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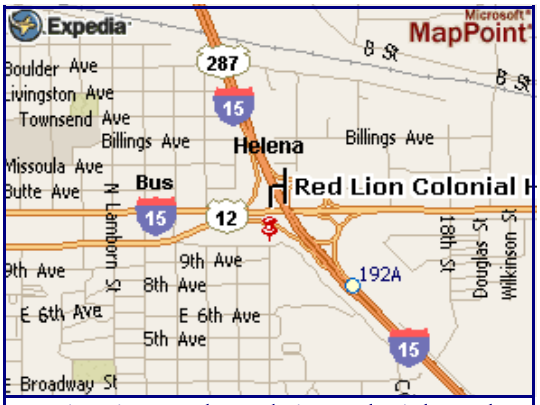
Officials' Training in December

The county officials' training will be held in Helena at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel from December 11 to December 14. MACo encourages incumbent and newly elected county government officials to attend the upcoming training.

The schedule includes courses covering topics such as Montana local government law, public meetings, county offices and their legal requirements, human resources, code of ethics, and the legislative process. A wide variety of current public officials will be the presenters.

Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena



Directions to the Red Lion Colonial Hotel

Monday, December 11, 2006

1:00	Board of Directors Meeting
3:00	Registration
6:00	Dinner with MACo Board of Directors Keynote Address: Welcome to Public Service--Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger

Tuesday, December 12, 2006

7:30	Registration
8:00-10:00	Introductions & participants' self introductions & concerns
10:00-10:30	Break
10:30-12:30	Course 101.1: Introduction to County Government
12:30-1:30	Lunch
1:30-3:30	Course 102.1: The Commission Decision Process
3:30-4:00	Break
4:00-6:00	Course 103.1: The Montana Code of Ethics

Wednesday, December 13, 2006

8:00-10:00	Course 104.1: County Functions & Services
10:00-10:30	Break
10:30-12:30	Course 105.1: Local Government Law
12:30-1:30	Lunch
1:30-3:30	Course 106.1: The Montana Legislative Process
3:30-4:00	Break
4:00-5:00	Course 107.1: The Montana Association of Counties & The National Association of Counties

Thursday, December 14, 2006

8:30-9:30	Course 107.1: The Montana Association of Counties & The National Association of Counties (Continued)
9:30-11:30	Course 108.1: Human Resource Risk Issues
11:30-12:00	Break (this allows time to check out of hotel rooms)
12:00-1:00	Lunch Address: Dr. Douglas Steele, Vice Provost & Director of MSU Extension
1:00-3:00	Course 501.1: Pending Legislation Affecting Local Government
3:00-3:30	Break
3:30-5:30*	Course 508.1: Elements of Land Use Law
5:30	Adjourn

**A break out session for row officers will be provided at this time.*

Letter from MACo Executive Director, Harold Blattie

Election 2007 will be in the history books very soon. For many people it will mark the end of a very long campaign; for others it may be the beginning of the next. Some will return to office for an additional term, while others will begin service to the public for the first time.

For all of its perceived problems, our democratic election process will once again provide us with those individuals the voters feel can best represent them in our government, whether local, state, or federal. If you are one of those elected, you have been given a huge responsibility. You now must put your personal interests aside in order to effectively represent the interests of your constituency. Some will be more successful at accomplishing this than others.

In January there will be 30-40 new county commissioners and over 50 other new county officials, each of which ran for office with the belief of being a positive influence and making things better in their county. Unfortunately, many of these individuals come into office with unrealistic expectations and end up being frustrated and disappointed as they become familiar with the authority they have, and all too often, with the authority they do not have. A new commissioner must learn that his/her authority is vested in the commission—properly convened and acting as a body—not as an individual commissioner. Newly elected officials are often surprised to learn that Montana and/or Federal law prohibits them from doing many things they would like, particularly in the area of personnel. They are also often frustrated with the lack of funding available to do all of the things they would like and may have even promised as a part of their campaign.

The best investment you can make in your county's future is to encourage ALL newly elected officials to attend the Elected Officials Training/Commissioner Certification and cover the registration and travel costs for them. This cost is a proper county cost—even though these people are officers-elect and will not take office until January—because it is for a "public or governmental purpose," in accordance with Montana law.

MACo Executive Director
Harold Blattie

This training will be held in Helena at the Colonial Inn December 11-14, 2006. The program has been expanded from the past sessions to include more topics that new elected officials will encounter during their first months in office. The agenda is available on the MACo website at www.maco.cog.mt.us.

For those of you continuing as local elected officials, you will play a very large part in how your county's elected officials will work together. Some of you may have supported candidates who did not win, and it is normal for you to be disappointed. I trust you will all accept the decision of the voters and do everything possible to assure that your local government functions in the best interests of your residents and taxpayers.

L Harold Blattie

Attorney General's Letter of Advice

Before presenting the Attorney General's Letter of Advice, it must be made clear that the Supreme Court of Montana has held that an **Official Opinion** of the Attorney General is not binding upon the Supreme Court; however, it is persuasive and entitled to respectful consideration and will be upheld if not obviously erroneous [State ex Ebel v. Schye, 130 M537 (1956)]. A **Letter of Advice** given by the Attorney General is not entitled to the same status as an Official Opinion of the Attorney General; however, it is entitled some weight.

Questions Presented by the Hill County Commissioners:

1. Is the prohibition on the use of public resources as set forth in Mont. Code Ann. § 2-2-121, and in particular subsection (3), as it relates to the passage of a ballot initiative applicable to the Montana Association of Counties (MACo), because the association is partially funded with dues paid with public funds by member counties as authorized in Mont. Code Ann. § 7-5-2141?

2. Is MACo bound by the provisions of Mont. Code Ann. §§ 2-2-101 through 2-2-144, the Montana Code of Ethics?

3. Can MACo make expenditures or contributions in connection with ballot initiatives, or voice its support or opposition to ballot initiatives?

4. Does a member of the Hill County Commission violate Mont. Code Ann. § 2-2-121 (3) by authorizing the payment of dues in accordance with Mont. Code Ann. § 7-5-2141, or by serving as an officer of the association, if the association uses any part of the dues paid to solicit support or opposition to the passage of a ballot initiative? Is this a violation of the use of public resources, or do the public funds used to pay dues lose their identity as public money when transferred to the association?

Letter of Advice (Condensed):

Questions 1 and 2 will be analyzed and addressed together:

The Assistant Attorney General Advised that the Code of Ethics (Sections 2-2-101 through 2-2-144, MCA)—including the prohibition contained in Section 2-2-121 (3)—does not apply to MACo as it is a corporation or organization, and the Code was only designed to regulate certain conduct by legislators, public officers, and public employees.

Question 3:

The advice given was that MACo could make contributions or expenditures or voice its support or opposition to ballot initiatives as any restriction on these rights would be an unconstitutional restriction on corporate political speech.

Question 4:

The Attorney General opined that there would be no violation of the statute as the Counties of the State have a statutory right to join an organization like MACo and to pay membership organization fees with county funds. The organization has a constitutionally protected right to involve itself in ballot issues, and therefore a County Commissioner does not violate the statute by authorizing the payment of dues to MACo even if the dues are used to participate in ballot issues. Additionally, any action taken by the Commissioner as an officer of MACo is not a violation of the Section.

Please note again that this is a Letter of Advice (condensed) and not a formal Opinion of the Attorney General. The Letter of Advice in full can be obtained at http://doj.mt.gov/resources/lettersadviceindex2006.asp.

Mark Your Calendars

November	
Nov. 7	General Election Day
Nov 8-11	Rocky Mountain Association of Fairs, Rapid City, SD
Nov 12-14	Western Community Stewardship Forum
Nov 13-18	Magistrates Association Certification meeting, Great Falls, Heritage Inn
Nov 16	Council of County Officials, Helena
Nov 16-18	NACo HHS Conference, St. Petersburg, FL
Nov 29-Dec 1	JPIA, JPA, MACo HCT Trustees Retreat, Double Arrow Lodge, Seeley Lake, MT
December	
Dec 6-7	Transportation Commission, Helena
Dec 11	MACo Board of Directors Meeting
Dec 11-14	Newly Elected Officials Training, Helena
2007	
Jan 3	Legislative Session Opens (TENTATIVE)
Jan 10-14	NACo Presidents & Exec's Meeting, Washington, DC
Jan 17-19	Loss Control, Billings—JPIA/JPA Membership Annual Meeting
Feb 12-15	MACo Midwinter Meeting, Helena
Feb 25-28	Transmittal Break (TENTATIVE)
Mar 3-7	NACo Legislative Conference, Washington, DC
April 25	Legislative Sine Die (TENTATIVE)
April 25-27	JPIA/JPA/HCT Trustees meeting (TENTATIVE)
May 8-12	WIR, Fairbanks, AK
June 4-15	District Meetings (TENTATIVE)
June 25-28	MACo Board of Directors Meeting (TENTATIVE)
July 12-18	NACo Annual Conference, Richmond, VA
Sept 23-27	MACo Annual Conference, Great Falls

Hamilton Wins Bid to Host 2008 MACo Conference

By Anthongy Quirini, *Ravalli Republic*, Hamilton, MT

Ravalli County commissioners landed the 2008 Annual Conference for the Montana Association of Counties in Hamilton.

The conference, typically held in the last week of September, is one of two conferences that MACo holds - the other mid-winter conference is routinely held in Helena.

The four-day event will bolster local businesses, as more than 180 elected officials representing 56 counties in Montana book 180 hotel rooms.

And with elected officials, spouses and others slated to attend - it will undoubtedly bring revenue into restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and many other businesses in the county.

Bitterroot Mountains

It will be the first time that a MACo conference will be held in Ravalli County.

"It will be a four-day convention that will infuse businesses, eating establishments, and recreational activities," Commissioner Alan Thompson said. "It is pretty exciting - and it means a lot of work."

Commissioners Thompson, Betty Lund, and Greg Chilcott peddled the idea at the recent annual conference in Bozeman. This year's event featured such speakers as the Secretary of State Brad Johnson, who discussed the implications of Initiatives I-154 and CI-97.

Dozens of exhibits and vendors routinely set up at the annual event, sharing product ideas such as computer software and other tools that help aid the day-to-day routines of county offices.

Flathead County officials also bid for the 2008 conference in the new Hilton Conference Center slated to be completed by 2008. But commissioners from different counties chose Ravalli County to be the spot for the convention - specifically, the First Interstate Center at the fairgrounds.

"I think it is wonderful," Bitterroot Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Diane Wolfe said. "That is one of the reasons the chamber worked hard for a long time to get the fairgrounds event center - they are spending dollars on food and souvenirs."

Landing the event took more than just an application - MACo officials had to check facilities to see if there was ample room for the 150-plus people.

"The members (commissioners) select where they want to go," Harold Blattie, MACo executive director said. "Some of the better conferences we have had have been at smaller facilities."

In Bozeman, at the 2006 convention, Commissioner Thompson attended, and his days customarily consisted of meetings and working sessions from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

2007 State Holiday Schedule

The following is a list of legal holidays in 2007 and the dates they will be observed by most state employees.

2007 HOLIDAYS

Legal holidays per section 1-1-216, MCA	Observed
New Year's Day	Monday, January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 15
Lincoln's and Washington's Birthday	Monday, February 19
Memorial Day	Monday, May 28
Independence Day	Wednesday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 3
Columbus Day	Monday, October 8
Veterans' Day	Monday, November 12*
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 22
Christmas Day	Tuesday, December 25

** The Veterans' Day holiday, November 11, 2007, falls on a Sunday. For most state employees, Monday, November 12, 2007, will be treated as a holiday for pay and leave purposes. (See section 1-1-216(2), MCA.) For more information regarding the administration of state employees' holiday benefits, see policy #3-0325 of the Montana Operations Manual and section 2-18-603, MCA.*

New MACo Building Com~

Before

Front of Building

Kitchen

Ceiling

After

Front of Building

Office

Kitchen

Mineral County Calls on Congress to Extend Secure Rural Schools Act

By John Q. Murray, *Clark Fork Chronicle*, Huson, MT

Mineral County's public lands consultant joined more than 200 local leaders from 23 states in a "fly-in" to Washington D.C., asking Congress to reauthorize for one year the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act of 2000.

Noel Williams represented commissioners from Mineral, Sanders, and Lincoln counties on Capitol Hill Sept. 13-14.

Commissioner Judy Stang said the bill is the single most important federal legislation affecting Mineral County. Failure to reauthorize the bill--the primary funding for county roads and schools--would devastate the county's budget.

Congress has not taken any action on Public Law 106-393, which expired last week after six years. The school board members, school superintendents, county commissioners called for action before Congress adjourns for the year.

In 2005, the Secure Rural Schools Act provided $757,317 for Mineral County. Of this amount, 90 percent was distributed to county roads and schools, with the remaining 10 percent distributed by the Mineral County Resource Advisory Committee to a variety of forest improvement projects affecting local access, water quality, wildlife habitat, and other goals established by the Public Law. Of the 90 percent split between roads and schools, the roads got roughly two-thirds and schools one-third.

The fly-in was organized by the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition, a national organization representing 1,500 local, state and national organizations around the country. While in Washington, Williams met with numerous members of Congress or their designated staff to discuss the impacts of this legislation.

When Congress created the Forest Service earlier in the previous century, one of the side effects was that it denied many rural communities a significant portion of their potential tax base that they used to fund public roads and schools.

To solve this problem, Congress mandated that 25 percent of all revenue generated from the national forests would be shared with the counties where those monies were generated. This historic compact was one of the first revenue sharing project approved by Congress.

However, beginning in the 1980s, the amount generated by these forests began to decline— dropping more than 85 percent between 1986 and 2005. This created a financial crisis for many rural forest communities around the country.

In 2000, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Determination Act to provide a safety net for these communities. Over the past six years, this Act has provided billions of critical dollars to support rural education, search and rescue organizations, road maintenance and the development of community fire plans for 800 rural counties and 4,400 rural school districts, including Mineral County.

However, the Act expired Sept. 30, 2006 with the final payments going out this month.

Bob Douglas, President of the National Forest School and County Coalition, said the fly-in was a “huge success” and that, as a result, “we are edging closer to a solution for a one-year extension as well as laying the foundation for a multi-year reauthorization. A lot of discussion is taking place on Capitol Hill with respect to finding a suitable funding source for this bill and the fly-in participants were largely responsible for re-igniting that conversation.”

In addition to the Capitol Hill meetings, Williams heard from Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID), Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR), Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon), Rep. Charles Taylor (R-NC), Rep. John Peterson (R-PA), Rep. Darlene Hooley (D-OR), and several local government officials from around the United States at a rally about the importance of reauthorizing the Act.

Over the life of the legislation, the Act has provided more than $2 billion to rural communities and school districts since 2001, including more than $4.5 million for Mineral County.

Stang said she thought the best long-term solution would be to resume logging in the national forests. That would not only improve forest health, but also produce good-paying local full-time jobs, provide revenue for the U. S. Treasury, and allow the 25 percent revenue sharing to again support county roads and schools.

This approach would eliminate the need to scrounge ongoing funding for the Secure Rural Schools Act, she said.

Montanans Pay Respects to Former Governor

By Gwen Florio, Tribune Capitol Bureau, *Great Falls Tribune*, Great Falls, MT

HELENA—Montanans filed through the Old Supreme Court chambers in the Capitol Wednesday to pay their respects to former Gov. Thomas L. Judge, a man who, said Gov. Brian Schweitzer, "had a passion for Montana as big as the Big Sky."

Judge, who was Montana's youngest governor ever when he was elected in 1972 at the age of 38, died Friday in Arizona, where he lived in recent years.

The viewing was at the state Capitol and marked the first time in 44 years that someone has lain there. In 1962, Gov. Donald G. Nutter, state Agriculture Commissioner Edward C. Wren, and Executive Secretary Dennis Gordon lay in the House chambers. All three were killed in a plane crash in Wolf Creek Canyon.

"(Judge) will be remembered for his openness. He always had a smile on his face," said Jane Morris of Helena, who with her husband, Gordon, the former director of the Association of Counties, knew Judge both personally and professionally.

"It's just nice to be able to say goodbye," she said.

Others who came to the viewing included Attorney General Mike McGrath and state Auditor John Morrison.

"He was a governor during a very dynamic time in Montana's history," Morrison said.

Even though Morrison was only 12 when Judge became a governor, he said he was aware of Judge's accomplishments.

"Montana's energy-resource development was expanding fast at that time, and so did our environmental protection laws and energy tax laws," Morrison said. During his two terms in office, Judge oversaw the enactment of those laws under the new state Constitution.

Judge's son, Patrick, is the energy program director for the Montana Environmental Information Center.

"A lot of what I do is inspired by his work," he said. "I think he was proud of that."

Patrick Judge, his brother, Thomas, and their mother, Carol, greeted people at the Capitol on Wednesday.

Thomas Judge was working on a memoir that was nearly finished when he died, Patrick Judge said. The family plans to complete the book and publish it.

"We're just very grateful for all of the support and sympathy we've received," he said. "it would have meant a lot to him that so many people came."

Governor Thomas L. Judge

Gwen Floria can be reached at 406-442-9493 or at gfloriogreatfal.gannett.com.

Changes in the Local Government Center

By Jane Jelinski, Director, Local Government Center

I am delighted to announce the many changes underway in the Local Government Center and its services and staff.

Edward Sypinski is our new Associate Director. He has a B.S. from Illinois State University in Political Science & History and an MPA from University of Illinois at Chicago in Public Policy & Public Administration. He is currently a member of the City of Bozeman's Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

Ed has more than 20 years of broad professional experience including community health programs, policy development, strategic planning, land use policy, historic preservation, Main Street Program, economic development, budget and finance, legislative research, and employment training programs.

Heather McCartney has been our Administrative Associate since February. Heather has a B.S. in Agricultural Education from MSU. Currently she shares her time between the LGC and the College of Engineering where she works as a tribal college liaison and native student advisor.

Two graduate teaching and research assistants have joined us this month: Mary Ann Anderson and Jeff Callen. Mary Ann has a B.S. in Agricultural Education from MSU and is pursuing her Masters in Agricultural Education with an emphasis in community development. She will be working closely with us on assigned research projects.

Jeff Callen earned his B.A. in Philosophy from MSU. He was formerly a Technical Project Manager at Zoot Enterprises and is in the Master's of Public Administration program with an emphasis in e-government and GIS.

We are in the process of a national search for a Community Development Extension Specialist who will also be working out of the Local Government Center.

The results of the city attorney status survey, supervised by Dr. Steven Swinford, is being mailed to all mayors; if you are interested in obtaining a copy, please let us know. Many thanks again to the tremendous response from the municipal clerks and treasurers.

Plans are underway for the Newly Elected County Officials Orientation at MACo December 11-14, 2006; the Montana Mayors Forum to be conducted in Helena February 22-23, 2007; and plans for a School in Bozeman for the Montana County Treasurers April 3-6, 2007 are being finalized.

We are now replanted in our office with fresh carpet, paint, and more professional space. Due to the chaos of moving over the summer, website development has been delayed. We will send out a notice when it is overhauled.

We look forward to continuing to work with and for Montana's local governments. Look for the needs assessment to arrive this fall—be sure to let us know how we can serve you best.

County News

COUNTY OFFICIALS

CUSTER COUNTY appointed Wyatt Glade as the new County Attorney. He stepped in for Garry Bunke, who took a position as a staff attorney for the Office of the State Public Defender. Glade is the only declared candidate on the election ballot.

POWELL COUNTY Clerk and Recorder Karla Rydeen is retiring at the end of her term after 12 years of service. The primary election determined Diane Grey would be the new county Clerk and Recorder.

PARK COUNTY appointed Linda Gillett as the new county planning coordinator. Gillett was formerly the planner for Fergus County.

RAVALLI COUNTY welcomes three new defense attorneys to the Public Defenders Office: Reed Mandelko, Alex Beal, and Carol Johns.

JAILS

GALLATIN COUNTY will solicit proposals from companies across the country to build a new jail. The existing Gallatin County Detention Center opened in 1981 and was designed to hold 45 inmate but has held as many as 70 at one time.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY commissioners agreed to purchase about 15 acres of property south of Yellowstone County Detention Facility to accommodate future expansion of the jail and the county's public works department.

RAVALLI COUNTY Juvenile Detention Center cost the county over $150,000 last year due to outsourcing; this year it quadrupled in size and became a revenue source. It is also now licensed to house long-term detainees and has the capability to separate boys and girls as well as the older kids from the younger kids.

SUBDIVISIONS

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY commissioners approved the preliminary plat of the Bar NZ Minor Subdivision and the preliminary plat of the North Valley Properties Minor Subdivision. The Bar NZ is a proposed two-lot subdivision located ¾ of a mile north of Dillon adjacent to Hwy. 91 North. The North Valley five-lot subdivision is located 5.5 miles north of Dillon adjacent to Hwy. 91 North and Anderson Lane.

RAVALLI COUNTY Planning Board gave another thumbs down to the Aspen Springs subdivision proposal at a public hearing. The subdivision is the largest to ever be considered by the county.

PARK COUNTY commissioners voted to allow developer Wade Dokken to begin infrastructure work on Ameya Preserve, a subdivision of mostly second homes in Paradise Valley.

GALLATIN COUNTY commission approved the 343-lot Gallatin Heights subdivision by a 2-1 vote.

ROADS

JEFFERSON COUNTY commission formed a Rural Improvement district and a Rural Maintenance District for the South Hills area by a unanimous vote. Plans call for paving South Hills Road, South Hills Drive, and portions of Holmes Gulch Road and then maintaining those improvements with money raised from the RID/RMD.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY's Shiloh Road project could be delayed for up to three years. According to the report from the Montana Department of Transportation, the project could begin in 2009 but not end until 2012 due to rising costs for building materials as well as other road projects taking longer than expected.

FLATHEAD COUNTY has embarked on a program to christen an estimated 2,000 unnamed roads in the rural part of the valley.

MISCELLANEOUS

FERGUS COUNTY fire trucks will all have radios thanks to a $547,614 federal assistance to Firefighters Grant through the Department of Homeland Security.

DAWSON COUNTY is receiving a communications tower as a donation from BNSF Railways. It will be used as part of a dispatch area being set up in the emergency operations center of the county courthouse.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY commissioners were part of a delegation that received a check for $435,000 from Kent Atwood, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, as a pre-disaster mitigation grant for the upgrade of bridges and stream bank work on Blacktail Deer Creek.

LAKE COUNTY Sheriff's Department and local city police departments are now using Computer Aided Dispatch with the addition of laptop computers and software that allows officers to access the Criminal Justice Information Network and the National Crime Information Center.

FLATHEAD COUNTY commissioners hired retired Bozeman Finance Director Miral Gamradt to produce a capital improvement plan for the county.

RAVALLI COUNTY Park Board loaned the Bitterroot Aquatic enter $20,000 so it could open its doors again.

FLATHEAD COUNTY Board of Health adopted a new policy that cracks down on non-mobile coffee shacks operating with food purveyor licenses issued for mobile units. Under the new policy, new coffee vending operations must have piped hot and cold water under pressure as well as a connection to a sanitary sewer. Existing businesses may continue to operate under the previous policy unless they increase the complexity of their menu.

ROOSEVELT COUNTY recently experienced a small Shigella outbreak. Typical symptoms include diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps. The disease usually resolves itself within five to seven days.

Livestock Assistance Signup Begins in Seven Counties

HELENA—Owners of livestock in seven eligible Montana counties have until Nov. 28, 2006 to complete applications for the Livestock Assistance Grant Program announced recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Applications and facts sheets will be available starting October 16 at county Extension Service offices in Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Powder River and Rosebud counties, as well as at reservation extension offices at Crow Agency and Lame Deer.

The total grant amount for Montana is $933,443. The program is funded by the USDA, which identified the eligible counties based on U.S. Drought Monitor maps from March 7 to August 31, 2006. The agency determined the dollar amount by the number of cattle and sheep in those counties.

Under an agreement with USDA, Governor Brian Schweitzer appointed the Montana Department of Agriculture to administer the program in Montana to make the money available promptly.

Owners of cattle, sheep, bison and horses who pastured animals in the affected counties for a portion of the period between March 7 and August 31, and who experienced drought losses or expenses, are eligible to receive checks based on the number of breeding stock and on forage-loss estimates in their counties, explained Nancy K. Peterson, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture.

"The list of counties and rules for the program came from the USDA. We recognize that producers in other parts of the state experienced losses due to drought and will not be eligible for this program," Peterson said. "We also know that the amount of money Montana received from USDA will not compensate producers in the seven counties for all of their forage-related losses and expenses."

A simple, one-page form was devised to make it easy for producers to apply. In signing the application, livestock owners certify that they had eligible losses or expenses, which may include forage-related losses, supplement feed costs, transporting feed or livestock to new feed supplies, and costs associated with emergency water supplies.

Cattle, bison and horses will be counted as one animal unit each. Five sheep will count as one animal unit.

Extension agents have agreed to forward the completed applications to the department for processing by no later than the close of business on Nov. 28, 2006. The November deadline will enable the department to get assistance to producers by the end of December, Peterson says.

Forms and information are available at MSU and Reservation Extension Service offices in the seven eligible counties, and must be returned to those offices for review. The producer's taxpayer identification number will be required to complete the application. Copies of the forms and a related fact sheet also can be obtained from a link on the department's website homepage: www.agr.mt.gov.

Participating MSU and Reservation Extension Service offices are located at:

-- Big Horn County- 121 West Third Street, Rm. 101, P.O. Box 908, Hardin, MT 59034-0908, Phone: (406) 665-9770, Fax: (406) 665-9776.

-- Carbon County - 128 Main St., P.O. Box 230, Joliet, MT 59041-0230, Phone: (406) 962-3522, Fax: (406) 962-3522.

-- Custer County - 1010 Main St., Miles City, MT 59301-3419, Phone: (406) 874-3370, Fax: (406) 874-3454.

-- Fallon and Carter Counties - 10 W. Fallon, P.O. Box 850, Baker MT, 59313-0850, Phone: (406) 778-7110, Fax: (406) 778-3431.

-- Crow Reservation - Little Big Horn College Extension Service, P.O. Box 370, Crow Agency, MT 59022, Phone (406) 638-3132 ext. 132,

-- Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation - P.O. Box 128, Lame Deer, MT 59043, Phone: 406) 477-6498, Fax: (406) 477-6488.

-- Powder River County - P.O. Box 269, Broadus MT 59317-0269, Phone: (406) 436-2424, Fax: (406) 436-2482.

-- Rosebud County – Courthouse, P.O. Box 65, Forsyth MT 59327-0065, Phone: (406) 346-7320, Fax: (406) 346-7551.

Information from the Montana Department of Agriculture can be obtained from Andy Gray, commodity section program manager, at (406) 444-3730 or by e-mail at agr@mt.gov.

Announcements & Reminders

2006 Watershed Symposium
Charting our Course in a Changing West

The 2006 Watershed Symposium: Charting Our Course in a Changing West is scheduled for December 5-7, 2006 at the Great Falls Holiday Inn. Changing landscapes, changing economies and watershed and landscape restoration are challenges for every community. It is impossible to have sustained conservation of water and soil without also conserving the quality of life and means of making a living. This Symposium will help participants learn and use information that can help local efforts improve natural resources while maintaining community values. Symposium speakers include Ed Marston, publisher emeritus of the High Country News, Dr. Harry Fritz, University of Montana, and many more local and regional experts and practitioners. It also offers opportunities for networking and further resources.

Limited partial scholarships are still available for watershed group members, conservation districts, local governments and individuals interested in using collaborative watershed approaches to solve community natural resource issues. Scholarships are considered on basis of eligibility and date of application. Early registration is due November 14. Forms and further information about the Symposium are available on the web at http://watersheds.montana.edu/symposium or by calling or emailing Montana Watercourse at mtwatercourse@montana.edu or (406) 994-6671.

Risk Management Loss Control Conference

The Risk Management Loss Control Conference, held January 16-18, 2007, is presented by the Montana Association of Counties and the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association

It only happens once a year – the MACo Risk Management "Loss Control Conference" will mix serious and fun days of learning.

The safety sessions will teach you several ways to make your safety and health program WAY more effective.

Sign up now! For additional information or to obtain registration forms, access MACo website: http://www.maco.cog.mt.us

Let's spend several days together at the MACo Risk Management "learning party."

Law Enforcement attending the conference will receive Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Credits.

The convention will be held at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center: 1223 Mullowney LN, Billings, MT 59101, (800) 537-7286.

Questions About The Conference? Contact Karen Houston at (406) 444-4375 or macomtg@maco.cog.mt.us.

Please see the registration form on the following page (page 11) to sign up immediately.

Open House for Retiring Commissioner

An Open House will be held in honor of retiring Golden Valley County Commissioner Joy Schanz.

The festivities will be held at the Golden Valley County Court House on December 19, 2006.

It will begin at 1 pm and last until 3 pm.

Orientation to MT Disaster & Emergency Services (DES)

This orientation program will be held December 5-7, 2006 at the Helena Armed Forces Reserve Center, Fort Harrison. The participant will have the opportunity to meet and visit with the State staff, tour the headquarters building, meet with other emergency managers and public officials and share your experiences and concerns in the field of emergency management.

This course is for all disciplines that work together in planning for or responding to emergencies. The course is intended for state, tribal and county officials who are responsible for emergency management functions.

The primary objective of this program is to provide you with an overview of the emergency management system in Montana, expectations, the people that work within the system and the resources that are available to assist you.

Motel accommodations will be provided, at no cost to you at the Fort Harrison Inn, located 7 miles west of Helena. A map is available on the DES website, under the Training link: www.mt.gov/dma/des

Other motels are available in the Helena area. If you choose to stay elsewhere, it will be at your own expense.

If you have special needs for room accommodations, please let Fred Naeher, Training and Exercise Manager, know by the application deadline. He can be reached at 406-841-3968 or fnaeher@mt.gov.

An agenda of the program and registration form can be obtained through the following link: http://dma.mt.gov/des/training.asp.

The registration deadline is noon on Friday, November 17, 2006.

County Radon Outreach Program

As mentioned in the MACo October Newsletter, NACo is continuing its successful radon program in time for National Radon Awareness Month in January 2007. To raise awareness of radon, its health effects, and mitigation techniques, NACo is again conducting the County Radon Outreach Program. Your county could be one of ten counties to earn 300 free radon test kits.

To earn radon test kits to distribute in your county, submit a summary of innovative activities planned to educate diverse and low income population areas of your county throughout the month of January 2007.

Application Materials: Submit a 1-2 page summary of your county's planned radon awareness and outreach activities for the month of January 2007. All activities and distribution of test kits should occur between Jan. 1, 2007 and Jan. 31, 2007. The application deadline is Monday, November 13, 2006 by 5:00 p.m. EST.

Please mail applications to National Association of Counties (NACo), Community Services, Attn: Kelly Zonderwyk, 440 First Street NW, Washington, DC 20001; or submit your application by e-mail to kzonderwyk@naco.org.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the new NACo Indoor Air Quality Issue Brief on Radon in the Indoor Environment contact Kelly Zonderwyk at 202.942.4224 or kzonderwyk@naco.org.

Recipients will be notified by December 1, 2006 and will receive their 300 free radon test by the end of December.

Montana Association of Counties
&
Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association

January 16-18, 2007

Billings Hotel and Convention Center
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Billings, MT 59101
(406) 248-7151

LOSS CONTROL CONFERENCE PRE-REGISTRATION

Name:_____County or Agency:_____.

Position/Title:

Pre-Registration	On Arrival	Paid
$75.00	$85.00	_____

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE BOXES BELOW:

□ Yes, I will be attending the Awards Luncheon on Thursday January 18, 2007.

□ No I will not be attending the Awards Luncheon on Thursday January 18, 2007.

Registration fee includes the awards luncheon, coffee breaks, registration materials, and the cost of speakers and program.

Make checks payable to MACo, and send with this entire form to MACo at **2715 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602.** For information regarding the conference call Emelia McEwen at 444-4370 and for information regarding registration call Karen Houston at 444-4375.

REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED ONLY IF CANCELLATION IS REQUESTED BY JANUARY 13, 2007

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING YOUR OWN LODGING RESERVATIONS**!!**

MACo has blocked sleeping rooms for the nights of January 16-18, 2007, at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. The cost of the rooms are $60.00 plus tax. **TO RECEIVE THIS RATE, you must mention you are with MACo Risk Management and YOU MUST MAKE YOUR RESERVATION before January 5, 2007.**

NACo Annual Conference, Chicago: Combined Reports

Submitted separately by Connie Eissinger, McCone County, WIR & Public Lands Steering Committee; Alan Thompson, Ravalli County, Public Lands Steering Committee Representative; and Mike Murray, Lewis & Clark County, WIR & Public Lands Steering Committees

Friday, August 4, 2006

Federal Lands Payments Subcommittee
Four Resolutions reviewed:

1. Federal Mineral Royalty Resolution—A motion was made and passed to recommend the resolution be tabled and to request that the PLSC Chair appoint a committee to study the effects of such a resolution before next year's annual conference.
2. Sale of Public Lands Resolution—A motion to recommend approval by the PLSC was passed.
3. Assessing Concessionaire Property Taxes on Public Lands Resolution—A motion to recommend approval by the PLSC was passed unanimously.
4. Support for BLM's New Grazing Regulations Resolution—A motion to recommend approval by the PLSC was passed.

Federal Lands Management Subcommittee

David Tenny, Deputy Undersecretary, Natural Resource and Environment, USDA, reported on many different issues relating to the Forest Service, but the main focus was on the State and Private Forestry program. They were particularly concerned with the coordination of private foresters and the work that needs to be done in the wild land urban interface area. They are trying to look past individual issues such as accumulation of biomass, disease, etc. and instead focus on the overall health of the forest. He said the Government is supporting and encouraging Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

Gateway Communities Subcommittee

A presentation titled "The Lost People of Mountain Village" was given; it was a satire about a real village built by wealthy people who "disappeared" when the services in the village could no longer stay in business because the workers could no longer afford to live there. The second presentation was very informative for all fast growing counties; it was about the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act. Because of the tremendous growth in southern Utah, they have been working for several years with all the stakeholders in the area to formulate a plan for orderly growth. The plan can be accessed at either www.house.gov/matheson or http://Bennett.senate.gov/.

Western Interstate Region Board Meeting

The financial report for WIR was given, and in the discussion it was felt that it would be worth taking another shot at asking non-WIR states who benefit from WIR's efforts in increasing the PILT payments for counties, to send a one-time assessment for the Public Lands Trust Fund. This fund covers the expenses of the PILT Fly-in.

The Grazing Rule was also discussed. The rule insures that grazing is one of the authorized uses of federal land and a means by which to preserve open space and improve land management. The rule now allows ranchers to share the title to improvements that they make. The Grazing Rule may be found at www.blm.gov, and information on each state may be accessed there as well.

Also discussed was the National Landscape Conservation Network and a few of the resolutions proposed to various steering committees; the National Advisory Committee on Roadless Areas was reported on; and Collaboration with Western Extension Service Directors was reported on as well.

There was a legislative update: the Secure Rural Schools Coalition will be bringing teams to Washington every month. Any county not now a member may sign up on their website.

Senator Baucus's staff will work on the Crapo/Lincoln Endangered Species bill this fall. It was noted that this was significant in making improvements to the ESA through the senate.

The Wildland Fire Interagency Council was reported on: catastrophic fires are caused by more than global warming and fire suppression; the density of stands, years of drought, insect infestations, and litigation over timber sales have largely contributed to the disasters.

Yellowstone County, MT, St. George, UT, and Pendleton, OR announced that they will be putting in bids for the 2008 WIR Conference.

A sample of what the Public Lands Book will look like was presented. Each county in the western region will have a page identifying federal PILT acreage, federal fees/receipts/PILT, state public lands, state payments/grants, a map of the state and location of the county, and a section with a brief discussion of each federal payment act or law and all federal public land laws.

Saturday, August 5, 2006

Environment, Energy, and Land Use and Public Lands Steering Committees Joint Meeting

This was a follow-up meeting to the one that took place in Sacramento during the WIR conference and was focused on the ESA. The two committees met to discuss the Endangered Species Act and needed improvements to its reauthorization.

Public Lands Steering Committee
Legislative Briefing: Senate Perspective

Mr. Frank Gladics, Professional Staff for the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources discussed the areas that have been treated under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to date and noted that counties need to demand more funding for prevention rather than suppression. He thinks that the Secure Rural Schools will be reauthorized for at least one year. In discussing the Walden Bill, he said it is in the Ag Committee and may not be as acceptable as it was.

Subcommittee Reports and Consideration of Proposed Policy Resolutions

The Public Lands Steering Committee agreed with the Federal Lands Payments Subcommittee's recommendations with regard to the prior four resolutions discussed in the first part of this report. Later, during the Board of Director's Meeting as a Resolutions Committee, the Sale of Public Lands Resolution was strongly opposed, pulled from the resolutions, and passed on to be voted on by the delegates.

A report was given on the language to be incorporated into the Public Lands Chapter of the *American County Platform.* The Wildland Fire Leadership Council discussed their Ten Year Strategy Implementation Plan Update. Paul Beddoe reported where we are with the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act (same discussion he presented to the WIR board). Supervisor Tommie Martin From Gila County, AZ presented a dialogue on her county's fire plan: bought 20,000 gallon surplus Desert Storm Fuel Bladders for $21,000 each and placed them strategically throughout the county; set up tanks made of culverts with pumps to fill out of the bladders (they are large enough that helicopters can dip out of them); and built fire breaks around the towns throughout the county. For any questions, she may be reached at tmartin@co.gila.az.us.

NACo Chosen as One of Nation's Top Associations

By Jim Philipps, Media Relations Manager

Veteran NACo members have long known that their dues and active participation have contributed immeasurably to the growth and effectiveness of an outstanding advocacy organization. Now, that observation has been validated by a new four-year study from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

NACo was one of nine "remarkable" associations selected to be part of a study to determine why successful associations thrive. The results of the study were released in a new book, *7 Measures of Success - What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*, at ASAE's Annual Conference in Boston last month.

NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake attended the conference to receive the honor and met with renowned author Jim Collins, who was the mentor and research advisor for the project and book.

Collins is best known for writing such business bestsellers as *Built to Last* and *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap And Others Don't*.

After polling 1,000 nonprofit CEOs on their top five choices of nonprofits in the U.S., ASAE compiled a list of the 506 most mentioned associations. ASAE researchers then analyzed the responses and narrowed the list to the top 104, which were invited to participate in the next phase of the study.

After four years of data analysis, several indicators of success were discovered that differentiated the good organizations from the remarkable ones. Nine remarkable associations, including NACo, were then selected for in-depth study and featured at length in the book.

"To be cited by the American Society of Association Executives as a remarkable association is a real tribute to our NACo members, board, leadership and staff," Naake said. "We are very proud of this national recognition."

Collins said associations are the "hidden glue of our society and economy. Like the mortar that holds the bricks of a building in place, associations go largely unnoticed, yet they do much to hold the entire structure together."

The researchers found that "truly exceptional associations - and other nonprofit organizations for that matter - share a dogged commitment to seven key factors, or measures, that define their ability to remain remarkable year after year after year." They don't so much subscribe to certain qualities as they embody these 7 Measures of Success:

- A Customer Service Culture
- Alignment of Products and Services with Mission
- Data-Driven Strategies
- Dialog and Engagement
- The CEO as a Broker of Ideas
- Organizational Adaptability, and
- Alliance Building

There were a number of references made to NACo in the book as examples of why NACo was considered remarkable by the researchers. For example, the authors wrote that remarkable associations view members as a population to serve rather than a market to sell to.

"In fact, they reject out-of-hand a product or service that fails to directly aid their members, even if it might generate revenue. The National Association of Counties (NACo) is one organization that is completely driven by its commitment to meet member needs."

The book further cited the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (GPA) as one of NACo's success stories. GPA grew out of the recognition that counties are chronically short of money. NACo cosponsors the alliance with several other government associations. It enables local government agencies to aggregate their purchasing power and obtain volume pricing on office supplies, technology products, janitorial supplies, park equipment and other supplies.

NACo, the authors wrote, "probably could have crafted a group purchasing arrangement on a much smaller scale, such as a typical affinity services program. Doing so, however, would have reduced the organization's effectiveness in meeting its mission."

In 2004, GPA registered more than $500 million is sales and saved local governments an estimated 20 percent on purchases through the program.

The authors also cited NACo's regular "County 101' sessions with staff as an effective way to help ensure that "everyone is clear about what (our) members do," and detailed how the association dug out of a financial crisis in the early 1990s and took steps to guard against future serious fiscal difficulties.

Other remarkable associations cited in the book include AARP, the American Dental Association, the Associated General Contractors of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants, Radiological Society of North America and Society for Human Resources Management.

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Conclusions

Good News About Fire Safety:
How to Control 4 Common Workplace Fire Hazards

Even though there are 70-80,000 workplace fires in the U.S. annually, only 15% result from a catastrophic failure of equipment. Meaning, 85% of fires are caused by factors related to human behavior and are totally preventable with the proper pro-active fire prevention plan in place.

Common Fire Hazards & Their Control

1. Heating Equipment: Improperly installed, operated or maintained furnaces and other heating equipment can lead to a fire.
   - ♦Equipment should be installed ad serviced annually by a licensed technician.
   - ♦Combustible material should never be kept in furnace rooms.
   - ♦Temporary heating units should not generally be used in public buildings.
2. Electrical: Misused, damaged, improperly maintained, or overloaded electrical equipment is a common cause of fire.
   - ♦Extension cords should only be used for temporary power to equipment that is being used by someone "now."
   - ♦Cords should never be left coiled up while plugged in. Inductive heating can be caused resulting in insulation damage.
   - ♦Circuit breakers should be turned off and on every six months to ensure they are functioning properly.
3. Mechanical Friction: Equipment that is not properly maintained or cleaned can lead to fires.
   - ♦Bearings on ventilation equipment and conveyors should be kept properly aligned and lubricated.
   - ♦Loaders and forklifts should be kept cleaned and free of combustible material.
4. Proximity Hazards: Hazards outside of buildings can expose them to the risk of fire.
   - ♦Fuel tanks near buildings should be installed to current codes and protected from vehicle collisions by a barricade.
   - ♦Dumpsters should be at least 30 feet from buildings.
   - ♦Weeds/brush/grass should be kept mowed back at least 30 feet from building.

Fires do happen so be prepared. Remember the Fire Defense Triad:

1. Detection/Notification: discovering the fire and alerting fire department.
2. Emergency Egress: well-marked safe ways to leave the building.
3. Incipient Suppression: sprinkler systems, fire hoses and portable extinguishers.

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