike Halligan, Executive Director of the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation. "Developing Graduation Matters programs in

school districts across the state sends a message to our children that we care about them and their future. This message is the core of the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation's mission, and we are proud to be able to support this critically important initiative."

**The lost lifetime earnings in Montana from dropouts this year alone total nearly \$83 Million**



Above: A student at the St. Ignatius Graduation Matters Community Showcase takes the pledge to graduate

Today's students are your future customers, employees, tax payers, board members, parents and community leaders. Students on Superintendent Juneau's Student Advisory Board consistently request real world experiences and coursework that will prepare them to take the next steps in their life. Partnering with local schools on Graduation Matters initiatives provides an opportunity for businesses to expose students to the requirements, satisfactions, concerns and expectations of the business world and gives businesses a chance to interact with their future work force.

The Office of Public Instruction invites you to learn more about how you can get involved in a local Graduation Matters Initiative. Call Deborah Halliday, Office of Public Instruction at 406-444-3559, or e-mail [dhalliday@mt.gov](mailto:dhalliday@mt.gov). Or visit the Initiative website at [graduationmatters.mt.gov](http://graduationmatters.mt.gov).



Above: Graduation Matters Great Falls created a visual display with a desk for every student who dropped out in the previous year. Right: Denise Juneau's 2012-2013 Student Advisory Board

# Giving a Voice to Main Street

Governor Bullock is asking Montana business leaders to develop a bottom-up self-sustaining blueprint to support the creation, recruitment and retention of Montana jobs.

BY MIKE WESSLER, Computer Systems Analyst, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

**M**ontanans have proven they are national leaders in business ingenuity and hard-work. These are the qualities that helped Montana weather the recession better than other states and come through the recovery in a position of strength. While other states were running deficits, Montana's state budget remained flush. And Montana's employment levels have recovered to pre-recession levels much more quickly than most other states. Despite these successes, Montanans know there is always more work to be done.

This is why Governor Steve Bullock recently announced the creation of the Main Street Montana Project to tap into these strengths of Montana businesses and workers, to build a business plan for the state. The Project, which is led by some of Montana's most well respected business leaders, will seek input from all corners of the state to develop a bottom-up, self-sustaining economic blueprint to support the creation, recruitment and retention of Montana jobs.

"Montana businesses have shown they have an unmatched know-how and work ethic," Bullock said. "The Main Street Montana Project will begin by going directly to the people who have made our economy strong, to hear what we can do to make it even stronger."

The Project is being co-chaired by Larry Simkins, President and CEO of the Washington Companies, and Bill Johnstone, President and CEO of D.A. Davidson & Co. These forward-thinking business leaders are bringing the Project directly to Montana business leaders and innovators through a series of roundtable discussions, to hear first-hand their ideas to expand economic opportunities and

Montanans are encouraged to continue to provide their thoughts on the direction the Project should take at [MainStreetMontanaProject.com](http://MainStreetMontanaProject.com)

confront our challenges.

"I'm proud to be involved in this process because I believe that working together—businesses, workers and the government—we can find ways to build on our strengths, and ensure that Montana continues to thrive, businesses are created and grow, and wages rise," Johnstone said.

Governor Bullock joined Simkins and Johnstone at the first roundtable discussion in

Billings in May. The event was attended by more than 100 business, labor, education, workforce and economic development and other community leaders. During the discussion, participants talked about the need to help businesses and colleges work together more efficiently, to ensure that graduates were entering the workforce with the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are available. They also talked about strengths that give Montana advantages over other states, such as our streamlined regulatory processes and the work ethic of Montanans.

These roundtables also highlighted the diversity of our state's economy. Businesses in the Bakken region talked about their struggles to find qualified workers and compete with the high wages of the oil field jobs. Montanans in the central part of the state told of their successes in bringing high-tech jobs to our communities. And residents in the western part of the state talked about the important role that tourism and our state's natural beauty plays in our economy, while warning of ongoing unemployment challenges that they face.

"Throughout the state, we've been hearing from diverse groups of people about the strong position that Montana is in to grow our economy and tackle the challenges that our businesses and workers are facing. I look for-





Left: Governor Steve Bullock and Bill Johnstone, D.A. Davidson chief executive at the first roundtable discussion in Billings.

“The Main Street Montana Project will begin by going directly to the people who have made our economy strong, to hear what we can do to make it even stronger.”

ward to continuing to work with Montanans to put together a business plan that will ensure Montana’s economy remains strong for years to come,” Simkins said of the Project.

The roundtable discussions are only the first stage in this process. The Project leaders will continue to reach out to Montanans throughout the summer, through a statewide community survey. In these surveys, community leaders in every county of the state will have an opportunity to tell the story of their cities and towns. They’ll be asked to identify the strengths and challenges that their local businesses and workers face on a daily basis. Most importantly, they’ll be asked for their input on what can be done to help businesses and workers in their county and throughout the state. These surveys will ensure that the Main Street Montana Project gets a complete picture of the economy.

Building off the input from the roundtables and community surveys, the project co-chairs will put together a business plan for Montana. This plan will contain concrete steps that the Governor can take to build on Montana’s economic strengths and make the most of our opportunities, while addressing the lingering challenges that Montana businesses face. Simkins and Johnstone have made it clear that in this process, any idea that will actually create jobs is on the table for consideration.

Ensuring the voices of all Montanans are heard in this Project is a top priority. This is why, throughout this process the Project will provide Montanans with continuous updates and feedback, to ensure that the process is done as transparently as possible. They’ll also provide Montanans with ongoing opportunities to provide input on the direction of the Project.

Montana’s economy must constantly change to remain competitive in the global marketplace, which is why Simkins and Johnstone have committed to keeping this Project going long after they present their proposals to the Governor. They will regularly reexamine the plan that Montanans put together to identify changing needs of the state’s economy and to ensure their proposals are having the expected impacts.

Montanans are encouraged to continue to provide their thoughts on the direction the Project should take at [www.MainStreetMontanaProject.com](http://www.MainStreetMontanaProject.com) and they can keep up with the latest news by following the Project on Twitter: @MainStreetMT.



Left to right: Governor Bullock listens to a participant at the Bozeman Roundtable; Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy listens to a participant at the Great Falls Roundtable; Participants in Miles City discuss the economic opportunities in Eastern Montana.

# Apprenticeship Program partners with Post-Secondary Education

The transfer of credits from Montana's two-year colleges to apprenticeships are taking apprenticeship to the next level.

BY MARK MAKI, State Director of the Montana Apprenticeship and Training Program

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Apprenticeship and Training Program, has been a training partner with Montana employers and unions since 1941. Through the years, the Program has certified training for thousands of Montana's skilled workers in a program that not only requires an average of four years of on the job training experience, but also an extensive educational component. Prior to 2005, the educational requirements for apprenticeship were provided by union funded classroom training for union sponsored apprentices. For those apprentices sponsored by independent employers, their educational requirements were fulfilled through a correspondence course provided by two technical colleges in North Dakota. From 1941 to 2006, apprenticeship training in Montana did not have any linkage with the Montana higher education community.

That changed in 2005, when faculty from MSU-Northern and employers from the Havre area approached the Apprenticeship and Training Program with proposed plans to establish two Associates Applied Science (AAS) degrees in plumbing technology. "Educational needs change, and by having business input, the apprentice can learn and keep current with changes and trends in industry",

community to support the MSU-N program, the AAS in plumbing technology became operational in 2006.

Although the plumbing industry had a voice in the overall hands-on training and classroom instruction for the MSU-N program, we worked closely with the school to establish the credit that would transfer from the school to apprenticeship. In 2006 an articulation agreement was established that set the parameters for the amount of on the job training credit, and education that would transfer as credit, toward plumber apprenticeship training. The agreement also included an understanding that a representative from the apprenticeship program would provide an apprenticeship information presentation to students on an annual basis.

Since 2006, the Apprenticeship and Training Program has established articulation agreements with MSU-N's electrical AAS program, Flathead Valley Community College in Electrical Technology, several Colleges of Technology (COT's) in carpentry, a power plant operations program at the COT in Billings, and the Program was instrumental in establishing the 12-week linemen school at the COT in Butte. All of the articulation agreements with these programs were modeled after the original agreement with MSU-N in 2006. These agreements allow us to take apprenticeship in Montana to the next level.

AAS graduates that are entering apprenticeship have to demonstrate a skill level comparable to the approved apprenticeship credit to the employer within a reasonable time frame; AAS graduates can apply school related experience to the jobsite. "We have a huge shortage of skilled workers in Montana and the United States, and any advantage the apprentice can gain by bringing those credits into the trades will allow the apprentice to complete their education hours sooner, focus on work experience, and make the apprentice more employable", said Schlotfeldt. The prior education not only reduces the term of apprenticeship but it also places an apprentice



Above: Student in MSU-Northern's Electrical Program.  
Below: Plumbing class at MSU-Northern



at a higher wage level. Most AAS graduates will start earning from \$13 to \$15 per hour versus the average entry of \$11 to \$12 per hour. Currently, AAS graduates from the electrical and plumbing programs are highly sought after by employers and usually have a job commitment prior to graduation.

On a final note, there has been serious discussion between the apprenticeship community and Montana higher education officials to grant up to year of credit for a two year associate degree for journeymen that have completed registered apprenticeship programs. This proposal could lead to higher trained workforce and provide more employment opportunities for Montana's skilled workforce, especially in recession economies. ❁



said MSU-Northern Apprenticeship Training Coordinator and Plumbing Instructor, Lorren Schlotfeldt. Montana plumbing licensure law requires either a license or registration of apprentices to work in the trade legally. Graduates from the proposed two year AAS program would have to complete their training in registered apprenticeship. After several meetings, and with the concurrence of the plumbing



Left: Great Falls students in a carpentry class build affordable housing. Below: Salish Kootenai College nursing students conducting a women's health/wellness fair.



# Good Careers and the Common Good

Montana's colleges and universities serve as incubators for a qualified workforce and engaged and active citizens.

BY DEAN MCGOVERN, Executive Director, Montana Campus Compact

A qualified workforce is the backbone of a strong economy. Engaged and active citizens are the backbone of a strong democracy. Montana's colleges and universities can serve as incubators for both by preparing students for careers and for their civic and social responsibilities. Students can learn to do well for themselves and do good for others.

Today, many are reevaluating the purpose of a college education. Should higher education be an engine for economic prosperity by producing graduates with the skills and talents that make them ready to work? Should higher education adhere to its civic mission to develop the "whole person" and foster the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and democratic attributes needed to advance a healthy and civil society? Can colleges and universities commit themselves to both pursuits with a high level of impact and without diminishing either? These are good questions; and the answer to each is "YES."

In Montana, colleges and universities prepare students for both work and citizenship. Workforce development and civic development can be complementary purposes for higher education. First, we must acknowledge that college has been and can be a great start to fruitful careers. Merely as an investment strategy, a college education still pays high dividends over a lifetime. According to the Pew Research Center, an average college graduate

earns approximately \$650,000 more than the average high school graduate throughout a forty-year career. Businesses, large and small, need college educated workers equipped with technical skills. Government, schools, hospitals, and nonprofits need trained professionals that lead change, think critically, innovate, and solve problems. Montana needs qualified workers with specialized training for 21st Century jobs in current and yet-to-be-discovered industries. Montana's four-year, two-year, public, and independent colleges and universities are filling those demands. In these ways, there are large private gains to be made through a college education—higher wages, more earnings, and more economic productivity.

Second, we must acknowledge the public good that is gained when a person receives a college education. According to the College Board Policy Center, people with college degrees are more likely to volunteer, give to charities, help educate and mentor children, use fewer government resources, celebrate diversity, and make healthier lifestyle choices that keep healthcare costs low, just to name a few community benefits. Corporate citizenship is also an important attribute for an engaged workforce. A study conducted by Cone Incorporated revealed that 81% of Americans consider a company's social commitment when deciding where to work. To be sure, our communities need "civic professionals" or those who see the public value of whatever

they are doing and act in the best interests of whole community. These connections are being made in various majors across the college curriculum, creating complementary relationships between workforce development and civic engagement.

Through community-based research experiences, co-curricular volunteer projects, and service-learning, Montana college students learn civic professionalism, develop technical and civic skills, and gain an appreciation for place and diversity. Nursing students at Salish Kootenai College, Montana State University, and Montana Tech, are serving patients in need while preparing for their careers. Similarly, education students at MSU-Billings, Fort Peck Community College, Rocky Mountain College, and The University of Montana, are learning to become good teachers by helping children in low-income schools around the state. Heavy equipment operations students at Miles Community College are creating value by applying their skills to community projects. Students at MSU-Northern, Carroll College, and UM Western are preparing for and teaching others to mitigate the negative effects of flood, fire, and drought. Carpentry students at Great Falls College partner with NeighborWorks to build affordable homes in the community. Students in various majors at the University of Great Falls, Blackfeet Community College, Flathead Valley Community College, and Helena College are tutoring youth, helping seniors, planting community gardens, and distributing food to fellow citizens in their local areas.

Through civic engagement college students are launching careers to do well for themselves and do good for others.

For further information, please contact Montana Campus Compact, [www.mtcompact.org](http://www.mtcompact.org) or 406-243-5177 and "Like" MTCC at [www.facebook.com/mtcompact](https://www.facebook.com/mtcompact).

# Workforce development in Western Montana

BY PAT HULLA, Regional Director, Department of Labor & Industry Workforce Services Division

Great challenges can bring great innovations when communities decide to take the opportunity. The economic recession created many changes in western Montana. On paper, it didn't always look too promising. Months of double digit unemployment figures hid a quiet but steady movement to use this time when jobs were scarce to focus on a key factor in economic growth – workforce development.

What is workforce development? According to Wikipedia, it is “an American economic development approach that attempts to enhance a region's economic stability and prosperity by focusing on people... Workforce development has evolved... to a holistic approach considering participants' many barriers and the overall needs of the region.” Workforce development is unique in bringing together strategic partners such as business, education, economic development and public and private placement organizations for the purpose of identifying gaps between business needs and worker skills.

When western Montana moved rapidly from labor shortage to labor surplus, a num-

ber of things were observed. Businesses became more conservative in hiring or actually had to reduce staff. Workers who had never been out of work before flocked to Job Service and staffing agencies to discover that they needed a whole new set of job seeking skills in the 21st century's technological environment. And communities began dialogue that started with “what can we do?” People began to make connections, come together and share ideas. If those strategic partners hadn't collaborated before, they did now, and the result has been positive forward movement to prepare for the growth and new direction that would emerge from the recession.

What does workforce development look like in western Montana? The process has involved identifying what some of these emerging needs would be. The Business Expansion and Retention (BEaR) program is strong here and provides data on business growth patterns and challenges. It serves as a vehicle for connecting businesses with resources available for growth and training. Economic development partners continue to meet with new and expanding businesses and add to the knowledge pool of what workforce require-

ments will be. There are a number of fine educational providers in western Montana who listen and rapidly develop relevant curriculum. And organizations who work with job seekers took on the task of honing job search skills and directing workers into appropriate training to be work ready as opportunities arise. Funding resources are being identified and implemented for workforce development and include curriculum development, on-the-job training, and financial aid. Critical workforce essential or “soft” skills are gradually becoming embedded into secondary and post secondary education and are available to businesses and job seekers through model programs like the “Skills for Success” workshops offered by the Polson Job Service.

There are signs of vitality throughout western Montana. New and different businesses exist and established ones have retooled. The partnerships established in response to the recession are strong and contributing to continued economic growth with a commitment to workforce development. Would we choose to repeat the last 4 years? Probably not, but just as the phoenix rises from the ashes, so too will we. 🌱

Representatives from Blue Marble Biomaterials answer questions during the 2013 Job Fair in Missoula





# Workforce development in Eastern Montana

BY STEVE OLSON Regional Director, Department of Labor & Industry Workforce Services Division



jobs began trickling into the area, a slow but steady rise in wages and increased competition for workers for the increasing number of jobs forced a paradigm shift upon many employers who were suddenly seeking to employ the same people they had hastily labeled undesirable in the past. This forced many employers to begin investing their own time and money to train staff on the job, and in an interesting way, this shift sparked a great deal of employer based workforce development training. The Department of Labor & Industry's successful implementation of the fifteen million dollar Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development initiative also played a key role in the meeting workforce development needs during this time frame.

In the present day, those once, "less-desirable", workers now have both training and successful workforce experience to list on resumes as they make the most of the current job seekers market, and are better prepared than ever to provide for their families. Additionally, where once both spouses of a family were working two jobs, now only one parent working at a true living wage will support their entire family. Such situations leave three

jobs open to be filled. This is something no statistic will reveal, yet it is a unique reality in some situations.

On the employer front, the dramatic increase in the number of jobs, especially those with superior pay and benefits continues to drive retention and hiring efforts between employers. In support of the same, Glendive recently hosted the Eastern Montana Energy Expo. This trade specific event, a joint effort between Dawson County EDC, Glendive Job

**The dramatic increase in the number of jobs continues to drive retention and hiring efforts between employers**

Service and many other entities, hosted a total of 854 attendees. The 124 trade exhibitors filled Dawson Community College's two gymnasiums as well as an outdoor exhibit area. Glendive

Job Service simultaneously hosted a Career Fair at Dawson Community College with both employer and job seeker numbers exceeding expectations. Events like these allow the business and education communities to work together to meet the demands of an ever changing workforce. 🌟

Hopeful job seekers meet employers at the Eastern Montana Energy Expo



**F**or a number of years now, an ongoing discussion has existed as to the impact energy development has had on the communities of eastern Montana. My perspective as the former Local Office Manager of both Glendive and Sidney Job Service, and currently the Regional Director of eastern Montana provides me with a ring-side seat to many of the paradigm shifts that have faced our citizens, our employers and our Job Service staff.

One of those shifts has resulted in a new reality for many of our long time residents. From 2004 through 2006, it was not uncommon for each spouse in a two parent household to work two jobs just to make ends meet. This was a direct result of the low wages being offered at that time based upon plentiful labor and fewer job opportunities. It was also an occasional practice among employers within any one community to readily label less than perfect employees as undesirable making it difficult for those unfortunate enough to receive this informal label to make ends meet.

From 2007 forward, as the oil exploration

# Government and Education Team up to Fill Jobs Created in Montana

Montana is increasing its proportion of population with college degrees faster than any other state in the nation.

**BY DAVID COOK** Bureau Chief, Department of Labor & Industry Building Codes Bureau

**I**ndustry is growing in Montana creating new jobs and new opportunities. Some of those opportunities include highly technical positions such as Boiler Operator Engineers. As the demand for technically advanced skills increases, so does the need for training. That's why the Department of Labor and Industry's Business Standards Division teamed up with the Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) to develop and approve a Boiler Operator Engineer's course to fill highly technical positions needed by Montana industry throughout the state.

The idea started locally with industries in the northwest part of the state having demand for higher skilled operators to fill the need of expanding operations. These Montana businesses called on Flathead Valley Community College to create a 'career ladder' for existing, entry-level boiler operators. Businesses needed these skilled operators to extend their knowledge and experience and to achieve higher state licensure to fill positions being created by those industries. "When the immediate workforce need and a viable solution were made known to us, there was no question that we would work to pursue and make available the training if it all possible," said FVCC Workforce Training Director, Jodi Smith.

Once that demand was recognized the Department responded by taking a step back from the traditional 'regulatory' posture and examined current flexibilities offered in the licensing laws recognizing the merits of an alternative approach for these expanding industries. By working directly with college administrators and staff to set specific standards of class content, instructor credentials, reference materials, and baseline prerequisites the training program created by the College could be approved



Graduates of the first Boiler Operator Training Class at Flathead Valley Community College



under current licensing law.

The Department approved FVCC's proposed program based on the thoroughness of the educational exposure to the topics which included traditional classroom lectures, as well as guest speaker instruction and site visit experiences. "It was exciting to work with the Department of Labor and Industry to leverage current licensing laws for the advantage of the Montana workforce," said Smith.

Other areas of support for this program include providing students with direct, classroom-delivered information on boiler inspection methods and processes from a Department licensed State Boiler Inspector; information they will find valuable as they increase their responsibilities in the boiler rooms of industries across the state. Additionally, the Department recognized that these students, who also work full time, may find a benefit to having their state licensure testing performed at the college upon graduating from the program.

FVCC's inaugural Boiler Operator Train-

ing class graduated six students on May 20, 2013. These graduates, proudly representing local industry including F. H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. and Kalispell Regional Hospital, went on to take their state licensure tests on May 22nd at the college. Due to their commitment to self-improvement, the support they received from their employers and the excellent education received at the College, all six were successful and received their First Class Boiler Engineers license from the State Department of Labor and Industry.

The Department certainly recognizes and applauds FVCC's effort to provide this necessary education and training to fill both an essential need for sustainable employment for Montana's labor force and Montana's requirement for highly-trained personnel for industry and business. When government and education team up—business and labor both benefit.

FVCC is planning to offer another session of the First Class Boiler Engineer Licensing Preparation Course this fall (Third Class license is a pre-requisite). ❁

# The Right Stuff

Montana has the second highest population of veterans per capita in the country. Businesses want to hire these highly trained individuals and the Montana Department of Labor & Industry is taking steps to ensure they have that opportunity.

BY DAN BERNHARDT, Veterans Employment Program Coordinator, Department of Labor & Industry

**T**he Department of Defense lists the average cost of initial-entry training (boot camp, recruit camp, basic training, etc.) per service member at \$35,000. This is just for the initial training! They also estimate it costs about \$11,000 to recruit each service member. How many private businesses dedicate \$46,000 to train and recruit a new employee?

Yet, many of us have heard about a veteran who served as a combat medic, but when he or she returned to the civilian workplace, they were not “qualified” to become an EMT; or that veteran who drove 18 wheel vehicles long distances, but that experience doesn’t count toward a commercial driver’s license.

Numbers speak loudly. In 2011 the Department of Defense paid over \$936 million in unemployment compensation for veterans. We can do better.

Montana is making positive changes to address this challenge. During the 2013 Legislative Session there were a number of bills passed to assist our trained veterans in obtaining a license or certificate for which they are already qualified.

HB 508 (Edmunds) revised the commercial driver’s license laws to waive the skills test for veterans with military commercial ve-

hicle experience. We have now joined 32 other states with this waiver in place.

HB 259 (Hunter) and SB 183 (Arntzen) both revise the Professional and Occupational Boards and Programs to apply relevant education, training, or service completed by a member of the armed forces. The Department of Labor & Industry’s Business Standards Division is currently working on the Administrative Rules for implementation of these new statutes.

Montana has the second highest population of veterans per capita in the country. Businesses want to hire these highly trained individuals and the Montana Department of Labor & Industry is taking steps to ensure they have that opportunity. One of those steps is participating in de-mobilizations. By reaching out to vets when they de-mobilize, we are able to touch base with them right away and let them know about available jobs in their hometown, apprenticeship and training opportunities and register them with their local Job Service Office. We are also working with various service providers to help Montana veterans transition from military to civilian life. The goal is to help veterans overcome obstacles they have when trying to gain employment once they have been honorably



During the 2013 Legislative Session there were a number of bills passed to assist our trained veterans in obtaining a license or certificate for which they are already qualified.

discharged from the military. Applying the skills and training veterans have acquired during service is just the first step.

These efforts have taken Montana’s post 9/11 veteran unemployment rate from 20.1% in 2010 to 5.5% in 2012; making the Treasure State the 11th best state in the country. We will continue to work diligently with veterans and service providers so that all veterans will have the opportunity to find meaningful employment when they transition into civilian life. 🌟



# Equal Pay for Equal Work

Governor Bullock created a new task force to ensure that Montana workers earn equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender.

BY ANNIE GLOVER, Director of Special Projects, Department of Labor & Industry

On June 13th, over 70 Montana business, education, nonprofit, and community leaders joined Governor Steve Bullock, Commissioner of Labor & Industry Pam Bucy and Department of Administration Director Sheila Hogan for the announcement of Montana's new Equal Pay for Equal Work Task Force.

Addressing a crowded room, Governor Bullock said, "Fifty years ago this week, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law. In 1963 women were paid 59 cents for every dollar that men were paid for the same work. In 50 years, we've only managed to close the wage gap by 18 cents to 77 cents nationwide, and we have a long way to go."

Governor Bullock charged the Task Force with gathering information, furnishing advice, and providing recommendations on policies and actions to ensure that Montana workers earn equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender.

"Pay equity is a major issue that affects a huge part of Montana's economy," said Commissioner Bucy. "Women are contributing to the economic prosperity of our state, but they are not enjoying the same economic rewards for their work. On this Task Force, we will take very clear steps to meet the Governor's call to identify steps that we can take, as a state, to close Montana's wage gap."

"Montana women earn only 67% of what men earn, putting Montana at 39th place for pay equity in the nation," said Governor Bullock. "I'd match the Montana work ethic up



Above: Governor Bullock, Department of Administration Director Sheila Hogan and Labor & Industry Commissioner Pam Bucy at the announcement of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Task Force.

Right: Governor Bullock and Secretary of State Linda McCulloch applying the State Seal to the Executive Order



against any other state in the nation, and 39th place for pay equity is unacceptable."

The Governor's Executive Order sets forward a clear path forward to achieve lasting, positive change for Montana working families. The Task Force's objectives will include study-

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**"With women state employees making 20% less than their male counterparts, it's time for us to set our own house in order."**

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ing the magnitude and underlying causes of Montana's wage gap, developing a pay equity self-audit for public and private employers, promoting education and training opportunities for Montana women, and gathering public input for policy recommendations that will help to close Montana's wage gap.

Director Hogan elaborated on the Task

Force's objectives, saying, "With a workforce of about 13,000 employees, the State of Montana is in a position to make a positive difference for our own workers. With women state employees making 20% less than their male counterparts, it's time for us to set our own house in order. As part of the work of this Task Force, we will develop a pay equity self-audit, using our own workforce to set the example. Private employers can then take this audit to study and address their own pay equity issues."

Closing the celebration, Governor Bullock said, "We know that it's not enough to bring new business and jobs to our beautiful state; we need to make sure those jobs are high-paying, quality jobs—jobs where Montana women and men alike earn a fair day's wage for a fair day's work," said Bullock. "This Task Force will strive to support all Montana workers in achieving paycheck fairness, because when Montana working families prosper, our state prospers." 🌟

# Jobs for Montana Graduates



Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG) has positively affected over 11,000 students since its inception by providing them with the motivation and skills they need to complete high school and become productive citizens. JMG students graduate prepared for life after high school by raising their expectations of themselves, investigating and selecting realistic career goals, learning and teaching leadership and teamwork skills, and acquiring workplace values and employability skills.

## JMG PROFILE: CORY BUCKLEY

Cory Buckley is a student who will not soon be forgotten. His ability to communicate with others, overcome obstacles and perform at a very high level makes him an ideal student, employee and person. Cory has been involved in Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) where his Specialist, Yenta Jaques, was able to watch him channel his many talents into a successful leadership role. Cory experienced turmoil as a teen when he was forced into an adult role. The pressure of this experience resulted in Cory turning to drugs and alcohol as a release and he quickly developed an addiction. Due to Cory's hard work, the support of his grandparents, and completing two treatment programs, Cory has his life on track. He has all of the skills necessary to accomplish his goals and more.

Cory demonstrated his leadership, civic, social and career skills through many valuable experiences this year. Cory is well spoken and well written and used those skills to apply for and receive scholarships, speak to the Montana Legislature Appropriations Committee to request funding for JMG, serve as the emcee at the 2013 JMG Career Development Conference, and win second place in public speaking at that conference.

Despite a busy schedule with work and school, Cory consistently donated his free time to JMG events including selling concessions, donating bloods, serving at Rescue Mission events, and serving on the Graduation Matters Boards at the local and state level. Cory worked hard this year to



prepare for college by attending orientation at MSU-Northern in Havre, completing the ASE Auto course offered at Paris, and researching his career to develop a first place winning career portfolio at the Career Development Conference. Cory and another student also went on to win the 2013 State Ford AAA Auto Skills Championship. They advanced to the National Contest in Dearborn, Michigan in June. Each student won a \$36,000 scholarship

from Snap On Tools. If they are successful at Nationals, they will receive more scholarships, tools and get to spend a week with a Nascar Race Team preparing and racing at an International Speedway. Not only did Cory and his partner debug the nine mechanical and electrical issues in the car, but they were also awarded the state trophy for the highest written test scores in the state of Montana.

Cory quickly stepped into a leadership role in our class and school. Our class consistently leaned on Cory for his ability to lead his peers, organize a project, and get work done. He is able to take care of business in all areas and advocate for himself. He is extremely responsible and

was a well deserving recipient of the Kenneth M. Smith Scholarship as well as the Chairman's Recognition Award. Additionally, Cory is appreciative for all that he has and is quick to applaud others who've helped him along that way. The reality is that Cory, when provided the opportunity, took advantage and excelled. Those involved in JMG at Paris Gibson Education Center were just lucky enough to be a small part of his journey. ■

## JMG PROFILE: JOHN MAHONEY

My name is Johnathan Michael Bartholomew Mahoney. I was born to parents who were struggling in life. My father was fighting a losing battle with drugs and alcohol, and my mother was the financial support of the family and working two jobs while she was pregnant. During the first few months of my life, my father spent time in jail as well as prison for D.U.I.'s, which left my mother to raise and support me alone.

This situation was the norm for the majority of my life. My father has always been gone, and my mom has always worked hard. They tried to repair their lives with other people, but no matter I always had a sense of being the odd man out and not welcome.

In school, I merely went through the motions. I had so much to deal with at home; I didn't have the emotional strength left for school. My teachers had no understanding of my life, and I never felt smart. I participated in sports and found three people who had positive influences on me; two coaches and one fellow athlete. They all had one thing in common; they encouraged me and didn't give up on me.

I began to realize that I was a very pessimistic person. So, taking one very positive step, I applied to and was accepted at the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) in Helena. The PAL teachers helped me to see my



true potential and began pushing me to work harder. I joined the Jobs for Montana's Graduates class at PAL. In my JMG class, I participated in a variety of projects focused on the four programs of work outlined in the JMG curriculum—Leadership, Social Awareness, Career Preparation and Civic

Involvement. I also had opportunities to visit state universities and to see where I could go to college. By the end of the 2012 school year, my confidence had grown enough that I participated in a skit at the state JMG conference and won the Junior Decision Making competition. For the 2013 school year, I served as president of PAL's JMG class, and I was chosen to attend the National Jobs for America's Graduates Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. JMG has given me confidence in myself, and I know that I am ready to continue my life as a leader.

I begin college in the fall of 2013 at the University Montana—Western in Dillon. I plan to study Health and Human Performance so I can continue on in graduate school to become a physical therapist. I continue to live with my many struggles, my mother still works long hours, and my father is in prison for a minimum of 4 years. I will not let this hold me back, for I am in my prime, and I will stop at nothing to achieve the best life I can. ■



## Casting a Wider Net

How travel and recreation in Montana benefit individuals, the economy, and the landscape.

BY WILLIE CONNELL, Economist, Department of Labor & Industry

As summer comes into full swing, many Montanans will begin to get outside and enjoy the mountains, the rivers, or just the pleasant scenery from their backyards. The warmer months bring with them a shift in economic activity linked to travel and recreation throughout the state. Increased economic activity from residents and nonresidents in Montana has positive effects on overall employment, individual well-being, and the conservation of the natural landscape that defines Montana. This article will explore the economic and demographic characteristics of the jobs supported by travel and recreation, the extent of and potential reasons for recent employment growth, and how these changes can benefit individuals

and Montana as a whole. Measuring employment changes stimulated by travel and recreation is not as clear as with some other industries because few jobs are completely reliant on just travel and recreation. Instead, expenditures by tourists and outdoor lovers help support a portion of many different types of jobs. Examples exist on both ends of the employment spectrum: hotel employees in resort-based towns are very closely tied to nonresident visits, yet employees at gas stations, grocery stores, and restaurants rely on expenditures from a broader pool of consumers.

Two North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) categories are commonly used for measuring travel and recreation employment. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry is composed of about 11,500 workers, including over 9,000 jobs in Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation. These jobs involve producing, promoting, or participating in live performances or exhibits intended for public viewing. The Food Services and Accommodations industry is much larger, providing over 47,000 jobs, including about 35,000 jobs in restaurants and bars and 11,517 in accommodations.

Montana has a higher proportion of employment in the Leisure and Hospitality industry compared to the U.S. average. Leisure and Hospitality jobs make up about 16.6% of private employment in Montana, while nationally this sector is responsible for just 12.3% of employment. As a further example: Montana employs 4,910 bartenders, giving the state the second-highest rate of bartenders per-capita in the nation.

Jobs in the Leisure and Hospitality sector are often characterized as low-paying, seasonal, and mostly part-time. In Montana, the Leisure and Hospitality sector had the lowest average weekly wage in 2012, as well as the highest rates of part-time workers, with about 40% of all jobs being defined as part-time, meaning 34 hours or less per week. Indeed, part of the reason for the low weekly wages is the simple result of working fewer hours a week. However, this wage data does not take into account tips and gratuity, which Leisure and Hospitality jobs rely on more than other industries. In addition, Leisure and Hospitality jobs tend to carry many non-wage benefits such as free housing or food, free or discounted recreation access, and other fringe benefits that are not captured in average wage data.

The demographic makeup of the Leisure and Hospitality industry also provides helpful information about who are filling these positions. Almost half of the jobs in Leisure and Hospitality are filled by people 24 years of age or younger, many of whom are entering the labor market for the first time. This sector is also one area of employment with a higher proportion of women, which comprise 60% of workers.

Educational attainment is also a useful demographic characteristic to consider when analyzing this labor market. Most data on educational attainment only includes people who are 25 years of age or older because people under the age of 25 have not had enough time to fully complete their education. Overall, folks working in Leisure and Hospitality are less educated than in other industries, although the data indicate many workers may be currently working on degrees. While the Leisure and Hospitality industry has the highest proportion of workers with less than a high school diploma, this sector also has a fairly high proportion of workers with “some college or associates degree.” With college graduates trending towards later graduation and taking time off during their coursework, the relatively high proportion of workers with “some college” education, coupled with the age distribution in the industry, may also indicate that workers are still completing their degrees.

As explained previously, jobs in the Leisure and Hospitality sector tend to be part-time and have lower wages. Yet there are demographic and economic characteristics of these job holders that make wages appear to be lower. Furthermore, many of the seasonal jobs closely related to the National Parks and outfitter services provide a perfect fit for high school and college students just entering the labor force. This work allows younger folks to

gain experience developing soft skills and help workers make informed decisions about what career path they may follow in the future. Similarly, it is worth noting that even though pay is relatively low, for retirees, parents, students and those who hold a high value on leisure, flexible part-time work may be exactly the type of work they are looking for.

### **INFLUENCES OF A GROWING LABOR MARKET**

Although the quality of jobs in the Leisure and Hospitality sector may be lower than other industries, the sector provides a large number of jobs and has been a leader in economic growth over the last decade. Dating back to 2001, the Accommodations and Food Services sector experienced the third highest growth in total employment, accounting for more than 18% of job gains from 2001 to 2011. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector ranks 6th in most additional jobs from 2001 to 2011. The Accommodations and Food Services industry contributed more than 11% of all employment gains over the time period. Perhaps more surprising is that the Arts and Recreation sector contributed to more than 7% of total employ-

the Montana Office of Tourism helped launch the Montana Branding Initiative. This campaign spent over \$75 million collected from the “Bed Tax” between 2007 and 2012 to spread a fairly broad message to big city markets, driving home the message that Montana is a wild and naturally unique place to vacation. This campaign and others have surely influenced spending by nonresident travelers. However, because so many factors influence this part of the economy, precisely disaggregating what policies are responsible for spending and visitation fluctuation is difficult.

Regardless of the exact influences, an increase in spending by nonresident travelers has taken place. The Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana collects and makes available data related to the tourism, travel, and recreation industry. Data is collected on nonresident visits and spending in Montana with quarterly surveys. From the mid-1990s leading up to the recession lasting from 2007-2009, annual nonresident expenditures and visitation grew fairly consistently at about 5% and 2%, respectively. Since the recession began,

are then recirculated throughout our economy, creating economic activity in other industries. Additionally, resident tourism helps the Montana economy by retaining dollars in-state that may have otherwise been lost to other economies. Whether it is the sixteen diverse ski areas in the winter, Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks in the summer, or anything in between, Montanans are able to travel and recreate in wild places relatively cheaply. In 2011, Montana residents spent an estimated \$877 million on travel. Much of this money could be spent out of the state if Montana did not offer ample recreation and vacation opportunities. While economists and policy makers often recognize the benefits of nonresident spending in the form of tax revenue, increased employment, and wage increases; the source of this monetary benefit is the environmentally-based services provided by the Montana landscape.

Because of Montana’s active tourism sector, Montana is able to recruit and retain a steady incoming population of workers and businesses who are attracted to Montana’s natural amenities. Montanans have easy access to world class rivers, ski mountains, and national parks that many Americans may never get to experience. Economic theory suggests people vote with their feet, meaning they will live where they like, to the extent mobility is financially possible. By extension, we may assume that most people live here partially because of the natural surroundings and access to recreational opportunities.

The last way that Montana residents benefit from a solid travel and recreation industry cushioned by nonresident spending are the investments, protections, and accessibility this increased demand ultimately provide. Increased travel and recreation has provided more funding for public land access and maintenance. Things such as better protection of public lands and one of the strongest stream-access laws in the country give the average Montanan more opportunities to enjoy the environment. Increased demand for air travel by nonresidents has increased the number of direct routes out of Missoula, Helena, Bozeman, and Billings, making it easier and cheaper for Montana residents to visit friends and family out-of-state. With continued monitoring and support of the travel and recreation industry, the unique landscape of Montana and the people whom it attracts is expected to provide diverse benefits for Montanans for many years. 🌟

**In 2007 the Montana Office of Tourism launched a branding initiative to spread a broad message to big city markets promoting Montana as a wild and naturally unique place to vacation.**



ment growth over the time period, yet is one of the smallest industries in the state.

There are many factors that may influence the growth in employment related to the Leisure and Hospitality sector. Varying annual weather patterns can influence resident and nonresident expenditures on Leisure and Hospitality. Also, because travel is dependent on driving within our vast state, gas prices can play an inhibiting role in spending on travel and recreation. Finally, exchange rates with other countries also impact the growth of the tourism industry, as a dropping exchange rate makes travel less expensive for our nonresident visitors. Because Montana shares a border with Canada, dropping exchange rates have surely influenced some increased spending and visitation over the last five years.

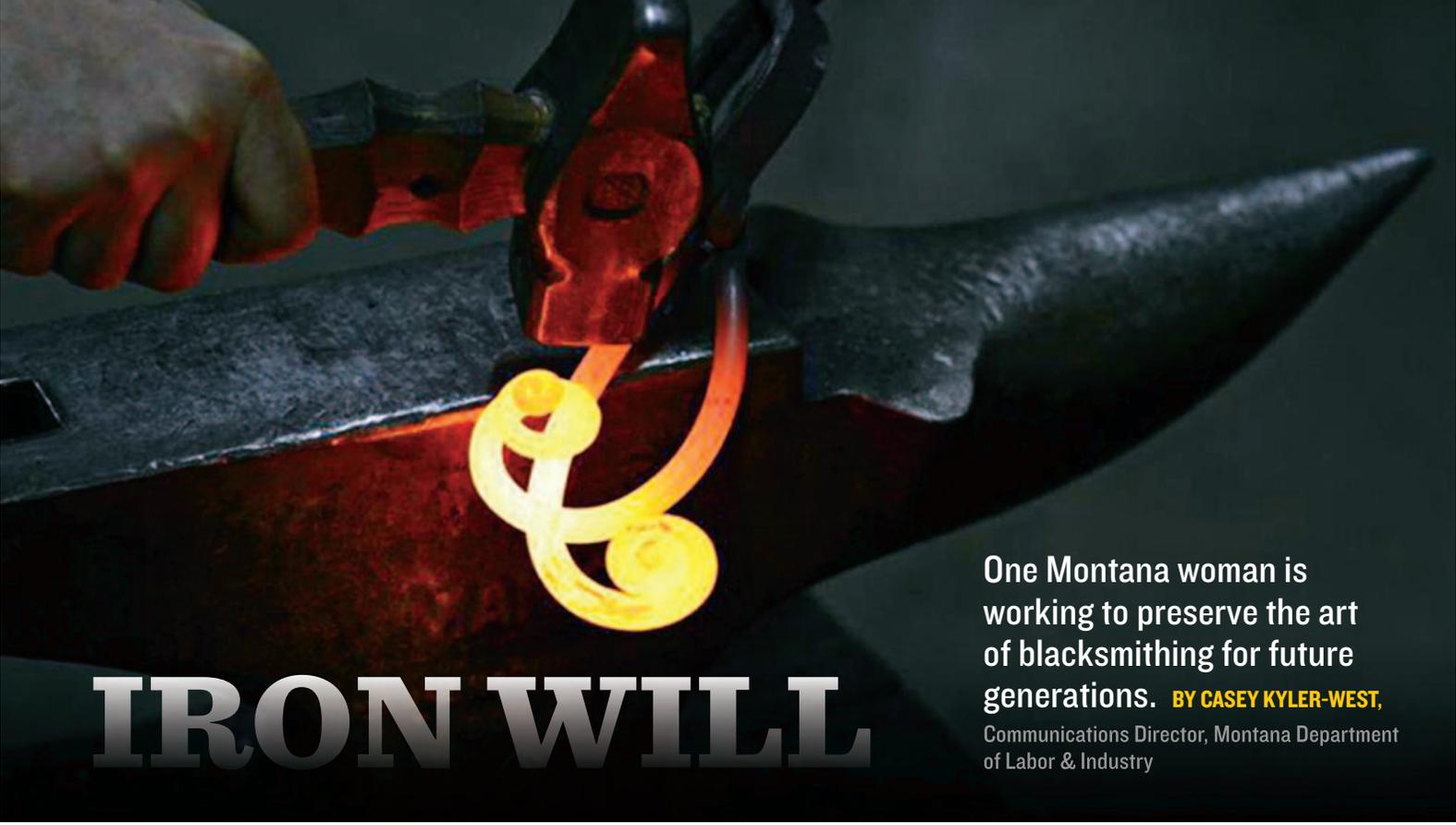
One way that policy makers can influence increased travel and recreation spending is tourism marketing out-of-state. The revamping of a Montana marketing campaign in 2007 by

large fluctuations, both positive and negative, have characterized the expenditure data.

Nonresident visits fell in 2008 and remained at low levels through 2009. Nonresident expenditures fluctuated even more, falling in 2008 and 2009, both because of fewer visits and because visitors were spending less money. As the economy stabilized in 2010, the number of visits recovered to pre-recession levels, and visitors started spending more each visit. In 2012, nonresident expenditures grew by 15% from 2011, adding \$3.3 billion to the state’s economy.

### **THE BIG PICTURE**

The nonresident visitor money coming into the state is unique not only because it comes from out of state (and thus represents an export), but because it implies that people want to be here. As an export, tourism is important to our economy because it brings new money into Montana from out of state. These dollars



# IRON WILL

One Montana woman is working to preserve the art of blacksmithing for future generations. **BY CASEY KYLER-WEST,**

Communications Director, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

It's been said that blacksmiths are the kings of craftsmen, and with history that spans back to ancient civilization, there's no doubt that statement is true. During the Middle Ages, blacksmithing subdivided into several different trades such as armorers, bladesmiths, locksmiths, gunsmiths and farriers. In fact, during America's Colonial Days, some were even the village dentists. *Ouch!*

However, unlike medieval times when the "village smithy" was a staple in every town or village, the need for blacksmiths has evolved over the years. Today, blacksmiths like Sacha Kozlow are teaching the art of blacksmithing to keep the craft alive. "I was fortunate to find and study under William Bastas when I lived in Texas. The Montana Blacksmith School was created to share what I and guest smiths have learned to be part of keeping blacksmithing alive", said Kozlow.

The Sore Elbow Forge in Bozeman, where the classes are held, is a complete fabrication and blacksmith shop with a forging area large enough to hold classes. The school opened its doors in January of this year and to date, has had dozens of students attend the classes. Along with the basic classes, Kozlow is offering a Youth Summer Program. "I wish I had been exposed to blacksmithing as a young person. It would have changed my life in the best of ways. Patience, planning, eye-hand coordination and respect for and understanding of fire and metals, all of which you learn when smithing. I want to share the magic of turning

a piece of junk metal into a functional piece of art. It's a perfect medium for young people because of how exciting and forgiving working with metal is. There are no mistakes in blacksmithing, only rapid design modifications."

Kozlow is also offering an All Women Class. "When I was studying, whether it was welding, tool making, or art metals, I was frequently the only female in the class. That was rather intimidating when I was first getting started. By offering the all-women's class I wanted to create a space that is empowering, building confidence in everyone that participates."

The classes are geared towards anyone who is interested in working with metal; from those who have never picked up a hammer to

those who know their way around a shop, but want to fine tune their hand-forging skills. Kozlow says it's exciting watching students transform a piece of metal into a piece of art. "I'm passionate about blacksmithing and old crafts in general, so it's wonderful to meet so many people that are really enthusiastic about it as well. I love the challenge and seeing the results. Every one of my students has taken home a completed piece."

When asked why it is so important to preserve these skills and pass them on to future generations Kozlow said: "I could write pages about my feelings on this matter. Instead I would like to ask the readers a question. What kind of world are we encouraging when everything we purchase is made of plastic, mostly, with built-in obsolescence? If you step into your local antique store or your grandma's attic, you'll find all sorts of things that were made to last, by skilled craftsmen and women. These items hold their beauty, and in a lot of cases increase in value. Imagine, if all future generations knew how to do was operate gadgets and buy cheap goods over and over again? I believe it is important to preserve these skills and crafts in general, because I want to leave a different world for my kids. One where you don't have to throw everything away; one where everyday objects you'd use have been thought out and beautifully crafted."

To learn more about the Montana Blacksmith School you can visit the website at [www.montanablacksmithschool.com](http://www.montanablacksmithschool.com). 🌟

Below, instructor Sacha Kozlow walking a student through the process of making a pair of tongs.



# Workforce Forum Convenes in Billings

A discussion on the workforce development challenges facing Yellowstone County. **BY TIM ROBBINS**, Regional Director,

Montana Department of Labor & Industry State Job Service Bureau

**A**s the U.S. economy begins to recover, one potential economic hurdle is simply having a workforce that meets the needs of employers. After being buffeted by years of bleak economic news, it might be surprising to learn that last year alone, more than 3 million jobs went unfilled because of a lack of qualified job seekers. Earlier this year, approximately 150 business, education, government, and economic development leaders, met in the assembly hall at MSU Billings' City College to learn about workforce development challenges in Yellowstone County, and form a plan for addressing this need into the future. The day-long discussion was coined Workforce 2023.

The forum opened with Steve Arveschoug,

Executive Director of Big Sky Economic Development Agency (EDA), sharing a recent experience. Big Sky EDA had been assisting the Northern Hotel, which opened the weekend before the forum convened. Steve asked Mike Nelson, the Northern's co-owner, what Big Sky EDA could do to help. Nelson responded, "Steve, it's all about the workforce. I need to make sure I have the best people that I can get working at the Northern Hotel. Anything you can do to help us have a quality workforce is the key to the success of the Northern."

Following Arveschoug's introduction, Dr. Tony Zeiss, President and CEO of Central Piedmont Community College, and a national leader on workforce development, took the stage. Dr. Zeiss shared with the group the need

for a workforce that is capable of meeting the needs of employers in order to provide the economic return necessary for growth. As Dr. Zeiss shared his experience and data, there were several looks of surprise and even concern in the audience as it became clear that workforce could be the catalyst for economic prosperity or a barrier to economic growth. The key is to develop a clear vision of workforce needs and develop appropriate strategies to meet those needs. To accomplish this, all stakeholders in the workforce development and utilization stream need to be involved and engaged in a continuous dialogue to ensure those developing the workforce are producing a product that will satisfy the employers, the end users of the product. It is critical that those in the business of developing the workforce and those in the education and training system, be actively engaged and responsive to those businesses that are hiring their product. As in any other business, we need to be listening to our customer, and in this case, the customer is the employer. Having a business driven workforce development strategy will be critical in future economic growth.

Throughout the day, the participants also received a preview of a target industry analysis for the Billings region, one that identified where potential growth will occur; providing clarification on where to focus workforce development efforts. The audience also heard from a panel of workforce development providers featuring apprenticeship and training, research and analysis, and the Job Service. A subsequent panel, composed of Billings area employers in high-growth industries, also provided perspective on their workforce needs.

The day concluded with a visioning discussion, attempting to clarify what the workforce development vision would be for Billings and the surrounding region. The group developed a draft, "By 2023, Billings will be the premier business-driven workforce development hub in the Rocky Mountain West." It is a lofty statement, but a smaller group of leadership is already being formed to take the momentum of the initial forum and carry it into meaningful action. This group, composed of key business, education, and government leaders from the region, will begin to work together to develop strategies that will produce a workforce that creates competitive advantage for employers and the region, leading to continued economic growth. 🌟



# Accommodating People with Service Animals

BY DENNIS UNSWORTH, Investigator, MT Department of Labor & Industry Human Rights Bureau

If you are a business that serves the public, such as a restaurant, hotel, or retail store, etc..., you probably have your fair share of customers who utilize a service animal. But did you know that you are prohibited from discriminating against people with disabilities that use service animals? For example, people with disabilities must be allowed to bring their service animals into all areas customers are generally allowed.

Some service animals wear collars, harnesses, or other means of identifying that they are service animals, but it's not required.

If you run into a situation where you are uncertain if the animal accompanying a customer is a service animal, you can ask the person if it is a service animal required because of a disability. But you should know the person who has the animal is not required to carry documentation or certification that it's a service animal, and the animal does not have to wear a vest, collar or other identification. Your questioning must be limited to just the question of whether the animal is required because of a disability—the individual does not have to identify or describe their disability, or provide any other medical information.

Even if you have a clearly-posted "no pets" policy, service animals must still be allowed. The Americans with Disabilities Act doesn't require that you abandon your no pets policy, but it does require that you make an exception for service animals. They are not "pets."

Likewise, a deposit or surcharge can't be imposed on an individual with a disability as a condition of allowing a service animal to accompany the individual.

While the requirement to allow service animals in public places has been in place for more than twenty years, the type of animal allowed changed in 2009. Under the new definitions, a service animal is any dog "individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." Other species of animals are not

service animals under the amended ADA, i.e. rabbits, cats, etc...

Some services dogs perform are probably familiar to you, but some might not be. For example:

- ▶ Guide dogs help blind people; "hearing dogs" can aid the deaf or hard of hearing.

- ▶ Mobility dogs are used by people in wheelchairs or by those who need help with balance.

- ▶ There are psychiatric service dogs for people with PTSD, depression, bi-polar disorder, agoraphobia (an anxiety disorder related to places where people feel immediate escape might be difficult), and panic attacks.

- ▶ There are service dogs that detect seizures and low blood sugar.

- ▶ "Social signal dogs" are trained to help people with autism. These dogs help with the sensory overload people with autism often feel, and help detect and calm their social fears—for instance, in strange places. Dogs are also trained to stop children with autism from running off.

- ▶ Service dogs help people with sensory input problems steer clear of obstacles.

If you have questions regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, or how to accommodate customers or employees with a disability contact the Montana Human Rights Bureau. The Bureau, an agency of the Department of Labor and Industry, receives and investigates claims of unlawful discrimination, including claims that people with disabilities were discriminated against by not being allowed into a public accommodation with their service dogs. The Bureau can also answer your general questions about the law, and provide model policies you can use in your business. ❁



Some service animals wear collars, harnesses, or other means of identifying that they are service animals, but it's not required.

# The Skinny on Labor Law Posters

**J**ust about the time you hang the new five-in-one labor poster in your employee break room, a portion of the poster has been updated and it's time to get a new one. But did you know that your local Job Service office can provide you the poster at no cost? Unfortunately many businesses don't and they fall prey to aggressive marketing companies who charge anywhere from \$10 to \$50 and more for the same poster the Department of Labor and Industry provides at no cost.

The marketing companies have various ways of contacting Montana businesses. Some will call; others will send an "official" looking mailer with an order from attached with a veiled threat that you are breaking the law if you don't order a poster; and others will send the posters with an invoice demanding payment despite the fact the business didn't order them. These tactics can make it expensive and difficult for business owners who are trying to follow the law.

If you have received posters in the mail that you didn't order, just mark return to sender on the box and return them. You are

not required to pay for the posters if they came through the mail and you did not order them.

The five-in-one posters, encompass Equal Employment Opportunity, Family and Medical Leave Act with Military Family leave (for employers with 50 or more employees), Federal Minimum Wage (Fair Labor Standards Act), and the Polygraph Protection Act. Federal regulations also require posting the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA). All posters are available at your local Job Service Office.

Posters also required by Montana state law include: Proof of Unemployment Insurance coverage (provided by the Department of Labor and Industry, Unemployment Insurance Contributions Bureau) and Proof of Workers' Compensation coverage, provided by Workers' Compensa-



This poster is provided as a service to employers by your local Department of Labor & Industry Job Service offices. Job Service offers assistance to businesses including help with employee recruitment and retention needs; human resource tools; employee training programs; and information on tax credits. To locate the Job Service nearest you to speak with a Consultant, go to <http://montanajobs.mt.gov> or call 406-444-4100. *Revised June 2013*

## Workers' Comp reform

The workers' compensation reform that came out of the 2011 Legislature was the result of substantial, ongoing, and vigorous dialogues among workers' compensation stakeholders. The Labor-Management Advisory Council on Workers' Compensation (LMAC) was a driving force behind the reforms and over the course of the four years leading up to the reform facilitated discussions on a host of work comp issues.

Now newly reinstated, the LMAC will hold its first meeting in Helena on June 27 at the Great Northern Hotel. Established by agency order by Commissioner Pam Bucy and signed off by Governor Steve Bullock, the new LMAC features both familiar and new faces. The council of five representatives of labor and five representatives of employers has been expanded to include other stakeholders as nonvoting members who represent medical providers, insurers, and vocational rehabilitation providers. Lt. Governor John Walsh will chair the LMAC.

"One of our top priorities," said Employment Relations Division Administrator Diana Ferriter, "will be to monitor the effect of the 2011 workers' compensation reform. In addition, we will be working closely with the Economic Affairs Interim Committee on HJ 25, a study of specific workers' compensation issues."

LMAC members, subcommittee members, staff and work comp

stakeholders alike are looking forward to renewing discussions on the Montana workers' compensation system in this forum:

### LMAC MEMBERS REPRESENTING WORKERS

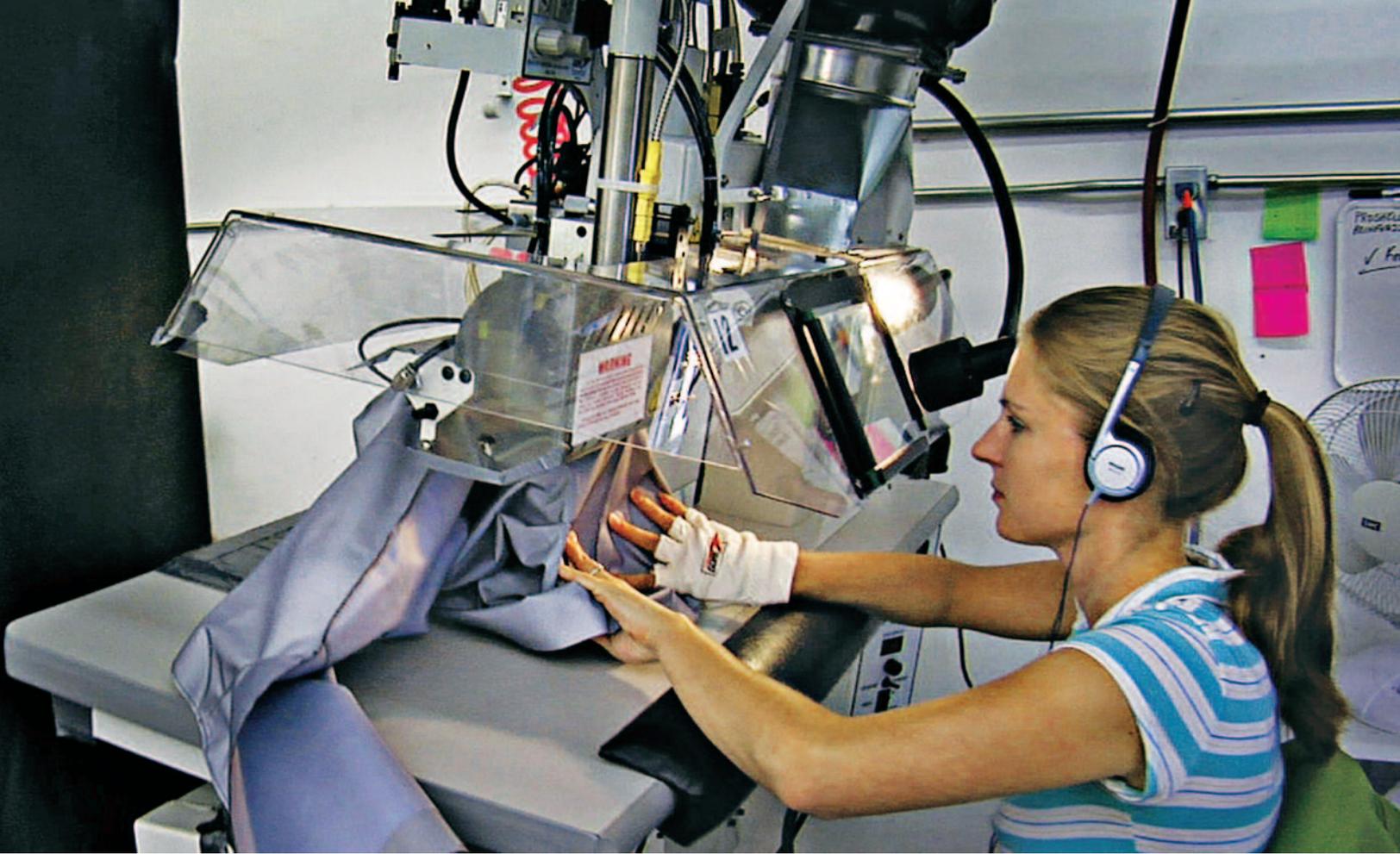
- Doug Buman, Laborers' International Union of North America
- Al Ekblad, Montana AFL-CIO
- Don Judge, Injured Workers Resource Council
- Jim Larson, Teamsters Local 190
- Al Smith, Montana Trial Lawyers Association

### LMAC MEMBERS REPRESENTING EMPLOYERS:

- Bill Dahlgren, Sun Mountain Sports
- Annette Hoffman, St. Vincent's Healthcare
- Riley Johnson, National Federation of Independent Business
- Robert Worthington, Montana Self-Insureds Association
- Lance Zanto, Workers' Compensation Management Bureau

### SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Bob Olsen, Montana Hospital Association
- Jean Branscum, Montana Medical Association
- Kevin Braun, Montana State Fund
- Lisa Kozeluh, Rehabilitation Association of Montana
- Jackie Lenmark, American Insurance Association



# Profiting From Safety

Did you know there is a direct link between safer workplaces and lower workers' compensation costs? **BY FRED MILLER**, Safety Specialist, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

**D**o you ever wonder why your workers' compensation premium is so high? Do you have a written workplace safety plan that has been implemented and doesn't just sit on the shelf? Do you want to help control your workers' compensation costs? And, why am I asking all these questions?

Because there is a direct link between safer workplaces and lower workers' compensation costs. In fact, if Montana's workplace injury rates were reduced just to the national average, Montana businesses could save \$145 million in workers' compensation costs per year.

Protecting workers and eliminating injuries is the most important step toward creating a safer workplace. Not only does it preserve your most valuable natural resource, it also yields healthy dividends on workers' compensation.

When workplace safety becomes important to all Montanans, a proactive safety culture will benefit workers and business owners. It's a win-win scenario: workers will be healthier, and workers' compensation costs will be reduced (which will help Montana businesses be more competitive.)

A commitment to take care of workers is a good place to start. That's the emphasis for the state Workers' Compensation Management Bureau, which oversees the workers' compensation policy for 14,000 state employees.

"We want to take care of our employees," Lance Zanto, Bureau Chief in the Health Care Benefits Division at the Dept. of Administration. "It's the right thing to do. If we take care of our employees the (decreased) premiums will follow."

It's no easy task teaching safety to more than 14,000 employees in 35 state agencies.

But the reduction in workers' compensation premium proves it's worthwhile. More than \$6 million over the past four years: Zanto points to these savings when talking about the value of reducing workplace injuries. "If you don't have the injuries, your premium will go down." Protecting your employees demonstrates that they are important and have intrinsic value.

If an employee is injured on the job, "Show them that you care about them and that you want to see them healed," Zanto said. A Stay at Work/Return to Work program will help injured workers return to work as soon as they are medically ready; which helps them financially and helps you keep your workers' compensation costs under control.

That sentiment resonates in private business as well.

"You sleep better at night knowing that you're providing a good place to work," said

Robert Gibson, Director of Operations of Simms Fishing Products in Bozeman. “It’s a safe, clean work environment, and that’s what we want to provide to the Gallatin Valley.”

Cheri Decker, Human Resources Manager for Simms, agrees, while extolling safety’s other virtues.

“When you can reduce your turnover, when you can reduce your training, when you have everybody on board wanting to do the right thing: those kinds of things you can’t put a price tag on,” she said. “It’s the right thing to do.”

Here’s how safety pays dividends: businesses pay workers’ compensation based (in part) upon the amount of compensation claims costs they generate compared to the state average for that industry. That cost can skyrocket based upon a firm’s experience modification factor (e-mod). The e-mod can increase workers’ compensation premium, depending upon the amount of workers’ compensation claims in your firm over a three-year period.

On the other hand, workers’ compensation costs can be dramatically reduced if a business is below the state average for claims. And therein lies safety’s most conspicuous competitive edge.

One of the goals at the Safety Bureau is

## “You sleep better at night knowing that you’re providing a good place to work.”

that we take the framework of risk management principles and teach them to all Montana businesses, large and small, to help reduce our high rate of workplace injuries.

To that end, the Safety Bureau provides:

- ▶ Free on-site consultations to bring a business’s safety culture up to OSHA standards. A Safety Bureau consultant will walk through your workplace and point out hazards that should be corrected (without penalty).

- ▶ Free individual written safety plans, intentionally designed to meet the provisions of the Montana Safety Culture Act. These plans are quickly downloaded from the University of South Florida’s web site.

- ▶ Free high-quality safety training at SafetyFestMT, offered periodically at different locations.

- ▶ Monthly community safety groups across Montana to provide refresher training for business owners and safety professionals. These groups provide instruction, networking

and mentoring.

- ▶ OSHA 10-hour classes in Construction and General Industry. Before training begins, a walk-through consultation is needed to observe your work environment. This helps customize the training to meet your specific needs.

Every business should begin with an on-site consultation from a Safety Bureau consultant. A written safety plan would be the next step. The written plan is crucial because it spells out what gets done, who is responsible, and minimum training policies and procedures.

The MT Safety & Health Bureau offers a free Safety Writer plan that can be downloaded from the Internet.

The simple solution to Montana’s workplace injury problem is to have everyone adopt safety as a core value essential to their business success.

OSHA has said the single greatest impact on accident reduction comes from developing a strong safety culture. Montana has one of the nation’s highest workplace injury rates, but we can change that by working together to develop a stronger safety culture.

We have identified the problem. Now it’s time for the remedy: a top-notch safety culture in every workplace. ☀



Left: Simms Fishing employee using safety gear while sewing waders

Below: Simms Fishing Safety Committee Meeting



# Protecting Your Business

BY CASEY KYLER-WEST, Communications Director, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

**A**s a business owner you've taken all the necessary precautions to make sure no one breaks into your store or office. The locks on the doors and the security systems are protecting the physical aspects of your business, but what about your data? Securing your data goes beyond the antivirus software you have on your computer.

Although viruses are still used, malware and spybots are tools scammers are also utilizing to get your sensitive data. But scammers aren't just limiting their attempts to get your data in your computer; some are calling, sending phishing e-mails, or letters posing as an official entity to get information; this is called 'spoofing'. Scammers who use this technique masquerade or mimic another person, computer, or organization via e-mail, web pages, or file sharing services in order to obtain sensitive information, gain access to a system or data in it, gain illegal entry to services/accounts, or otherwise deceive people. For ex-

ample, earlier this year scammers sent an e-mail targeting Montana employers asking for former employees' wage and separation information; because the e-mail referred to the Division of Unemployment Assistance it looked official to many business owners.

The best thing you can do to protect your data and your business is to call and verify that the information request is real. Do not use numbers listed in the e-mail or letter, but call the entity using the phone number listed in the phone book or online.

Here are a few other tips that will help you protect your data and your business:

- ▶ Destroy hard drives from PCs, fax machines, copiers and printers—they could contain confidential information
- ▶ Destroy hard copy documents that are no longer needed
- ▶ Create strong passwords, and not actual words. Use at least 8 characters; a mix of alpha, numeric and special characters i.e., Prot3ct!13

- ▶ Lock workstations or other devices that contain confidential information
- ▶ Update your antivirus software regularly and run malware tools such as Spybot Search and Destroy weekly
- ▶ Do not leave confidential documents on fax machines or printers after hours
- ▶ Back up your data
- ▶ Do not send confidential information via e-mail—use encrypted methods to send your information

Keep in mind that using public WIFI networks are not safe. Cybercriminals can use unsecured wireless to gain access to your PC, mobile device and your data.

If you haven't already developed a plan to keep your information secure, do so following these tips. Once you've created your plan, take the time to educate your staff on security practices. It only takes one incident to compromise you, your employees and your customer's information. 🌟





# A \$438,000,000 Deep Impact

**The opposite of a meteor striking the earth, but with strikingly similar effect economically in Montana, Unemployment Insurance (UI) helps more than just unemployed folks in your community. Its impact is felt by businesses on Main Street in every town in the state.**

**BY JJ COGGESHALL, Unemployment Insurance Division, Montana Department of Labor & Industry**

**T**he UI program is a partnership between the federal government and the State of Montana to provide financial help to qualified Montana workers during times of unemployment. These are folks who lose their job through no fault of their own and are seeking work in their community. Currently Montana workers can qualify for 8 to 28 weeks of state benefits and up to 14 weeks of emergency federal benefits.

In state fiscal year 2012, all UI programs, both state and federal, paid benefits to Montanans of just under \$219 million. A study commissioned by the US Department of Labor under the Bush

administration showed that for every dollar spent on UI benefits, two dollars are pumped back into the economy. Using that factor, for the 12 months ending June 30, 2012, UI benefits spent by claimants provided an economic impact to the state of almost \$438 million. The reason for the large effect is that Montana families that receive UI benefits spend that money right away in their local communities to pay for necessities.

These UI benefit dollars are spent at local merchants for food, gas, and clothing as well as on rent and mortgage payments. A study published in *The American Economic Review* has shown that individual consumption falls by

only one third as much as it would have if the UI program were not available. UI benefits provide a large boost to local economies when times are difficult. Without these benefits, spending would fall sharply and the hardship of the unemployed Montanan would transfer to others in their community though the effect on local merchants and their workers.

The primary goal of UI is lighten the financial burden of a job loss to individual Montanans and their families allowing them time to search for a new job. The secondary effect of stabilizing the state and local economy has a tremendously deep impact. 🌟

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- + Self-service account maintenance
  - + Enhanced electronic filing of Wage & Tax Reports
  - + A single sign-on instead of two
  - + Make payments via ACH debit & credit card and set up payment plans
  - + Enhanced web communications

## An easier way: UI eServices

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry is working to make it easier for you to do business with its Unemployment Insurance Division through UI eServices.

**I**n the spring of 2014, all Montana employers (and those who do their payroll) will be able to access UI information through the new DLI UI eServices for Employers. “We are implementing a new software system that allows employers to do the majority of their business with our UI Division online. This will streamline the process making it easier for employers to work with the state of Montana,” said Labor Commissioner Pam Bucy.

UI eServices is replacing both WOW and UI4Employers, providing businesses with a ‘one-stop shop’ for registering for UI, maintaining UI account information, filing wage and tax reports, and making UI tax payments.

During the Department’s transition to the new software, it is asking employer representatives and accountants to help test the us-

ability of the new system before it becomes available to everyone in 2014. “This is a great opportunity to not only get a first look at the new website, but also provide feedback that may influence its development and bring

**“This will streamline the process making it easier for employers to work with the state of Montana.”**

benefit to all Montana employers,” said UI Administrator Roy Mulvaney.

Onsite Test Sessions will begin in October. Each session will last between 60 and 90 minutes, and are one-on-one with a Test Administrator. Although locations have not yet

been set, testing will take place in various locations across the State; your participation could sway that decision! Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

The Department is also looking for volunteers to do remote testing from their location, such as their home or office. This testing will be less structured than the onsite testing, so volunteers would navigate the system on their own.

Testers will be given a set of scenarios to complete. These will include, but are not limited to registering employers and filing quarterly reports, as well as making UI tax payments. Several open-ended questions may be asked during the testing session to solicit your preferences, reactions, and feedback regarding the ease (or difficulty) of use and navigation within the website.

If you are interested in participating or would like to recommend someone else, please contact Keith Lavender by email at [KLavender@mt.gov](mailto:KLavender@mt.gov) or by phone at 406-449-2468 to secure your testing appointment. We appreciate your participation in this process. 🌟

# Upcoming events

## ABC Clinics

Each year the Montana Department of Labor and Industry in partnership with other state agencies, local Chambers of Commerce, Job Service Employee Committees (JSEC), and Montana State University host Assistance for Business Clinics (ABC) across the state. These clinics are designed to assist new and established businesses by providing the tools and information they need to stay up to date on the latest changes in various laws.

September 11	Polson, Ninepipes Lodge (Charlo)	Job Service (JSEC)	\$45/40**
September 19	Lewistown, Yogo Inn	Job Service (JSEC)	\$50
September 25	Butte, La Quinta Inn & Suites	Chamber of Commerce	\$50
October 2	Hamilton, Bitterroot River Inn	Chamber of Commerce	\$45/50*

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. Enrollment may be limited, so please respond as soon as possible. Send your registration form and check payable to your local sponsor. For a registration form go to: [www.dli.mt.gov/abc/clinic](http://www.dli.mt.gov/abc/clinic). \*Higher prices indicated are for participants that are not current chamber members and \*\* are for 2 or more attending participants.

## 2013 Governor's Conference on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Safety and Health

The Governor's Conference on Workers' Compensation and Occupational Safety & Health is an annual event presented by Governor Steve Bullock and the Department of Labor and Industry. Workshops presented are directed toward workers' compensation and safety & health issues. Participants include employers, adjusters, insurers and attorneys.

September 4, 5, 6	Crowne Plaza hotel	Billings	\$175/\$200/\$225*
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\*Pricing reflects early, general, and late registration fees. See a schedule of events and register to attend at: <http://erd.dli.mt.gov/governors-conference-home/registration.html>

## 2013 Arbitration and Labor Relations Conference

Participants receive valuable information concerning arbitration preparation, collective bargaining, and other topics relating to labor relations that can be practically applied to a variety of workplace settings. This annual conference is sponsored by the Montana Arbitrators Association, Montana Board of Personnel Appeals, Montana Department of Labor & Industry, National Labor Relations Board, Federal Mediation & Conciliation Services, and the Montana State Bar Dispute Resolution Committee.

September 25 & 26	Gran Tree Inn	Bozeman	\$250/\$140*
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\*\$250 for both days, \$140 for individual days. Information and registration here: <http://erd.dli.mt.gov/labor-standards/labor-relations-conference.html>



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## Main Street Memory



Inside the Cash Grocery Store on Main Street. Deer Lodge, Montana, 1907. The owner, Jensen, at left, and clerks assist patrons in the grocery store. Shelves are lined with canned goods, glass cases are filled with food and cigars; artfully arranged boxes and stamped tin ceiling are prominent. Photo courtesy Montana Memory Project.