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Census undercount costs Montanans

By Talia Knudsen, MACo Communications Officer

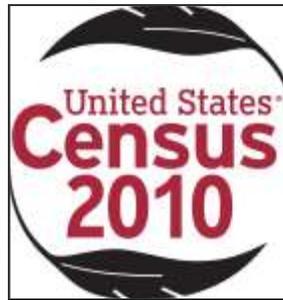
Montana lost an estimated \$43.2 million in federal funding due to Census 2000 undercount, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. As a state, Montana ranked 20th in statewide response and was ranked the 8th most undercounted state in the nation, Alaska being the most undercounted. An estimated 14,390 Montanans were not counted in the 2000 Census.

Hard-to-count populations are typically minorities, low-income households and children.

Mary Craigle, bureau chief at the Census and Economic Information Center at the Montana Department of Commerce had some tips for county commissioners hoping to improve their county's response to Census 2010.

"Talk to family and friends, particularly young people. Tell them it is safe, confidential and important. This is how we figure out where to build schools and bridges," Craigle said. It also determines

our state's congressional representation. She emphasized the importance of local help with publicizing the event in local newspapers, brochures, etc. Counties can also contact Craigle with requests for local visits, town hall meetings, promotional material and other ideas to improve their constituents' participation.



10 Questions, 10 Minutes

The April 1, 2010 Census form will be the shortest form in U.S. history, with only 10 questions. These questions will ask

for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship and whether you own or rent your home. Questions asking about diversity, education, housing, jobs, etc. are now covered by the American Community Survey, which is conducted every year.

For more information visit www.ceic.mt.gov, census.gov or call Mary Craigle at 841-2738.

First Lady invites Mont. commissioner to D.C.

By Talia Knudsen, MACo Communications Officer

First Lady Michelle Obama unveiled her Childhood Obesity Initiative Feb. 9th in Washington, D.C. While most Montanans could only watch the event on television or read about it, Peggy Beltrone, Cascade County Commissioner, was there by invitation.

Beltrone, the only county official there, was alongside other elected officials, members of the Cabinet and media, sports, entertainment, medical and business leaders.

"There was a general buzz in the room that the effort that everyone had been working on finally had a focus - a champion, and that was really needed," said Beltrone. "It was a historical event, and I was very honored to be there."

Beltrone has been active on the Cascade

County public health board for the past 15 years, and in 2005 she founded the program "Get Fit Great Falls," which wrote a childhood obesity prevention plan for Cascade County last year. Part of the "Get Fit Great Falls" program entails a day in the woods for all fifth graders to learn about nature and snowshoeing, with the help of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. She was proud to note other communities are considering similar programs.

Beltrone also chaired the NACo Rural Obesity Initiative which produced a report



Peggy Beltrone

Please see "First Lady..." on page 12



MACo News

Early return to work programs are win-win

By Emelia McEwen, MACo Senior Loss Control Specialist

Comprehensive early return to work programs have proven to be highly effective in containing and reducing the costs of workers' compensation. At MACo JPA, we are recommending that our county members implement an early return to work program.

MACo Risk Management provides early return to work guidelines, posted on the website (maco.cog.mt.us). An early return to work program is designed to facilitate the earliest possible return of injured workers to the workplace, to perform meaningful, productive work within their physical capabilities. It may be referred to as modified duty, light duty, limited duty, alternate duty, restricted duty or transition work. These terms are used synonymously and refer to duty that is intended to be time-limited and tempo-

rary. The number of days the employee is in this transition work will be determined by the county. The primary goal is a faster recovery for the injured worker. However, if there comes a point when the county can no longer accommodate the employee because of hardship then the county needs to contact Jack Holstrom, JPIA Personnel Administrator, before taking any further steps.

An early return to work program is an essential factor in successfully dealing with the workers' compensation system.

The employer wins by minimizing workers' compensation costs while retaining the use of valuable trained employees. Also, the employee wins by returning to work and avoiding the negative effects of a long-term absence. It's a win-win for everyone.

...if the county can no longer accommodate the employee because of hardship then the county needs to contact Jack Holstrom, JPIA Personnel Administrator...

The employer benefits in the following areas:

- Reduces the likelihood of malingering or fraudulent claims
- Saves indemnity expenses in temporary disability payment
- Receives some production for wages paid (when a worker is out drawing loss time benefits there is no production derived)
- Facilitates employer/employee contact, giving the employer more control and direction, leading to a more positive resolution to the claim

The employee benefits in the following areas:

- Increases their self esteem, minimizing feelings of guilt for being injured
- Promotes better morale among all workers
- Contributes to fast recovery by keeping the injured worker mentally and physically conditioned to the regular work schedule
- Maintains social contact with fellow employees, which enhances recovery and encourages a faster return to the job
- Reduces the negative financial impact many injured workers experience due to lost time.

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MACo News

Counties “toot their horns,” share ideas, plans

In last month's MACo News, Carl Seilstad, MACo president, requested ideas from counties for promoting county government to present to NACo. The following are Montana counties' submissions.

The junior high students from the Lewistown Junior High School come to the Fergus County courthouse and do a mock trial. Local attorneys help with this process. The county attorney's office donates their time to act as the prosecutor in this mock trial and the public defender's office donate time to act as the defense attorney for this mock trial. The class goes through the jury selection process and then comes to the courtroom to sit as jurors and go through the testimony of the trial. The students then go back to the classroom to deliberate. The students look forward to this experience. **Fergus County, Phyllis D. Smith, Clerk of District Court**

A good single period program that commissioners would be comfortable presenting to high school government students would help the students.

In many ways, government is government. A presentation on the processes of local government would give the students a more relevant perspective and promote greater understanding of county government. **Golden Valley, David Paugh, County Commissioner**

Here in Musselshell County Clerk of Court's office, we host the third grade classes each year in the courtroom, as well as any other class that requests a visit. The classes have an hour long session with the Judge, Clerk of Court, Court Reporter, county attorney and youth probation officer. They participate in courtroom procedures and hear about specific duties of our offices. The Clerk of Court has also hosted students participating in the occu-

pational work experience class as a junior or senior in high school. That entails working with, training and evaluating the student to work in my office for one class period per day for a semester. Our office has also assisted the heritage class at the high school with their project of researching old criminal cases of our county. There were many days when our office was full of students. **Musselshell County, Connie Mattfield, Clerk of Court**

We put on shows for the residents showing what our Police K-9's are capable of. My Police K-9 is taken to sports events where attendees of all ages pet her and ask questions about her.

We also invite the Montana Highway Patrol troopers to our school, and we borrow golf carts. With the use of the drunk vision goggles we have the students attempt to drive through a maze of cones to show them how poorly they do.

We have one high school teacher that brings his students into the court room during trials and we keep him posted as to what the outcome is to that hearing.

Our volunteer fire department takes a fire truck to the school and lets the younger children get up close to the equipment and all the gear. We will have a well known person enter the class in full gear, then they reveal themselves, teaching the children that although a fireman might look scary it is someone they know and someone there to help them. We have a question and answer session for the children afterwards.

This office is gearing up to teach self-defense to the high school girls this spring. It is my hope that the girls that leave this sleepy town of Hysham will be more comfortable in the world and be able to enjoy life to the fullest without the fear of being attacked and not knowing what to do. **Treasure County, Wayne Robinson, County Sheriff**

Please see "Counties toot..." on page 12



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MACo News

MACo 2010 Mid Winter Conference review

MACo 2010 Mid Winter Conference, held Feb. 22-25 in Great Falls at the Heritage Inn, was well attended and featured speakers and guests from all corners of the state, as well as MACo staff.



Harold Blattie, MACo Executive Director



Dennis McCave, Yellowstone County Detention Officer



Owen Voigt, HCT Administrator

MACo would like to express thanks to sponsors of the conference:
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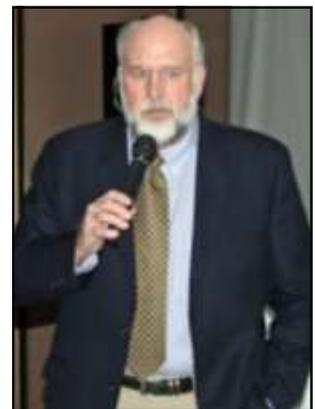
Mike Murray, Lewis & Clark County Commissioner



MACo Executive Committee: (left to right) Fiscal Officer Cynthia Johnson (Pondera), Urban Rep. Greg Chilcott (Ravalli), Past President Mike McGinley (Beaverhead), President Carl Seilstad (Fergus), Vice President John Ostlund (Yellowstone), Second Vice President Connie Eissinger (McCone)



Audience reacts to a speaker. All events were well attended.



Greg Jackson, JPIA/JPA Trust Administrator



MACo News

Cell phones & driving cost counties lives & claims

By Keith Stapley, MACo Claims Administrator

The Harvard Center of Risk Analysis estimates that cell phone activity contributes to 636,000 motor vehicle crashes, 330,000 injuries, and 2,600 fatalities each year. It's hard to put a number on how many of those are work-related, but it is safe to say employers need to be aware of potential ramifications. A few years ago a company settled a claim for \$16 million because one of its salespeople killed a person when driving and talking on a cell phone.

In Los Angeles the operator of a commuter train who, while looking down to send a text message, hit another train and killed 20 people.

In Montana, a county road department employee while talking on a cell phone, pulled his truck from a side road onto the highway into the path of a fully loaded logging truck. The logging truck unable to stop, tried to pass the county truck but the county driver crossed over the center line forcing the logging truck to the soft shoulder. The logging truck overturned causing a total loss to the truck and serious personal injury and wage loss to the driver. This claim, caused by inattentive driving due to the use of a cell phone, cost the MACo JPIA Insurance Pool almost \$400,000.

Researchers say that a trucker looking down while texting for a mere six seconds while moving 55 miles per

hour will travel the length of a football field, and not realize he traveled so far, so fast.

Some businesses have already banned the use of cell phones while driving vehicles or equipment. They understand the potential liability. Unfortunately, there are still employers and employees who fail to realize the urgency of the matter.

Counties are putting themselves at risk should a distracted employee be involved in an accident. Plus, it is very likely that there would be a workers' compensation claim for the injured employee.

But it's time to wake up and smell the risk. Companies and their underwriters will surely be standing downwind and it's only a matter of time before they start sniffing around to see if employers have language in place prohibiting the use of cell phones while driving. It's only a matter of time before insurers will require employers to prohibit the use of cell phones while driving.

States prohibiting use of hand-held cell phones while driving:

- California (primary)
- Connecticut (primary)
- New Jersey (primary)
- New York (primary)
- Oregon (primary)
- Utah (secondary)
- Washington (secondary)

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MACo News

Road liability update

By Fred Hansen, PE, MACo Loss Control Specialist

This month Jack Knorr will be on the road with the new MACo road liability training program. This program will touch on areas of exposure that have been showing in claim trends, as well as some non-reported items of interest. Covered in this training will be winter survival, vehicles, trucks and grader safety, including hitches for proper towing (42 of 47 participating counties have lost pickup trucks off the back of graders). Pre and post trip inspections and gravel hauling will also be covered.

Jack and I will also be conducting shop inspections. These inspections will cover furnaces, flammable liquid storage, explosive storage, cutting and welding areas, electric and oil heaters. So look for Jack-he will be visiting you soon.

I will continue to visit county road shops thermal imaging and photographing the structures. County fairgrounds will be added to the visits as well.

Driver training classes are continuing to be conducted. Remember, there is a POST certified 4 hour driver training for Sheriff Departments. This needs to be scheduled in advance to meet POST requirements, so call and schedule early at 449-4370.

We have completed our regional training on internal audit controls and we will have a model guideline available soon on how to set up internal audit controls for those who have expressed an interest. Look for Rick, our trainer, to be back with new training early this summer.

Great Falls Police Dept. to host grant writing class

Great Falls Police Department and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grant writing workshop in Great Falls, April 5-6, 2010. Beginning and experienced grant writers from city, county and state agencies as well as nonprofits, K-12, colleges and universities are encouraged to attend.

Purchase orders, checks and cards are welcome. Multi-enrollment discounts are available. Tuition payment is not required at the time of enrollment. Tuition is \$425 and includes all materials: workbook and accompanying 420MB resource CD that's packed full of tools and more than 200 sample grant proposals. Seating is limited, online reservations are necessary.

Contacts:

- Cathy Rittenhouse
Grant Writing USA
800-814-8191
cathy@grantwritingusa.com
- Sgt. John Schaffer
Great Falls Police Dept.
406.455.8421
jschaffer@greatfallsmt.net
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MACo News

CRS saving 24 counties money

By DJ Kreal, CRS Vice President-Sales and Frank Carcione, CRS Vice President

Through a new time and money saving program offered to members of MACo, county governments and Sheriff Department's can now save on the millions of dollars spent each year to provide medical care to jail inmates.

The Montana Association of Counties continues to hear positive feedback about Correctional Risk Services, Inc. CRS currently works with 24 Montana Counties as well as over 260 counties and municipalities in 18 states.

NACo has endorsed CRS for the claims administration and inmate excess medical insurance policy-



the only company of its kind to have such an endorsement. Through a nationally awarded RFP by Dallas County, Tex., Montana counties are able

to piggyback onto the award and begin using the program right away without bidding the service.

CRS is able to provide MACo members either the claims administration service or the inmate excess medical insurance; although an overwhelming majority of participating Montana Counties have elected to utilize both.

Before this program was introduced, Montana counties did not have an insurance mechanism to be able to insure their risk of high-priced, catastrophic inmate medical claims. Through this new program, Montana counties are

now able to pass that risk along to an insurance carrier, helping control and stay within your annual inmate medical budget. The insurance program available through CRS has a \$10,000 deductible. This deductible is tied to each inmate and will accumulate for each inmate throughout the course of the policy year, regardless of how many times they have been released and re-booked. The policy will enable your county to better manage your budget without taking those unexpected hits.

The claims administration service entails CRS reviewing your offsite inmate medical bills to make sure the treatment was provided and the medical coding was accurate. The uniqueness of this is CRS does not charge a premium for this service. CRS only gets paid through a percentage of savings, creating an incentive to save your county the most amount possible. That's the win-win type situation we wanted MACo members to be able to take advantage of.

Enroll by April 30, 2010 to take advantage of an early enrollment rate special.

To enroll contact: Sheryl Wood, MACo Associate Director at 449-4360 or at swood@mtcounties.org



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Falls from elevation

Part 1 of 2

What are they?

The fall from elevation exposure group includes all falls that occur while the victim is either attempting to gain height or is on an elevated surface. There are other kinds of falls that can occur from elevations, like falling from a ladder, or falling into a pit, shaft, or hole, but our focus here is on the act of falling from an elevation.

What is their impact?

Falls from elevation are typically high-severity injuries to the head, neck, and back. Lacerations and abrasions are common from falling onto hard, sharp, or abrasive objects. Falls from rolling chairs can occur suddenly. Injuries are common resulting from furniture collapsing or tipping while being stood or sat on.

Why does it happen?

The use of furniture instead of a step stool or ladder to gain height is a common exposure in companies. Other falls from elevations, like falls from curbs, loading docks, ramps, stages or porches occur but with much less frequency. Regardless, this type of fall is usually the result of

an individual's at-risk behavior. That is, for whatever reason, an employee either makes a decision to place himself at risk of a fall or simply does not understand the risk they are taking.

Examples of at-risk behaviors that lead to falls from elevations include:

- Standing on tables or desks.
- Standing on chairs, especially rolling chairs.
- Climbing up shelving.
- Climbing on stacked boxes. Sitting on desks or counters.
- Not watching where you are stepping.
- Being distracted and not paying attention to your surroundings.

The information contained in this document was obtained from sources that to the best of the writer's knowledge are authentic and reliable. Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. makes no guarantee of results, and assumes no liability in connection with either the information herein contained, or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein, or that abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures.

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MACo News

Employee termination, due process, contractual rights Counties shouldn't navigate the process alone

By Michael Sehestedt, MACo Legal Services Chief Legal Counsel

One area of liability exposure that is totally, or nearly totally, within your control is personnel actions. Those of you who are members of the Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA) should be aware that JPIA requires you, as a condition of coverage for damages resulting from an employment action, to make "reasonable efforts to notify and seek the advice and counsel of the MACo/JPIA personnel services administrator, or in the absence of the administrator, other designated Authority personnel, prior to taking an employment action, and comply with the administrator's direction in attempting to resolve the action."

Employment action for purposes of the JPIA policy means "action by an Insured that could result in claims for alleged or asserted wrongful discharge, improper hiring, discrimination, federal or state civil rights claims, and claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Family and Medical Leave Act."

The purpose of the requirement that the MACo/JPIA personnel services administrator be given the opportunity to give advice and counsel is not to prevent you from terminating an unsatisfactory employee, but rather to help you follow the required steps and to help you develop the factual basis necessary to sustain a termination.

Whether we like it or not, nonprobationary public employees have both constitutional due process rights and a right under the Wrongful Discharge Act to not be discharged except for just cause in a manner that comports with your personnel policies. For those of you with union contracts, the grievance and discharge and discipline pro-

visions of those contracts may create additional requirements.

The MACo/JPIA personnel service administrator is Jack Holstrom, an attorney with an extensive background in personnel matters and labor relations. Jack is currently the Chair of the State Board of Personnel Appeals and has served as an advisor to counties on personnel matters for more than ten years. His role is to help you navigate the shoals of labor law and make sure that any personnel action you take is legally sustainable.

While no one needs to keep an unsatisfactory employee, the world is now far more complex than it once was; and failure to give even a clearly unsatisfactory employee his or her due process and contrac-

tual rights and/or to properly establish and document just cause for a termination can result in legal liability for your county, and may even result in reinstatement of a problem employee. Jack can give your county the advice you need to move forward on personnel matters and to legally accomplish your personnel objectives.

When claims are made against your county, Jack works closely with the assigned attorney from the legal division or with outside counsel to help ensure the best possible defense of your county.

To borrow a line from the utility companies, "Call before you dig," and if you are considering a termination or any other personnel action that you have reason to believe may result in a claim, call Jack at 800-471-6304.

The requirement of advice and counsel is not to prevent you from terminating an unsatisfactory employee, but to help you follow the required steps and develop the factual basis necessary to sustain a termination....




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MACo News

MACo Employee Profile

Spouse's name and time together:
Shawn Schroder (significant other); together for 9 years

Occupation: Assistant Claims Adjuster

Years at current occupation: 2 ½ years

Profession before current occupation:
Medical Billing Specialist for 9 years

Education: Associate Degree in Accounting, certificate in medical coding and billing

Biggest challenge you've ever faced: Raising my 2 sons alone for the past 17 years after my divorce.

A song you know all the words to: "Wipeout" and "Happy Birthday"

Your goals as a senior in high school: I wanted to become a CPA, but my parents didn't want me to leave Butte to attend college in Bozeman.

Surprising fact about you: I love to ride Harleys and I commute from Butte to Helena everyday to come to work.

Most adventurous thing you've ever done: Learned to ride my Harley and my snowmobile.

Favorite TV show: *The Big Bang Theory, Two and a Half Men, Mercy, Grey's Anatomy, Vampire Diaries and The Biggest Loser* (I can't narrow it down to just one)

Most proud of: My sons and the fine young men they are becoming.

A book you've read twice (or more): The Holy Bible

Favorite charity/cause: Local food banks and animal shelters

Historical event you wish you could change: The attack on the World Trade Center and all of the wars

Favorite movie: Once again, I can't narrow it down to just one...so to name a few: *The Great Outdoors, Mr. Mom, Avatar, Back to the Future (all 3), The Notebook, and Cars.*



Liz Krzan

Commissioner Profile

Spouse's name and time together:
Hong Kok Ting (Millie) Paugh, 32 years

Occupation: Rancher, Golden Valley County Commissioner

Profession before current occupation:
Peace Corp Volunteer/Malaysia. My title was Agricultural Economist and my biggest project was Cocoa Inter-cropped with Coconut.

Education: Bachelor Degree/ Agricultural Business

Biggest challenge you've ever faced: Nothing stands out.

A song you know all the words to: I was going to say "The Star Spangled Banner" but I only know the words to the first verse.

Your goals as a senior in high school: Probably to go to college, travel, get married and then become a rancher.

Surprising fact about you: That my "ranch wife" is a native to Malaysia.

Most adventurous thing you've ever done: The Peace Corp experience. I was repeatedly in situations which were previously unknown to me. Many, having to do with being in an unfamiliar culture and many, not.

Favorite TV show: *House*

Most proud of: No question, hands down- my wife (Millie) and our two children Bryan and Stephanie.

A book you've read twice (or more): "Holism and Evolution" by Jan Smuts. I had to read it four times before I understood it.

Favorite charity/cause: We contribute locally.

Historical event you wish you could change: A hundred years out, I am unconvinced any path not taken would result in any less human misery than the one we went down. Even if it did, the resulting human creativity might be less and the overall human condition would still be diminished.

Favorite movie: *Lord of the Rings*



David Paugh



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Passing the buck in health care

By Owen Voigt, HCT Administrator

Health care and jobs are the biggest issues in our country right now. Health care and jobs seem to trade places daily as to which issue gets more press. Jobs are crucial; I have family members who have been looking for months and are having a tough time finding work. I am sure many of you are in the same situation with family or friends.

Health care has so many issues. It reminds me a bit of my days riding bucking horses. One year while competing at the Miles City bucking horse sale I had what I would call the typical Miles City experience. What I mean is, during the saddle bronc competition my first horse ran off so I got a reride; my second horse fell down so another reride; the third horse fought in the chute and I was pretty beat up by the time I got out and then he did not buck very well so still another reride.

The day was getting very long for me and I remember thinking, "how many more horses would I have to get on?" Then Pat Linger, who is a bit of an icon in the Miles City country, pointed out this big black stud horse back in the pens and suggested I try him. The stud finally came into the chutes; I saddled him, crawled on and nodded my head. He reared out of the chute then bucked hard across the arena. I ended up winning second that day and placing in the average- my best results ever at the bucking horse sale.

Health care has many issues and pitfalls that seem to give call for a reride option. Look at all the issues being discussed: the house version, senate version, the president's version; the issues of medical malpractice limits and buying across state lines, abortion and eligibility for illegal immigrants. Not to mention the alleged issue of union plans being underfunded and the national health care is a behind the scenes payoff for unions underfunded health plans. Then there is the effect of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursing less than the actual cost of the service which causes what is called "cost shifting."

I think the biggest issue today is the

cost shifting. As the baby boomers retire and go on Medicare and as the individual state Medicaid plans continue to grow, more and more people are being covered under federal and state plans. Part of the problem is, these plans do not pay the cost of the service being received. If a Medicare covered individual receives medical services that cost the provider \$100 to provide, Medicare does not pay even the cost of the service. Currently, reimbursement is less than 80 percent of that cost. In my example, that means 20 percent or \$20 has to be paid by someone else for the provider to stay in business. Add in the 5 percent or so who do not pay or are not insured and the provider is now losing \$25 per service.

Who is left to pay the unfunded portion? The insured or cash payer is who. Well mostly the insured. So if you are insured your bill does not start at \$100 it starts at \$125 then any profit or extra is added on to that because the government plans set their reimbursement amount. That is why so many medical facilities do not take Medicare patients. When medical inflation increases, Medicare has not increased their payment so the entire inflation amount is incurred by the insured. If inflation is 5 percent the insured plan now pays the \$5 inflation for the Medicare plan and the \$5 for the insured plan. Guess what, the medical inflation to the insured plan is now 10 percent! Approximately 50 percent of medical services in the United States are federal or state plans so just the effect of medical inflation on the insured side is staggering.

I do have faith in our elected leaders. I think of the great Montana county elected folks we have and how fortunate we are to have them. I just wish Pat Linger could tell everyone they have a reride option and we could actually have a redo on some of the health care issues our country faces. That or put all of them on that big black stud horse and see how they do.

HCT screenings

The MACo Health Care Trust is sponsoring free employee health screenings by It Starts With Me. It Starts With Me is a company that provides employee health promotion programs to various companies and government groups across Montana. Screenings have already been held in ten counties.

All employees and spouses that are covered under the county health insurance plan through MACo are invited to attend a screening in their area. All other employees and others in the community are invited to attend the screenings and pay the minimal \$80 screening fee. The screenings include:

- Comprehensive metabolic panel
- Lipid panel & complete blood count
- Blood pressure & blood oxygen
- Body composition & BMI
- Personalized health report received the day of the screening

The screenings take an average 11.4 minutes to complete. It Starts With Me also allows participants to choose from 35 other lab tests at reduced costs. HCT will pay for members' basic screening. The member may select additional screenings and pay, then submit to the HCT. The HCT will pay for additional screenings subject to the annual \$300 preventive benefit.

Scheduled Screenings:

- **Big Horn County:** March 2, 7-10 a.m. at the Big Horn County Courthouse
- **Powder River County:** March 3, 7-10 a.m. at the Broadus Community Center
- **Custer County:** March 4, 6:30 – 10:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Express Meeting Room
- **Meagher County** – April 29. Time and location TBA

Flyers will be distributed to counties prior to screenings with more information. Preregistration is requested. Limited walk-ins will be accepted. Contact Pam Walling at 535-6893 with any questions.



News

First Lady invites Mont. commissioner to D.C. *Continued from front page*

of struggles that elected officials face in combating childhood and adult obesity in 2007. Beltrone now serves as a county representative on Leadership for Healthy Communities, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and recently represented rural communities on an Institute of Medicine study committee. Their study, "Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity," was released last fall.

Obama's plan, dubbed "Let's Move," has four pillars: more nutrition information, increased physical activity, easier access to healthier food and personal responsibility. The program calls for reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act and a request for \$10 billion over ten years to improve school meals. Providers of school meals around the country have agreed to cut salt and fat, while offering more whole grains and fresh fruits. The 2011 federal budget includes \$400 million for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

"It was a family to family talk— just a mom talking to other families," Beltrone said. "That is exactly what the nation has needed,"

Beltrone stressed that there is a lot that local governments can do to fight the obesity epidemic, like change public building codes to require drinking fountains to offer a healthy choice to thirsty children.

"I was drawn to it, and I have been drawn into it," Beltrone said of the childhood obesity problem.

Counties "toot their horns," share ideas, plans *Continued from page 3*

We invite Ft. Belknap Tribal Council and local area schools such as Harlem and Hays/Lodge Pole to tour the courthouse and visit our offices. We could have our area schools decorate our Christmas tree that we have in our lobby outside of our door. Students could also "shadow" county leaders on career day. **Blaine County, Dolores Plume, County Commissioner**

A personnel exchange that would be similar to a student exchange program would immerse us into developing healthy relationships with the county and schools. People with similar titles could exchange positions for a day. **Blaine County, Violet Crasco, Hays Lodge Pole Schools**

In Pondera County the 8th graders do a mock trial of Henry Plummer. It would be an excellent idea for school children to have a tour of the courthouse and the students that are studying government, could come and tour during their senior year of high school. There could also be a career day involving the county offices. **Pondera County, Kara Thompson, Clerk of District Court**

We put on a mock trial and the students participate as jurors. They actually participate in voir dire, hear evidence, and deliberate to reach a verdict. Students also participate in a job shadowing program where they come to our office and follow us around for a morning or afternoon. **Hill County, Gina Dahl, County Attorney**

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Around Our Counties

Planning & Zoning

FLATHEAD COUNTY commissioners approved a zoning amendment to include asphalt and concrete plants in the definition of gravel extraction. The amendment will affect the West Valley- the sole district with a definition for gravel extraction. The county planning department and county planning board had recommended denial for the amendment.

WHEATLAND COUNTY commissioners approved a resource plan late January that would require state and federal entities to include the county in planning discussions. The plan was written by volunteers who first met early last year. Issues in the plan include agricultural use, water resources and structures, wildlife and community management.

FLATHEAD COUNTY commissioners signed an agreement that acquired a \$3 million waterfront park in Lakeside for the county. Property owners Bruce Ennis and Margaret Davis will develop a day-use public park including restrooms, pavilions, tables, a parking lot, docks and landscaping, then transfer ownership to the county. The county will be responsible for future maintenance, and must maintain the use of the use of the property as a park.

GALLATIN COUNTY commission unanimously approved boundaries for a zoning district, with the in-

tentions of mediating conflicts between gravel operators and their neighbors. The boundaries encompass Belgrade, Manhattan and Amsterdam-Churchill planning districts, and the Gallatin Gateway planning area and surrounding area. The district will require gravel miners to obtain conditional use permits within the boundaries.

Personnel

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY Justice of the Peace, Wallace Jewell will resign at the end of July after serving for two decades. He told a local newspaper he is resigning because the sad situations he encounters each day have taken a toll on his want to do the work. Commissioners will fill the position with an interim judge until an election.

L A K E C O U N T Y commissioners passed a resolution making the position of Superintendent of Schools part-time. The decision was due to the current economy and input from the current superintendent, Gale Decker, who thought part-time status would be sufficient for the position. The resolution requires there to always be a full-time deputy in the superintendent's office.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY commissioners have been ordered by District Judge Ingrid Gustafson to release information regarding grievances against Dennis McCave, commander of the Yellowstone County Detention Officer. The commission was confronted with a re-

quest for the information from a Billings Gazette reporter. Gustofson found that the commission does have the authority to release the information and that McCave is a public figure with a diminished expectation of privacy.

Projects

JUDITH BASIN COUNTY received a check from Gov. Brian Schweitzer for \$298,000 to build an Essential Services Facility in Geysers. The funds are part of a \$1.8 million state Recovery Act. The Essential Services Facility will have five bays: one for the road crew, three for the fire department and one double bay for the ambulance and extrication vehicle.

MISSOULA COUNTY Public Works Dust Abatement Program crews are being videotaped for use in training across the nation. The program manages approximately 250 miles of graveled road, and uses magnesium chloride. This year's program is scheduled to treat 78 miles of road.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

FINANCE DIRECTOR This position administers and supervises the finance functions for Flathead County. The successful candidate must possess a comprehensive understanding of finances, budgeting and planning operations of county government; a Bachelor's degree in Business or Public Admin, Finance, Accounting or closely related field; Master's degree and/or CPA preferred; must have five years of progressively responsible experience at a management level in governmental accounting, finance and payroll administration. Contract position, salary \$71,000 DOE. Visit www.flathead.mt.gov for more information. Interested applicants must submit a cover letter, resume, references, salary history and completed Flathead County employment application to: Flathead Job Service Workforce Center, 427 1st Avenue East, Kalispell, MT 59901. Deadline: 5:00 p.m. 3/31/10 EOE

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Announcements & Reminders

Mark Your Calendars

March

- 1-2 Legislative Council
Legislative Audit
- 3 **State Administration & Veterans' Affairs Int. Committee***
Legislative Training Day
- 4-5 Legislative Finance Committee
Environmental Quality Council
- 5 Leg. Finance Comm. Subcommittee
- 10-11 Water Policy Committee
- 12 Education & Local Government Committee
- 19 **State Administration & Veterans' Affairs Int. Committee**
- 6-10 NACo Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 10-11 Water Policy Interim Committee*
- 29-31 MACRS, Great Falls
- 30,31 MT Weed Control Assoc. weed manager training, Lewis and Clark Co. Fairgrounds

April

- 1 MACRS, Great Falls
MWCA Weed manager training, L & C Co. Fairgrounds
- 13 HCT Trustee Meeting
- 14 JPIA & JPA Trustee Meeting
- 15 MACo Tax, Finance & Budget Committee
- 26-27 Children Families, Health & Human Services Committee

*All events are held in Helena unless noted.

Upcoming Events

- May 26-28 NACo WIR Conference, Billings
- Sept. 26-30 MACo 101st Annual Conference, Billings

March MACo 2010 Elected Officials Directory updates/corrections (accumulated corrections will be printed in June MACo News):

1. McCone Co. Commission seat previously held by Patrick Eggebrecht is currently vacant
2. Big Horn Co. clerk and recorder seat is currently vacant
3. Mineral Co. commissioners can be reached at mccommissioners@co.mineral.mt.us
4. MACo will mail out corrections to pages xiv & xv, reflecting correct county classifications.
5. Cele Pohle, Powell County commissioner, can be reached at cpohle@co.powell.mt.us

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Christine Holling, Claims Adjuster

Liz Krzan, Asst. Claims Adjuster

Kerissa Lyman, Claims Admin. Assist.

Owen Voigt, Health Care Trust Admin.

Alyce Bailey, Enrollment/Eligibility Specialist

Pam Walling, Marketing/Member Services Representative

Laurie Goltry, Admin./Enrollment Asst.

Tom Beneventi, Custodian/Maint.

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1. Richard Dunbar, Phillips County
2. Mark Rehbein, Richland County
3. Donald Reiger, Fallon County
4. Russ Tempel, Liberty County
5. Arnold Gettel, Teton County
6. Leslie Burroughs, Golden Valley Co.
7. Maureen Davey, Stillwater County
8. Andy Hunthausen, Lewis & Clark Co.
9. Bernie Lucas, Meagher County
10. Tony Berget, Lincoln County
11. Jean Curtiss, Missoula County
12. Tom Rice, Beaverhead County

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