

MACO DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

DATE: MAY 4, 2005

**WHERE: Lewis & Clark County Commission Chambers
Helena, Montana**

The Meeting Began at 10:00am

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Ed Tinsley, Lewis & Clark County, welcomed the attendees who included:

Gordon Morris, MACo Executive Director
Harold Blattie, MACo Assistant Director
Bill Kennedy, MACo President, Yellowstone County,
Doug Kaercher, MACo Vice President, Hill County
Frank Nelson, Madison County
David Schulz, Madison County
Larry Zanto, Broadwater County
Elaine Mann, Broadwater County
Gail Jones, Powell County
Dwight O'Hare, Powell County
Gene Vuckovich, Anaconda-Deer Lodge County
Chuck Notbohm, Jefferson County
Tom Lythgoe, Jefferson County
Ken Weber, Jefferson County
Garth Haugland, Beaverhead County
Cliff Nelson, Granite County
Carl Holttun, Granite County
Linda Holttun, Granite County
Susie Browning, Granite County
Ray Barniocat, MACo Risk Management
Ken Weber, Jefferson County
Anita Varone, Lewis & Clark County
Mike Murray, Lewis & Clark County
Ed Tinsley, Lewis & Clark County
Paulette DeHart, Clerk of Court, Lewis & Clark County
Bernie Lucas, Meagher Count
Dave Schwindin, DOLI
Larry Lahren, Park County
Dick Murphy, Park County
Jim Durgan, Park County
Joe Skinner, Gallatin County
Betsy Allen, Representing Senator Conrad Burns Office

Bill Kennedy: Thank you to all that helped with the legislative session. The Annual MACo meeting will be in Billings, Montana on Sunday, September 25, 2005. It will include golf, board meetings and evening dinner. Hosting a BBQ at his house to thank everyone since he's the outgoing president.

Nominations were opened for District Chair for Districts 8, 9, and 12. The elections will not be until the September meeting. There will be another District Caucus before the elections.

Nominations for Second Vice President:

Note* Jean Curtiss, Missoula County was previously nominated by Districts 10 and 11

No nominations were made, but will remain open until September

Nominations for Financial Officer:

No nominations were made, but will remain open until September

Nominations for District Chairperson for Districts 8, 9, and 12:

- Nominations for District 8: Anita Varone nominated **Tom Lythgoe**. It was seconded by Ken Weber
- Nominations for District 9: **Bernie Lucas** was re-nominated. It was seconded.
- Nominations for District 12: **Dave Schultz** was re-nominated. It was seconded.

Nominations for Vice-Chair for District 9: Jim Durgan, Park County, was nominated and it was seconded. He was immediately voted as current Vice-Chair.

Nominations for Vice-Chair for District 12: Garth Haugland, Beaverhead County, was nominated and seconded. Garth Haugland was immediately voted as current Vice-Chair (taking over for Commissioner Ed Beaujolais who passed away).

Harold Blattie passed out copies of the Proposed Budget for MACo for Fiscal year 2006. It will be sent to the Board of Directors for approval at a June 8, 2005 meeting. Input will be accepted until June 8, 2005. It was discussed.

11:30: MJTP Speaker

12:00: Lunch was served

1:00: Historic Trolley Ride around Helena

2:00: MDOT Speakers: Wayne Noem, Secondary Roads Engineer, Montana Department of Transportation and Gary Larson, past Secondary Roads Engineer.

Wayne Noem: He presented a PowerPoint Presentation. He explained the status of some current projects of some attending commissioners. and the 2005 priority list. \$100,000 of the \$200,000 of MDOT discretionary money will be used for a snow fence for the area East of Livingston (Park County). MDOT is using state funds to help advance projects since time is an issue. Fuel, concrete and steel costs are affecting the current projects. MDOT received all the counties priority lists for 2005 except Deer Lodge and Silverbow. He will wait for them until July, if they don't respond they'll allow funding to go to other counties. The Mill Creek Project by Anaconda is taking up a lot of funding at the moment so they got it down to 10 miles of road instead of the entire road, which would use up the budget for other counties.

MDOT Q&A:

Q.) A gentleman asked when the repairs went from the state level to the county level for the Mill Creek Project. He asked why the county has to maintain the road if they never accepted it from the state on record?

- A.) Gary Larsen, past secondary road engineer: Gary had a letter that went sent to the county by the state. He said the county opted to take that project off the secondary road system. The state received a letter from the county in 1976. It is on file. Gary said the commissioners at that time made a big mistake by doing that. A copy will be sent to them from MDOT.

Gary Larson explained criteria for choosing how money gets dispersed to counties for road repair:

1. Safety
2. Geometrics: Number of sub-standard, horizontal & vertical curves, anything that relates to safety, could be trouble.
3. Travel
4. Maintenance

Back in circa days, years ago, the county took over gravel secondary roads and the state took over most paved secondary roads (240+ miles of road).

Q) How do they remain secondary roads if they are gravel?

A) Because they are still a major collector.

Q) If there are counters across the roads, whom can we call to ask the results?

A) Dan Bison (Head of Traffic)

Gary Larson, past Secondary Road Engineer, spoke about the "Public Process": S.T.I.P.: Surface Transportation Improvement Program was put together to involve the public, which has the next 3 years of projects and all phases of those projects. Every year they generate the "STIP" to make sure they get public involvement and feedback. The document is put on the Internet, newsletter, 500 copies sent out through state to libraries, local papers. Projects that are between phases may not be listed, but the projects are still being worked on. A copy is sent to each county, comments are to be sent in writing and another document will be produced (this August will be the next). Last year no comments were received. He stressed that the counties should be responding. This document is very important.

Q) If the STIP does not include those between phases, does it mean that when those projects do get in later, will they be pushed back?

A) We don't put them in because there are too many projects in the program. This helps cut cost. We put things in that are in "active" construction phase so the document won't be so large. The purpose of the STIP is to get public involvement, which is required by the Federal Government. It's updated monthly. It runs on a Federal Fiscal Year.

Gary will put together a new book this fall for Oct 1, 2005-Sept. 30, 2007 and it will show the plan of how MDOT will spend their money. A project didn't get bumped if you don't see it in the book. It's just in between a phase. You can get online to see the STIP.

3:00: DNRC Speakers Gary Williams and Julie Shea from Gallatin National Forest.

Julie Shea: As of 2000, Fire Restrictions needed work and better coordination across Federal, State and Counties. A group called MACo was formed. Representatives are in each county and a Federal Rep within the state. New restrictions were on a fact sheet handed out earlier by DNRC. Julie Shea is the South Central Fire Coordinator, which covers primarily Gallatin, Park and Sweet Grass County, also portions of Meagher, Carbon, Stillwater, Madison, (mainly Federal in the latter counties). May 1st is the first day of fire season and the last day is Sept. 30, 2005. "Public Safety" is the #1 reason they made fire restrictions. There are hardly any human caused fires anymore except the hunters in late fall. 95% of Montana fires are lightning caused. Stage 1 restrictions are campsite fire designations. Smoking restrictions in vehicle or 3' diameter areas. Stage 2 restrictions are the building, maintaining and attending campfires. We designate which campgrounds can remain open. The "Hoot Owl" means no activity from 1am to 1pm daily. Those 2 stages are what the coordinators work with. Beyond those 2 stages is called a "Closure". The area of high fire activity is closed, not the complete zone or area, which the public accepts better. Enforcement is done by the Forest Service on BLM land, by the State on State Land and private land and by the county on county land. The area coordinators within your counties should be receiving the area restriction plan any day now.

Gary Williams, Central Land Office Manager: Meagher, Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Madison, Beaverhead and Gallatin. The other counties need to talk to Tony Leon. In Bozeman, the unit manager position is currently vacant, in Helena it's D.J. Bocken and in Dillon, it's Dick Moore. They manage the school trust lands and activities on those, but also get involved with private landowners to aid in forest management. They are involved in the counties programs now. Recently the legislature provided a large budget for the program. Land banking program authorized them to sell some state lands that are hard to keep up or recreate in and use the money to buy better land and make it state land. They can't sell more than 100,000 acres total and can't sell beyond 2008. Nominations are taken from lessees only, not landowners. They prioritized Garfield, Custer and Choteau Counties. A concern is buying up a lot of state lands in one county. Scoping notices are sent out to all commissioners, lessees, and adjacent landowners before the sale and a public hearing is held. A bidding process and final sale process goes on and it goes before the land board twice during this process. The utilities are very interested in working with the counties. Real Estate Management EIS was put in place to try to provide guidelines so people don't buy and build all around the high value lands and ruin their value/beauty. State lands should not be set aside as open land only. We'll work very close with local planning offices to develop some of the land for high revenue development.

Harold Blattie: Former Teton County Commissioner, Murray Sexton, is now head of DNRC and is making an effort to establish good relationships with the county commissioners. A bill just passed and now under current law you cannot abandon a county road that provides access to public lands or water public waters unless the same access is provided otherwise. There's still a lack of consistency for the public and that's the purpose of these groups. He cited 7-33-2201, the authority of the county governing body to protect the range, farm and forest resources. The authority is not in the local fire department, fire chief. The authority lies with the commissioners on lands over which the county has jurisdiction.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm