

# MACO Districts 1, 2 and 3 Meeting

Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Sheridan County

Plentywood, MT

District 1 Chairman Richard Dunbar called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Sheridan County Civic Center in Plentywood.

Sheridan County Commissioner Bill Nyby opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to Sheridan County.

Chairman Dunbar welcomed and introduced Stacy Graham with Congressman Rehberg's office, Pam Crisafulli with Senator Burns' office and Becky Berger with Department of Administration 911 Division.

## **Agenda Item #1: Roll Call**

District 3 Chairwoman Joan Stahl took roll call. A quorum was present with 16 of the 17 counties represented. A sign-in sheet is attached and made a part of these minutes.

## **Agenda Item #2: Approval of the Minutes**

Rosebud County Commissioner Dan Watson moved to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2005 Districts 1, 2 & 3 meeting held in Rosebud County at Forsyth, seconded by Valley County Commissioner Dave Reinhardt and the motion passed.

Chairman Dunbar introduced Becky Berger with the State 911. Ms. Berger gave a brief report on the 911 system statewide and the progress of the PSAP's becoming enhanced 911 with Phase I and Phase II capabilities in regards to cellular phone usage. She also talked briefly about the 911 surcharge and HB775 in the 2005 legislative session.

## **Agenda Item #3: Resolutions**

MACO Associate Director Sheryl Wood introduced and reviewed the 3 resolutions that came from the District 6 & 7 meeting in Billings. Chairman Dunbar asked for resolutions from the floor. The only possible resolution introduced was from Phillips County dealing with delinquent property taxes.

## **Agenda Item #4: DPHHS—Public Health Modernization Project**

Kathleen Jensen with the Sheridan County Public Health Department was unable to make the morning portion of the meeting. She met with counties interested in this project following lunch.

## **Agenda Item #5: Ballot Initiatives and Commissioner Involvement**

Jack Holstrom explained ethics and rules of involvement with ballot measures pertaining to commissioners and other elected officials. He stated that it is our duty to inform constituents about ballot measures, but to remain neutral when explaining the language and impacts of these ballot measures. **DON'T TELL THE ELECTORS HOW TO VOTE ON BALLOT MEASURES.** Jack also talked about the topic "Use of Public Time" when talking about ballot measures. An Attorney General's opinion has stated the "Commissioners do not lose the right to express their personal opinion of initiatives and ballot measures".

## **Agenda Item #6: Nominations for MACO 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Chairman Dunbar called for nominations for 2<sup>nd</sup> VP from the floor. There were no nominations at this time, but they can be brought forward at a later date or during the annual convention if any person is interested.

## **Agenda Item #7: MACO Budget**

Executive Director Harold Blattie reviewed the proposed FY2007 revenue and expenditure budget for MACO and the Insurance Trusts with the attendees. He noted that the expenditure budget is slightly higher than the FY'06 budget due to the upcoming legislative year and increased costs for staff travel due to higher rates for lodging and increased gas prices. The estimated revenues also showed a slight increase from the previous year. Harold mentioned that the Tax, Budget & Finance Committee budgeted for a 3.4% cost of living allowance for the employees.

Also noted was the resignation of Administrative Assistant Oline Barta. Presently, MACO is advertising for this position.

Mr. Blattie discussed the transition of bringing the insurance claims processing under the MACO umbrella. He noted that the transition has been going smoothly and the claims department staff is anxiously awaiting the completion of the new building. Past President Bill Kennedy mentioned he would like to have this in-house claims report each year to assure the membership that there has been a cost savings by bringing the claims processing in-house or to alert them to any problems that are occurring.

#### **Agenda Item #8: MACO President/Officer Reports and Comments**

Past President Bill Kennedy stated that he was hear to listen to any issues and needs of member counties in the absence of President Kaercher who was attending meetings on behalf of MACO today.

The meeting recessed for lunch at noon.

Following lunch, each MACO District held their own meeting to discuss any issues that they felt needed to be brought forth to the whole body.

#### **Agenda Item #9: District Reports**

**District 1:** Chairman Dunbar reported that there is a right-of-way road issue in Roosevelt County that may require legislation to resolve.

**District 2:** Chairman Rehbein reported that their membership was quite concerned with the floodplain program and mapping, which is linked to FEMA's Disaster Mitigation Funding and becoming a requirement to be eligible for federal funding. Also, many lending agencies are now requesting floodplain mapping when there are real estate property transactions. This could pose a problem for eastern Montana counties in the future if population expansion moves eastward from the western part of the State.

District 2 mentioned they may bring forth a couple of resolutions in regards to Mercury Rules and the Right to Farm.

Chairman Rehbein asked the member counties of District 1 and District 3 if they would be interested in a workshop dealing with public lands and federal payments—PILT, Taylor Grazing, etc. If there was enough interest, they may be able to have a workshop during the Oil, Coal and Gas Counties meeting in Lewistown in June.

**District 3:** Chairman Stahl announced that District 3 is looking at bringing forth 5 resolutions later this fall. No details were mentioned at this time.

#### **Agenda Item #10: DNRC Fire Restrictions**

DNRC representative Pat Cross gave a brief presentation on their fire restriction plan and procedures. He handed out a desk reference for the counties explaining the restrictions with the hopes that these guides are easier to read and understand than earlier versions. He stated that the DNRC is making a concerted effort to educate the public concerning fire restrictions and make it easier for the public to understand why these

restrictions are put in place when needed. The DNRC is looking at introducing 5 bills in the next legislature pertaining to fire restrictions and open burning.

### **Agenda Item #11: Resolutions—Voting**

The membership decided to table voting on any resolutions until the fall meeting.

### **Agenda Item #12: Legislative Interim Committee Reports**

Executive Director Harold Blattie and Associate Director Sheryl Wood presented an overview of the legislative issues that may be presented to the 2007 legislature and the work of the Interim Committees. They noted that currently there are 100 legislative bill draft requests, which is quite high for this time of year prior to a legislative session. The membership discussed the following possible legislative issues of great concern to counties:

- Permissive Health Insurance Levy
- MT Gas Tax Dollars Distribution
- Federal Transportation Funding
- Public Access at County Bridges
- Mail Ballot Elections

In the discussion of the gas tax dollars distribution, Past President and Highway Commission Chairman Bill Kennedy cautioned the commissioners about drastic action due to the fact that these gas tax dollars are used to match federal transportation funding and leverage additional dollars. He stated that if you reduce the state matching dollars, the federal funding is reduced accordingly.

There were many more issues that needed to be addressed but in the absence of time they will have to be watched carefully by MACO and the counties during the legislative process.

### **Agenda Item #13: Other Issues**

Roosevelt County Commissioner mentioned the scheduled mercury rules hearings in Great Falls on May 31<sup>st</sup> and in Billings on June 1<sup>st</sup> pertaining to the plant being proposed in McCone County. He noted that we need attendance at these hearings to persuade DEQ to not adopt more stringent rules than the EPA already has in place. Eastern Montana needs this kind of economic development to survive.

McCone County Commissioner Connie Eissinger gave a report on the Western Interstate Region. Ms. Eissinger thanked all the counties for supporting her as the WIR president and asked every county to continue supporting NACO & WIR to keep the much needed PILT funding in Congress.

Yellowstone County Commissioner Bill Kennedy gave a brief report on mental health issues especially the cost of transportation. This will be an issue in the next legislative session and he urged ideas and support from the counties during the session.

Associate Director Sheryl Wood presented the “Paint the State Project” being sponsored by the Montana Meth Organization. This contest is being funded through donations by PP&L and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Montana. The prize awards for each county are \$3,000—1<sup>st</sup>, \$2,000—2<sup>nd</sup>, \$1,000—3<sup>rd</sup> with the statewide winner receiving a grand prize of \$10,000. Ms. Wood asked for names of the contact person in each county that will spearhead this project to get the word out concerning meth and its terrible impacts on the lives of all Montanans.

With no further business before the Districts, Chairman Dunbar adjourned the meeting at 2:30 P.M.

Following the District's meeting, the MDT representatives met with the counties in regards to the Secondary Roads program. Gary Larsen discussed the STIP, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, document. Wayne Noem discussed the Secondary Roads Project and Off-System Bridge priorities. District 4 Administrator Ray Mengel was also in attendance to answer questions from the counties.

## **MACO Districts 1, 2 and 3 Meeting**

**May 16, 2006**

**Plentywood, MT**

### **Sign-In Sheet**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Joan Stahl	Rosebud County
Mark Rehbein	Richland County
Henry Johnson	Richland County
Jim Courtney	Carter County
Gerald Kohler	Sheridan County
Troy Blunt	Phillips County
Richard Dunbar	Phillips County
Bill Loehding	Carter County
Bill Nyby	Sheridan County
Bob Nikolaisen	Sheridan County
Betty Aye	Powder River County
Nancy Espy	Powder River County
Lesley Robinson	Phillips County
Connie Eissinger	McCone County
Daniel Watson	Rosebud County
Gary Fjelstad	Rosebud County
Donald	Daniels County
Jim Shanks	Roosevelt County
Phil Hill	Garfield County
Glenn Hutchinson	Wibaux County
Steve Rosencranz	Carter County
David Reinhardt	Valley County
Gary McDonald	Roosevelt County
Jim Skillestad	Dawson County
Bill LaBree	Dawson County
Adam Gartner	Dawson County
Pat Eggebrecht	McCone County
Leif Bakken	Wibaux County
Vickie Delger	Roosevelt County
Julie Jordan	Garfield County
Jack Nesbit	Custer County
Milo Huber	Custer County
Todd Devlin	Prairie County
Bill Leach	Prairie County
Anne-Marie Davis	Prairie County
Bill Kennedy	Yellowstone County