

SPRING 2008

Main Street

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Sheep shearing, Billings, 1890s, Courtesy of Western Heritage Center, Billings

More than 10 million years ago, the Yellowstone Valley was underwater, and the rims that overlook it were prehistoric beaches. Through the course of history the valley has changed. In 1874, Addison Quively said “The Yellowstone Valley is valuable for neither agriculture, grazing, nor minerals, but...interesting... as the last home and burial place of horrible monsters of the earliest animal creation.” Three years later an irrigation ditch was dug in the area and the valley became a rich agricultural area, disproving Quively. President Teddy Roosevelt often rode through the valley on hunting trips while visiting his North Dakota ranch.

In its early history livestock and agriculture were the key players in the county’s economy. The first cattle were introduced into the area in 1872 by soldiers escorting railroad surveyors. The devastating winter of 1886 and 1887 crippled the open range, but the livestock business survived and helped usher in the expansion of irrigation for both hay and ultimately a substantial sugar beet industry. With his headquarters in Billings, Charles Bair became one of the nation’s largest sheep producers in the late 1800’s. At one point he had as many as three hundred thousand head of sheep from the Musselshell Valley to leases on a large portion of the Crow reservation. Agriculture continues to be a key player; in 2006 the county was still the top seller of agriculture and livestock products in the state.

As time went on and the county continued to develop, its industries began to evolve. The oil industry has grown from its humble roots with the American Oil Company in 1875, to three substantial oil refineries. The medical field has also blossomed. Today the two major hospitals, St. Vincent Healthcare and Billings Clinic, provide healthcare services to more than 400,000 patients in a multi-state region.

The economy is still evolving. Alternative energy and our natural resources are providing new opportunities not only for the county, but the state as well. Montana is one of the states pioneering the alternative energy movement and making sure our workforce is trained in the latest technology to ensure its success. In this edition of Main Street, we’re highlighting the people and the programs in Yellowstone County dedicated to moving Montana’s economy forward.



Keith Kelly
Keith Kelly, Commissioner
Department of Labor & Industry

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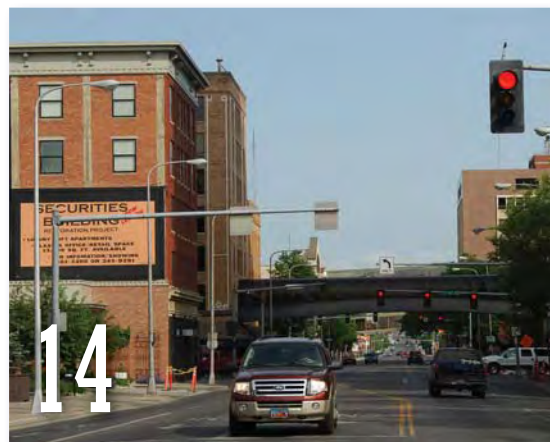
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**Front cover photo credit:**

Billings Brewery employees on the dock, Montana Avenue, 1912, Arthur F. Salisbury photograph, Bob Fears Collection. Courtesy of the Western Heritage Center, Billings

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City of Billings
Travel Montana, Courtesy of Donnie Sexton



The Unemployment Insurance Division provides claim filing, adjudication, and benefit payment to unemployed workers and business registration, wage report filing, and tax rate structure to employers in an accurate, efficient and timely manner. Unemployment Insurance is financed by employers and held in trust for workers when they are unemployed through no fault of their own.

The Employment Relations Division works to deter and resolve disputes encountered in the employer/employee relationship, involving issues such as worker's compensation, workplace safety and health, human rights, wage and hour, prevailing wage and public sector collective bargaining.



The Research & Analysis Bureau gathers data, performs research & analysis, hosts the Montana Career Information System, produces career and economic publications, and disseminates information on the state's industry and occupational employment activities such as wages, labor force statistics, and unemployment at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry administers the **Montana Agro-Energy Plan – WIRED** program which proposes revitalization of 32 counties and six Indian Reservations through bioproduct and renewable energy development. It also administers the pilot **Incumbent Worker Grant** that is assisting Montana's workers maintain leadership in skills and technology expertise through individual worker training.

The Montana Campus Compact is the state's largest higher education consortium. Its board of directors is composed of Montana's college presidents and chancellors who encourage the faculty, students and staff members of their campuses to get involved through community service, service-learning, and by creating genuine campus-community partnerships. To learn more log onto www.mtcompact.org.

The Laurel Chamber of Commerce promotes sound business growth while serving as the primary information source for business, community, interested individuals and civic organizations, including the events and issues of the greater Laurel area.

The Department of Commerce's Main Street Program is an approach to downtown revitalization, set within a context of historic preservation that has been used in thousands of rural and urban communities across the country since 1980. It was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to rejuvenate traditional commercial districts, rehabilitate historic structures, attract new businesses, and return downtowns to their former place as a center of community life. The State of Montana joined the national Main Street network in 2006.



Editors: Casey Kyler-West (Far Right)
Margaret Ore (Top Right)

Graphic Layout: Casey Greenwood (Far Left)
Stevie Harper (Bottom Left)

MONTANA'S WORKFORCE ON THE MOVE

In Montana our economy is on the move. We need to continue to take steps to make sure that our economy continues to grow. This is Montana's opportunity to shine, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation and new jobs being created at a faster rate than anytime in history, we're proving that this truly is a Treasure State.

We have cut more taxes for more Montanans than any other time in the state's history. According to a report by the Tax Foundation, Montana has the 9th lowest in state and local tax burden in the nation. While nationally the average of state and local taxes paid jumped to 11% in 2007, Montana residents haven't seen any increase in state and local tax burden over the same period.

We've increased Montana's electrical generation capacity more than the previous 16 years combined and are one of only two states in the country to have increased our oil production – we've had a 50% increase since 2004.

And with our new clean and green energy tax incentives, Montana is poised to continue to grow this important sector of our economy - producing American energy, lowering prices and weaning ourselves from our addiction to foreign oil. We've already added more than \$1 billion in wind power projects and there are many more to come.

Montana is on the move, there are a lot of opportunities on the horizon for one of our most valued natural resources, skilled workers. New industries are looking to locate to Big Sky Country and we need to make sure that our workers are ready for the jobs they'll bring with them. Recently, Fuhrlander Company, a growing wind turbine manufacturer from Germany, announced its plans to locate a production and assembly facility in Butte citing in part our ability to provide a skilled workforce through Montana's education, development, and training programs. When it comes to economic development, we've created more jobs, an average of over 1,500 per month at higher wages than anytime in history and our economy is the 7th fastest growing in the nation over the past three years. Our job quality has been going up and we have recently been rated as having the #1 pro-business climate in the nation.

With hundreds of jobs already created and thousands more on the way in our robust energy sector, Montana will need a qualified and skilled workforce to be the mechanics, electricians, steel and metal workers, labors, accountants, marketers, scientists, and engineers.

To continue our strong economic growth we need to diversify. We can't put all our eggs in one basket, to keep the national downturn out of Montana we need to

strengthen all sectors of our economy from agricultural, small businesses, energy, manufacturing, technology, medical, service, research & development, to our tourism sectors. In order to reinforce our growing economy and supply the employees for all sectors of our diverse marketplace we need to have a trained workforce ready for tomorrow's challenges.

To meet those challenges it's vital that we provide our workers the opportunity to enhance their current skills and learn new ones. Through programs like the Workforce Innovation Regional Economic Development (WIRED), Montana workers are able to train for jobs in their own communities. The pilot Incumbent Worker program is helping train people who are already working and want to advance in their current job.

By bringing new business and expanding existing businesses in the state we will provide more good paying jobs to more Montanans. Our expanding workplace will give our children the opportunity to stay, work, and raise a family right here in Montana. As folks around the nation look to Montana as a place to relocate or expand their business, with a trained workforce we will be prepared to host our continued economic expansion.



Governor Brian Schweitzer

MTCC CAMPUS CORPS: BUILDING HOPE IN BILLINGS

Author: Dean McGovern, Executive Director, Montana Campus Compact

Photos Courtesy of MTCC

As one of Montana's gems Yellowstone County has plenty for everyone, its home to the state's largest city, historical landmarks like Pompey's Pillar, and its namesake the Yellowstone River.

But does it really have plenty for everyone? Despite its recent prosperity Montana in general and the county in particular, still grapple with the problems of homeless citizens and people living in poverty. Whether it's the lack of affordable housing, substance abuse issues, or scarcity of living-wage jobs, too many Montanans remain marginalized by their circumstances. Governor Schweitzer has made it a state priority to provide a hand up to the "least and the last" of our citizens. If Montana is going to reach its economic, social, and cultural potential, then our state's greatest resources—its citizens—need the food, clothing, and shelter essentials to reach their individual potentials. With support from the Montana Campus Compact (MTCC) and the engaged students at Montana State University-Billings, more residents are getting what they need throughout Yellowstone County.

Brittany Quade a college student at MSU-Billings, signed on with the MTCC Campus Corps program to serve her community and develop her own professional skills. She first got involved in community service in junior high school. Once in college, Quade was introduced to the homelessness project through the Office of Community Involvement at MSU-Billings. Since then she has spearheaded an aggressive campaign to connect the homeless citizens of Billings with food, shelter, clothing, and the social services that allow them to care for themselves and their families over the past two years. "It has really opened my eyes to how big a problem affordable housing is in the Billings community," said Quade, "It's a chronic issue."

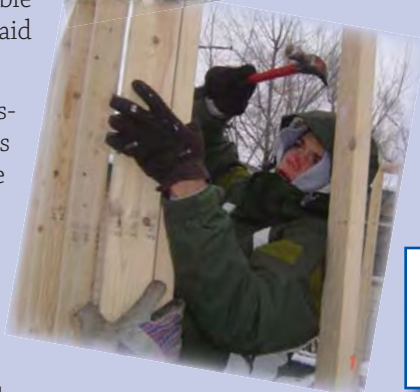
The homelessness project began as a campus-community partnership between MSU-Billings and Habitat for Humanity of Mid-Yellowstone Valley. Quade was responsible for recruiting and coordinating volunteers for build days throughout the county. These are days when larger groups of volunteers, skilled workers, and coordinators come together to turn up productivity and get big chunks of a new housing project completed. Last year, she

organized four separate build days including the very successful "Team Build" project which convened a work crew of more than 50 volunteers, most of whom were members or coaches of the MSU-Billings Yellowjackets baseball team. "We came out and worked together to do something for the community, to help people," said team coach, Chris Brown, "It was fun, helpful, and good for the team." The Yellow Jacket baseball team moved and organized materials, built temporary sheds for tools, and prepped a building site. They also spent the afternoon framing several interior walls and building roof trusses for what was to become a nice two-bedroom home for Billings resident, Lucy Hernandez, and her family.

In the spring, the MTCC Campus Corps team at MSU-Billings implemented the Act! Speak! Build! Week, a series of special on-campus events organized around advocacy and awareness of homelessness and poverty. The week kicked off with the second annual Project Homeless Connect. The Campus Corp team partnered with the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness and a coalition of nonprofit organizations to host the community event. The goal was to offer a safe space where the homeless and other citizens in need could access information and services in one convenient location. Free food, clothing, haircuts, and limited medical treatments were available; as well as information on housing assistance, longer term medical and legal services, and job placement assistance. The project successfully convened more than 40 service organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies to serve and inform more than 350 participants in need. In the end, at least 125 people came together to volunteer their time and energy to the project.

MTCC Campus Corps members serve from nineteen college campuses in sixteen different communities, including: Billings, Bozeman, Browning, Butte, Crow Agency, Dillon, Harlem, Havre, Helena, Glendive, Great Falls, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula, Pablo, and Poplar.

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



WORK OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION PAYING OFF

Author: Anne Wolfinger

Employers and business owners in Montana are starting to see results from the efforts of the Labor-Management Advisory Council on Workers' Compensation (LMAC) where it matters—in their bottom line.

In the past two years, the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI), the workers' compensation rate-setting authority, has filed rate reductions amounting to 5.9% or \$22 million. Better yet, this savings was achieved with no reduction of benefits to injured workers.

The change was primarily triggered by a new medical fee schedule for providers implemented by the Department of Labor and Industry on January 1, 2008. Medical costs are one of the primary areas of emphasis for the LMAC, since they account for 66 cents of every benefit dollar spent in workers' compensation. The new schedule redistributes medical payments among physicians and other providers but still compensates them above group health rates. In a related effort, the agency is currently in the rulemaking process for a new medical facility fee schedule, with the goal of an improved payment system for hospitals, clinics and ambulatory surgery centers.

Even bigger savings are possible for Montana. NCCI projects that we could reduce costs by 37.5% and save \$145 million in workers' compensation costs if we reduce the frequency of injury among Montana's workers to the national average. According to the 2005 Bureau of Labor Statistics, Montana's injury rate is 57% higher than the national average. Again, if Montana was comparable to the national average, the savings would be huge: in the neighborhood of **\$145 million**.

Lessening the duration of work-related injuries would likewise pay off. Currently, an injured worker in Montana is off work an average of 136 days. If Montana was in line with the national average for duration (85 days), the system could save \$12.5 million per year.

These cost savings are only part of the story, however, as participants in the "60 Summits MT" workshops can attest to. More than 220 business owners, medical providers, claims examiners, insurers, and other work comp professionals heard Dr. Jennifer Christian detail the benefits of return-to-work at workshops in Billings, Great Falls and Missoula in April. Small groups developed actions plans for implementing return-to-work recommendations from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine's (ACOEM) guideline on "Preventing Needless Work Disability." The bottom line: return-to-work benefits everyone—the injured worker, the employer, the work comp system.

This compelling information and the fact that Montana has significantly higher frequency and duration rates than the national average has made safety and return-to-work primary area of emphasis for the LMAC.

To this end, the LMAC recently formed a public/private partnership called WorkSafeMT to direct and coordinate a host of safety programs and return-to-work programs and hired a project manager. WorkSafeMT is modeled on WorkSafeBC (British Columbia) which has an impressive multi-year track record of measurable success. British Columbia average premium is \$1.56 per \$100 of payroll compared to \$3.69 in Montana.

The goal of the LMAC is to enhance business competitiveness through a safe and healthy workforce, while maintaining benefits to injured workers and reducing insurance costs. The LMAC was commissioned by the Department of Labor and Industry in 2006. The LMAC has five employer representatives: Bill Dahlgren (Sun Mountain Sports), Annette Hoffman (St. Vincent's Healthcare), Riley Johnson (National Federation of Independent Business), Connie Welsh (State of Montana) and Bob Worthington (Montana Municipal Insurance Authority); and five labor representatives, Doug Buman (Laborers' International Union of North America), Jacquie Helt (AFL-CIO), Dan Lee (AFL-CIO), Don Judge (Injured Workers Resource Council), and Jason Miller.



Advisory Council meetings are open to the public and public comment is encouraged.

For more information on the council, visit

<http://erd.dli.mt.gov/wcstudyproject/labormngmntadvisorycouncilonwc.asp>

THE NATIVE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Author: Casey Kyler-West

Photos Courtesy of NADC

When it was first established in 1996, the Native American Development Corporation (NADC), worked to bring resources to deteriorating native communities. At the time there were very few resources available so the NADC developed initiatives targeted at tribal enterprises on the reservation. “The goal was to develop employment through government contracts,” says NADC Executive Director Leonard Smith.

Since 1996 NADC has initiated several programs both on a statewide and national basis, such as the Tribal Leadership Council with Administration for Native Americans (ANA) funding and an Air Force program with a goal to leverage 50 million dollars in contracts to tribal firms.

At the local level, the organization has created statewide programs and funding that helps Indian communities both on and off reservations develop their economy and address poverty. One of those programs developed with funding from the Economic Development Administration is the Revolving Loan Fund, which can lend up to \$250,000. Another, with various banking institutions and Montana State University Billings, provides technical assistance in loan packaging, feasibility analysis, and business plans. In addition, another partnership with the Administration for Native Americans will establish an economic development center in Billings, to prepare Native American owned businesses to develop and manage successful businesses. Another partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation will help increase the organization’s capacity for poverty reduction, with programs such as low income housing, financial literacy training, advocacy, and employment services for Native Americans who live in Billings.

However, running the various programs doesn’t come without challenges. Some of those challenges include the access to resources; funding cutbacks from the federal

government can have a real impact on that accessibility. “It’s created a need for partnerships and alliances that focus on sustaining current programs and that work towards developing independent operations,” says Smith. “In the past, as a CEO I have used workforce training funds to prepare tribal members for machining and welding careers with the Fort Peck Tribes and their manufacturing industry. NADC hopes to make this strategy a part of the plan for creating employment for Native Americans in the future.”



Leonard Smith

But the tide is turning and change is in the air for Indian country as federal funding begins to dry up and more accountability is required. Each tribe is at a different level, some are further along in development than others and their priorities are constantly changing. “As an organization, we’re also going through a period of change. We’ve just finished restructuring our organization and have new professional staff to begin bridging the gaps in services for Native American Communities to address poverty. Our goal is to provide professional and sustainable programs,” says Smith.

Native American communities in Montana represent a large percentage of the available workforce due to high unemployment in their communities. “Workforce training plays a key role in the success of any individual or business. That’s why the NADC is looking at providing training in Billings.” Smith says, “We’re looking at the needs of Native American businesses in Montana and trying to meet those needs.” The NADC is working with Dartmouth University’s Minority Development Agency and the Bureau of Indian Affairs on a class that teaches how to create a successful business in Indian country. Other areas the NADC are looking to broaden are individual entrepreneurship training, teaching Native Americans how to manage a business in order for it to be profitable, how to develop their business and how to provide project management. The people who take these classes will learn to develop cost proposals, administer contracts and effectively manage their business. Smith says, “Creating awareness and the opportunities will benefit people both on and off the reservation.”



Building a Successful Business in Indian Country Graduates

MOVING THE CROW TO ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Author: Cedric Black Eagle, Vice Chairman, Crow Tribe

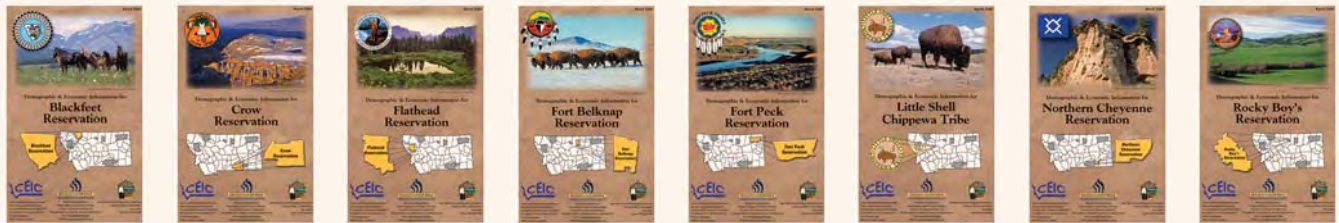
Montana has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, which is a good thing but suggests the possibility of an actual labor shortage. On Montana's Indian Reservations, the unemployment rate is still around 50-percent. The population on our reservations is also very young, meaning that we will see our young people growing into the workforce for many decades to come.

Unfortunately, many of our young people are overlooked when employers are looking to fill positions or considering education or training. That means thousands of gifted young people who live both on and off the reservations that need a world-class education and real opportunities for employment, aren't getting the opportunities they need. But tribes can also help employers meet their demands in order to move into the future we all deserve.

At Crow we have been working to develop our energy resources and making long-range plans for full, meaningful employment. A hundred years ago, many of our people had the experience of going from landowners to menial laborers on our lands and we find today that some of our most talented young people are still met with negative expectations when they try to accomplish their dreams. As a result, talents are wasted, needs go unfulfilled and our future gets a little bit farther away.

To combat that, we are working on strategic partnerships with our energy partners that will include training programs and scholarships. If a project is going to take two to seven years to build, then we can offer training to our youth and be ready for high quality good paying jobs as the plant opens up. We are also taking advantage of the WIRED grant and the training opportunities it provides for our people. The benefit of this is two-fold. Those who complete the training are able to get a good job and at the same time show others on the reservation that it is possible to break the poverty cycle.

We are also working on legislation and agreements that will make it easier for us to do business with other jurisdictions. At Crow we're working on developing more partnerships for workforce development. Through these efforts we hope to fill the labor market with qualified workers and help the state avoid a labor shortage. By working together on new programs and initiatives we can ensure not only the future success for the Crow and other tribes, but for Montana as well.



RESERVATION FLIERS – ECONOMIC DATA FOR TRIBES

The Department of Labor and Industry announces updates to last year's first ever Reservation Fliers of the seven Tribal Nations located in the State of Montana.

The Fliers provide a detailed picture of the economic and demographic status of the Blackfeet, Crow, Flathead, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne and Rocky Boy's reservations. This year data is included on the Little Shell Chippewa for the first time. The Fliers provide nation specific data on annual average wages, employment levels, agricultural statistics, income distributions and much more. A principle goal of the Fliers is to provide useable data for people interested in doing business on the reservations.

The Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau spearheaded the effort with active participation from the Montana Department of Commerce's Census and Economic Information Center, the Governor's Office and the Tribal Nations through the State Tribal Economic Development Commission (STEDC). The STEDC, comprised of representatives from the seven reservations in Montana, a representative of the Little Shell Chippewa, the Coordinator of Indian Affairs for the Governor's Office, a representative of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and a representative from the Montana Department of Commerce, is instrumental in furthering economic development efforts in Indian Country in Montana.

"The Reservation Fliers provide an accurate, measurable economic benchmark for each of the seven Indian reservations and for the Little Shell Chippewa," said, Shawn Real Bird, a member of the Crow Tribe and Chairman of the STEDC. "Together (state and tribes), we have produced a tool to attract prospective developers looking to invest in tribal economies."

"Recent enhancements to our data collection, including our ability to identify which businesses are located within the physical boundaries of the reservations made the development possible," said Research and Analysis Bureau Chief Todd Younkin. "We're very pleased with the end result and believe that our customers will be too."

Fliers are available at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org.

LAUREL CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Author: Casey Kyler-West

Laurel's history as a town began in 1879 when the first settlers came into the area. However, Laurel was not the original name, nor is it in the original location. Initially named Carlton, the town was two miles west of its present location. No one knows why the name changed, although there are different accounts as to how it came to be known as Laurel. One account claims that a railroad man named it after a member of his family, another claims a railroad man named it after his hometown of Laurel, Mississippi. A third account that claims a railroad official named it after a shrub. Whatever the reason, by 1906 Laurel was considered a town and by 1908 it was incorporated.

Long before the trains and the settlers came to the area Lewis and Clark camped on the banks of the Yellowstone River near Laurel. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians fought the U.S. Cavalry led by Colonel Samuel Sturgis seven miles north of Laurel at Canyon Creek in 1877. Other historical characters have ties to the town as well. One of them was Calamity Jane, who owned a cabin in Canyon Creek. The "Log Cabin" that houses Laurel's Chamber of Commerce was built as a replica of her cabin. Elroy Gilles graduated from Laurel's high school in 1940 and four days after graduation took off on his horse "Shamrock" and rode across the country to New York City to see the World's Fair. Laurel native Charles George, who was known world wide as the boxer Sonny O'Dea, fought 529 professional fights. Master Sergeant William Phillips was the one who sounded the first general alarm announcing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7th, 1941.

The railroad isn't the only key industry in Laurel; the Laurel Leaf Oil Refinery began operation in 1930. The refinery was purchased in 1943 by the Farmers Union Central Exchange for \$750,000. At the time the plant's capacity was 5,000 barrels a day and it employed 90 people. Today the refinery is part of the Cenex Harvest States Family and employs more than 300 people. The refinery is adding a new Delayed Cooking Unit which will add even more employees to its payroll.

Today Laurel is known as the "Hub of Montana". Many of the state's resources like wheat, hay, copper, zinc, livestock, wool, lumber and other products are routed to the Midwest or South through Laurel's railroad yards. Laurel is also the junction to four entrances into Yellowstone National Park. The Red Lodge/Beartooth Highway entrance, the Cody entrance, the Gardiner entrance and the West Yellowstone entrance can all be accessed through Laurel. Billings is just 13 miles east on I-90 and two major highways will take travelers south to Wyoming.



Laurel: East Main Street; Courtesy of Chamber of Commerce

Local residents like the small town atmosphere Laurel offers while being close to Montana's major city. "We moved to Laurel when my husband worked for Stillwater Mining Company because we wanted to be in a town that wasn't heavily dependent on the mine for its economy. We moved here from Columbus 6 years ago, and even though Ward left SMC last year we're still here. It's home; we've made wonderful friends, we're involved in community activities and we have two businesses here now. Laurel is growing, which offers excellent growth opportunity for our



Laurel 1918



Laurel: East Main Street; Courtesy of Chamber of Commerce

businesses, but it still has the small town feeling, and freedom, that we love.” says Kammy Thurman, owner of Anchor Photography. Laurel Chamber of Commerce Executive Secretary Joanne Flynn says, “Laurel is a great place to live. Personally, I enjoy the small town atmosphere and the friendliness of the people. Combine that with the excitement of growth and prosperity and you get a picture of “Laurel Alive”.”

Laurel is still growing. Wal-Mart came to town and opened its doors last October. The South Side of Laurel is becoming the new downtown with new businesses moving in like the UPS store, Big Dawg Daddy’s, Hot Dogs (a workout facility), a large Ace Hardware and more. Wood’s Pow’r Grip, an international manufacturing company, has also moved to town and employs 130 people.

New businesses also mean more people and new housing developments are popping up all over. Plans are in the works to improve the entrances and exits to Laurel. According to the Laurel Chamber of Commerce, the town is experiencing

growth it hasn’t seen since the early 1900’s.

Each year Laurel plays host to the state’s largest free fireworks display. The annual event is hosted by the Volunteer Fire Department and brings between five to ten thousand people from all



Laurel: East Main Street; Courtesy of Chamber of Commerce

over the state and parts of Wyoming to Laurel. This year’s event will be even bigger because of the Centennial Celebration. The event will kick off on July 3rd with a street dance. On July 4th, the 11th annual Chief Joseph Run starts at 7:00 a.m. The Kiddie Parade starts 10:00 a.m. and the Grand Parade begins at 11:00 a.m. The fireworks display will begin at dusk on the 4th. The Arts and Crafts Fair will be held at the old middle school on July 4th and 5th. Events in August include the Odyssey West concert in the park with Rob Quist and Jack Gladstone on August 9th. Shakespeare in the Parks will be performing on August 27th at Thompson Park.

For more information about Laurel and the Centennial Celebration log onto laurelmontana.org.



Laurel, MT Train

REVITALIZING YOUR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Author: Julie Burk, Montana Main Street Program Coordinator, Montana Department of Commerce



Julie Burk

Decades ago, downtown commercial districts served as the primary providers of goods and services to their communities. People shopped, ate, transacted business, and recreated downtown. But, with the advent of malls, big box stores, Internet commerce, and the like, downtowns declined.

Most traditional commercial districts will never again be able to provide the range of goods and services they

offered years ago. Nevertheless, downtowns can adapt to new trends, and find new niches.

The Main Street program, which was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, has been used by more than one thousand communities across the United States. In Montana, the State Legislature authorized funding for the program in 2005. Currently, Libby, Polson, Stevensville, Butte, Anaconda, Livingston, and Red Lodge are designated Main Street communities. In 2007, these seven communities collectively created 106 new jobs, and 45 new businesses. Public improvement projects totaled almost \$3 million dollars; building improvements totaled \$1.5 million. Volunteers contributed more than 5,000 hours to their communities.

Libby's program helped revitalize its downtown by making sure travelers knew where it was. The downtown shopping district is directly off U.S. Highway 2, unfortunately there was very little signage directing traffic to that area. So as part of the downtown improvement plans, Libby's Main Street program recommended a gateway arch that denotes the shopping district. Working with the county commissioners, the Libby Chamber of Commerce, the City, and local artist Todd Berget, Libby Main Street raised more than \$29,000 from local businesses to purchase the sculpture and materials for the project, and managed the project from inception to completion in just seven weeks. Libby Main Street Executive Director Trent Oelberg says, "This is proof that when a city has a common goal and the desire to work together to accomplish that goal, things can be done quickly."

"One of Butte's biggest success stories over the past year is bringing the National Folk Festival to Montana this July", said George Everett, executive director of Mainstreet Uptown Butte. The National Folk Festival is the oldest multi-cultural festival of traditional arts in the country. The free three-day festival celebrates the music; dance, food, and culture drawn from the heritage of the many immigrant groups that have helped settle America. This is



Livingston

Photo Courtesy MT Main Street Program

the first time the festival is being held west of the Mississippi River in decades, and the first time ever in Montana. "The effort began with a visit to the national Main Streets conference in New Orleans in 2006 by volunteer Barb Kornet, who brought back information that the National Council for the Traditional Arts was looking for a Main Street community interested in hosting the national festival," Everett said. "Our Main Street efforts in Butte over the past five years have put us in a position to be able to propose and organize this large event over the next three years with the help of a lot of fine people from throughout Montana."

The underlying premise of the Main Street program is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation. In order to do this the program encourages communities to use their unique assets – distinctive architecture, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, local ownership, and personal service – to rebuild their downtowns.

To do so, Main Street focuses on four major areas: organization, promotions, design, and economic restructuring.

The first area, organization, focuses on getting everyone in the community to work toward the goal of revitalizing Main Street. Organizational duties consist of raising money for projects and administration, recruiting volunteers, managing staff and volunteers, and managing the finances.

The second area, promotions, focuses on attracting potential shoppers, investors, and businesses to the downtown. Promotional strategies create a positive image through advertising, special events, and retail promotions.

The third area, design, focuses on getting Main Street back into top-notch



Anaconda's Main Street Program

Photo Courtesy MT Main Street Program



Butte Farmer's Market

Photo Courtesy MT Main Street Program

physical shape. Design conveys a visual impression of Main Street, creating an inviting atmosphere through window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping.

The fourth area, economic restructuring, focuses on finding a new niche for Main Street's businesses. Different ways this can be accomplished is by recruiting new businesses to the area, strengthening existing ones, and finding new uses for vacant spaces.

To learn more about the Montana Main Street program, please check the Montana Department of Commerce's website at www.mtmainstreet.mt.gov, or contact Julie Burk, program coordinator, at (406) 841-2756 or jburk@mt.gov.



Libby Gateway Arch

Photo Courtesy MT Main Street Program

Employers Register for Unemployment Insurance Online

Finding a path through the bureaucratic jungle is often confusing for new business owners. But one part of the path just got a little easier with the launch of an e-government service by the Unemployment Insurance Division of the Department of Labor and Industry.

UI4Employers is an online process available 24/7 that allows users to register their business, immediately obtain an account number and tax rate, and download the quarterly report form and other notices. UI4Employers also links to the department's secure Internet process whereby employers can easily file UI payroll reports and payments. The Department of Labor and Industry's Commissioner, Keith Kelly says, "UI4Employers offers a secure, easy and efficient alternative to paper registration."

The registration process guides the user through questions to establish whether their business is subject to UI tax coverage, the industry classification of their business, and contact information. If some information conflicts or is not available, the user is informed that a contributions bureau expert will call. By offering an efficient alternative to a paper process, UI4Employers continues the Department's mission to provide convenient access to services.

Employers who want to take advantage of this service can access it by logging onto:

www.ui4employers.mt.gov.

The Effect of WIRED on Yellowstone County

Author: John Rife



John Rife

Billings is one of Montana's "hot spots." It is a growing community where workers enjoy low unemployment and rising wages. But go east from Billings and things change quickly. In the towns of eastern Montana, populations are shrinking, jobs are scarce and wages are low. The bright

lights of Billings do not shine very far out onto the plains.

WIRED is changing that, by encouraging the growth of energy-related businesses in eastern Montana. It is a regional approach to economic development that offers support and incentives to companies willing to invest there. Companies located in Yellowstone County that are in the energy industry are in an excellent position to benefit from this. Typically, they already have a presence in eastern Montana and can quickly ramp up operations once it becomes profitable for them to do so.

One incentive being offered to these companies is a trained workforce. Workers who live in eastern Montana, including those living on reservations, are being prepared for the jobs that the energy industry requires such as welders, electricians, truck drivers, construction workers and pipe fitters. Companies moving into eastern Montana will be greeted by a workforce ready to meet their needs.

Newton Old Crow Jr., Adult Vocational Training Coordinator for the Crow Tribe, said WIRED is a tremendous opportunity. "Employers are waiting in line to hire people who finish occupational training," he said. "This causes a ripple effect. People see someone complete his training and get a good job and they say, 'I can do that, too.' Helping people obtain high-paying jobs is the most effective thing we can do to fight poverty and end drug and alcohol abuse on the reservations," he said.

As the region develops economically, Billings will continue to be the predominant city. Because of its infrastructure, companies will locate their offices in Billings, and it will remain the distribution hub for the region. Meanwhile, the development of eastern Montana's energy industry will help stabilize the entire region and ensure that Billings' star keeps shining brightly.

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

Cenex



St. John's Lutheran Home



Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch



Wells Fargo



Billings Clinic





YELLOWSTONE AT A GLIMPSE

Author: Mike Peery

Total population: 139,936 (Census, 2007)

Median age: 38.2 (Census, 2006)

Median household income: \$43,377 (Census, 2006)

Average unemployment rate: 2.4% (BLS LAUS estimate, 2007)

Top five industries in terms of employment:

- 1) Food Services and Drinking Places
- 2) Administrative and Support Services
- 3) Hospitals
- 4) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- 5) Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods

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

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

Wal-Mart



Avitus Group



First Interstate Bank



St. Vincent Healthcare



ConocoPhillips



IN YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

Photos Courtesy of each business except for Avitus Group, Billings Clinic, St. John's Lutheran Home and Wal-Mart Courtesy of Casey Kyler-West.

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

TOP 10 PRIVATE EMPLOYERS IN YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

Avitus Group

Billings native Arthur Geiger believed there was a better system for businesses to conduct their operations in Montana, so he and some of his colleagues started the **Avitus Group**. Now ten years later, the company, which is headquartered in Billings, provides employment services to firms in 28 states around the country.

Avitus handles everything from payroll disbursement, tax preparation, benefit offering and administration, and employment law expertise to risk and safety assessments. In order to provide these services, the group has 2600 employees, of which about 750 are based right here in Montana. Meanwhile, the types of job at **Avitus** run the gamut from blue collar jobs to white collar, from doctors to janitors work for the company.

When it comes to retaining employees, the executives at **Avitus** believe in having a very strong and safe work environment. Concern for employee welfare along with benefits is the key to keeping their employees in the company.

The original goal of the **Avitus Group** was to contribute to the state. A goal that has not only been met, but exceeded as the company continues to expand its services to Montana businesses and the rest of the country.

Billings Clinic

In 1911, Dr. Arthur J. Movius opened his general practice in Billings. Dr. J.H. Bridenbaugh joined his practice in 1915 as an assistant. Bridenbaugh later took over obstetrics and ran the clinic's first x-ray machine. Now 97 years later, the clinic has grown from two physicians to one of the largest multi-specialty group practices in the region. There are more than 250 physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners providing service to patients in Billings and patients throughout the region in Colstrip, Columbus, Miles City, Red Lodge and Cody, Wyoming. In order to provide services to all those areas, the **Billings Clinic** employs nearly 3200 people.

Billings Deaconess Hospital was incorporated in 1907; however it didn't open its doors until after World War I. The hospital had 58 beds with 12 doctors and 16 nurses on staff. Through the years, the hospital continued to grow to meet the growing population while incorporating new technology and treatments for its patients. In 1972, the hospital performed Billings' first open heart surgery.

"We have a culture here at the **Billings Clinic**; we focus on service and meeting the needs of patients and guests. We pride ourselves on bringing a different face to patients, we try to do what we can to put them at ease, make them feel welcome and comfortable during their visit," says clinic spokesman, Luke Cobalt. That philosophy carries over to the employees as well, which is why the clinic recently received the Employer of Choice Recognition.

Cenex

The **Cenex** refinery in Laurel is one of the few cooperative refineries in the U.S. that is still operating, despite the fact that more than half the refineries have shutdown over the last 20 years. Owned by farmers and ranchers, the company's income does not come from oil

from the ground but in the fuel that's produced. The refinery is part of the Cenex Harvest States or CHS family, the result of a merger between **Cenex** and Harvest States back in 1998. The refinery itself was constructed in 1930. Laurel was a prime location because it was the intersection of the north/south and east/west railroad lines.

More than 300 employees work at the **Cenex** refinery, and due to the new Delayed Cooking Unit, the refinery will be adding even more employees. "As a result of this project, our refinery has grown to the point where we are adding over 35 additional permanent employees" says plant manager Pat Kimmert. In addition to the permanent positions, the project has created temporary positions, which means at times up 2400 people work at the facility.

The refinery's workforce is a highly skilled group of individuals that are trained on the job in their primary areas of responsibility. There are safety and environmental specialists, engineers, accountants, operators and craftsmen. Training at **Cenex** averages around five months, once an employee is proficient in one area; they begin cross training for another area. Kimmert says, "A recent study by the MSU-B Center for Applied Economic Research for the Montana Petroleum Association indicated that every job created in the refining sector in our state results in the creation of over four additional non-refinery jobs that can be linked to the presence of the refinery."

ConocoPhillips

The American Oil Company, **ConocoPhillips**, got its start back in 1875 as the Continental Oil and Transportation Company. At the time the company distributed coal, oil, kerosene, grease and candles in the west. In 1929, more than two million shares of stock were sold to the Marland Oil Company and the name was changed to the Continental Oil Company.

Today **ConocoPhillips** has 19 oil refineries around the world, including one in Billings, which has been operating since 1949. The Billings refinery employs roughly 300 people on a permanent basis, but it can employ up to a thousand contract employees depending on the season and the projects. Refinery Plant Manager Mike Wakowski says, "We're always looking for good employees; we do a lot of hiring through Job Service."

There is a wide spectrum of jobs performed at the refinery, but most of them are technical and engineering positions. Several of the refinery's employees come from the College of Technology with a two year degree, something the refinery finds invaluable.

The Billings refinery has also been recognized by its parent company **ConocoPhillips** as one the top business units in the world. Wakowski says "It's quite an honor to be recognized as one of the top business units the last two years."

First Interstate Bank

With its headquarters in Billings, **First Interstate Bank** employs 1,936 employees, 798 of whom work and live in Yellowstone County. The bank came about after Homer Scott, Sr. purchased the Security Bank in Billings in 1970. He already owned the Bank of Commerce in Sheridan, Wyoming. The Montana and Wyoming operations were combined in 1993, and the headquarters remained in Billings. Today there are 51 bank branches across Montana and Wyoming under the **First Interstate Bank** name and 18 branches under the First Western Bank Charter in the Black Hills area of South Dakota.

First Interstate believes that ongoing training and development opportunities play a key role in retaining its employees, along with competitive compensation and benefits. "We want to ensure that





the 798 employees we have living in Yellowstone County have a good working environment at **First Interstate** and are proud to support their community.” says bank spokeswoman Ramona Doll.

Doll also says, “We touch a lot of people in this community, and it makes us realize even more how important it is to treat everyone honestly, fairly and with respect. Banks reinvest in the community by supporting the local economy with financing necessary to purchase homes, construct new buildings, and buy vehicles. In addition, we believe in our commitment to give back to the community through charitable giving and community sponsorships.”

St. John’s Lutheran Home

St. John’s Lutheran Home is the first Montana HUD-financed senior retirement community. Since its start in 1958, the original establishment has grown to become the largest senior campus in Montana. There are 500 seniors who reside on the 22 acre site. **St. John’s** has also purchased an additional 10 acres of land adjacent to the current campus for future expansion.

However, caring for and housing seniors is not the only service that **St. John’s Lutheran Home** provides. It also provides adoption and child care services. As a result, the types of people who work for **St. John’s** are varied. Nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, accountants, caseworkers, activities directors and several other occupations make up the 500 plus employees who work for **St. John’s**.

“I think it’s important to know in the healthcare field, people who have a niche for care giving of any kind are highly sought after. There are good employers in the field,” says **St. John’s** spokeswoman Marlene Moran. In order to stay competitive, the facility not only offers good benefits, but also tries to stay a step ahead when meeting the needs of its employees. Moran says, “Treating people how you want to be treated, making sure you’re fair has an impact on our clients as well. How we treat our employees is how they treat our clients.”

St. Vincent Healthcare

On February 1st 1899, St. Vincent Hospital officially opened its doors. Founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, the hospital was built to meet the increasing demand for healthcare. That demand hasn’t lessened more than a century later. In November of 2000, the hospital’s name changed to **St. Vincent Healthcare** in order to adapt to the new changes in healthcare. Today its one of Montana’s largest comprehensive hospitals, serving the needs of more than 400,000 people in a four state area.

The hospital employs 2,150 people. Because of the variety of jobs at the hospital, the types of education and training vary as well. St. Vincent Healthcare spokeswoman Iola Harris says, “St. Vincent Healthcare takes a lot of pride in being one of the largest employers in Billings. Our vastly skilled, compassionate team-oriented employees are the driving force in making our mission attainable.”

In order to retain its employees, “**St. Vincent Healthcare** takes a lot of pride in promoting professional growth and development for its staff.” says Harris. Employees are recognized for their individual talents that they bring forth in providing patient care, whether direct or indirect.

Wal-Mart

It may seem hard to believe, but the **Wal-Mart** Corporation is only 46 years old. Yet in those 46 years, from its humble beginning as a retail store in Arkansas, **Wal-Mart** has become an international retail giant. During a visit to Korea in 1975, Sam Walton, **Wal-Mart’s** founder, was inspired by workers he encountered during his visit and created the **Wal-Mart** cheer that associates still do to this day.

The store in Billings opened in 1993 and has since then become a Supercenter employing roughly 534 people; statewide the corporation employs nearly 5,000 Montanans. The average wage for regular full-time associates in Billings and the rest of the state is \$10.73 an hour.

But the corporation doesn’t just provide jobs in its retail stores and Supercenters in Montana, it also buys merchandise and services from 347 suppliers in the state. That brings in more than 44-million dollars for the state and supports approximately 11,000 supplier jobs.

Wells Fargo

When **Wells Fargo** was looking at cost and employee quality, Montana ranked high among the 50 states in worker productivity and cost containment, so the company decided to locate one of its support centers in Billings. By doing that the company created more than 800 jobs in the Billings area. The other support center is located in Fargo, North Dakota.

The types of service provided at the Billings office vary. Because it is a support center for the whole company, there are 80 different business lines along with customer service providers, brokers, personal bankers, internal employees that support the banker connection team, and a loan servicing group that processes loans for all 50 states.

Wells Fargo also has high employee retention. Company spokeswoman Patrice Elliott says, “We focus on employee’s personal career paths. We make sure they get the opportunities and growth they want. People can do a lot of different things within Wells Fargo.” She adds, “We believe in our people and it’s a great place to work.”

Wells Fargo is the fifth largest bank in the United States and the 9th largest bank in the world by market cap. The company is constantly looking ahead, and was in fact the first bank to introduce individual account access on the web in May of 1995.

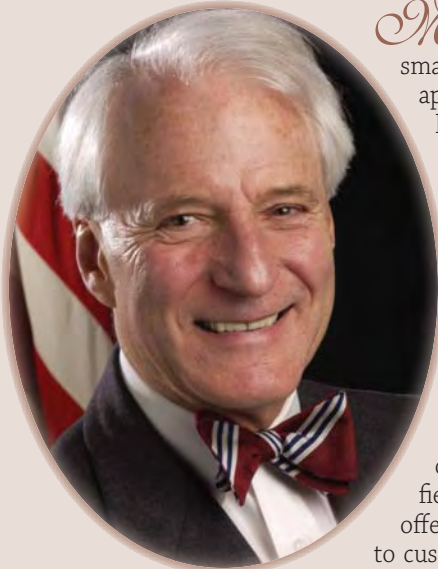
Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch

In 1957, Franklin Robbie visited a correctional school, and that visit forever changed his life. Determined to help the forgotten boys and give them another option, Robbie along with Carl Orth and Bob McFarlane, raised money to purchase property that would be home to the **Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch**. Now what was originally a dairy farm stands a nationally recognized facility that helps youth with behavioral and mental health issues. “I think that the community here is very supportive of the ranch and our mission to help children and families”, says ranch spokeswoman Andrea Kenny.

At any given time the **Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch**, helps 750 kids through its programs. There are 100 kids who receive residential treatment and anywhere from 550 to 650 kids who receive help through a variety of other programs. In order to help this many the ranch has roughly 500 employees. Kenny says, “I think our employees buy into what our mission is, helping kids and families. If employees believe in the mission they turn into long term employees, which are important to a non-profit organization like ours.”

The ranch is also the only facility that has a residential based equine assisted psychotherapy program in Montana. The program uses an experimental learning approach, where participants learn how to process feelings, behaviors and patterns. This helps them learn more about themselves and others. This year the equestrian center on campus held its first team roping competition. By holding events like this and others, the **Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch** raises money for riding gear and supplies for equestrian program participants.

WE ARE MONTANANS REFLECTIONS



Lieutenant Governor
John Bohlinger

My Montana experience began April 21, 1936 when I was born in what was then the small, rural town of Bozeman, where my parents, John and Aileen, owned the women's apparel store Aileen's. My father saw an opportunity to expand the business in Billings, and in 1941 we moved to the location that was home to Aileen's for more than 65 years.

I was 14 when my father passed away, and my mother moved the family to a new subdivision in the west side of town. Although development in Billings continued, I could still shoot pheasants in my back yard; at that time wide open fields started at our back door. Obviously, a great deal of the landscape around Billings has changed since then.

The nature of business in the area has changed, as well. The nature of competition between local small businesses shifted when department stores arrived, but we were all paying the same prices for our inventory. More significant changes occurred when 'big box' stores came in and changed the very nature of the playing field. Independent businesses today are forced to find a niche in the community, offering an inventory the customer can't get at the bigger stores. Our commitment to customer service and a unique inventory of quality designer clothes made Aileen's a success, and our interactions with customers made going to work a pleasure for generations of my family.

Hiring good people is also a key to any businesses success. You might own the business, you might have a marketing strategy for your product, but your employees will ultimately determine the quality of the experience for your customer. In today's competitive job market, employers must offer more than a decent wage. Aileen's was the only independent store in Billings to offer a profit sharing plan, and to pay half of employees' medical costs. By investing in our employees we built a reliable team that felt like family. Giving employees a sense of ownership in the business will inspire greater productivity, loyalty and a genuine commitment to success than any rule or regulation.

When my parents were running Aileen's, agriculture defined the character of Billings and much of Montana. Agriculture's influence on our state continues today, but emerging opportunities in a number of fields and the availability of constantly evolving technology have made a tremendous impact on our communities. The alternative energy industry is growing and Montana will play a pivotal role in our nation's energy future. Opportunities will continue to materialize and workforce training is critical to meet the demands of new industries.



Tina, Aileen and John Bohlinger

I have wonderful memories of Billings. I will always have a special place in my heart for the community, but I also know we can't live in the past. Montana is on the move, and I truly believe the future is bright for Billings.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY: THE STAR OF BIG SKY COUNTRY

Authors: Aaron McNay and Barbara Wagner

Located in the south-eastern region of Montana, Yellowstone County continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in Montana. The latest figures (2006) show an estimated population of 138,213. During the 1940's Yellowstone County displaced both Cascade and Silver Bow Counties as the most heavily populated county in Montana. Overtaking Butte in 1963, Billings became Montana's largest city. Since it was founded as a railroad town in 1882, Billings has continued to grow at a fast pace. In 2006 the Magic City's estimated population was recorded at 100,148. It also ranks as the 60th fastest growing city out of the 259 cities in the U.S. with populations more than 100,000. Billings' large population helps ensure that Yellowstone County will remain the state's highest-populated county well into the foreseeable future.

Yellowstone County residents are also earning more; in 2006, the average wage in the county was \$33,647 - slightly higher than the state average of \$30,607. While the wage is higher than the rest of the state, the wage gap between the county and the rest of the state is decreasing. From 2005 to 2006, the average wage increased by 4.6%, slightly below the state average of 4.9%.

The health care and social assistance industry is the largest employment sector in the county, employing roughly 10,905 people. Other significant industries include the retail trade, public administration, and accommodation and food service. Combined, these four sectors account for nearly half of the total employment in the county.

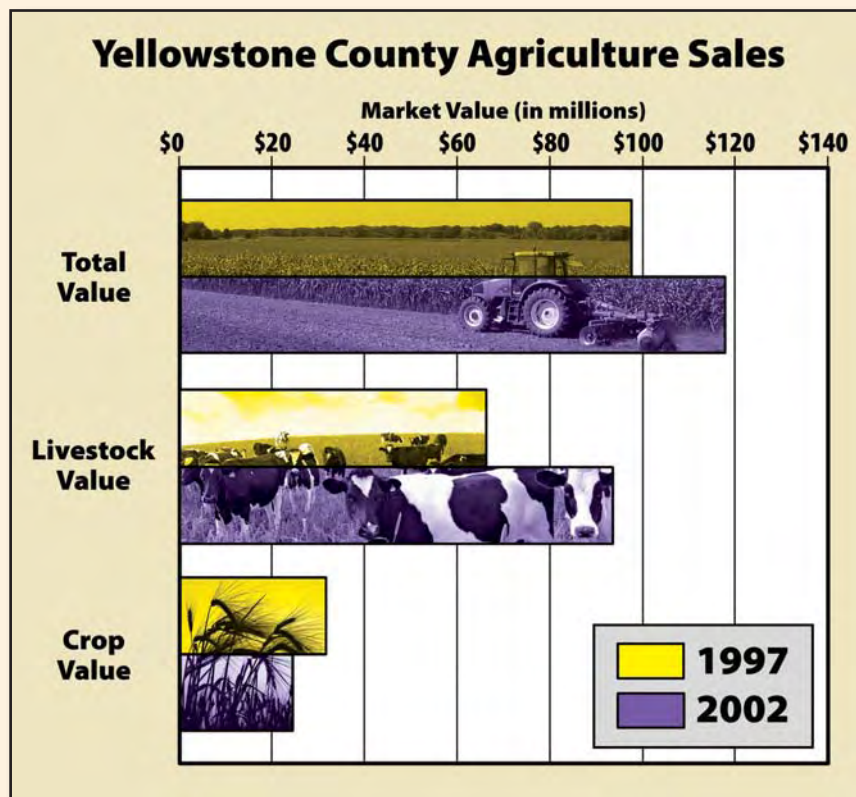
As with most of Montana, agriculture plays a significant role in Yellowstone County's economy. In 2002, the total value of all agricultural output in the county reached almost \$118 million, with livestock sales accounting for nearly 80% of the total value. That means Yellowstone County ranks as the top seller of agriculture and livestock products in the state.



Aaron McNay



Barbara Wagner



Crop sales are also an important part of the county's economy, with wheat and forage being the largest crops.

As Billings' economy continues to be a major contributor to Montana's economy, both residents and visitors benefit. The Magic City's prime location ensures that it will remain an important trading hub of the western United States for a long time to come. That economic stability provides Yellowstone County with shopping and recreational opportunities that may not be found anywhere else in Montana. The Yellowstone River, Pompey's Pillar and other geological features draw thousands of people each year to enjoy the natural splendor that surrounds and encompasses Yellowstone County adding yet another boost to the local and state economy.

THE MULTI-GENERATION WORKPLACE

Author: Wendy Samson, Development Coach and President of FutureSync International

This is the most unique time in American history—a time when four distinct generations are converging upon the workplace. Not only are they converging together --- often times they are COLLIDING!

These 4 generations are referred to as Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Below is a summary of our current workplace demographics. This data was compiled by the Montana Dept. of Labor & Industry’s Research and Analysis team using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current population Survey, 2006.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS				
Generation	Employed in MT	% of MT Population	US Employed	% of US Population
Veterans	22,952	4.7%	6.46 million	4.5%
Baby Boomers	174,927	35.7%	44.98 million	31.0%
Gen X	192,783	39.4%	66.6 million	45.9%
Gen Y/ Millennial	99,220	20.3%	27.02 million	18.6%

POPULATION STATISTICS			
Generation	Born/Age	How many - US	How many - Montana
Veterans	1922-1943 Age: 65-86	34 million	121,000
Baby Boomers	1943-1960 Age: 48-65	63 million	231,000
Gen X	1960-1980 Age: 28-48	83.9 million	240,000
Gen Y/ Millennial	1980-2000 Age: 8-28	82.9 million	249,000

These statistics show that in the state of Montana the once dominant population of Baby Boomers in the workplace has been surpassed by Gen X. Together Gen X and Gen Y constitute nearly 60% of the workforce in MT and almost 65% nationwide.

It seems that the days of high school students and/or college graduates getting their first job, going to work, being on time, and doing whatever their boss asked or told them to do are long gone. The younger generation has a tendency to hop from job to job. In today’s tight labor markets, it is time for the boomers and veterans to discover the strengths these younger workers offer, and learn to adapt. Wendy Samson, Development Coach and President of FutureSync International, has been studying the generations in the workplace for 10 years. She provides training to organizations and public groups with the desire to bridge the gap of the multi generations. She recommends that business owners and managers try to “screen job hoppers into their world, not out.”

Today’s generation of teens and 20-somethings (a.k.a. millennials or **Generation Y**) are accustomed to instant gratification. Growing up as busy kids immersed in organized activities planned by their parents, conditioned them to desire interesting, high-paced, creative jobs where they can control their schedules and the methods of completing work. They want to be their own boss. Often times, due

to their lifelong exposure to cutting edge technology, they have more efficient techniques, the ability to multi-task, be highly productive and manage quite well. They are curious and have a desire to learn. Because they have quick access to answers and information literally at their fingertips through text messaging and Googling, they need immediate feedback. If they aren’t receiving feedback, they tend to perceive disapproval.

Generation Xers are defined as the “latch-key” generation that learned independence at an early age. Influential events occurring in their lives include women’s liberation protests, the introduction of Tandy and Apple PC’s to the market and massive business layoffs in the U.S. They range from approximately 28-48 years old and tend to be self-reliant. Work-life balance is frequently a top priority for this generation. They appreciate a schedule without tight boundaries and have a tendency to change jobs every 18 months to 3 years. Generation X has a desire for positive feedback --- they need to know they are on the right track.

The **Baby Boomers**, formerly the largest group in the work force, are beginning to retire. Their attitude towards work changed as many transitioned from “hippies” to “yuppies”. In their 20s, they were skeptical of authority based on experience with Watergate and the Vietnam War. However, they have evolved into being the workaholics of the workplace. They are loyal to their companies and driven to work hard and long to get ahead. Boomers are used to giving feedback, but seldom receive it. A once a year evaluation with lots of documentation is what this group expects.

Veterans are those in the workplace that have reached retirement age, but continue to work. Their loyal work ethic and values were formed in the shadow of “hard times” including The Great Depression, World War II and the Korean War. They are traditionalists who respect their country and authority. Holding the majority of CEO slots of Fortune 500 companies, they are financially conservative and appreciate uniformity and consistency. This older generation is humble when it comes to feedback, believing there is a time and place for it. They seek no applause.

One thing each of these generations has in common is they all have been influenced by the events occurring in their lifetimes. Based upon the snapshots of each generation, it is easy to recognize this diversity and understand why organizations can find themselves in a generational tug-of-war.

Effective leaders of a multi-generation workplace are the ones who find a way to let all generations be heard and contribute to the growth and development of their organization. They embrace diversity recognizing that no one has all the answers. They are willing to understand and accept the differences among the generations, and alter their feedback style to fit the individual’s expectations. Flexibility in scheduling and staying current with technology are key factors to their success in retaining the younger generations.

We are all products of our own life experiences. Our values, work ethic, method of communication, way of giving and desiring feedback are extremely diverse. In the world of work, it is necessary that we learn to understand and value these differences to create a harmonious environment.



Wendy Samson

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT

Author: Tom Frisby

One of the Department of Labor & Industry's top priorities is to increase the skills of Montana's workforce. A key segment of Montana's Workforce that has been overlooked for skill development are those employed, but needing skill enhancement or upgrade. In Montana, they are often working in a small business that has 20 or fewer employees.

Over the last 9 months, Job Service Workforce Centers in partnership with those workers, labor, businesses, Big Sky Economic Development Authority (EDA), Beartooth Reclamation, Conservation & Development (RC&D), Snowy Mountain RC&D, Chambers of Commerce and the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) programs in south central Montana; have been piloting an Incumbent Workforce Training Grant for those very employees who bring their skills to work at small businesses everyday.

So far 222 Incumbent Workers have attended training and added to their skills in:

- Workers' Compensation Claims Adjuster Training –
- Automatic Door Certification
- Computerized Cabinet Making
- Computer Software including Word 2007, Excel 2007, Publisher 2007, PowerPoint 2007, and Accounting Packages
- Tree Trimming and Diseased Tree Prevention
- Veterinarian Technician Certification

Businesses who have workers needing to advance their skills and knowledge should contact their local Business Expansion And Retention (BEAR) Program. The BEAR Program assists the business with a BEAR Interview and Resources to solve challenges the business is facing. Those challenges can include financing, facilities, human resources, strategic planning and, of course, training, up to \$2,000 per employee. The business provides a matching amount which depends on the training and training location.

The participant wins by accruing skills and knowledge, making them more valuable as a worker and the business wins by having better and efficient staff to compete in a global economy. Jenna Jones, who is receiving training to become certified as a veterinarian technician while working at a veterinary hospital, says the program is helping her maintain her independence while she continues to pursue her education. "Your generosity will also benefit my employer as I will then be able to apply my learning to my work at the veterinary hospital and eventually get my license as a veterinary technician," says Jones.

The state of Montana and its citizens win by having an increasingly skilled and efficient workforce and strengthened economy.

The Incumbent Worker Training Grant is still in the Pilot Program stage. The partners are looking at approaching the 2009 Legislature to develop a statewide Incumbent Worker Training Grant. Although funds are limited, Incumbent Workers or their businesses in south central Montana who are interested in the program should contact their BEAR Program through the Billings Job Service Workforce Center at 406-652-3080, the Lewistown Job Service Workforce Center at 406-538-8701, or the Livingston Job Service Workforce Center at 406-222-0520.

"NAVIGATOR" DISABILITY PROGRAM

With the labor market as tight as it is these days, it can be hard for employers to find the right person for the job. But there is an untapped market out there that is ready and willing to go to work. As the nation's largest minority, and the only one a person can join at a moment's notice, disabled workers are often overlooked in the hiring process.

While the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 have helped shift attitudes about disabled workers, they still have a hard time navigating through the enormous challenges of seeking work. Besides the fact that they are an untapped market, many disabled workers are afraid that they will lose cash assistance and health benefits if they work.

That's where the Disability Program Navigator comes in. The program was established by the U.S. Department of Labor and Industry (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to better inform beneficiaries and other people with disabilities about the work support programs. These programs are available at One-Stop Career Centers, which provide information, training and other employment-related services at a single location. Some of those services include assessing the person's job readiness, current skills and resume building.

One-Stop staff members help people access and navigate complex provisions of various programs that impact their ability to gain/retain employment. One way they do this is by conducting outreach to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities. The Navigators also facilitate the transition of in or out of school youth with disabilities, to help them obtain employment and economic independence.

By building partnerships with employers, Navigators are able to collaborate with them on employment opportunities for disabled workers and discover other untapped labor markets. Navigator Program Manager Patti McCubbins says, "We want to make it as seamless as possible for those folks who have a disability to enter the workforce. It's our job to help them prove that they are just as qualified as a non-disabled candidate."

To find a Navigator near you, log onto <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/service/navigator.asp>.

PREPARING TODAY'S GRADUATES FOR TOMORROW'S JOBS

Author: Casey Kyler-West

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you."

Advice more than 300 students from 31 schools all over Montana put into action at the 18th annual Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG) Career Development Conference in Billings on May 6th and 7th.

While there were the usual workshops, this wasn't a typical conference. After being welcomed to the Magic City by Billings Mayor Ron Tussing, the students broke out into chaos. By chaos I mean "Coordinated Chaos". The students were divided up into teams and placed with students from other schools. The teams made their way through eight different stations during a set amount of time. These weren't your typical ice breaker activities. Students had to solve wordless problems, do a human scavenger hunt, play career charades, climb a rock wall and go through an obstacle course set up by the National Guard. As with most small groups, the students were wary of each other at first, but as each team progressed through the stations they grew more comfortable with one another and were soon cheering and giving each other high fives. "Before I came, I thought the conference was going to be lame, but it's really been a lot of fun." said Eddy Helland of Glasgow High School.



Emily Morse, Havre, making balloon animals for Talent Competition

The students also had the opportunity to strut their stuff in the talent competition. Like American Idol there was a panel of judges who evaluated the students as they sang, danced, and even made balloon animals for the audience. They were judged on their performance, as well as audience reaction. Unfortunately for the judges, the audience gave each act a roaring applause.

The next day students went head to head in critical thinking skills, decision making, life skills math, employment preparation, public speaking, telephone



Rock Climbing Wall in Coordinated Chaos event

techniques and words in the workplace. "Our goal is to give these students an opportunity to experience what it's like to try and find a job and be in the workplace in a positive way so that they're better prepared when they go out in to the real world," said JMG State Director Drea Brown. Darold Starks from Nashua High says, "You really learn a lot about the future and all the possibilities."

To date, the Jobs for Montana's Graduates program has helped more than eight thousand students in grades seven through 12. Ninety-six percent of the students who have participated in the JMG program



Jared Standing, Poplar, playing for the crowd in Talent Competition



Obstacle Course in Coordinated Chaos event

have graduated high school and are now contributing members of Montana's workforce and economy. JMG students are a cross-section of the student body, but at least half the group is drawn from the lower half of their grade level.

For many, it's the first school sponsored activity they've ever done. What sets these students apart from their peers is that they will leave high school with some of the skills employers are looking for in the workplace. They have experienced the interview process; they know how to put a good resume together, and researched a number of career options. They'll also have participated in a small group situation working with people they don't know. "It really prepares you for your future and stuff," said Brittne Wersal



Pal JMG Banner

from Glasgow High.

As an affiliate of the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), JMG has been recognized as one of the state's most cost effective, high performing programs that serves students and helps them develop career plans to achieve their goals. They are prepared to enter the labor market with work-ready 'soft skills' that today's employers require.



Plains High School JMG Banner

JMG

Author: Kathryn Barsotti

JMG Student Granite High School



High School, for me, has always been a busy time. I have participated in almost everything my school has to offer, including four years of sports, student council and other clubs. So as my graduation quickly approaches and I begin to make plans for my future, I have come to realize how

important the Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) program is to my life.

I am very privileged to have participated in the JMG program at Granite High School for the past two years. Our JMG program has had the amazing opportunity of helping out with two major community projects each year, the Operation Secret Santa, and the Community Easter Egg Hunt. I dived into these projects not knowing what to expect and came out learning more about my community and how I fit into it than I could ever have possibly imagined. I began to foster a love for my community unlike ever before; I wanted to help others. As a result of such, I volunteered almost every free moment in the school year of 2006-2007, and completed more than 100 hours of community service through not only these projects, but also through school clubs and youth groups.

This community involvement, along with some aptitude and ability assessments from the JMG curriculum and a supportive teacher who believed in each of us, helped me to identify my strengths of organization, communication and social interaction. This in turn, helped me to identify my future career path of becoming a teacher. What better way to help a community than by helping their children build futures for themselves?

JMG has helped me learn to love and serve my community. It has also helped me find a career in which I can continue to serve my community while using the strengths that, without JMG, I might never have known I possessed.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE: MONTANA'S WORKFORCE ON THE MOVE

Author: Casey Kyler-West

Today's workforce is changing. Gone are the days when an employer just had to put an ad in the paper to find a qualified employee. There are more than thirty-seven thousand employers in Montana and that number continues to grow; coupled with a low unemployment rate, businesses have to get creative when recruiting employees.

That and many other issues facing Montana's workforce were discussed at the Governor's Workforce Conference in Billings at the end of May. Nearly three hundred representatives from business, labor, education and government met in the Magic City to find solutions to the issues facing Montana's workforce today. The goal of the conference was to bring people from all the different sectors together to brainstorm new strategies to move Montana's workforce forward. "It's time for Montana to talk about not just wages, but jobs with benefits," said Governor Brian Schweitzer. Many of the conference attendees agree with the Governor. "Providing good benefits, a work-friendly environment and training opportunities are key elements to retaining employees," said Greg Kohn, Director of Compliance and Corporate Relations for Avitus Group.



Governor Brian Schweitzer and Senator Lane Larson

Photo Courtesy Dan Carter MSU-Billings

New industries are moving into the Treasure State and will provide more jobs, which means the workforce needs to be trained and ready for those jobs. Some of that training can be done through both four-year and two year colleges as well as pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs; other programs like WIRED and the Incumbent Worker Program also offer training and retraining opportunities for workers already in the labor market. Joel Rogers, Director of the new Center for State Innovation says, "The labor market needs to be as transparent as possible to both employers and employees." Dan Miles, Chair of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) says, "It's all inclusive. Education, labor, commerce, economic development are all part of working toward the quality of jobs and life in Montana."

New Partnerships in Apprenticeship

New partnerships in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship are bringing people from the education, labor, workforce and state government together and creating new opportunities for Montanans. The new partnership is also giving industry the opportunity to let higher education know what it is looking for in a skilled worker. Now instead of going to school out of state, Montanans are able to obtain two-year Associate's degrees in electrical, plumbing, carpentry and the power plant process at schools throughout the state. Up until four years ago, many went to North Dakota and other neighboring states for their degrees.

New Partnerships in Apprenticeship

During the New Partnerships in Apprenticeship workshop at the conference representatives from Higher Education, the state, the IBEW Labor Union and Northwestern Energy talked about the newly formed partnerships and how each sector is benefiting from them. Mike O'Neil from Northwestern Energy talked about the new lineman training program at Montana Tech in Butte. Previously, Montanans had to go to the Dakotas, Wyoming, Idaho or Washington for training. Northwestern Energy played a key role in developing the program, because they were hiring out of state lineman who would stay for a short period of time and then leave to go back to their home state. With the Lineman program here in Montana, the utility company can now recruit locally.

The Department of Commerce offered a training session in which participants received a comprehensive overview of the New Worker Training Grant program, the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund, the Community Development Block Grant program, the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development program, and the Indian Country Economic Development program. Each of these programs includes options that provide Montana employers with tools to train their new workforce.

Helping Employers Train Employees

The New Worker Training Program and the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund were created to address the fact that Montana was one of the



SWIB Chair Dan Miles, answers questions during Policy Makers breakfast

“WE ARE INVESTING IN MONTANA’S GREATEST RESOURCE, PEOPLE.” Governor Brian Schweitzer

last states in the nation to provide state-funded workforce training programs that were employer based. These programs benefit Montana’s economy because they help companies create educational opportunities and new jobs for Montana workers. Montanans are learning new skills in exciting new careers that did not exist here previously, while the state is receiving a better trained workforce and new tax revenues. The programs play a critical role in drawing new business to Montana, and retaining or expanding existing businesses.

Investments in Early Childhood

While training today’s workers is a key component to moving Montana’s workforce forward, a vital element is investing in early childhood. During the conference, a first-ever study to investigate the economic effects of the early care and education industry in Montana was commissioned by the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and the Early Childhood Services Bureau of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. The study, conducted by the Insight Center for Community Economic Development and reviewed by business, economic development and workforce leaders throughout Montana, was released at the Governor’s Workforce Conference.

The research reveals that the early care and education industry--made up of for-profit and non-profit businesses that focus on young children’s education and development, including child care centers, pre-schools, family child care homes and group homes, and Head Start programs--is an economic driver in Montana. The industry generates \$143.4 million every year in gross receipts and provides more than 6,600 jobs. More than 55,000 workers are currently parents with young children, and together these parents earn \$2.2 billion every year. The industry facilitates productive participation in the current labor force, enables parents to retool their skills for upcoming workforce demands, and prepares the future Montana workforce as a critical foundation of the overall education system. Based on these findings, the report concludes that leaders in business, workforce development, economic development, and policy will benefit from working in partnership to strengthen this industry that is a critical part of Montana’s current and future economic vitality. The report includes specific recommendations for business, the public sector, and the early care and education industry itself. More information about the report can be found at www.childcare.mt.gov.



*The Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship Panel
John Cech, Pat Wise, John Lei and Mike O’Neill
Photo Courtesy Dan Carter MSU-Billings*

Aging Workforce

Montana’s aging workforce is posing another challenge for the state. Add that to the new jobs coming into the state, and if the current trend continues, jobs could outnumber people by 2014. What does that mean for Montana businesses? In the past, workers were responsible for their training, but with this trend employers will need to take responsibility for training in order to recruit and retain employees.

There are untapped labor markets out there. Disabled workers, Native Americans, veterans and older workers are resources many employers aren’t tapping into for a variety of reasons. “The Tribes can help employers move into the future we so desire,” said Crow Vice Chairman Cedric Black Eagle. Cheryl Kulm, the Regional Manager for Experience Works said, “We came to the conference to develop new partnerships and relationships that will help serve the older worker to keep them an active part of the labor market.”



Tommy Thompson, Executive Director of WIN speaks to Linking Education and Industry workshop participants

As Joel Rogers wrapped up the conference in his closing remarks, he stressed the importance of not only keeping the labor market as transparent as possible, but also setting standards for economic development. “We need to capitalize on what we are doing and improve where we need to,” said Rogers. Many agreed with Rogers and will take what they learned at the conference and start applying it to their recruitment and training efforts. “We are investing in Montana’s greatest resource, people.” said Governor Schweitzer.

THE WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER

2007 marks Billings' 125th anniversary. The Western Heritage Center now has a fun, new, upbeat exhibition, "We're Making History: Billings' First 125 Years." The exhibit will be open through the Fall of 2008.

The all-new exhibit looks at Billings through its historic characters, a railroad depot, artifacts from national and regional collections, local radio and television broadcasts, a kids' play area, oversized maps, and an anniversary time capsule.

Visitors can revisit community events that shaped Billings, including the arrival of the first train, the impact of sugar beet farming, the joys of the Midland Empire Fair and Western Days Parades and other news-making events.

The unique story of Billings is shared in a fun way - each visitor will get a genuine sense of what it's been like to live in Billings and the Yellowstone Valley and be surprised by the stories, artifacts and activities in the exhibit.

For more information on The Western Heritage Museum log onto www.ywhc.org.



Montana BioScience Alliance Conference

The Art of Attracting Investors & Strategic Partners

July 15 & 16, 2008

The University of Montana Skaggs Building

Missoula, MT

Experience teaches us that successful businesses 1) **develop focused planning that can be leveraged for results**, and 2) **create alliances to achieve select objectives**.

Attendance at this conference promises an opportunity to grow business skills that will help you to:

- Think about what you need to meet the fast-paced growth demands of your target industry
- Effectively explain your business and tell your story to staff, partners, and investors
- Understand and distinguish between the various types of investors, tailor plans and presentations to meet their expectations, and make the cut for their next investment
- Define your preferred commercial profile (manufacturing, licensing, etc) and recruit strategic alliances that match your profile
- Hone in on a meaningful strategic alliance
- Balance courtship of an alliance with due diligence
- Examine the negotiation and legal structure of a partnering relationship
- Successfully manage the alliance life-cycle

Registration Fee: Free

For Details: www.mtip.mt.gov/workshops.asp

On the Right Track?



Building the Echo Canyon Railroad Tunnel for the Great Northern Railroad, May 5, 1907, Courtesy of the Western Heritage Center

1st Stop: Assistance for Business Clinics

City	Date	Location	Sponsor	Phone	Fee
Havre	June 25	Triangle Communications	Chamber	265-4383	\$30
Butte	Sept. 3	Butte War Bonnet Inn	Chamber	723-3177	\$40
Lewistown	Sept. 17	Yogo Inn	JSEC/Chamber	538-8701	\$35/30**
Great Falls	Sept. 18	CM Russell Museum	Chamber	761-4434	\$45/55*
Polson	Oct. 7	Lake County Health Dept	JSEC	883-7885	\$40/35**
Missoula	Oct 8	Quality Inn	Chamber	543-6623	\$35/45*

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

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

Final Destination: Occupational Safety and Health Training Institute

AUGUST

Effective Workplace Safety Management Systems	Aug. 13	Great Falls
Complying with OSHA Record Keeping Requirements	Aug. 14	Great Falls
Conducting Effective Workplace Accident Investigations	Aug. 14	Kalispell
OSHA's Most Often Cited Hazards- What To Look For And How To Correct	Aug. 20	Baker
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety Inspections	Aug. 21	Baker

SEPTEMBER

Effective Workplace Safety Management Systems	Sept. 17	Billings
Conducting Effective Workplace Safety Inspections	Sept. 18	Billings
OSHA's Most Often Cited Hazards- What To Look For And How To Correct	Sept. 24	Billings
Complying with OSHA Record Keeping Requirements	Sept. 25	Billings

OCTOBER

OSHA Fall Protection Requirements in Construction	Oct. 16	Great Falls
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Check out our extended menu of events on
<https://app.mt.gov/cal/html/event?eventCollectionCode=doli>



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Department of Labor and Industry

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