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# Seilstad takes MACo leadership reins

By Carl Seilstad, Fergus County Commissioner and MACo President

*Carl Seilstad, former MACo First Vice President, ascended to the position of president at MACo's 100th Annual Conference, held Sept. 20-24, in Helena. The following is his acceptance speech.*

I'd like to start off with a bio. I've got three children, two boys and a girl. Cory, my oldest, is in Wyoming working at a refinery. Cody's a lineman who's stationed out of Denver. I never know where he's at, but he's about in every state sometimes. Cari, my daughter, manages the Verizon store here and she's moving to Great Falls soon. My lovely wife of 31 years, Cathy, is working in Havre at an accounting firm.

When you elected me, I think you kind of got a hick from the sticks. I've heard that before. I will not drive a car in a big city, so don't ask me to rent one. If the cab can't get me from point A to point B, I'm probably not going to go. I have trouble making airplane reservations, so I'm going to rely on the staff to help me out with that stuff. When we went to a restaurant in Washington, D.C., I ordered item number 37 off the menu and Lesley Robinson said, "That's the price, that's the price!" So now you know what you've got here.

Over the course of the last three weeks, people have asked me if I was excited to be taking over the new job. I apologize if you didn't get the dog-like reaction. You know when you throw a dog a bone, he comes back and wants you to throw it again? If you didn't get that, I apologize. So you're probably wondering, "What does excite this guy?"

Well, (grabbing a fishing rod), "Get that net, I know it's a hog! It's got to be a big walleye down there. Get the net, I know it is, I know it is!"

With that (blowing an elk call), "He's coming, he's coming, I know he is! He's

just around the corner!" Those are a couple of things that excite me. I do get excited every now and then.

That being said, I was excited a couple of years ago when you elected me to be your upcoming president. Since then, the excitement has kind of worn off; you're there for a couple of years and I guess you're eager to jump in there, take your turn and get going.

One thing I'd like to mention is every president that gets up here talks about the organization and the staff. I'm going to do the same thing, but I'm not going to lengthen it because you've heard it before. I want you to know I feel the same way. I think Harold said it best Monday night when he said, "This organization is your organization." I don't feel like this is my job, it's our job. I'm up here for you. We're going to be working for you, because you are the organization.

I would like to hear about ideas. If anybody's got an idea, I'd like to hear about it, whether it's good or bad. If it's a bad idea I bring up, I want to hear about it.

There is an idea that I had and it's that every county donate \$500 and we will have the MACo President's Walleye Cup. I hear some clapping going on, but I bet I'm not going to get too much support on it.

I do want to hear about your ideas and I will be bringing one that I heard, which wasn't mine, to the board meeting and I'm going to present it to your district chairs. I'm going to be relying a lot on the district chairs because I feel that's a good way to get information back to you.

I'll be relying heavily on the district chairs, our past presidents, and our upcoming boards.



*Carl Seilstad, Fergus County Commissioner and MACo President*

*Please see "Seilstad..." on page 12*



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# MACo News



## 2009-2010 MACo Executive Committee

*From left to right:*

*Past President Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County; President Carl Seilstad, Fergus County; 1st Vice President John Ostlund, Yellowstone County; 2nd Vice President Connie Eissinger, McCone County, and Fiscal Officer Cyndi Johnson, Pondera County (not shown, Urban Counties Rep. Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County).*

## Seen at the Conference



*Photos by Mike Harbour*



# MACo News

MACo was fortunate to have several state officials attend the 100th Annual Conference in September, including Gov. Brian Schweitzer, who entertained and informed the

crowd at the Centennial Reception and Dinner. In his absence, U.S. Sen. Max Baucus was kind enough to send the following letter to MACo for inclusion here.

## Letter from U.S. Sen. Max Baucus

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the invitation to join you for the MACo Annual Conference. I send my thanks to Harold Blattie and the MACo staff and board for your hard work and dedication.

I join you in celebrating the 100th anniversary of MACo. Here's to another century of working together for our great state.

I have no doubt that 2009 have been an challenging year for Montana counties. The long-reaching effects of the recession and our broken health care system are well known in the Big Sky State. As I write to you today, we have much to be hopeful for as we continue to work toward a bright future ahead.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I helped write and negotiate the JOBS Bill legislation earlier this year. We are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in long-term projects like rebuilding Montana's highways, water systems, schools, energy facilities and health care facilities.

I've also been working day in and day out on health care reform so we can lower costs, improve quality, and

make sure every Montanan has access to quality, affordable health care.

Together, we will keep Montana a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

All the best,  
Max

***Don't forget! Columbus Day***

### More conferences just around the corner

MACo has more opportunities for education and fellowship coming soon. First up is the Elected Officials Training, Nov. 30-Dec. 3, here in the MACo conference room. That will be followed by the Risk Management Loss Control Conference, Jan. 20-22, at the Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula. Finally, don't miss the MACo Midwinter Conference, Feb. 22-25, in Great Falls.

For more information about our conferences, call MACo at (406) 444-4360, visit the MACo site at <http://maco.cog.mt.us> or watch for upcoming announcements in *MACo News*.



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# MACo News

## Checking preferred providers list can keep charges down

By Owen Voigt, MACo Health Care Trust Administrator

Ever gone to the local pub and wished you would have checked with the spouse first? My wife is fine with a quick stop at the local pub to see the guys. She is even OK with a few minutes of chatting about the big one that got away while imbibing in liquid beverages known to be present at those types of establishments.

What does not work is taking up residence at the local pub until I need a cab to get home without first calling her. If I commit marital suicide by ignoring the rules of common courtesy, she has a subject-specific chat with me. The chat is one sided; my role is to listen and nod. I make promises to her and God that when sober makes me wonder what body parts had fallen off at the time.

I liken this to the use of preferred providers. The Health Care Trust does not require you to pre-certify or pre-register when you have a major medical event. Many people do not have time to plan their surgical procedures or if they do, they don't think of asking or finding out if the physician or facility is a preferred provider.

The Health Care Trust, through Allegiance Benefit Plan Management, provides a significant list of preferred providers. What is happening in the health care industry right now is there are doctors and facilities that come and go. If a provider is not a preferred provider, they can charge whatever they want and they frequently do.

There is a physician now with an office in Billings who sees patients there, then performs surgery on them in Wyoming. While in Wyoming, he and the hospital do not participate in our PPO networks. He charges significant amounts for his services. The Health Care Trust pays based on usual and customary charges for non-PPO providers; when his charges are more than usual and customary, a nasty thing happens. The member who has care from this man ends up with a substantial bill called balance billing, which is the amount between the charges and the allowed amounts. Unfortunately, you end up paying that amount.

Balance billing is much like staying at the bar without calling your spouse. While it may not be required, not doing so can be very costly. So, too, is not knowing if your doc or hospital is a preferred provider.

It was great to see many of you at the MACo Annual Conference last month. Thanks to all who attended the HCT annual membership meeting.

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# MACo News

## New resolutions focus on CMR grazing, taxes, MERLIN

The following resolutions were introduced during the 2009 Annual Conference. The MACo Resolutions Committee met to review the resolutions and made its recommendations to the Board, Committees and Membership. The full text of each resolution is available on the Info page of the MACo Web site; click on Info tab in the left-hand column.

### Resolution 2009-01

Grazing on the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge (CMR)

It is the intent of the Montana Association of Counties to support continued, consistent annual grazing on the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge (CMR).

Sponsor: Phillips County, Valley County, McCone County, Garfield County, Fergus County and Petroleum County

Recommendation: Do Pass

Priority: High

### Resolution 2009-2

Opposition to Legislation Imposing New Taxes or Costs Through Federal Climate Change Revenues Collections

It is the intent of the Montana Association of Counties to oppose federal legislation imposing new taxes on state or local governments, employers or households from climate revenues collections.

Sponsor: MACo Public Lands Committee

Recommendation: Do Pass

Priority: High

### Resolution 2009-03

Montana Enhanced Registration & Licensing Information Network (MERLIN)

It is the intent of the Montana Association of Counties to support the County Treasurers in their efforts to resolve implementation problems, and to request that counties be reimbursed for added costs being incurred that are associated with the problematic implementation of MERLIN.

Sponsor: Montana Urban Counties

Recommendation: Do Pass

Priority: High

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### ***Avoiding skin cancer at work***

According to a new study by the Mayo Clinic, in a report published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, basal and squamous cell cancers, the two most common forms of skin cancer (versus melanoma type) have risen by 29 percent for women under the age of 40 since 1970. Skin cancer rate up for women under age 40-study, Reuters as reported in Yahoo! News (August 9, 2005).

For young men, the incidence of basal cell cancer did not increase, but the rate for squamous cell cancer did rise.

According to the report, there were 800,000 new cases of basal cell and 200,000 cases of squamous cell cancers diagnosed in 2000.

So what can you do at work and at home to avoid skin cancer?

- Do not tan. Lying in the sun or in a tanning booth can increase your chance of skin cancer.
- If you work outside, you must cover your head, arms and legs.

- Wear sunscreen on all parts of your body exposed to the sun. The higher the SPF value the better. If you sweat while working, wear sunscreen that will not smear or reapply sunscreen as necessary.
- Wear a hat and sunglasses outside. A wide brim hat that shadows your face and your neck is optimal.
- Look over your body routinely. Basal cell cancer usually appears as a pink bump that never goes away. It can also bleed. Squamous cell cancer also has pink tones, but is scaly and appears as a rough, raised bump, according to the report.
- See your dermatologist regularly. If you find abnormalities on your skin, go to your doctor.

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# NACo News



## National County Government Week expands to a month

More counties will have opportunity to participate in National County Government Week activities in 2010, when the observance expands from a single week in April to the entire month — henceforth to be known as National County Government Month.

NACo's Executive Committee decided to expand National County Government Week to a month to give counties more options to schedule activities that raise public awareness and understanding of county government.

National County Government Month (NCGM), which will continue to have topical themes (the 2009 theme was Greening Our Future), will be held in April in 2010 and future years.

“By designating each April as National County Government Month, counties will have greater flexibility to plan and schedule their own county government activities,” said NACo President Valerie Brown. “Counties aren't expected to hold public awareness activities throughout the month, but can schedule activities any time during the month.”

Previously, a county government week with fixed dates fell at an inconvenient time for some counties, according to feedback the received by the Executive Committee.

First celebrated in 1991, National County Government Week (now National County Government Month) was created by NACo to raise public awareness and understand-


ing about the roles and responsibilities of nation's 3,068 counties. The community outreach events help residents and businesses better understand how counties serve the community. More than 1,000 counties annually participate by holding a variety of programs and events.

A booklet of ideas and suggestions on how celebrate NCGM will be available early next year. It also will provide helpful information about media outreach strategies and NACo's online NCGM Media Resources Kit.

For more information about NCGM, visit the Public Awareness Campaigns section of the NACo Web site (under the County Resource Center tab) or contact Tom Goodman at (202) 942-4222 or [tgoodman@naco.org](mailto:tgoodman@naco.org).

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# NACo News



## Baucus health care reform bill heads for markup

By Paul Beddoe, NACo associate legislative director

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus' (D-Mont.) America's Healthy Future Act is the product of months of closed-door negotiations among Baucus, two other committee Democrats and three Republicans — the so-called Gang of Six — that aims to lower costs and provide quality, affordable health care coverage.

None of the gang's Republicans, Sens. Charles Grassley (Iowa), Michael Enzi (Wyo.) and Olympia Snowe (Maine), has signaled support for the measure in its current form. The bill was scheduled for full-committee markup on Sept. 22, when its provisions will be debated and amended.

"The cost of America's broken health care system has stretched families, businesses and the economy too far for too long. For too many, quality, affordable health care is simply out of reach," Baucus said in a statement.

"The Finance Committee has carefully worked through the details of health care reform to ensure this package works for patients, for health care providers and for our economy," Baucus added. "We worked to build a balanced, common-sense package that ensures quality, affordable coverage and doesn't add a dime to the deficit. Now we can finally pass legislation that will rein in health care costs and deliver quality, affordable care to the American people."

The draft legislation is intended to improve the health care delivery system by improving efficiency, quality and coordination. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the bill's price tag — \$774 billion over 10 years — would be offset, and the bill would not add to the federal deficit.

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# Around Our Counties

## Personnel

GARFIELD COUNTY hired Mega Weeding as its health nurse in August. Weeding, a May graduate of the Miles Community College nursing program, will be responsible for giving vaccinations, visiting schools, writing grants, and other health-related tasks. McCone County Health Nurse Sue Brown, who has been training Weeding, also served as the interim Garfield County nurse until the position was filled.

BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY named its community enrichment program coordinator to also head its animal services department in September. Ed Randall, who worked for the health department for more than 12 years, received the extra duties when the previous animal services director unexpectedly resigned. Even with the possible hiring of a compliance officer to assist Randall, County Executive Paul Babb believes there will be no additional impact on the proposed budget.

MADISON COUNTY has a new deputy attorney: Chris McConnell. A former law clerk for state District Judge Loren Tucker, McConnell started his new duties Aug. 31. The Sheri-

dan resident is a California native and a graduate of the University of Montana School of Law.

## Law Enforcement

RAVALLI COUNTY formally charged Jeff Fowler, the ex-deputy fired for allegedly stealing ammunition earlier this year, with a count of felony theft in September. Fowler, a former patrol sergeant and firearms instructor, is accused of stealing more than 40,000 rounds of ammunition; just less than 30,000 rounds have been recovered. If convicted, Fowler faces a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and a \$50,000 fine.

POWDER RIVER COUNTY Sheriff John Blain was justified in the May shooting death of a Wilsall man who tried to first shoot him, according to the ruling of an inquest jury in September. John Thomas Andrew was in Broadus-area rancher's shed when Blain, responding to the rancher's call, approached. When Andrew aimed a revolver at Blain, the sheriff fired, hitting the man several times in the chest. A forensic pathologist and associate state medical examiner ruled the death an "officer-assisted suicide."

## Miscellany

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY has begun restoration work on its 1898 courthouse, thanks in parts to the county's annual CTEP funds. The county has obtained almost \$800,000 of the project's \$1.1 million cost; more than \$450,000 came from CTEP. The first issue to be tackled is the structure's decaying sandstone walls.

FLATHEAD COUNTY commissioners in September approved a subdivision along the Stillwater River northwest of Whitefish. The 66-acre, 15-lot Riverpark of Whitefish received the green light after the county planning recommended its denial, by a 5-3 vote, in August. Although the subdivision was called "out of character" for its location, Riverpark of Whitefish sits near a 66,000-square-foot manufacturing facility.

MISSOULA COUNTY opened new office space in the Seeley Lake Fire District's new fire station, which opened north of Seeley Lake in September. The district bought a former Plum Creek facility, which includes the multi-purpose building and 2.3 acres, for \$425,000. The county loaned \$100,000 for the purchase and agreed

to rent office space there for \$16,000 a year.

CASCADE COUNTY's City-County Health Department vaccinated more than 100 people in the first hour of the department's first drive-through flu shot clinic held in mid-September. By the end of the day, almost 700 had used the service, which is an emergency preparedness practice for the department in case of wide-spread illness. Among the clinic's customers was Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

DAWSON COUNTY commissioners approved in early September a mill request for the local economic development council. Valued at \$15,143, the mill will provide the Dawson County Economic Development Council with the ability to continue a variety of projects, including the promotion of a tourism business improvement district.

CUSTER COUNTY in early September named eight residents to its new planning board. Funded by a \$15,000 state grant, the board will address issues outside the donut area that surrounds Miles City. The board, created in August, will serve the county in an independent advisory role.

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# Announcements & Reminders

## Seilstad takes MACo leadership reins

*Continued from front page*

When you hear a good story, you've got to share it and I know everybody hasn't heard this one. We were in Nashville this summer for the NACo Annual Conference and I was sharing a taxi ride Vic Miller and Kathy Bessette. We get in this big Suburban, and Vic gets in the front and Kathy and I are in the back.

You know Vic, he's got a heart of gold, so he starts visiting with the driver and making really good friends. This guy is actually a kind of rancher, and Vic invites him out to Montana to visit us. He says, "Any time you get out there, you can call me or Carl. He's just across the river. We ferry back and forth all the time."

This guy's eyes got really big and he said, "Sir, I'm not really into that." So, of course, I had to come up from the back and say, "A ferry boat. We take a ferry boat between each other's houses."

We got a quite a chuckle out of that.

With that said, I look forward to working with you and being your next president. We will get through this year and we're going to have fun doing it. Thank you!

## Mark Your Calendars

### October

- 1 State Admin./Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee Meeting\*
- 1-2 Education & Local Govt. Interim Committee Meeting\*
- 7-9 State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee Meeting, Rocky Boy Reservation and Fort Belknap
- 12 State/county/MACo offices closed (Columbus Day)
- 29-30 State Admin./Veterans' Affairs Int. Committee Meeting\*
- 18-20 AGRIP Governance & Leadership Conf., Seattle, Wash.

### November

- 9-10 Energy & Telecomm. Interim Committee Meeting\*
- 16 Children, Families, Health & Human Services Interim Committee Meeting\*
- 17 Economic Affairs Interim Committee Meeting\*
- 17-19 MACo Joint Insurance Pools Trustee Retreat\*

### Upcoming Events (2010)

- Jan. 20-22 MACo Risk Management Loss Control Conf., Missoula
- Feb. 22-25 MACo Midwinter Conf./JPIA/JPA Trustee/Member Meeting, Great Falls
- May 19-21 NACo WIR Conference, Billings
- Sept. 26-30 MACo 101st Annual Conference, Billings

\*All events are held in Helena unless noted.

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5. Arnold Gettel, Teton County
6. Leslie Burroughs, Golden Valley Co.
7. Maureen Davey, Stillwater County
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#### MACo NEWS

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