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## BALANCING THE STATE BUDGET

Legislative Fiscal Division begins reviewing options to address the projected long-term budget imbalance

Many of the options being considered will affect local government and school district budgets and services and could likely result in an increase in property taxes.

The Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) met on June 14-15 to hear the latest General Fund Balance Update and to begin reviewing options for closing the projected budget gap.

LFC asked staff to review options prepare a "reference book" with options for reducing expenditures, increasing revenues, or both, for consideration by the 2011 Legislature. **It needs to be understood that these are options and not recommendations.** Many of the options are incomplete and will require additional review by LFD staff.

In the "Reference Book" prepared by Legislative Finance Division staff, the following areas are identified (in no particular order) as options for revenue sources that were presented for consideration that will impact local governments and/or schools:

### Statewide issues:

- Elimination of Trust Funds
- Transfer state special revenue fund balances to the state general fund
- Eliminate Election Day Paid Holiday
- Reduce General Fund Retirement Statutory appropriations (used to funds some local gov't retirement costs).
- Reduce General Fund Local Government Statutory Appropriations (County Attorney Salaries, Local TIF's)
- Reduce other general fund statutory appropriations (Includes DES, Junk Vehicle, Search & Rescue)
- Reduce or eliminate the HB 124 growth factors for local government entitlement shares (either temporarily or permanently)
- Implement four day/ten hour work weeks for all but 24/7 functions

- Revert outstanding FY 2011 HB 645 appropriations to the state general fund.

### Health & Human Services:

- Reduce or Eliminate General Fund Support for Food & Consumer Safety (Health inspections)
- Continue the elimination of support for community aging services
- Use Older Montanan's Trust Fund Balance
- Reduce funding for the Mental Health Services Program

### Corrections:

- Early release of inmates
- Increase diversions from prison
- Reduce sentences & decrease length of incarceration (or eliminate incarceration)

### Judicial:

- Close courts one day per week

### Dept. of Commerce:

- Eliminate 2.9% increase in coal severance tax distribution to the Coal Board

### Education:

- Eliminate HB 124 Block Grants to K-12 Funds other than General Fund.
- Require High Schools to Consolidate under Conditions
- Eliminate or reduce the inflation increase in HB 124 block grants for school districts
- Eliminate County Extension offices and replace them with regional centers

The most recent General Fund Revenue Update and the Finance "Reference Book" with all of the projections and summary explanations can be found on the Legislative website: [www.leg.mt.gov](http://www.leg.mt.gov). The next meeting of the LFC is scheduled for October 7 & 8 in Helena.



# MACo News

## *District 10 & 11 Meeting News* *By Jean Curtiss, Missoula County*

County Commissioners and Economic Development Organizations in the 7 Western Counties have met several times since October to establish better communication and find ways to collaborate on economic development regionally. These meetings have been well attended and have proven to be a good way to involve commissioners in economic development discussions in a more relaxed atmosphere. We have shared what is going on in our counties and identified common issues to focus on as a region. Our next meeting is July 12 & 13 - Two -1/2 day sessions- in Polson. We will be discussing resolutions for MACO and MEDA.

## *GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY NEWS* *By Leslie Burroughs*

Golden Valley County has a new fire hall taking shape next to the courthouse in Ryegate. With the help of Coal Board monies, HB 645 funds, contributions from the City of Ryegate, Ryegate Volunteer Fire Dept. and private citizens from around the area, construction has begun.

The site has been prepared, and the foundation and floor of the fire hall have been poured. Construction of the steel building will begin soon. The completion date is set for Sept. 15, 2010. The City of Ryegate will have a new office in the building.

Golden Valley Clerk and Recorder, Mary Lu Berry, pulled together local resources and obtained a stone sign for the front of the courthouse. Berry arranged for a donation of the stone from the E.S. Stone Company to help improve the area around the courthouse in time for the Ryegate All School Reunion.

The flag pole was moved to the same area, with flowers and gravel put in place also. Local volunteers spent several days helping prepare the site and placing the stone. Golden Valley County would like to thank Clerk Berry for her vision and effort to make this project happen.



## *Districts 8, 9, and 12 Meeting News* *By Andy Hunthausen, Lewis and Clark County*

Though Sheryl and Harold lead us in stimulating and exciting discussions centered on potential 2011 legislation, reappraisal and the MACo budget, we still managed to enjoy a bit of interaction honed in on a few other topics.

During lunch there was a spirited discussion related to the MISTI Line (Mountain Interstate Transmission Inter-tie). The proposed transmission line travels through Broadwater, Jefferson, Butte-Silver Bow, Anaconda-Deer Lodge and Beaverhead Counties. Concerns focused primarily on the EIS, routes (private or public), impacts, property rights as well as the potential benefits of the construction of the line. All of the impacted counties were represented at our meeting and agreed to continue a discussion regarding concerns, routes, benefits and impacts at a future date.

As was the case for most of the other District Meetings we had an informative visit from the friendly folks at MDT (Wayne Noem, Gary Larson, Jeff Ebert) regarding STIP and Secondary Hwys. It looks as though the next couple of years will be very busy all across the state.

We also had a presentation from Susan Bomstad representing the MT Chapter-Assoc. of Public-Safety Communications Officials. **Susan's presentation focused on her association's intention to ask the legislature to change her member's retirement from 30 to 20 years by changing from PERS to SRS.** She described some of the pros and cons as well as took questions from the commissioners present.

Three potential resolutions were discussed and will be acted upon in August. The first was presented by Park Co and will attempt to address Bison issues in their county. The second was brought forward by Lewis and Clark Co and will propose that counties be allowed to pass a Social Host ordinance. Beaverhead Co also presented a potential resolution regarding GASB 45 and the impacts it could have on counties. All three were discussed

Nominations included: Greg Chilcott for MACo 2nd VP, and Gail Vennes, Chair Dist. 8; Randy Taylor Chair, Dist 9; and Tom Rice, Chair, Dist 12.

In all a fabulous time was had by all and Districts 8, 9 and 12 are in tip-top shape.



# MACo News

## State's big pension suggests changes CHARLES S. JOHNSON Gazette State Bureau, Lee Newspapers Reprinted with permission

HELENA — The largest state and local government employees' pension fund has proposed some changes to turn around and stabilize its finances after its investment assets lost a fourth of their value during the market downturn in 2008 and 2009.

As of June 30, 2009, the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) reported an unfunded liability, or potential debt, of \$790.6 million. Its financial experts also found that the PERS pension fund could not amortize its potential debt. Unfunded liabilities must be amortized by contributions in 30 years or less. Updated figures as of mid-2010 will be available later this year.

The PERS proposals would take effect only if passed into law by the 2011 Legislature.

Its ideas would affect only new employees hired after the law passes and takes effect. Current employees and retirees would not be affected.

Here are the proposals presented last week to the Legislature's interim State Administration and Veterans' Affairs committee:

- Boosting contributions paid into the fund by both employers and new employees by 1 percent each annually, if necessary, for up to six years. State and local governments now contribute 7.17 percent of employees' salaries to PERS, while employees contribute 6.9 percent of their salary. So in the sixth year under the proposal, the contribution rates could be as high as 13.17 percent for employers and 12.9 percent for employees. Each 1 percent increase in the employers' contribution share would cost state and local governments \$10 million a year. So if the increases were approved by the 2011 Legislature for the next two years, it would cost government agencies \$10 million for the first year for the first

year and \$20 million for the second year (the 1 percent from the first year and the 1 percent for the second year).

- Increasing the time period used to sets employees' highest average compensation from the current three years to five years.
- Increasing the normal retirement age from age 60, with at least 5 years of membership service, to age 65, regardless of membership years.
- Phasing in a lower multiplier based on years of service, which is another key part of calculating what pensions will be.

PERS has about 29,000 active members who are state and local government, school district (except for teachers) and University System employees, and about 17,000 retirees drawing pensions, said Roxanne Minnehan, executive director of the Public Employee Retirement Administration. Of the active members, about 11,000 are state workers.

Minnehan said Tuesday that these proposed changes would make PERS actuarially sound in six years, its financial experts believe. She said these suggested changes are the ones the PERS board believed "would provide the most bang for the buck" and not dilute the retirement system too much.

With state government expected to face a general fund deficit of up to a \$400 million in the next two years, Minnehan was asked if the PERS board considered likely potential budget constraints when proposing higher government contributions.

...Story continued on Page 4

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# MACo News

## State's big pension suggests changes, (cont)

"It wasn't discussed, really," she said. "We do understand there are budget constraints."

That's why the proposal calls for the PERS board to make an annual evaluation whether it needs to raise employers' and employees' contribution by an additional 1 percent, Minnehan said. She said the PERS board believes these proposed changes "are good for long-term fund sustainability."

The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that public sector unions in some other states are now willing to accept cuts in retirement benefits for current employees and retirees, not just future employees.

Minnehan said the PERS board discussed that possibility but didn't follow through on it. She said it's a contractual right in Montana that public employee pension benefits can't be cut and contributions paid by current employees cannot be raised.

"Although we'd love to say if the employees are for it, we'd be for it too, but it would just take one to sue," she said.

## Myra Shults thanked for dedicated service to counties

JPIA contract attorney Myra Shults was recognized for her many years of dedicated service on land use issues at a joint meeting of the MACo Board of Directors and the Trustees of the Health Care Trust, the Joint Powers Authority Workers Compensation Insurance Pool and the Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA) Property and Casualty Insurance Trust.

Myra was presented with a custom MACo logo clock, and a gift certificate to help with her post-retirement job of fly fishing. Myra noted "I'm keeping my fishing gear in my car from now on".



Best wishes Myra!!

Myra has been instrumental to Montana counties in land use legislation, training and advice, and has also written and edited many reference books that are used by commissioners, planners, state agencies, etc in interpret-



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# MACo News

## BEAVERHEAD COUNTY NEWS

By Tom Rice & Patti Odasz

With the wonderful moisture, which leads to more road maintenance, a bridge was lost near Bannack and roads were closed in the Big Hole and the Centennial Valley.

Local Projects consist of reroofing of the Courthouse and the replacement of the boiler in the Courthouse.

County is completing the following projects:

- Replacement of bridges over irrigation canals using TSEP monies.
- Replacement of Governor Creek Bridge in the Big Hole.
- Replacement of 3rd Avenue Bridge in Lima.
- Construction of the Laknar Lane Pedestrian Path using CTEP monies.
- The Blacktail Deer Creek Flood Mitigation Project in Dillon

The reconstruction runways and lighting project at the Dillon Airport Beaverhead County also had 200 contestants at the Senior Pro Rodeo and there were 550 riders in the RATPOD. The RATPOD was a fund raiser for Camp Make A Dream.

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## COMMISSIONERS HELP CHART I.M. DIRECTION, FUNDING

By Ian Marquand, Interoperability Montana  
Public Affairs and Outreach

Scope, location, cost and control: trying to find a long-term, sustainable business plan for the Interoperability Montana project means addressing several difficult issues. Montana county commissioners are among those in the discussions.

Several commissioners attended IM's "Strategic Planning" sessions in April at MACo's Helena headquarters. Input gathered at those sessions led to the creation of a draft Business Plan for the IM project.

IM then invited commissioners to its June 8 Project Directors (IMPD) meeting, when the agenda included action on key elements of the Business Plan. Commissioners from Richland, Dawson, Beaverhead, Gallatin, Musselshell and Flathead were among those who attended. They endorsed the following elements of the plan, which the IMPD approved:

\* IM will seek to provide mobile (vehicle-mounted) radio coverage along 95% of U.S. and state highways in Montana. For counties with vehicle-mounted computers (Mobile Data Terminals) data coverage will be 90%.

\* IM will seek to provide 100% "on street" coverage in major population centers.

\* To achieve those coverage goals, IM will limit the number of local tower sites to 120, with the understanding that the total number could change slightly, based on the actual performance of individual sites.

\* Work will continue on "approved" tower sites and projects currently funded, including many where construction already has begun or is imminent.

\* All proposed tower sites not currently on the "approved" list will have to go through a formal evaluation process before being approved.

\* IM will evaluate relationships with private sector entities for such things as leasing of tower space or use of fiber optic networks. IM may enter private sector partnerships if they help reduce costs and contribute to public safety.

Despite lengthy discussions surrounding potential long-term, ongoing revenue sources for the IM system, no decisions were made at the June meeting. IM leaders agreed to include county commissioners as those discussions continue. The IMPD will next meet on Tuesday, July 13.

IM will be conducting a series of webinars and meetings in July and August to gather comments regarding proposed funding models for ongoing revenue sources. For dates and more information, please contact Kevin Bruski at (406) 441-5417 or kbruski@interopmtproject.org



# MACo News

## PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS SAVE LIVES

By Pam Walling, MACoHCT Marketing & Member Services Rep.

No matter which side of the Health Care debate you are on, we all should be able to agree that one of the best ways to control health care costs is to prevent illness in the first place. Increasing the usage of preventive services has become a critical public health priority.

A simple way to keep healthy is to have the recommended immunizations and preventive screenings each year. Immunizations provide protection against some diseases. Preventive screenings are designed to detect diseases in the early and treatable stages. Many of us finished our health insurance plan year on June 30<sup>th</sup> without using our preventive benefits. If you fall into this category, let this be your challenge to do better this year.

The federal government has a Health Finder Service that provides prevention information for you. The use of healthfinder.gov is a quick way to learn the basic and important prevention steps you should take for someone your age and gender. However, these are guidelines and your most important prevention step is to have an annual visit with your doctor. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force has a list of questions to ask your doctor if you need some assistance.

According to the CDC, Americans need some assistance as only 1 in 4 of the 55 million Americans between 50 and 64 receive the recommended preventive services that they should have each year.

The Montana Cancer Control Program states the following statistics in their April, 2010 Quarterly Surveillance Report:

- 19% of all cases of cancer in MT are prostate
- 15% of all cases of cancer in MT are lung/bronchus
- 14% of all cases of cancer in MT are breast
- 10% of all cases of cancer in MT are colorectal

This accounts for 58% of the cases of cancer in Montana and the other kinds of cancer each account for less than 5%. Although lung cancer may not be easily diagnosed, the others may be detected through preventive screenings. Most of these screenings are paid or partially paid for by your health insurance. The MT Cancer Control Program may be able to help those that are uninsured or underinsured to receive screenings for breast and colorectal cancer.

Many of us finished our health insurance plan year on June 30<sup>th</sup> without using our preventive benefits. If you fall into this category, let this be your challenge to do better this year.

In Montana, approximately 800 women this year will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Almost 90% of these women will live at least another 10 years if the cancer has not spread. The MT Cancer Control Program expects about 475 people to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer. If you are 50 years or older, and have not been screened, make it a priority to schedule your screening. Your health care provider will help you determine the best testing method for you.

The MACo Health Care Trust immunization and preventive exam claim totals are not yet complete for the members that ended their plan year on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Although, preliminary totals indicate that Custer County will receive top honors for providing the most immunizations through their County Health Department. It appears that approximately 40% of the participants in the HCT had at least one preventive screening. Preventive screenings save on health care costs, and most importantly, save lives.



## WHAT 'S NEW ON THE MACo WEBSITE?

[www.maco.cog.mt.us](http://www.maco.cog.mt.us)

[June 2010 PILT Payments](#)

[FY 2011 Entitlement Shares](#)

[2010 Prior Year Payments for PILT Formula](#)

[FY 2011 County Fuel Tax Allocation](#)

[2010 Federal Mineral Royalty Payments](#)

[2010 MACo Annual Conference Registration](#)



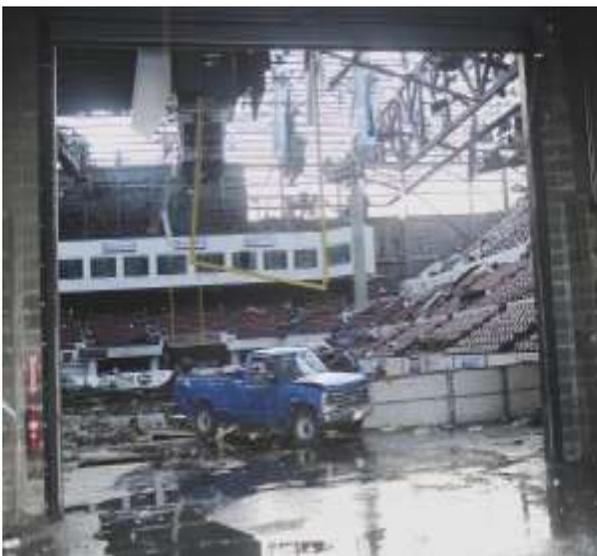
## Employees Working 10-Hour Days, Four Days Per Week May Bargain for Additional Holiday Pay

By Mike Sehestedt, MACo General Counsel and Jack Holstrom, JPIA Personnel Services Administrator

In an Opinion issued on July 1, Attorney General Steve Bullock held that “A county may bargain collectively over a provision that public employees working 10-hour days, four days per week, are to be paid ten hour pay for holidays”. The full text of this Opinion (53 Op. Att’y. Gen. No. 4) is available on the Attorney General’s website .

This opinion extends a 1989 opinion by Attorney General Racicot which held that in the absence of a Collective Bargaining Contract, county employees who worked 4/10s were entitled to eight hours holiday pay for each legal holiday. (43 Op. Att’y Gen. No. 14) This opinion is still controlling for county employees not in a collective bargaining unit, which means that for employees not covered by a union contract holiday pay is limited to 8 hours even if the employee is working 4/10s.

It is important to stress that this Opinion does not require a county to agree to these conditions when they are engaged in collective bargaining, nor the payment of additional holiday pay; it merely makes both the 10 hour day shifts and 10 hours holiday pay mandatory subjects of bargaining with union employees working 4/10s.



*Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark after a tornado destroyed the 12, 000-seat facility on Sunday, June 20, 2010.*

## YELLOWSTONE COUNTY WORKING TO TURN TRAGEDY INTO OPPORTUNITY

By Sheryl Wood, MACo Associate Director

On Sunday, June 20, 2010, the unthinkable happened in Yellowstone County. A tornado touched down and destroyed the Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark. “A total disaster,” said Yellowstone County Commissioner John Ostlund after he toured the arena Sunday. “Absolutely nothing is left of it.” Not only did the tornado rip off the roof, but rain pouring into the cavernous building damaged the interior.

Monday morning, County Commissioners declared a state of emergency in Yellowstone County. Mayor Tom Hanel also signed an emergency declaration on behalf of the City of Billings. The declaration was sent to Governor Brian Schweitzer, who toured the site Monday afternoon, and signed a state emergency declaration. With the emergency declarations, the county can get to work while bypassing the usual requirements of bids, advance notice and other rules that normally slow the wheels of government. The state declaration also provided soldiers and their equipment from the Montana National Guard to provide security at the facility. The site was also toured by Senators Baucus and Tester, and Congressman Rehberg.

Commissioners and staff began strategizing how to host the upcoming events that had been scheduled. As the other buildings were not significantly damaged, the Yellowstone Valley Kennel Club Dog Show and the Antique Road Show went on as planned, as will the MontanaFair . Unfortunately, the Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood concerts were cancelled.

Following the tragedy, the community came forward with an outflow of support, including over 400 volunteers answering the call to help clean up debris.

Metra — Montana’s Entertainment Trade and Recreation Arena — opened in December 1975 after years of controversy, including a lawsuit that went all the way to the state Supreme Court. The 12,000-seat arena was built on the county fairgrounds at a cost of \$7.2 million, or about \$28.4 million in today’s dollars.

Commissioners are now considering options for rebuilding the facility, seeing this as an opportunity to make improvements, and have set up a website for suggestions.

Yellowstone County commissioners and MetraPark staff members are requesting that the public submit ideas through a new page on MetraPark’s website. The ideas and suggestions will be collected over the coming weeks and will be reviewed by county officials as they decide how to rebuild the arena.

The idea page is located at [www.metrapark.com/site/suggestion](http://www.metrapark.com/site/suggestion)



# MACo News



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# MACo News

## NACo Prescription Discount Card Program

In May 2010, 1925 Montana Residents saved \$47,364, an average of \$18.87 per prescription utilizing the NACo Prescription Drug Discount Program on 4,622 prescriptions. Since inception in October 2005 over 100,000 Montana residents have saved over \$2,000,000.

The NACo Prescription Discount Card Program was designed for your uninsured and underinsured county residents. Through a partnership with [Caremark](#), this simple discount card can save an average of 23% off the full retail cost of prescription medication. Here are the key factors that make it a great program;

- It is easy to participate. There are no enrollment fees, no forms to fill out, no age or income requirements, and no medical condition restrictions. The entire family is covered with just one card and virtually all commonly prescribed medicine is covered;
- There are no costs. There is no cost to the county, county taxpayers, or consumers to participate. Caremark negotiates the discounts directly with participating pharmacies. Neither NACo nor the participating counties receive any revenue from the program;
- Everyone is eligible. The discount cards are provided free to residents living in participating NACo member counties across the country. A national network of more than 59,000 retail pharmacies honor the card;
- Consumers always receive the lowest retail price. On occasion, pharmacies will price a particular medication lower than the discount rate available with the NACo card. If that occurs, consumers will receive the lower price. Either way, consumers will always receive the best price available.

If your county is not participating in this free NACo Program, it is easy to sign up so your residents can begin saving. For more information contact Harold Blattie or Sheryl Wood at MACo.

## Commissioner Beltrone Resigns

Cascade County Commissioner Peggy Beltrone has announced her resignation to join renewable energy developer Exergy Development; where she will head a spin-off division that is tasked with fostering the design, development and deployment of technologies, beginning with a "vertical-axis" wind turbine called Zilo.

Beltrone said it is her hope that the turbines will be manufactured in Great Falls, where the company plans to open an office. Beltrone will be based in Great Falls.

Beltrone said she plans to stay in her public post for another three months, until early September — 28 months shy of completing her third term, which expires Dec. 31, 2012.

Beltrone developed the county's first wind marketing program in 2001, and a big part of her agenda ever since then has been promoting wind development in Cascade County and Montana. Just this year, Beltrone has made wind business trips to Dallas and Ireland and two visits to Washington, D.C. Last year, she visited eight West Coast cities to speak with state regulators, legislators and utility executives about Montana's energy and transmission capabilities. Beltrone also lobbied for the 214-mile Montana Alberta Tie Line, a transmission line planned between Great Falls and Lethbridge.

Beltrone said her new post would allow her "more focus and greater reach." "I loved working for the people of Cascade County," she added.

Beltrone, 53, first was elected commissioner as a Democrat in 1994. She won her third six-year term in 2006.

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# MACo News

## NACo WIR CONFERENCE & COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

### WIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE

By: Mike Murray and Lesley Robinson

The conference prior to the start sponsors education tours: this year Ag and Energy both were a successes with much praise and comments from the attendees. Yellowstone County planned excellent ones.

The WIR conference opened with Minutes, finance reports the standard bill affair. Randy Carpenter of the Sonoran Institute presented his views on growth in the Western Counties and problems we are all to familiar with. We need to live with the "New Normal Economy" speculative building has dropped off in the west. Some counties are experiencing a rural residential growth spurt--there seems to be a market for this and it is expected to continue. Changes predicted are Democratic (seniors), consumer preference, increasing energy costs and environmental changes.. He stated planners must see that better rural subdivisions are designed. Less is more in rural areas with smaller lots that need less infrastructure.

Bob Harrington state forester--The state has 45 million acres of timber. This requires wildfire planning. There are two kinds of fire: prescribed and wild fire. The drivers for planning are Fire costs, firefighter safety and return of fire to the landscape, and condition of the forest next to the urban interface .

Rep. Overstar congressman from Minnesota has reintroduced the clean water bill HR5088.

PILT authorization runs out in 2012 WIR members from the 15 states are committed to renewing it.

Tod Devlin put on an hour presentation on PILT outside the formal meeting of WIR. A hard copy of his presentation is available at the MACO Office.

Mike Murray was elected president of WIR for the coming year.

### MACo Report on NACo WIR Conference on behalf of Montana Association of Reservation Counties

By Vic Miller

Wednesday, May 26, the afternoon was spent on the public lands sub-committee meeting. While the major resolutions will come before the sub-committee at the annual convention in July, the topics presented of major importance nationally, and at the state and local level dealt with PILT payments and public lands management.

Thursday, May 27, began with the general session featuring Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer with a speech focused on energy development in Montana. His usual wit and humor showed through as he took on a very serious issue of energy development and how the total "Montana energy portfolio" should look in the governor's estimation.

The second featured speaker was Robert Nelson from the University of Maryland. His expertise has been on public lands management in relation to several layers of management of these lands from federal, state, and local perspectives. His argument that he advanced made the suggestion of more local management based on local conditions and practices.

The first workshop of the day was on health care reform and how it relates to western counties. I thought this presentation was well thought out in that the presenters gave a balanced approach to the whole health care reform issue. Now that the legislation has passed, the presentations highlighted the implementation schedules and dispel the myths surrounding what is and is not in the bill. The audience was left with forming their own opinion rather than having an agenda thrown at you.

The afternoon workshop I attended was a forum on the development of a cohesive strategy for wild land fire management. While the majority of the forum focused on forest management and urban interface issues, the general discussion on proper zoning and building code enforcement for the good of the community was a good reminder for counties, regardless of size. The same application of zoning and building code requirements has an equal effect on counties that are primarily concerned with prairie fires more so than forest management.

Please see "WIR..." on page 13

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# MACo News

## MACo Staff Updates

### Warm Welcomes & Fond Farewells

MACo Health Care Trust Administrator, Owen Voigt has announced that he is leaving his position July 2, 2010 in order to pursue private business interests.

Owen was instrumental in the creation of the MACo HCT, working for nearly two years to gather data and information that was used in the decision making process when the MACo HCT was formed by the MACo Board of Directors in 2005 to provide a cost-effective alternative for health insurance benefits for counties and county-related boards and districts.

Since it's humble beginnings with eight member counties, the Trust has grown to 26 member counties and 35 Special Purpose Districts.

In accepting Owen's resignation, MACo Executive Director Harold Blattie stated that "Owen has been the face of the MACo HCT to hundreds of county employees. His broad knowledge of employee benefits has been a valuable asset and will be greatly missed."

Owen said that he would like to "thank everyone for the opportunity to work with county employees for the last five and a half years and for their confidence in MACo and the HCT."

There are no plans to immediately fill his position as the MACo HCT Trustees consider alternatives for the delivery of services that will best serve the Trust members.

Former MACo Publications Officer, Shantil Siaperas will be returning to MACo in August in the position of Legislative Coordinator.



While enjoying their California experience, Shantil and Tyler are eager to return home to Montana.

This position was made possible by re-structuring the duties of MACo Communications Officer and Administrative Assistant positions. Shantil will be primarily responsible for coordinating legislative activities, writing articles about legislative happenings and publishing our Legislative Alert, with an increased focus on information about the contents of bills and the impacts to our members.

During her time in California, Shantil has enhanced her graphic design and web development skills so will be **handling our website and tells us that she has "lots of neat ideas"**.

She asked us to tell everyone that *"I'm excited to be returning to the beautiful (clean-aired) big sky state, and I'm honored to be welcomed back to MACo."*



Sharon Wilson has joined the MACo family as Administrative Assistant. Sharon was born and raised in southern California and moved to Montana in 2009 to enjoy the beauty, recreation and wonderful people that Montana has to offer—and to escape the "rat race". **Sharon and her husband Steve have been married for 15 years and have four wonderful children.** Two are still in California attending college, and the other two are in Helena and love it. Sharon previously worked for a manufacturing company in Monrovia, CA for 16 years as the office manager in the purchasing and accounting departments. She and her family love to fish, hike, camp, dirt bike and enjoy gardening. Sharon replaces Talia Knudsen, who resigned in early June.



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## DIGITAL COPIER HARD DRIVES STORE IMAGES OF DOCUMENTS COPIED, SCANNED OR EMAILED

Digital copy machines are like any other computer, laptop and digital gadget used by a government: Their hard drives may contain identifiable, private information and should be held to the same security standards.

"Most offices today have a single device with multiple functions," said Doug Robinson, executive director of National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO). "Just the fact that they're on the network makes them a potential security risk -- it's a liability because they can be hacked, they do have an IP address and a network interface card."

As recently revealed in a CBS News report, improper disposal of such technologies can backfire on agencies, and leave security holes for hackers and identity thieves to exploit. The report revealed that not only do most copy machines built since 2002 contain hard drives that store an image of documents copied, scanned or e-mailed by the machine, but many used copiers also con-

tained Social Security numbers, internal police records and medical records.

Also, information isn't just stored on a copier's hard drive. Network settings, e-mail, server passwords and other data are oftentimes stored elsewhere in the machine's memory, Juntunen said, and need to be manually deleted.

After the CBS News report showed the hard drive of a copy machine -- owned by Affinity Health Plan -- contained 300 pages of health records, the New York-based insurance company notified more than 400,000 people that their personal or medical data may have been compromised.

The first step in protecting one's agency from breached information via digital copiers is to check if it even contains a hard drive, Shark said. If so, does the agency have a policy that describes the security procedures when discarding the equipment?

"You can't just scrub the hard drives, you have to put the firmware back on the machine -- that's the critical part," Juntunen said.

To illustrate the financial loss this critical step represents, he recalled a recent conversation with a leasing company, in which he learned a university was billed \$20,000 after returning some machines. The reason? The hard drives had been cleaned, but the firmware was gone. "Without the firmware, the machines won't work," he said. "It's a missing part of many [media] stories. When you clear the hard drives' information, you've also cleared off the firmware, or the machine's operating system."

That said, there are ways to scrub thoroughly and abide by federal standards. Most states have adopted the U.S. Department of Defense's triple-pass standard, Robinson said, in which the software is written over three times, making it virtually unhackable. "It's software that basically places binary zeros and ones across the

drive three times, rendering it impossible to get that information," he said. "The key there is the information was still on the hard drive, it's just been written over three times."

Another option is for agencies with highly sensitive material to physically destroy the hard drives, Robinson said. As well, many states have adopted degaussing requirements, which means using magnets to render the data undiscoverable.

But one method -- reformatting -- has proven itself to be the least successful method, he said. "People obviously know in a forensics world that you can recover a lot of data on a reformatted drive," he said.

Click [here](#) to view the CBS News report.

For the full article, visit:

Government Technology News  
June 10, 2010  
**"Are Digital Copy Machines Really a Security Concern?"**  
By Karen Wilkinson  
Staff Writer



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# MACo News

## McClure Reagan 1957—2010

Former Glacier County Clerk and Recorder McClure Reagan, 53, of Cut Bank, died of cardiac arrest at a Great Falls hospital. He was born May 10, 1957, in Shelby, MT.

He graduated from Cut Bank High School. He served as a page in the Montana Legislature and was an exchange student in England during the spring of 1978. McClure then went to college at the University of Montana in Missoula.

He went to work at the Glacier County Courthouse in the mid-1980s as a deputy clerk and recorder. He then was appointed as acting clerk and recorder when the clerk decided to run for a commissioner position. He filled this position until the term was up and a new clerk and recorder was elected.

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## \$1M grant surprises museum officials

By LORNA THACKERAY, Of The Gazette Staff

A chill gripped Big Horn County Historical Museum director Diana Scheidt when County Commissioner Chad Fenner told her to have the entire museum board at the commissioners' office in Hardin on June 7.

The commissioners — Fenner, chairman John Pretty On Top and John Doyle — had always supported the museum. The county had included \$60,000 a year in its budget for the complex spread on 35 acres on the east edge of town for as long as Fenner could remember. It had been a lot more in times past, until economic necessity forced a rollback.

The grave tone in Fenner's voice and the insistence that all 12 board members be present worried Scheidt. He wouldn't tell her what the meeting was about and she feared the worst — that the commissioners were planning to withdraw financial support altogether.

Friends tried to reassure her that if it was anything really bad, one of the commissioners would have just told her. But even as the members gathered in the courthouse, Scheidt's nerves were on edge.

In his soberest voice, Pretty On Top told them the bad news — they wouldn't be getting the \$100,000 they sought in an earlier request.

"The good news is, we're going to give you a million," he said. "I couldn't believe it, I just couldn't believe it," Scheidt said later that day. Her excitement barely contained, she had called nearly everyone she could think of, including The Gazette, with an interest in the museum. "It's just phenomenal," she bubbled.

Board members then called a meeting to immediately set the wheels in motion for a museum expansion they had been planning for a long time.

The \$1 million capped a four-year struggle to raise \$2.3 million for a project that will nearly triple the museum's space. Board member Glennine Schoen said a new building will be constructed to the west of the existing 3,300-square-foot structure. Some board members are already talking about

turning the existing building into a military museum, she said.

Fundraising began in April 2006. It went well at first, but the recession hit hard the next year and the board struggled to raise \$1.2 million.

"It's just been terribly hard to raise the rest," said board member Margaret Ping, who is one of the founders of the museum and donated the old truck farm where it stands. At 98, she still volunteers at the museum one day a week.

Another longtime board member, Everett Bullis, was elated that construction on the project can now begin.

"We need the work here in Big Horn County," he said. "This will be pretty good employment."

Scheidt said she wasn't sure how quickly construction could begin. She hopes the architect, Prairie Winds Architecture in Lewistown, will be able to put work out for bid by the end of July and that contractors can break ground and pour concrete in September.

Since its inception in 1978, the museum has relied heavily on donations and volunteers.

"They don't have much staff and they work like Trojans," Ping said.

That was what impressed the commissioners, Fenner said. Everyone worked hard and with absolute dedication.

"All I've heard is good things about the museum," he said.

The county gets about \$4 million as its share of federal mineral royalties paid to the state. In Big Horn County, most of those royalties come from major coal mines that operate on federal leases. The 2001 Legislature allocated 25 percent of those royalties back to the counties where the minerals were extracted. Each county's share was based on the amount royalties that originated there.

Fenner said the commissioners decided to use the money to build up infrastructure. They've spent millions upgrading roads and have

just completed work on a new senior citizen center. Next they will start remodeling the courthouse basement. They've also earmarked \$1.4 million to improve safety at the county's aging fairgrounds.

"The museum has always been in the back of our minds," Fenner said. "Its time was due. Times are such that they'll get good bids on it."

The vote to give \$1 million to the museum was unanimous, he said. Big Horn County Historical Museum, one of the finest of its kind in Montana, began as a truck farm owned by Ping's father, a Hardin businessman.

"My father loved gardening," she said. "Every hour he had he spent over there gardening."

An old two-story white house stood on the grounds, and her father let young couples just starting out live there rent-free while they saved money to buy their own homes, she said.

When a group of county residents decided it was time to put together a museum, Ping donated the house, barn and 22 acres.

When an adjacent 13 acres to the west became available, the board was able to buy that, too. That is where the new museum will be built.

The complex grew quickly until it now resembles an early pioneer community. More than 20 historical buildings have been moved to the grounds, including an early Hardin church, a schoolhouse, a general store, a gas station, the train depot from Lodge Grass and the studio and cabins owned by famed Western artist Will James. In the summer, colorful tepees representing the Crow and Northern Cheyenne decorate the grounds.

It has a building full of antique engines and farm equipment, all of it kept in working order by volunteers.

In his soberest voice, Pretty On Top told them the bad news — they wouldn't be getting the \$100,000 they sought in an earlier request. "The good news is, we're going to give you a million," he said.



# MACo News

## MACo Annual Conference

Registration is now open for MACo's 101st Annual Conference, September 26—30, 2010. The conference is being hosted by Yellowstone County and will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Billings.

Please visit the MACo website at [www.maco.cog.mt.us](http://www.maco.cog.mt.us) for more information and to register online.

### DRAFT AGENDA

Sunday, September 26	Tuesday, September 28 (cont)
9:00 am Golf	10:30 am MACo Committees
12:00 pm JPA Trustees	12:00 pm Luncheon
2:00 pm Resolutions Comm.	1:30 pm Workshops
3:00 pm Board of Directors	3:00 pm Workshops
5:30 pm <b>President's Reception</b> and Dinner	4:00 pm HCT Annual Meeting 6 Co. Fort Peck Lake Grp Forest Counties
Monday, September 27	Wednesday, September 29
7:00 am Prayer Breakfast	7:00 am HCT Trustees
8:30 am General Session	7:30 am Reservation Counties
12:00 pm Luncheon	8:30 am General Session
1:30 pm General Session	9:00 am Dept. of Labor
2:00 pm Presenters TBD	10:00 am Presenters TBD
4:30 pm Urban Counties Hard Rock Mining Co. Oil, Gas & Coal Co.	12:00 pm Vendor/Sponsor Appreciation Luncheon
Tuesday, September 28	1:30 pm General Session
7:00 am JPIA Trustees	5:30 pm Social & Annual Banquet
8:30 am MACo Committees	Thursday, September 30
	7:30 am Board of Directors

### MACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS: APPROVES DUES AND BUDGET, FORMS SUBCOMMITTEE

The MACo Board of Directors met on June 29 in Helena, where they approved the FY 2011 Membership dues schedule and budget. The Member dues schedule applied the COLA at -.4%. The FY 2011 MACo budget requested was -1.76% under the FY 2010 adopted budget, and did not include across the board staff salary increases for the next year.

In other business, the Board formed a **Leadership Development Committee to evaluate and propose MACo's** sponsorship of leadership training opportunities for Commissioners. The proposal will include how the training will be accountable to and benefit MACo, as well as incentivizing personal commitment. The Committee will meet via telephone and at conferences. Jean Curtiss, Missoula Co. was appointed by President Seilstad to serve as chair.



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# MACo News

## Charles Bernard 'Bernie' Lucas 1955-2010

Charles Bernard "Bernie" Lucas, 54, of White Sulphur Springs passed away June 23, 2010, at St. Peter's Hospital, Helena. Bernie was born Sept. 16, 1955, to Charles "Chuck" and Marion (Sibley) Lucas.

He was raised on the Lucas Ranch at Ringling. He attended school in Ringling and graduated from White Sulphur Springs High School. He graduated from MSU-Bozeman in 1979, moving back to the ranch to help his mom and dad. Bernie married Shirley Collins in February 1995. They have been married for over 15 years.

He was county commissioner for 15 years, served on the White Sulphur Springs school board for three terms, as secretary/treasurer of Meagher County Stock Growers and on Meagher County Farm Bureau. Bernie was active in many other organizations. He was always there to lend a helping hand. He enjoyed the symphony, driving a team of horses and especially spending time with his step-grandson.

He is survived by his parents, Charles and Marion Lucas, Ringling; wife, Shirley, Ringling; two sisters, Debbie (Mike) Marion, White Sulphur Springs, and Patti (Scott) Wilson, Cut Bank. He is also survived by his stepchildren

Tim (Laura) Collins, Ringling, and Katy Boutin and Wynn Meehan, Townsend; and stepgrandchildren, Will and Daisy Collins.

The family has requested donations to St. Peter's Cancer Foundation, 2475 Broadway, Helena, MT 59601; or Meagher County Senior Center, Box 682, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645.

### WIR—Continued from page 8

Friday, May 28, started with a general session featuring Terry Anderson and Bill Hopkin on effective grazing practices and pilot projects on public lands. Larry LaCounte from the Bureau of Indian Affairs spoke on the general issue of moving fee lands to reservation trust, particularly since 1934. For the Montana Association of Reservation Counties, I think it would be worth our while to have Larry as a presenter at our MACO Conference in September. The information and pending statutes were well laid out and coupled with upcoming NACO resolutions from the July Annual Convention and pending legislation both within the Senate and House, the presentation of the issues would be well worth consideration.

The workshop I attended was on energy development in Montana with an emphasis on the current wind and coal projects in Montana. Particularly for North Central Montana, the general interests and pitfalls of wind energy development were discussed in considerable detail.

Our ending luncheon featured Montana's Lewis and Clark County Commissioner Mike Murray being sworn in as the WIR President for the upcoming year. Congratulations and best of luck, Mike.

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# Around Our Counties

**Beaverhead** County Road Department employees worked overtime on Memorial Day Weekend to repair the North Valley Road. A stock water pond above the road broke loose and carved a course through the road surface.

**Butte-Silver Bow** is proposing a ban on texting while driving, as well as making it illegal to have pitbulls unleashed in residential areas.

**Carbon** County Commissioners voted to impose a curfew on music being performed at the Bull Pen Music Festival, after hearing comments from the Montana Highway Patrol and Carbon County Sheriff Tom Rieger who said he preferred closing the event down early out of concern for the neighboring homeowners.

**Dawson** County Commissioners have sent a letter to the Montana Department of Transportation requesting a flight from Glendive to Denver be added to the regular airport schedule. The flight would have a 15-20 minute layover in Gillette, WY.

**Flathead** County Commissioners deferred a decision to stoop maintaining some county roads. Instead, they offered to discuss with residents ways that the roads could be more easily maintained.

**Fergus** County's Sheriff's Office was awarded the 2009 Support award by the Montana Game Warden's Association for efforts in assisting Montana game wardens in the protection of fish and wildlife resources.

**Gallatin** County officials are retooling a portion of the subdivision regulations addressing floodplain standards in light of a state policy, where the state will no longer sign off on statements for waivers for developers seeking exemptions from floodplain review if the proposed subdivision was not in a flood hazard area.

**Jefferson** County Undersheriff Steve Marquis was honored as the Out-

standing Crime Victim Advocate of the Year by Montana Attorney General Steve Bullock.

**Judith Basin** County's Road supervisor Roger Riley was awarded the Rhodes Scholar award at the 2010 MACRS conference.

**Missoula** County Commissioners adopted a special zoning district in Northern Loloo under deadline, a looming lawsuit and a District Court order. The resolution was drafted with the intent of recognizing that litigation is pending and recognizing they could get a court order in the future advising them to go back and consider the protests.

**Stillwater** County has issued a claim to Bear-tooth Electric Cooperative demanding reimbursement of \$57,055.58 for suppression costs incurred by the county in the Sept 3-6, 2009 Eagle Mountain Fire.

**Park** County Commissioners rented a Dura-patcher a month ago, and is now considering buying the machine. The patcher makes permanent repairs to potholes, and saves labor and does a much better job than the temporary fixes of crews with

shovels. The machine blows the holes clean, then fixes them with a mix of hot oil and gravel.

**Phillips** County has named Saco resident Gary Taylor as temporary Justice of the Peace. An elected Justice of the Peace will take over the position the first week in January, 2011.

**Powell** County residents will be transitioning to a new medical center, scheduled to be running in June of 2011. The 40,000 square foot hospital will also have a long-term care unit.

**Roosevelt** County Sheriff's Department has joined a federal fugitive task force, making it the first county on an Indian reservation to become a partner in the organization.

**Teton** County Commissioners took the next step in finalizing the sale of the Teton County road shop by hiring a firm to test soil on the property for any fuel or chemical contamination.

**Yellowstone** County Detention Sergeant Steve Metzger was named the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association's Officer of the year, the first time in nearly a decade that a correctional officer has won the award.



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# Around Our Counties

## Events

- July  
 6-7 *State-Tribal Relations Committee, Browning*  
 12-13 *MACo Districts 10 & 11, Lake Co. Courthouse*  
 16-20 *NACo Annual Conference, Reno, NV*  
 22-23 *Environmental Quality Council*  
 26-27 *Water Policy Committee*  
 28-29 *Energy & Telecommunications Committee*  
 August  
 2 *Residential, Commercial, Ag Reappraisal Subcommittees*  
 2-3 *Revenue & Transportation*  
 4 *Montana Digital Government Summit*  
 12 *MACo Districts 4 & 5, Shelby (tentative)*  
 16-17 *Education & Local Government*  
 17 *MACo Districts 8, 9 & 12, Powell Co. Community Ctr*  
 23-24 *Children, Families, Health & Human Services Committee*  
 25 *MACo Districts 6 & 7, Billings, Metrapark*  
 September  
 1-2 *Law & Justice Committee*  
 9 *MACo Resolutions Committee, MACo Office*  
 26-30 *MACo 101st Annual Conference, Billings*

## July 2010

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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 Carol Knight, Legal Secretary/  
 Alyce Bailey, Eligibility Specialist  
 Pam Walling, Marketing Rep.  
 Laurie Goltry, Admin./Enrollment Asst.  
 Tom Beneventi, Custodian/Maint.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Platinum Member  
 Arthur Gallagher Risk  
 Mgmt. Services  
 MT Dept. of  
 Commerce

Silver Members  
 AT&T  
 Alltel  
 MDU Resources  
 Ameresco, Inc.

Bronze Members  
 Dorsey & Whitney  
 Nittany Grant Works  
 Johnson Controls  
 MT Correctional  
 Enterprises  
 WGM Group, Inc.  
 Morrison Maierle Inc.

Copper Member  
 Gaelectric, LLC

**AFFILIATE MEMBER**  
 MT County Road  
 Supervisors (MACRS)

MT Weed Control  
 Association

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