MONTANA
Policy Review

A Publication of the Local Government Center Volume 3, Number 2 Fall 1993

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

REGULAR FEATURES

A biannual analysis of public policy issues confronting Montana's communities and those who serve them.
Made possible by the Northwest Area Foundation.

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RELECTIONS ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

"Whereas, the number of unfunded federal mandates on counties and cities have significantly increased during the last decade; and

Whereas, such mandates stem from federal laws and regulations that require counties and cities to provide services and programs, and perform certain responsibilities without providing federal funding for such services", etc.etc..

These propositions set forth in a recent and formal resolution of the National Association of Counties (see "MACO News", October-November, 1993 for the complete text) are widely supported by Montana's municipal and county officials. At this year's annual conference of the League of Cities and Towns as well as at a recent workshop for MACO leadership the most frequently heard buzz words were "unfunded mandates". And the phrase was usually accompanied by a slight curling of the lower lip and a certain narrowing of the eyelids. We could substitute the phrase "germ warfare" and probably elicit a comparable reaction from most of Montana's county commissioners and municipal mayors.

Unfunded federal mandates dealing with water and air quality standards, land fills, facility access, employee benefits etc. are imposed by a well intentioned but broke federal government. The effect is to shift the enormous cost of compliance and implementation to grass roots governments and to their narrow property tax bases. A recent national survey of city and county governments, reported in the ***Nation's Cities Weekly*** (Nov. 1, 1993) predicts that these mandated projects, programs and standards will cost local taxpayers in excess of $87 billion (yes, billion) between 1994 and 1998. It should come as no surprise that local officials from Lincoln County, Montana to Lincoln County, Maine (by the way, the county seat is Wiscasset) are hopping mad.

Apparently the feds got the message. Last week President Clinton signed an executive order barring the imposition of any new federal regulations on local governments unless accompanied by sufficient funds to cover the imposed costs. Parallel action is now pending in both houses of the Congress. We hope the same message will not be lost on state policy makers as yet another special session of the Montana State Legislature convenes this month to deal with the state's budget problems.

It seems appropriate to recognize the fact that Montana's local governments, already up to their ears in budget busting federal mandates, cannot now reasonably be expected to absorb cost shifting solutions to the state's revenue problems. Downloading responsibilities from the state to local government as a budget balancing strategy was wisely forsworn at the outset of the 1993 Legislative Session. A similar joint resolution early in the special session reaffirming legislative commitment to the principles of the "Drake Amendment" (1-2-212 MCA) would be much appreciated by those who govern at the grass roots. It might also lay an appropriate foundation for the difficult property tax deliberations that will surely vex state-local relations during what promises to be a difficult special legislative session.

Ken Weaver

Kenneth L. Weaver, Director
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Policy Review

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2 *Fall 1993*

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LAND AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE FOR MODERATION IN MONTANA

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The renaissance of rural communities is partly a result of demographic and social trends, partly a result of home grown economic entrepreneurship. In any case, rural development is similar to urban development. Land use conflicts, environmental pollution, fiscal stress, and infrastructure failures can result. Montana provides a case study of the politics of immigration and land development in the Rocky Mountain West.

Recent articles in the mass media have highlighted political conflicts and environmental consequences of urban growth in rural Rocky Mountain states. These conflicts are most focused on state land use laws such as subdivision and planning policy and economic development strategies. This report uses Montana's Subdivision and Platting Act and state economic development efforts to illustrate the political responses to recent growth in the West.

Governmental action to address problems of growth is likely to be incremental rather than comprehensive, and cautious rather than immediate. Rocky mountain politics, whether Democrat or Republican, tends to be conservative and parochial. Westerners have long mistrusted the eastern establishment, believing Washington and New York (and Los Angeles by extension) are at best contemptuous of westerners and at worst colonialist. Recent demographic trends are not likely to change these perceptions. After all, most of the new immigrants have left their former homes and come to the Rockies more as refugees than as tourists. Consequently, western politicians mistrust models of laws from other states. They are more likely to craft policies from homegrown ideas than to borrow innovations from other regions.

The American Planning Association has recently embarked on a program to modernize planning and land use regulatory statutes in the states. Most states' zoning and subdivision laws are based on model language written in the 1920s. Land use regulatory laws in the Rockies are minimal, reflecting a conservative ethic and traditional suspicion of federally inspired planning concepts. Montana's revision in 1993 of its Subdivision and Platting Act reflected traditional western land use politics. Oregon and Washington, nearby states experiencing similar growth problems, have adopted comprehensive growth management acts, but these have had little or no influence on Montana's approach to managing growth. Future efforts in other Rocky Mountain states to respond to rapid land development are likely to adhere more closely to the Montana model of growth management than to the Pacific Coast model.

Growth Comes to Rural America

During the farm crisis of the mid 80's many pundits said that rural America was in dire trouble, that small towns were increasingly populated by ghosts and lost dreams. With farm after farm going into foreclosure and many farm banks collapsing, one could not argue with this thesis in 1985 or 86. The 1990s bring a different image of rural America, or at least certain pockets of rural renaissance. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that "most farmers have healthy bank accounts after four good years . . . farm banks are awash in deposits."[1] *American Demographics* magazine reported that one-fifth of America's non-metropolitan counties (481) had a net growth of retirement aged Americans of 15 percent, which enabled these counties to weather the recession better than the rest of the country.[2] *USA Today* also reported on this trend.[3]

Tourism and telecommuting are increasing the economic viability of rural communities

Retirement dollars have in fact been a common target for rural economic development efforts for several years.[4] With the baby boom cohort aging, future growth of rural retirement communities can be expected to continue for some time. But retirees are not the only source for rural population growth. Tourism and telecommuting are increasing the economic viability of rural communities heretofore dependent on extractive industries such as timber, mining, energy development and agriculture. And the trend is not lost on big business. Some of the hottest growth markets for national franchises are small towns.[5]

As air pollution, traffic congestion, and living expenses increase in the Los Angeles area, more people seem to be bailing out all together and seeking better lives in less congested communities. Consequently, towns receiving this immigration are looking to stricter land use laws and growth control measures. The impetus for Washington state's growth management laws have much to do with immigration by Californians. The *Wall Street Journal* described it as a new social pathology associated with Californians' exit from the Golden State calling it "Caliphobia."[6] Another article in the *Utne Reader* referred to the "Californication of the American West."[7] Rapid growth in other communities such as Bozeman, Carson City, Santa Fe, Portland, Sedona, and elsewhere has been tied by local officials to California refugees. Some evidence for this is indicated by trends in housing markets, with California markets down and the former going up.

A similar phenomena can be seen on the east coast with communities in south central Pennsylvania, northeastern West Virginia, parts of Delaware, South Carolina, Maine, Georgia, and rural New York receiving refugees from Washington, D.C., New York City and Boston. Some of the growth in nonmetropolitan counties can be attributed to metropolitan suburbs expanding and commuting times getting longer. No comprehensive analysis has yet defined the trend reflected by these anecdotal observations, but it is to be expected that as telecommunications improve and transportation of goods goes high tech, more business can be done in rural areas than in the past.

An argument could be made that dispersing the population would be a good thing for rural communities and America generally. However, population dispersion could also present the nation with broader problems usually associated with metropolitan growth and its air pollution, traffic congestion, infrastructure deterioration, fiscal shortfalls, farmland conversion and loss of open space, water contamination, "not-in-my-backyard" politics, etc.

Several recent state legislative reports outline critical dilemmas of rural land use.[8] California, itself, has a faster growth rate in its rural areas than cities. According to a story in *Planning* magazine, the Central Valley is growing five times faster than the rest of the state.[9] The article illustrates some of the valley's problems typical of any rural area with rapid influx of new residents - inadequate sewage treatment, air pollution, traffic congestion, rising gang activity, poor health care facilities, poor school districts, inadequate police and fire protection, premature subdivision of farmland, uncoordinated government planning and regulation, etc. - many of the same problems found in urban areas. But in rural areas, its difficult to characterize what's happening as "urban growth." Growth might be only 3,000 new residents, but in a town of 5,000, this kind of growth may be harder to cope with than 20,000 new residents in Los Angeles during the same time span.

Some of the retirement communities in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, for example, have experienced an influx of retirees not into retirement condominiums with standard public water supplies and sewage treatment but into subdivisions of mobile homes served by septic systems and well water. Many of the resulting problems are directly attributable to lack of rural planning. Most rural counties across the country have no subdivision regulations.[10] Many states have no enforceable statewide septic tank regulations, and the ones that do are incapable of requiring adequate maintenance of individual septic systems. Few septic regulations are written with land use objectives in mind. Their principle objective, after all, is the protection of public health.

Most state legislation for growth management has been aimed at growth in large urban areas or in critical natural areas, not rural sprawl.[11] In any event, a significant political backlash has emerged in the form of bills to restrict state agency actions that might be interpreted to constitute takings of private property without just compensation (so-called environmental policy acts). Suffice it to say that political constraints on regulating land use are still strong obstacles to planning and effective regulation of rural subdivision.[12]

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The professional planning community recognizes the problems of rural growth and desires support from the states, although statewide planning criteria should be voluntary according to most county planners.[13] Many local officials will oppose, for the record, state intervention in local planning matters but off the record acknowledge that without state or federal requirements, planning and/or land use regulation is politically infeasible. There are examples of strong local planning programs, even in rural jurisdictions,[14] but rural planning has a spotty record. A middle ground between centrally mandated planning criteria and no planning is technical assistance and/or financial incentives from state and federal programs. In the face of state and federal budget cuts for planning, however, this middle ground is not being seriously pursued.

The point is that land use, public health, and fiscal policies cannot be considered in isolation of one one another.

State laws that affect rural land use need to recognize the interrelationships of diverse policy objectives. For example, state programs to protect agricultural land from the adverse impacts of urban growth must recognize the effect that property tax has on farm economics. In spite of differential property tax for farm land in most states, assessment of real and personal property taxes in farm regions have reached such levels as to make the tax bill close to what it would be for subdivided land. The farmer in this case has a strong incentive to sell to developers. Likewise, many jurisdictions enforce ground water protection and septic system ordinances by requiring large lot subdivisions.[15] Critics charge that large lot subdivision contributes to sprawl, increases infrastructure costs, makes homes less affordable, and makes central, community sewage systems less feasible. This is not to say that large lots are always objectionable. The point is that land use, public health, and fiscal policies cannot be considered in isolation of one another.

Rural newcomers are bringing with them sophisticated community organizing skills. Political power in rural areas will inevitably shift and be shared in new ways. A lot of good old boy networks will be shaken up and replaced by new boy (and girl) networks. Power sharing and community organizing will doubtless involve more conflicts. Dispute resolution and mediation techniques are being employed in some communities in efforts to manage conflicts resulting from rapid growth and cultural change. Loudon County, Virginia undertook a year-long consensus/negotiation process to develop a new zoning ordinance. The process involved a professional mediator and broad representation of community interests.[16] Many economic development efforts now are mimicking consensus processes using multi-party planning and goal-setting. The continuing viability be a function of the local culture and traditions. Adversarial politics is the convention in the West and newcomers from other regions find it difficult to join the local power structure. Complexity will increase, and negotiations will get louder. Rural politics is bound to change as a consequence.

Rural America is not a vacuum, inhabited only by ghosts and Buffaloes.[17] There are many comeback stories of resurgent small towns.[18] The renaissance of rural communities is partly a result of demographic and social trends, partly a result of home grown economic entrepreneurship. In any case, rural development is similar to urban development. Land use conflicts, environmental pollution, fiscal stress, and infrastructure failures can result. Montana provides a case study of the politics of immigration and land development in the Rocky Mountain West.

Until the 1970s, Montana was a state of farmers, miners, loggers and cowboys with occasional tourists coming to see Yellowstone or Glacier National Park. Montana is increasingly a tourist-dependent economy with a growing number of retirees attracted by its famed fly-fishing streams, relatively unspoiled scenery and low crime rate. The state's laws regarding development were lax compared to larger, more urban states to the east and west. Like most western states, extractive industries were encouraged in Montana and, in fact, dominated its political culture. But change has come, and the resulting culture shock is shaking the foundation of Montana's political, economic and cultural institutions.

Complexity will increase, and negotiations will get louder. Rural politics is bound to change as a consequence.

On the front-line of environmental politics, it is ironic that many of the émigrés are attracted in the first place by Montana's "clean" and scenic open lands. The greatest threat to that environment is the influx of people. Agriculture, most significantly ranching, is the land use that most ensures open space and yet grazing is a major target of environmental activists. But politics makes strange bedfellows. The Montana Stock Growers' Association sided with environmentalists in the 1993 sion and Platting Act that makes development more subject to planning review. Stock growers are concerned that, as their neighbors sell out to the developers, property, estate and inheritance taxes go up, as does opposition to cattle grazing by the new neighbors, harassment from domestic dogs, and conflicts with other urban life-styles and land uses. Ranching becomes less viable. Similarly, wildlife habitat shrinks and the region's best fishing spots become overcrowded.

Gallatin County, the fastest growing county in the state (42,865 residents in 1980 to 50,463 in 1990), lost 25 percent of its agricultural land in the past 20 years. During the same period the average cost per acre of land went from $150 to $10,000. The environmentalist crusade to eliminate grazing on public lands is adding insult to injury of traditional ways of life. Some of the more exaggerated defenses by cattlemen seem true. One environmentalist recently asked a range ecologist to help find scientific proof of overgrazing, complaining about having stepped in a cow pie during a hike in the mountains.

Conflicts over the environment have replaced in vehemence the labor-management wars in Butte during the early part of the century. Environmentalists are promoting tourism as an economic panacea and alternative to extractive industries that diminish environmental values.[19] But even as businesses that cater to the tourist see opportunities in the Yellowstone region, community activists in Livingston, angered by unsightly signs, discouraged Hardees restaurant chain from locating there, losing 80 jobs in the process. There are downsides to tourism.[20] Environmentalists and planners maintain that good planning can compensate for tourism's negative consequences. On the other hand, the victory put together by environmentalists and planners in this year's legislative session on subdivision review was not strong enough to strengthen the state's planning capabilities. Bills which would have mandated comprehensive planning and paid for it were withdrawn or defeated. Although the revision of the subdivision law succeeded, long-term success of this revision remains in doubt because local governments are strapped for the planning funds to carry it out.

plished by House Bill 408 eliminated exemptions that allowed 20-acre divisions of property and occasional sales without subdivision review. Montana planners and environmentalists viewed these exemptions as the critical factor in an unprecedented land rush on Montana open spaces.

Representative Bob Gilbert, a rancher from Sidney, tried unsuccessfully for seven years to get the legislature to amend the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act. It is ironic that a conservative Republican from eastern Montana should adopt a cause — land use regulation — near and dear to western Montana environmentalists and liberals. Land development occurring in the western part of the state might seemingly be something coveted by eastern constituents. Gilbert committed his political weight to getting a bill passed in the 1993 session of the legislature. A bill was passed, but at a political cost which may pose problems for future planning legislation.

Unlike most other states that have toughened land use planning law in recent years, Montana did not incorporate an economic development component in the legislation to force a balance between development review and jobs-creation. There are a variety of economic development programs being conducted throughout the state, but they are not explicitly connected to the subdivision review process. Subdivision review and land use planning were addressed independently of economic development issues by the legislature. The process of adoption of HB 408 may provide insight into prospects for Montana and other western states' ability to balance growth and protection of the environment.

Subdivision and land use planning were addressed independently of economic development issues by the legislature.

The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act

The Subdivision and Platting Act of 1973 (MCA 76-3-101 et. seq.) requires local governments to review subdivisions. Prior to the 1993 legislative session, subdivision meant any division of land that created one or more parcels containing less than 20 into 20 or more acre parcels was submit a Certificate of Survey showing the location and boundaries for title purposes to the local government planning office. The act also exempted from local subdivision review occasional sales (any one sale of a division of land within a one year period) and family conveyances without limitation. In reviewing subdivision applications, local governments were required to consider several criteria for approval. They were:

- public interest,
- "basis of need,"
- expressed public opinion, and
- effects on agriculture, local services, taxation, the natural environment, wildlife and wildlife habitat and public health and safety.

The Montana Association of Planners and environmental interest groups have been trying to get the Subdivision and Platting Act amended for twenty years because the 20-acre, occasional sale, and family exemptions allowed a large amount of land to be subdivided without local review of any kind. The Montana Environmental Information Center first mounted a concerted effort to amend the statute in 1975 with publication of the Montana Subdivision Inventory Project.[21] This project collected data on land development in 35 of 56 counties in the state. The data included the fastest growing counties and showed that 334,018 acres had been subdivided into 114,085 lots, an average of 3 acres per lot. The report had several weaknesses. It did not state explicitly what time period these lots were subdivided, although it implied that the subdivisions took place between 1966 and 1974, several references being made to the year 1966 as the initial year of a land boom. Also, the data did not indicate how many of the subdivisions actually had structures built on the property following division. Nevertheless, the report and subsequent literature that cites the Subdivision Inventory Project concluded that rampant development of Montana land was underway and needed to be curbed.

The Environmental Information Center's project was the only comprehensive effort to assess the extent of land development in the state. Neither the state nor private interests have attempted to fully document the extent of development, but lobbyists for environmental groups have argued for two decades that development is uncontrolled and unmanaged. There is much anecdotal evidence to support this conclusion.

The 20 acre definition of subdivision was the most egregious loophole in the law. When the law was adopted in 1973, the legislature assumed that subdivisions of 20 acres or more were too large to constitute urban residential and were inherently agricultural. The assumption was that any construction that took place on such large parcels would have minimum impact on the environment or local public services and there would be no need for planning review of the relatively few 20-acre or larger subdivisions. However, according to a 1977 study by the Montana Department of Community Affairs (now the Department of Commerce), 93 percent of land divided for sale in 9 of the fastest growing counties avoided any review by local governments because they were larger than the 20-acre exemption.[22] This accounted for almost sixty-thousand acres of land compared to just under 4,000 acres of land that was subdivided into parcels of less than 20 acres that met the approval criteria through the regular review process. It was clear that a large amount of land in Montana was being subdivided without any review by state or local government and, therefore, was not meeting the criteria for approval.

Although no statewide studies had been conducted, a study of Gallatin, the fastest growing county in the 1980s, was conducted by a graduate student at Montana State University. This study confirmed that the rapid subdivision of greater than 20-acre parcels during the 1970s was continuing through the 1980s.[23] The Gallatin study showed that 109,000 acres had been subdivided in the county since 1973 without review compared to only 8,000 acres reviewed under the county subdivision ordinance. The primary reason for such a large number of acres avoiding review by the planning board was the 20-acre exemption. Other factors were the provisions in Montana law for occasional sales and family subdivisions. Again, this study did not assess the extent to which land subdivisions resulted in any actual construction or conversion of agricultural land to residential or urban use, but it was clear that the intent of the legislature in 1973 to provide for adequate review of subdivisions was not being accomplished. Of the 10,466 lots subdivided in Gallatin County between 1973 and 1992, only 5,220 lots were reviewed under the subdivision law. Most of these lots were less than one acre.[24] Most of the unreviewed lots were over 20 acres in size. The Montana State University study provided a compelling argument that the exemptions in the Subdivision and Platting Act were clearly being abused in a manner to circumvent the intent of the legislature and to develop land in a manner inconsistent with sound planning principles. When one considers that the 109,000 acres of unreviewed subdivisions that were made during that 20 years constitute 12 percent of the 890,000 acres in Gallatin county that are not federally owned, one can see that the rate of subdivision is rapidly exhausting the amount of available land in the county regardless of the rate of buildout.[25]

Planners and environmentalists attribute a number of problems to unreviewed subdivisions. They include:

- increased traffic
- inaccessible land parcels
- risks to public safety
- water shortages
- water pollution
- weed infestations
- increased urban-agricultural conflicts
- escalating public costs and land inflation

One of the critical factors behind the successful passage of amendments to the subdivision act in 1993 was the support of the Montana Association of Counties and other local government officials. The chief reason for support by local governments was the costs associated with unmanaged growth. In July of 1987, Montana voters passed Initiative 105 which capped property taxes at 1986 levels. Because new residents demand the same services they are accustomed to in more affluent, urban areas, the limits on local government revenues can severely handicap government services. One study found that the revenue generated by new development was half the total expenditures by local government necessitated by that development.[26]

Since 1987, the legislature has considered bills to reform the 1973 Subdivision and Platting

Act. Until 1993, all had failed. The main opposition to subdivision reform came from the real estate lobby, the surveyors, and agricultural interests. In 1993, the surveyors and agriculture lobby actually supported reform and the real estate lobby was split over the issue. In contrast, proponents of reform organized a cohesive and sophisticated lobbying campaign to get the law changed. They also emphasized a simple approach. The reform bill that finally succeeded (HB 408) was only 10 pages long and confined itself to simple yet crucial word changes in the statute.

The coalition supporting reform was lead by the Montana Audubon Council and Montana Association of Planners. Other groups involved in the coalition were:

- Montana Wildlife Federation
- Montana Association of Counties
- Montana Association of County Road Supervisors
- Montana Preservation Alliance
- Montana Association of Fish and Wildlife Biologists
- State Office of Disaster and Emergency Services
- Tri-County Wild land/Urban Fire Working Group
- Montana Fire District Association
- Montana Environmental Information Center and
- Trout Unlimited.

The Audubon Council took the lead by hiring a lobbyist and professional staff to coordinate the effort and conduct background research and organization. Audubon published a series of fact sheets that were widely circulated throughout the session. The state's news media obliged with extensive coverage not only of the progress of friendly bills but of problems associated with development throughout the state. The governor, a newly elected republican, made an early commitment to support reform. The governor's support resulted in part from a series of public meetings throughout the state at which unmanaged development was identified as a problem of high priority.[27] Likewise, the news media maintained its attention to the issue and kept the pressure on with editorials [illegible]

The legislative history of subdivision reform in the 1993 legislative session was documented by the coordinator of the Audubon Council's subdivision reform project.[28] This together with interviews of participants and media coverage suggest several reasons why reform succeeded in 1993 where it had failed in previous sessions. The reasons are, in no particular order:

- change in public sentiment
- gubernatorial support
- media attention
- proponent's groundwork and preparation
- several key opponents changed positions to support reform
- cooperation of key legislators, several of whom actively opposed reform in the previous session
- disarray of the opposition, and
- intensification of problems associated with land development.

The Audubon Council's efforts began in the summer of 1992. A series of organizational meetings were held throughout the summer and fall of 1992 involving coalition members, sympathizers and opponents. The purpose of these "scoping" meetings was to develop a common position among the proponents of subdivision reform and negotiate an outline of legislation that would mollify if not appease the opponents. Although no mediation was explicitly attempted or intended, the meetings were organized in a fashion to win friends, not to intimidate enemies. In other words, the meetings were open. All 150 legislators were invited. Opponents to reform were invited to attend and speak, and no particular legislative proposals were pre-written or proposed.

The outcome of the final meeting held on December 8th was a general understanding that:

1) the 20-acre exemption should be eliminated,
2) the occasional sale should be eliminated, and
3) the family conveyance provision should be modified to prevent abuse.

No specifics for bill language were agreed upon. Many of the attendees of the December 8th meeting declined to sign on as formal members of any coalition to support passage. Many were officials in state agencies and legally and politically could not publicly endorse the Audubon Council's agenda. Likewise, several of the groups that had opposed reform in the past session would not commit themselves to support legislation that had not yet been written or introduced. They wanted to see the results of the discussions before committing their political credibility to the effort.

Five bills were eventually introduced to reform the Subdivision and Platting Act. Four of those bills were relatively simple, short and similar in scope. The fifth, sponsored by Representative Bob Gilbert was a complex and comprehensive 39-page bill, HB 280.

The Audubon Council originally endorsed HB 280, but several members of the coalition, including the planners' association, had already expressed serious reservations about HB 280. The bill generated dissatisfaction among many of the reform proponents because of its complexity. Gilbert had circulated drafts of his bill for comments prior to the session. Reform proponents told Gilbert they were concerned about its complexity. There was a strong belief, based upon many years of frustrated efforts to revise the act, that a complex bill stood less chance of passage than a simple bill. Finally, the Attorney General's office expressed strong reservations about HB 280 because it would throw doubt on years of AG's opinions and confuse case law. Nevertheless, the coalition members and sponsors of the various bills agreed to support all the reform bills during the committee's deliberations. As a result, each bill passed successfully out of their respective house's committees, but HB 408 was the only bill to survive the legislative session and be signed into law by the Governor.

The successful passage of HB 408, one of the simple bills on subdivision reform, instead of HB 280, Gilbert's comprehensive bill was due to:

- its simplicity
- minimum number of amendments
- SB 280 had a significant fiscal note attached to it
- opponents of reform appeared to target SB 280, and
- legislative sponsors' agreement to support each other's bills broke down.

The successful bill was simple indeed. It increased the acreage threshold for subdivisions from 20 to 160 acres. It eliminated the occasional sale provision for avoiding subdivision review. It tightened the family conveyance component of the act to prevent abuse. It deleted "public interest," "basis of need," and "expressed public opinion" as review criteria, which won over some reform opponents, and it added physical access as a criterion for approval of subdivision applications. It did not fund planning by local governments.

Passage of HB 408 will not end Montana's land use development problems. Thousands of acres in 20-acre parcels were issued Certificates of Survey during the 1993 session, enough in some people's opinions to accommodate foreseeable demand for rural lots. Governor Marc Racicot said in signing the bill that he anticipated the Subdivision and Platting Act may need further amending during the 1995 session and expressed willingness to support future measures to fine tune the act.

The success of HB 408 may mask real dilemmas for the future. Some of the reform supporters foresee problems as a result of passage of HB 408. One county commissioner expressed concern that counties could face a "doubling or quadrupling" of their subdivision review workloads and "without the capability to increase staff and fund the necessary studies to support a credible comprehensive plan, local governments will not be able to perform meaningful subdivision reviews."[29] The same official expressed concern about inconsistencies among counties over interpretation and enforcement of state rules and procedures in the review process. Local governments are mandated to conduct review of all subdivisions under the Subdivision and Platting Act. If they are not adequately staffed to implement the act properly, the potential for legal action is great. Finally, national experts on rural planning emphasize that "the failure to see land use policy as economic development policy is a crucial mistake too many planners make."[30]

HB 408 was the only significant environmental bill passed in the 1993 legislative session in Montana. Personalities had as much influence on land use planning legislation as the substance of the bills. Hard feelings resulted from the 1993 session and foreshadow potential difficulties for any further land use legislation in the 1995 session. Fundamentally, the lack of consensus on land use policy and its elationship to economic development may sink long erm success on either issue. As K. Ross Toole bserved, Montana's political culture is characterized by confrontation and adversarial relations. Truly uccessful development policy in the 1990s will equire a degree of consensus-building, what Wallace Stegner would call a "communal effort."

About the author: Gordon Meeks, Jr., is an employee of the New Mexico state legislature. He and his wife now live in Santa Fe. They lived in Livingston, Montana between 1991 and 1993. Before that he conducted land use policy analysis at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Notes

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MONTANA Policy Review

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: LOCAL BUSINESS CLIMATE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

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The environmental impact hypothesis - known less formally as the "jobs vs. the environment" argument, states that policies aimed at protecting the environment are an impediment to economic growth. This is popularly expressed as an inherent trade-off between economic prosperity and strong environmental protection. Such protection is typically said to be anti-business and have negative economic effects. Yet, economic growth in regions of high environmental quality suggest some level of entrepreneurial activity is unhampered and in fact, may be encouraged through efforts which maintain local environmental and quality of life amenities.[1]

> ***...economic growth in regions of high environmental quality suggest some level of entrepreneurial activity is unhampered and in fact may be encouraged through efforts which maintain local environmental and quality of life amenities.***

The issue is important because if business location decisions are influenced by qualitative variables as well as other economic reasons, then an effective community development strategy for rural communities can be based, in part, on promoting those virtues. Additionally, retention of existing businesses is at least as important to a community as attracting new people and business. Consequently, understanding the values important to long-time businesses is also critical.

Some authors have asserted the importance of the role of qualitative variables to business location.[2] Few studies provide factual detail with respect to the character of the qualitative amenities which attract businesses, and whether these also influence the decisions of existing businesses to remain.

The purpose of this paper is to test the assertion that, in addition to traditional economic reasons, environmental amenities and other quality of life factors also influence the business location and retention decisions by firms in several rural Montana counties surrounding Yellowstone National Park. In addition, this paper investigates whether there is a significant difference in the importance of business location and retention variables between existing businesses ("Old-timers") and recent arrivals (Newcomers).

The authors wish to thank the Yellowstone Center for Mountain Environments and the College of letters and Science at Montana State University and the Fanwood Foundation for financial support of this research

RESEARCH SETTING

Three Montana counties (Madison, Gallatin, and Park) form the northern border of the geographical area known as the Greater Yellowstone Region. They were used as a representative subset of the region (see Figure One). The study area within the Greater Yellowstone was chosen because it is an example of a high amenity rural area that has experienced rapid growth in recent years. A multitude of local government entities in the region are facing problems coincident with growth and economic change. These counties are adjacent to Yellowstone National Park, and they contain may of the amenities that are sought after; spectacular scenery, outdoor recreation opportunities, clean air and water, and communities with low crime rates and rural character.

Population growth during the years 1969 to 1989 in the three county study area was 8%. The counties also experienced an increase of over 96% in new jobs and 120% growth of personal income. Eighty-eight percent of all new jobs and eighty-nine percent of all increases in labor income were in industries other than those which traditionally have supported the area: mining, agriculture, and manufacturing including the wood products industry.[3]

Recent changes in the Greater Yellowstone regional economy reflect a nationwide trend away from dependence on extractive industries toward an increase in services, in such areas as retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate, personal, consumer and business services, and state and local government. In 1990 the service economy comprises 68 percent of production of Gross National Product and 76 percent of national employment.[4] Due to the increased demand for service industries as well as changes in technology, "footloose businesses" have developed. They have the ability to locate anywhere, including the Yellowstone region, because back-office functions (such as data processing and any work that can be done via modern telecommunications facilities) no longer have to be performed in cities. Rural areas with sufficient infrastructures (including telephone facilities, quality schools, roads, airports) and with social and environmental amenities can potentially attract this type of business.[5]

The economy of the region has also witnessed an upsurge of entrepreneurial activity. Residents of the region are relying less on the traditional wage and salary sources of employment and are creating jobs for themselves. The bulk of the growth has been in small firms.

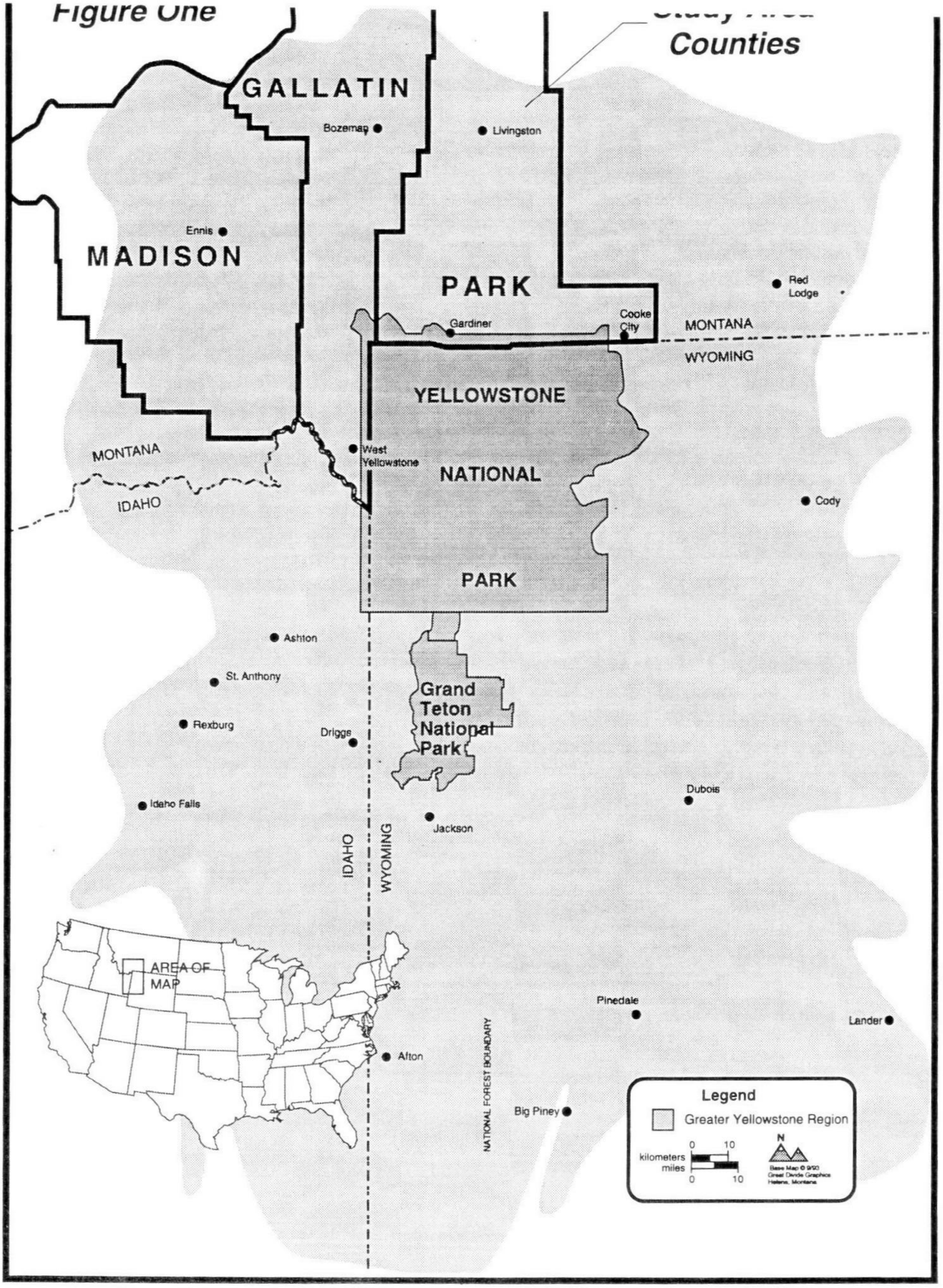
METHODS

To solicit opinions from business owners or managers on the importance of a range of location determinants a questionnaire was designed and a phone survey administered. The sample population was a random stratified sample of 500 firms obtained from a list maintained by the Montana Department of Commerce. The sample frame was drawn from the 1989 distribution of Standard Industrial Code (SIC) listing of businesses prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Census, County Business Patterns. This sample was representative of both the Greater Yellowstone Region and the three-county study area (See Table One).

Table One: Sampling Distribution by Industry

Sic Classification Code Label	Sic Code Major Group Classification	Ecosystem Totals %	Sample Counties %
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING	01-09	1.41	1.54
MINING	10-14	1.12	0.93
CONSTRUCTION	15-17	9.82	8.98
MANUFACTURING	20-39	4.49	4.13
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES	41-49	4.65	5.27
WHOLESALE TRADE	50-51	6.38	4.19
RETAIL TRADE	52-59	26.10	30.42
FINANCE, INSURANCE, AND REAL ESTATE	60-67	6.48	6.45
NONCLASSIFIABLE ESTABLISHMENTS	99	8.33	8.86

Figure One


Study Area Counties
GALLATIN
MADISON
PARK
Bozeman
Livingston
Ennis
Red Lodge
Gardiner
Cooke City
MONTANA
WYOMING
YELLOWSTONE
NATIONAL
PARK
West Yellowstone
MONTANA
IDAHO
Cody
Ashton
St. Anthony
Rexburg
Driggs
Grand Teton National Park
Dubois
Idaho Falls
Jackson
IDAHO
WYOMING
AREA OF MAP
Pinedale
Lander
Afton
NATIONAL FOREST BOUNDARY
Big Piney
Legend
Greater Yellowstone Region
kilometers
miles
0
10
0
10
N

Of 500 businesses contacted. 94.6 percent participated, with the majority of respondents being owners (90%); the remainder were managers with knowledge of the business' location decision process.

In the survey, two categories of location factors were assessed. The first, traditional quantitative factors, were designated "business factors" and included: cost of rent, land and labor; transportation infrastructure; and proximity to clientele. The second, "qualitative factors," included: proximity to recreation; rural quality of area in which the business is located; and the quality of local schools and the local environment. Also asked were standard demographic questions such as age, number of years in business, education, and years of residence.

Questions for the survey were derived, in part, from a literature review of similar studies.[7] A series of in-person pretest interviews were also conducted, which provided additional material for the development and refinement of the questionnaire.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

Research Question One: How do environmental factors and other qualitative variables rank in order of importance when compared to traditional location factors in influencing the business location decision to move to the survey counties of Montana?

Traditional business location theory would predict that firms locate in particular regions for economically competitive reasons.[8] For a profit maximizing entrepreneur the availability of raw materials; a reliable, trained and skilled work force; and infrastructure such as highways and airports; all play a role in determining where a firm chooses to locate.

Anecdotal assertions abound that firms locate to rural areas because of qualitative reasons.[9] These qualitative location factors include environmental amenities, recreational opportunities, a relaxed lifestyle, a lower crime rate and other variables not accounted for in conventional business location literature. Evidence suggesting that non-economic factors play a role in creating a positive climate for businesses investment is limited. According to Hirschl and Summers current studies of rural change show that traditional theories of development based on the expansion of the goods-producing sector are not sufficient for explaining rural economic development.[10]

All respondents were initially asked about the relative importance of business location variables in their decision to locate (or retain) a business in the area. After these questions, respondents were asked questions to learn the importance of qualitative variables. Seven general category items were measured on a rank order scales. Scores ranged from "not important" (1), "neither important nor unimportant" (3) to "very important" (5). As presented in Table Two qualitative factors ranked consistently higher than traditional business location factors.

Table Two: Overall Factors Influencing Business Location Decisions

N=473	Responding "Important" or "Very Important"	
	No. Respondents	% of Respondents
THE RURAL NATURE OF MONTANA	355	75.0%
STATE'S REPUTATION FOR QUALITY OF LIFE	329	69.5%
OVERALL POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF THE COMMUNITY	224	47.0%
CLIMATE	177	37.0%
PROXIMITY TO A UNIVERSITY	170	35.9%
COST OF DOING BUSINESS	102	21.0%
TAX STRUCTURE	49	10.3%

The "Rural Nature of Montana", "Reputation for (Montana's) Quality of Life", "Overall Community Attributes" and "Climate" were ranked as "important" or "very important" by 75%, 69.5%, 47% and 37% of the respondents, respectively. By comparison, "Proximity to the University", "Cost of Doing Business" and "Local Tax Structure" were ranked as "important" or "very important" by 35.9%, 21% and 10.3% of the respondents respectively. Clearly, qualitative elements are important to the business owners surveyed in their decision to locate to a particular area.

<u>Research Question Two:</u> Do the reasons for locating (and retaining) a business vary among long-time residents and newcomers?

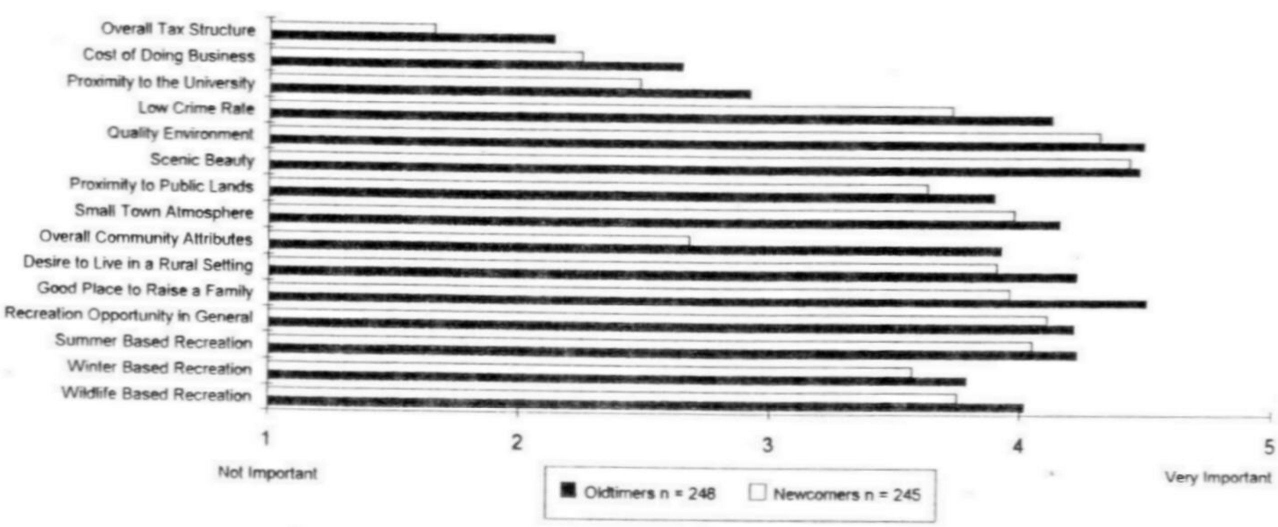
Early studies attributed growth and migration in rural areas to traditional economic reasons such as access to raw materials, cheap labor and inexpensive land.[11] More recent studies suggest contemporary migration may well express values associated with a concern for community and environmental quality.[12] Others emphasize that the rural migration and the pursuit of non-urban values is a result of a relatively recent anti-urban bias in metropolitan areas.[13]

The efficacy of Jobes' "Old-timer and Newcomer" topology of migrants is useful for the exploration of business location behavior.[14] If the reasons for the nonmetropolitan turnaround have changed over time, then the differing location determinants for s subset of the migrating population - business owners - should emerge as we survey older vs. newer business proprietors.

Following Jobes, Newcomers were defined as those persons who have resided in the county for five years or less at the time of the survey.[15] Old-timers are those persons who have been residents of the county for more than five years.

Questions were designed to elicit differences between the Old-timers and Newcomers across a spectrum of business location variables. Figure Two displays the average responses for the location factors among Old-timers and Newcomers.

Figure Two: Old-Timers and Newcomers - Perceptions of the Importance of Location Factors. N = 473.



The central finding for this discussion is the relatively low importance of traditional economic factors compared to qualitative, community and recreational factors. For both Old-times and Newcomers traditional economic factors were ranked as "not important" in the decision to locate a business. In contrast, qualitative, community and recreational factors were scored as "very important" by both Old-timers and Newcomers. As can be seen in Figure Two, the general profile of factor scores are nearly identical. The major difference is that Old-timers held all factors to be relatively more important than did Newcomers.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Findings for the survey investigating the nature of the business location decision indicate that the importance of qualitative factors such as quality environment, scenic beauty, the rural nature of the community, and recreation opportunities are very important to business owners in the study region. In comparison, traditional economic location factors such as tax policy, availability of capitol and the cost of doing business are of relative low importance to the choice of business location for the survey population.

If the modern scholars are correct, that the rural turnaround is in part driven by changing economic opportunities that allow pursuit of a better "quality of life", then local rural communities can benefit from the qualitative amenities they possess and some business owners desire.[16] Such a strategy can focus on predominantly two areas of a community development - business expansion and business retention.

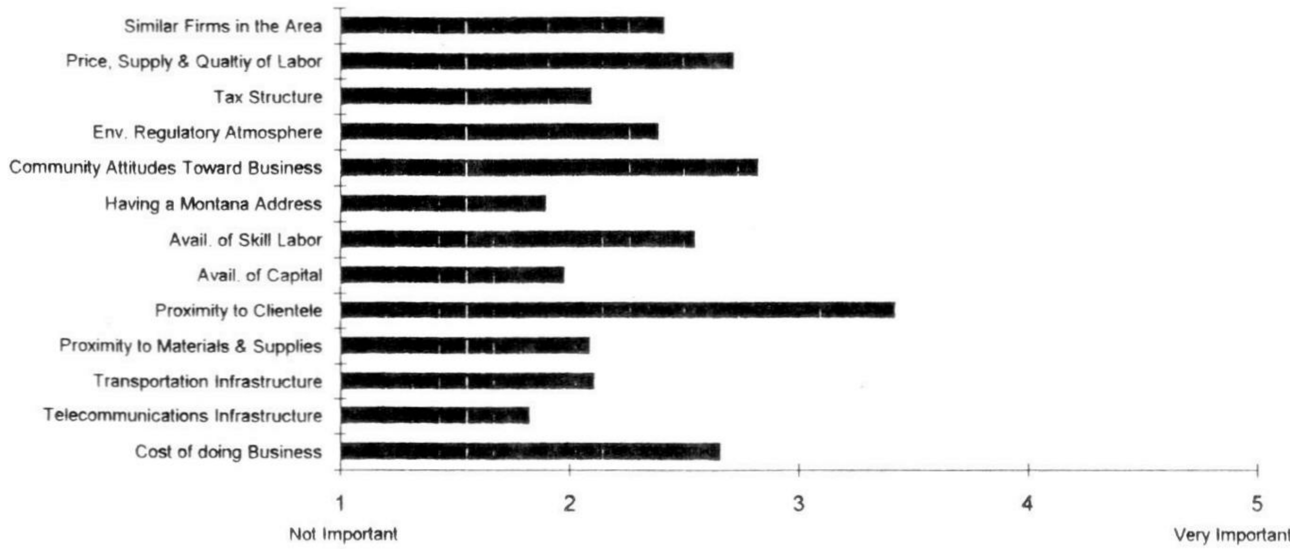
Business Expansion. Public policy decisions aimed at community and economic development are commonly aimed at enticing new business to an area. Traditionally, local governments have employed a variety of tools in an effort to attract new business such as cutting taxes, weakening regulations, or offering economic incentives to potential business investors. Freudenburg and others find little evidence of effective improvements in local economies through utilization of these traditional incentives.[17] Additionally, local community development strategies have varying amounts of influence on the range of location determinants explored in this survey. Comprehensive tax policy, capital availability, transportation infrastructure and availability of raw materials and clientele are largely beyond the management capacity of local government. Additionally, these factors are generally considered to be not important by survey respondents in the decision where they will choose to locate their business.

As was indicated in Figure Two, communities in the three counties surveyed in Montana do have amenities that existing businesses find desirable when they decide where to live and do business: scenic beauty, ruralness, recreation and a quality environmental setting. These important location determinants are within the management capacity of rural governing entities. Local governments can preserve the rural nature of the community through management of growth and land use planning, protecting scenic viewsheds and providing recreational opportunities such as local parks and trail systems. Collectively, management of these amenity resources represents a distinctly different category of community tools available to local government. This is in contrast to traditional development factors such as extractive natural resources, raw materials, or other economic factors such as labor and capital. For example, trees left standing in the interest of preserving a community viewshed may be as or more important to maintaining a healthy economy as trees cut down for lumber. Based on these findings, constructive public policy targeted toward community development can be established by preserving environmental and qualitative amenities.

...trees left standing in the interest of preserving a community viewshed may be as or more important to maintaining a healthy economy as trees cut for lumber.

Business Retention. Retention of existing businesses is as important to the rural development strategy as recruitment of new business.[18] Following the logic that retention of existing business would produce a different perspective of business behavior, Old-timer business owners were asked questions

Figure Three: The Importance of Traditional Business Factors to Existing (Old-Timer) Businesses N = 248



reflecting greater detail regarding the importance of traditional economic factors and infrastructure development. Results are displayed in Figure Three.

For Old-timer business owners there is only one traditional economic factor which emerges as "important" (mean = 3.42) to doing business in rural Montana - proximity to clientele. This would suggest many of the Old-timer businesses are closely tied to the local economy rather than uncoupled from it as would be expected of the newer footloose businesses. Old-timer businesses may depend to a greater extent on return clientele and a long time personal business relationship with the community. There is little a local government can do to directly encourage community ties to local business. However, any activity that preserves the quality of the community amenities will inevitable have an affect on the existing business district. Examples may be adequate downtown parking and preservation of historic public buildings.

It is likely, although not tested in this survey, that Newcomers retain many of their ties to their previous location, facilitated by the advent of modern telecommunications infrastructure, such as facsimile machines and computer modems.

Finally, results from the survey found a high level of satisfaction of doing business by all survey respondents in the sample counties. When asked "All things considered, would you locate a business in Montana again" 407 respondents (86%) said they would. Results were consistent for both Old-timers and Newcomers (86.3% and 85.8%, respectively). When asked "why" both groups responded that "Quality of life" was important (sample: 59%, Old-timers; 53.7%, Newcomers; 66.1%).

Of the 66 (13%) respondents who stated they would not locate a business to Montana again several reasons were cited in open-ended responses. Included were: the "poor business climate of Montana", "anti-business attitude of local government", "loss of resource base", "tax structure". The most frequently cited reason for not wanting to locate in the region again was "the state's workman's compensation program". Montana currently has the nation's highest per worker premium cost in it's state owned workman's compensation program.[19]

CONCLUSION

Data from the survey indicate the relative importance of qualitative factors over traditional factors in influencing the business location decision. Findings indicate that a quality environment, a sense of ruralness and recreation opportunities dominate the decision where to locate a business in the Montana counties of the Greater Yellowstone region. These findings are especially true for Old-timer businesses; they tended to hold environmental factors in higher esteem than the Newcomer business owners. This finding has particular importance in terms of retention of existing businesses. Less important to business owners were factors such as cost of doing business, tax structure and availability of clientele, capital and labor.

The clear role for local governments then becomes protection, and even enhancement, ot those attributes that the community and business find attractive.

For the moment, the amenity resources of the study region and Montana are superb. For high amenity areas such as the Madison, Gallatin and Park counties, this study has identified environmental factors which play a positive role in economic and community development. Other parts of the state of Montana enjoy amenities and quality of life that may be distinctive to a particular economy or geographic features. Local governments need to make an effort to identify the scope of such resources. They need to understand the role amenities assume in how business owners and the public think about their community. The clear role for local governments then becomes protection, and even enhancement, of those attributes that the community and business find attractive.

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MONTANA Policy Review

THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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Director of the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor

....distance is electronically irrelevant by fax or phone. It takes longer to drive from Helena to Plentywood than it does to fly from Seattle to Tokyo. The world of entrepreneurship is getting smaller. Businesses from around the world are seeking opportunity in other countries.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is not a reality yet, at least it isn't as I write these comments. However, the Canadian Free Trade Agreement is a reality, as is the European Community and numerous other regional initiatives such as the Red River Trade Corridor which already joins Manitoba and portions of North Dakota and Minnesota. These are but a few of the regionally based international trade initiatives which are springing up around the globe.

Why are these regional trading groups forming and how do they advantage the participating businesses and communities? What, if any, role will local government have to play in these new regional trading arrangements?

The short answer to the first question is that the world is changing and its changing rapidly. For example, consider the relative distances between Billings and Helena as compared to Billings to Denver. In both cases it is about 45 minutes by air and the distance is electronically irrelevant by fax or phone. It takes longer to drive from Helena to Plentywood than it does to fly from Seattle to Tokyo. The world of entrepreneurship is getting smaller. Businesses from around the world are seeking opportunity in other countries. Honda is going to make all of their North American version cars in the United States and Mercedes-Benz has just announced the development of a huge new production facility in rural Alabama. Trade analysts predict still more European and Japanese businesses will locate plants along with their high value manufacturing jobs in the United States in the immediate future. For the same compelling business reasons, Japanese and European firms are also looking seriously at Mexico as an advantageous site for locational diversification of their manufacturing, sales, and service operations.

As to the second question concerning the role of local governments in regional trading initiatives, it is now clear that governments at all levels have been and will continue to be essential partners in the globalization of business and the consequent expansion of regional and international trade. Governments, including local governments, often play the role of initiator of the process. They often have the experts and expertise to develop the outline of an organization that can set the stage or provide the "dance floor" where private sector leadership can meet and seek their mutual economic advantage. Government can help put the pieces together for the private sector to carry forward and develop the business like structures that will create and sustain an appropriate environment for economic development through trade expansion.

Governments can also play an important role primarily by identifying and inventorying the economic development resources and opportunities within their respective jurisdictions. Private business often simply don't have access to the strategic information that government can readily provide. This is especially true for the small and medium sized businesses that seek new opportunities in a particular state or region or community. Here, local governments can play the role of coordinator and information clearinghouse for these small but potentially vigorous firms. In fact, local government can actually take a lead role in the process by identifying businesses in the local area that could take advantage of the strategic information they may need to make better informed decisions. Indeed, local government leadership may have to take a proactive role in regional development efforts if they expect their local business community to take part. In short, a regional effort to accelerate economic development through expanded trade requires cooperation and collaboration between private sector leadership and local and state governments. With collaborative efforts, regional trade and development initiatives will inevitably succeed and probably succeed beyond our wildest dreams.

...Governments can also play an important role primarily by identifying and inventorying the economic development resources and opportunities...

What must be done? First we must be straight forward in acknowledging that communities and their individual economic development efforts will continue to be competitive with one another. A regional effort will not eliminate either the impulse toward or the need for this competition. Each community will continue to have it's own agenda and its own felt sense of responsibility for the economic well being of its citizens. However, in the emerging global marketplace, there will be circumstances which will enable these otherwise competitive communities to cooperate to their mutual advantage.

...circumstances will enable otherwise competitive communities to cooperate to their mutual advantage.

For example, if both Butte and Billings are competing to attract a new business to their respective communities, might it not be advantageous to both communities to have the new business at least locate somewhere in Montana rather than loosing it to New Jersey? If it locates in Montana or at least in the Rocky Mountain region our home companies with components and services to offer will be better positioned to take advantage of the expanded market. Rather obviously, if the new business decides to locate in New Jersey, the chances for any consequent business expansion here at home are greatly diminished.

The Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor will not be in the business of recruiting companies to any certain part of the region but we do hope to be able to identify the opportunities in the region and assist our members in accessing them. Nor will we be involved in promoting one region over another. Rather, by being aware of what is happening in the Rocky Mountain region, we can assist our members and trading partners who may wish to capitalize on those opportunities. In this regard, an inventory of what each community has to contribute to the regional effort is a natural place for units of local government to begin. If we do not know who we are then we will have difficulty determining what it is that we have to offer. Think of it as each business, each community, each local government contributing a piece of a regional economic development puzzle. The resulting picture will mirror our collective efforts.

Finally, there are problems with NAFTA, just as there will be problems with our regional efforts. But whether as individuals or as organizations we support NAFTA or not, whether we think it's a good or a bad thing for the Rocky Mountain region, it is going to happen. We in Montana need to be responsive to that reality and we need to position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities whatever they may be. For every trade door that may be closed, several others will opened and for every short term problem there will be a long term opportunity. Those who profit will be organized to respond to the latter.

...we need to position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities whatever they may be.

The Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor is an organization dedicated to identifying and developing business relationships and opportunities for the five Rocky Mountain states and three western Canadian provinces. These opportunities may be within or outside of the region. The states that are part of this regional group are: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming. The three Canadian provinces are: Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. We are not a political group nor do advocate the NAFTA agreement in its present form. However, we are convinced that some sort of continental trade enhancement agreement will be reached. For that reason Montana must be proactive in our approach to trade expansion opportunities. By forming cooperative associations involving businesses, cities, counties, states and provinces, we can assess what we each have to offer, how we fit together in the region, and what we can gain from the new trade arrangements. That is what the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor is all about.

Moe Wosepka is the Director of the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor. For additional information contact Moe Wosepka at RMTC, 2030 11th AVE., Helena, MT., 59601. Phone number: (406) 443-8316. Fax: (406) 442-2409.

Partial funding for the RMTC is provided by a grant from the Northwest Area Foundation.

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
NEWS

TRENDS IN MONTANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT

JUDY MATHRE
Local Government Center

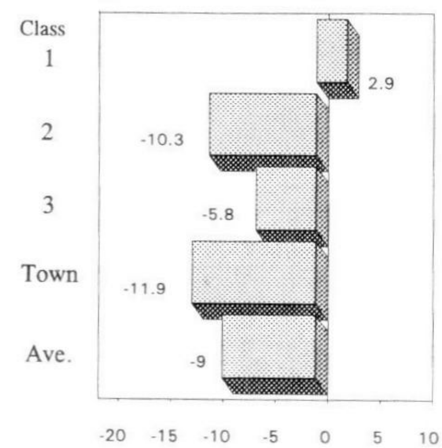
During 1992-93 the Local Government Center gathered information from 126 municipal governments, 54 county governments and 2 city/county consolidated governments, and calculated averages by classification for a number of different characteristics describing local government in Montana. Trends over a five year period (fiscal years 1989-1993) were measured by averaging data according to city or county class. Classification for cities is measured by population, but for counties is measured by taxable value.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal Government Classification and Population

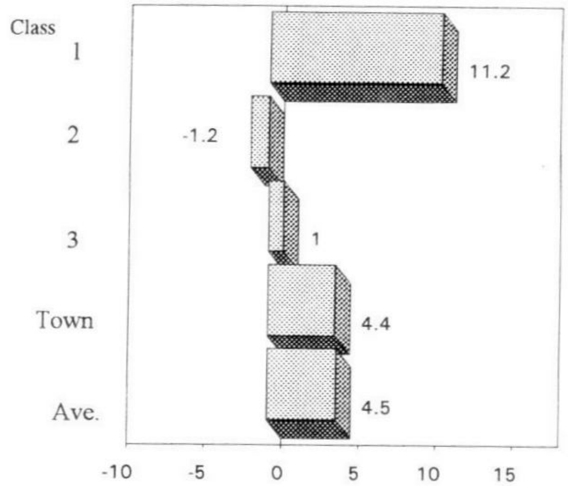
CLASS	POPULATION	NUMBER	AVERAGE POPULATION 1990	% CHANGE, POP. 1980-90
1	MORE THAN 10,000	9	32,444	2.9
2	5,000-10,000	3	7,071	-10.3
3	1,000-5,000	38	2,440	-5.8
TOWN	LESS THAN 1,000	78	483	-11.9
AVE.			3,466	-9.0

% Change Municipal Pop. 1980-90



Average city populations declined statewide between 1980-90 in all municipal classes except for class 1 which showed slight growth.

%Change Municipal Taxable Valuation 1989-93



Average Municipal Taxable Valuation

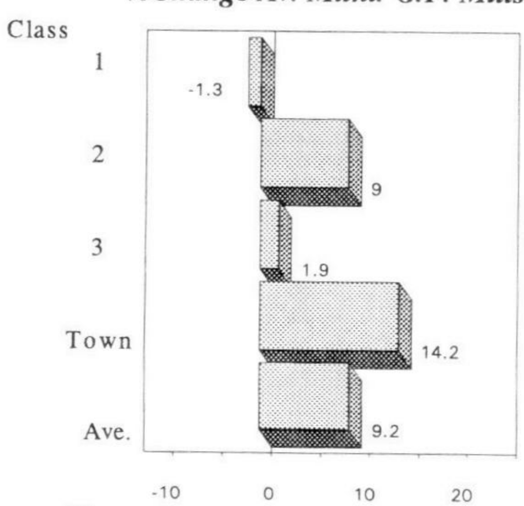
CLASS	MILL VALUE 1993	% CHANGE 1989-93
1	43,163.74	11.2
2	6,432.11	-1.2
3	2,481.12	1.0
TOWN	419.30	4.4
AVE.	4,204.09	4.5

During the five year period 1989-93 mill valuation increased in all but cities of the second class. Considering the fact that inflation increased on average 4.1% per year during this time, the actual growth in taxable valuation (.9% per year) did not keep pace with the rate of inflation.

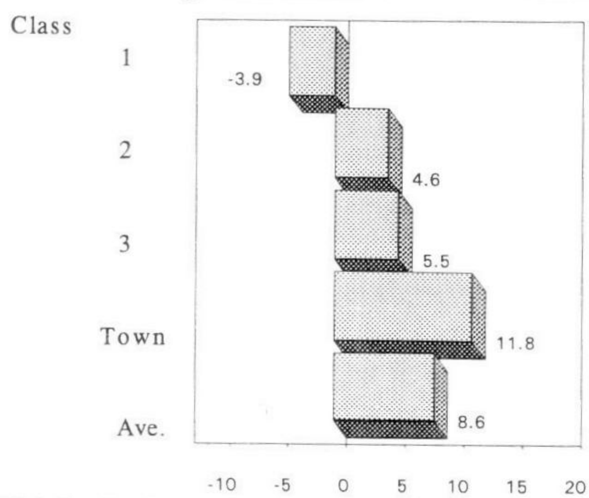
Average Municipal Taxable Valuation

CLASS	GENERAL FUND MILLS 1993	% CHANGE 1989-93	TOTAL MILLS LEVIED 1993	% CHANGE 1989-93
1	82.62	-1.3	116.52	-3.9
2	115.59	9.0	130.68	4.6
3	80.35	1.9	104.33	5.5
TOWN	74.71	14.2	89.23	11.8
AVE.	77.95	9.2	96.72	8.6

%Change Av. Muni. G.F. Mills



% Change Ave. Muni. Total Mills Levied

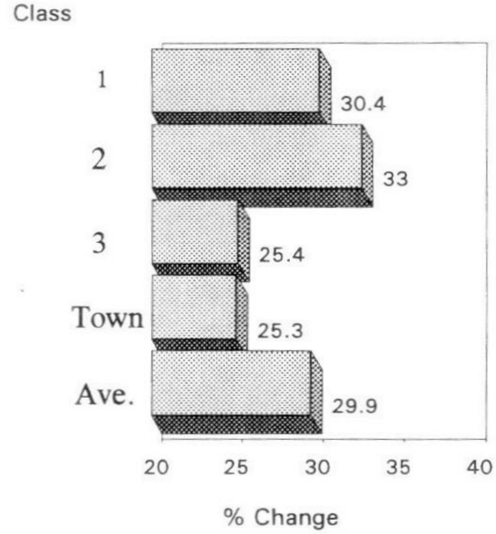


The modest growth of taxable value from 1989-93 helped to keep increases in mill levies fairly minimal, and even negative in the case of cities of the first class.

Average G.F. Appropriations and Per Capita Appropriations

CLASS	GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION 1993	% CHANGE 1989-93	GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION PER CAPITA 1993
1	$8,298,497	30.4	223.71
2	1,935,175	33.0	267.45
3	573,239	25.4	222.91
TOWN	103,164	25.3	270.21
AVE.	892,732	29.9	227.57

% Change Average G.F. Appropriation



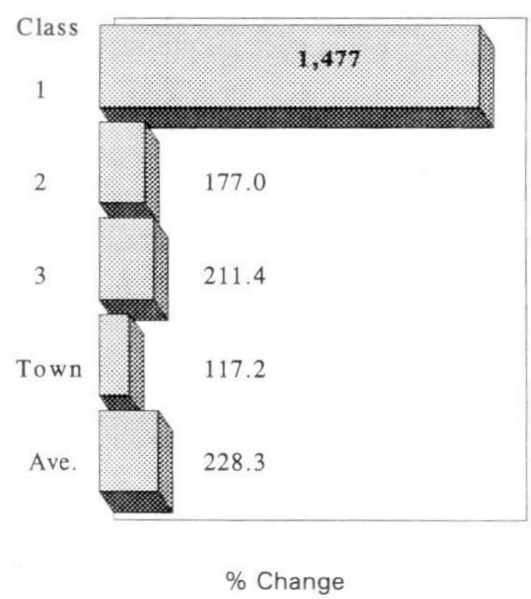
During the five year period 1989-93 general fund appropriations grew at about 6% per year on average. The average change in mill value during the same period of time was 0.9%, while the average change in mills levied was 1.7%. With the average annual change in general fund appropriations at 6% for the five year period, one must conclude that the increases must come from non-tax revenues.

Per capita appropriations averaged $227.57, and ranged from $222.91 to $270.21 for all classes.

Average Municipal Fund Balance

CLASS	GENERAL FUND BALANCE, 1993	% CHANGE 1989-93
1	$2,538,953	1,477.8
2	211,145	177.0
3	203,710	211.4
TOWN	44,428	117.2
AVE.	264,009	228.3

% Change Ave. Municipal Fund Balance

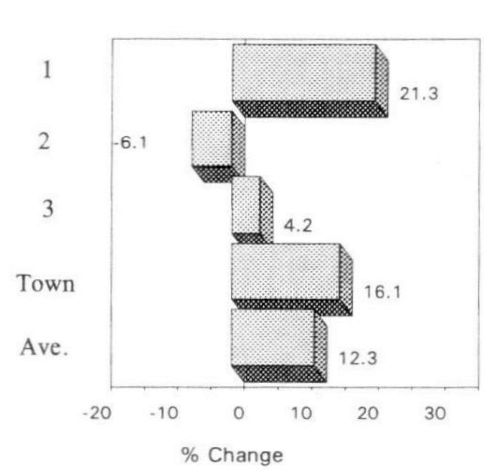


General fund balances increased significantly over the five year period suggesting a rather dramatic improvement in municipal fiscal stability.

Average Municipal Full Time Employees

CLASS	1993	% CHANGE 1989-93
1	275	21.3
2	58	-6.1
3	17	4.2
TOWN	3	16.1
AVE.	27	12.3

% Change Average Municipal Full Time Employees



Increase in number of full time employees was relatively stable over the 1989-93 period. The largest increase occurred in first class cities with about 4% per year. Population growth occurred only in first class cities from 1980-90.

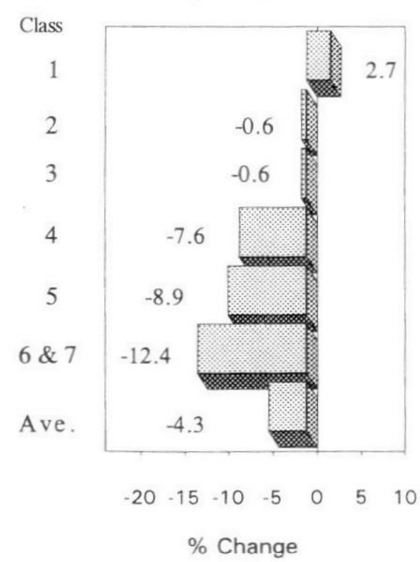
COUNTY GOVERNMENT

There is only one 7th class county (Petroleum Co.), and it has been included in the averages for 6th class counties for this report.

County Classification and Population

CLASS	TAXABLE VALUATION	# OF COUNTIES	AVERAGE POPULATION	% CHANGE POP. 1980-90
1	Over $50 million	10	48,586	2.7
2	$30-50 million	12	12,178	-0.6
3	$20-30 million	10	8,404	-0.6
4	$15-20 million	5	6,338	-7.6
5	$10-15 million	6	4,480	-8.9
6 & 7	Under $10 million	13	1,877	-12.4
AVE.			14,268	-4.3

% Change Pop. 1980-90

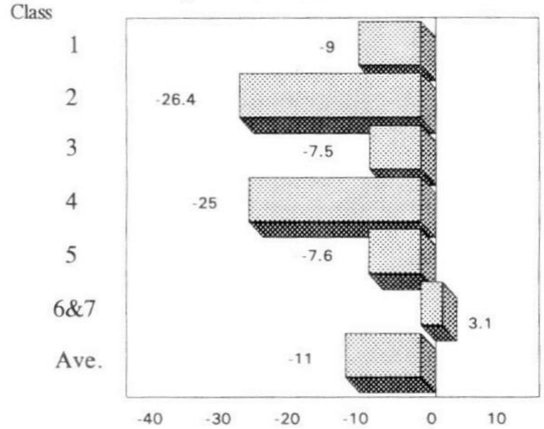


Population gains occurred only in those counties having the highest taxable valuation (or class 1 counties). All other classes lost population, and the loss in population is greatest in those counties with lowest taxable valuation.

Average County Taxable Valuation

CLASS	MILL VALUE 1993	% CHANGE MILL VALUE 1989-93
1	$94,385.60	-9.0
2	23,855.43	-26.4
3	20,208.88	-7.5
4	11,377.11	-25.0
5	10,057.25	-7.6
6 & 7	6,400.62	3.1
AVE.	29,153.98	-11.0

% Change Ave. Mill Value 1989-93



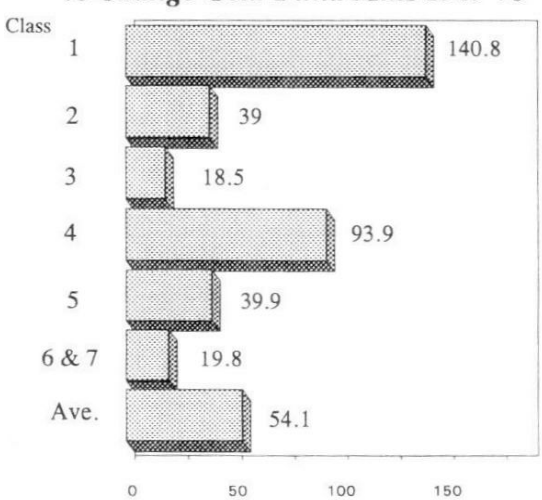
Taxable value declined in all except Class 6 counties during the 1989-93 period.

Average County Mills Levied

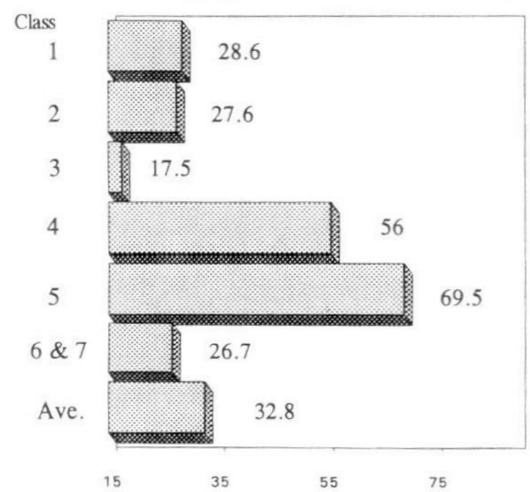
CLASS	GENERAL FUND MILLS LEVIED 1993	% CHANGE GEN. FUND MILLS 1989-93	TOTAL MILLS LEVIED 1993	% CHANGE TOTAL MILLS 1989-93
1	32.20	140.8	78.38	28.6
2	21.79	39.0	64.97	27.6
3	30.76	18.5	81.77	17.5
4	41.24	93.9	99.99	56.0
5	55.99	39.9	107.51	69.5
6 & 7	31.43	19.8	89.79	26.7
AVE.	32.89	54.1	83.81	32.8

Change in total mills levied ranged from 17.5% in Class 3 counties to 69.5% in class 5 counties over the five year period.

% Change Gen. Fund Mills 1989-93



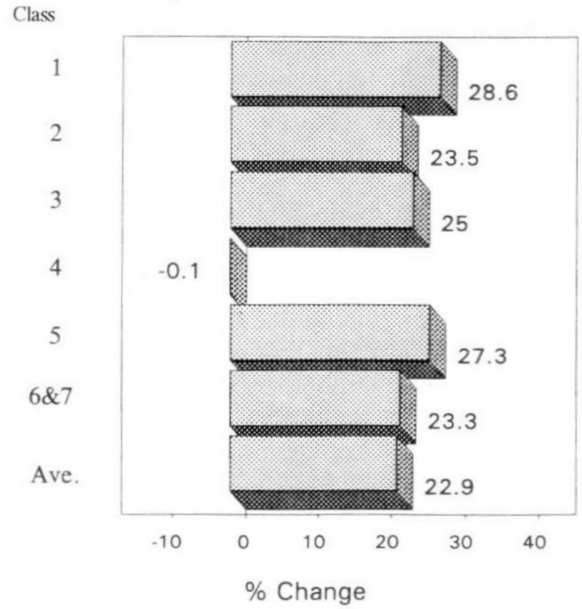
% Change Total Mills 1989-93



Average County General Fund Appropriation

CLASS	GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION 1993	% CHANGE GEN. FUND APPROP. 1989-93
1	$5,817,083	28.6
2	2,028,902	23.5
3	1,433,673	25.0
4	1,052,976	-0.1
5	1,306,680	27.3
6 & 7	522,220	23.3
AVE.	2,084,789	22.9

% Change Gen. Fund Appropriation 1989-93

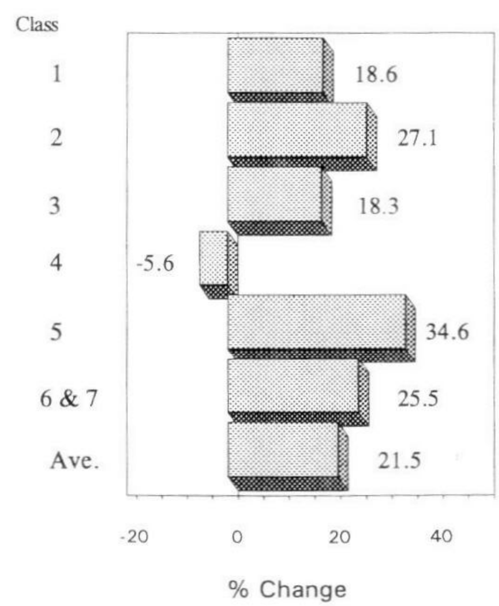


The change in general fund appropriations by class was similar except for class 4 counties. Class 4 counties on average declined .1%. All other classes increased, ranging from 23.5 - 28.6% over five years.

Average County Total Appropriation (16 Funds)

CLASS	TOTAL 16 FUNDS*	% CHANGE 16 FUNDS*	PER CAPITA EXPENDITUR 16 FUNDS*
1	$14,433,215	18.6	$581.03
2	5,214,437	27.1	580.70
3	3,433,586	18.3	450.04
4	2,277,358	-5.6	599.46
5	2,981,362	34.6	942.02
6 & 7	1,346,679	25.5	791.48
AVE.	5,143,269	21.5	646.75

% Change Ave. Total Appropriation



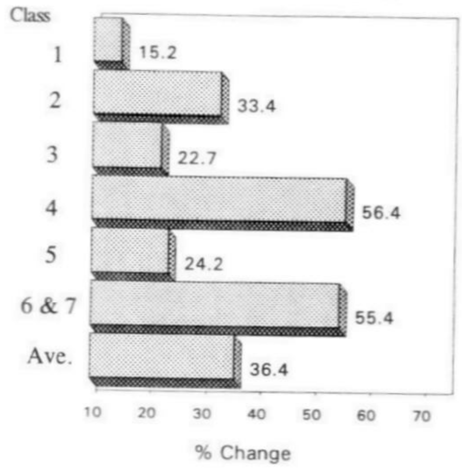
Sixteen fund totals declined over five years in class 4 counties. Expenditures increased in all other classes in the range of 18.3% - 34.6%. The average increase for all counties over five years was 21.5% or 4.3% per year which approximated the average inflation rate of 4.1% per year.

Expenditures per capita were lowest in class 3 counties, at $450.04, and highest in class 5 counties, $942.02. The average for all counties was $646.75.

Average County Full Time Employees

CLASS	FULL TIME EMPLOYEES 1993	% CHANGE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES 1990-93
1	281	15.2
2	100	33.4
3	73	22.7
4	54	56.4
5	59	24.2
6 & 7	27	55.4
AVE.	102	36.4

% Change Full Time Employees 1990-93



Full time employees changed statewide 36.4% during the four year period 1990-93. Changes ranged from a low of 15.2% in class 1 counties to 56.4% in class 4 counties.

* 16 FUNDS INCLUDED IN COUNTY APPROPRIATION

1. General Fund
2. Road Fund
3. Poor Fund
4. District Court Fund
5. Bridge Fund
6. Weed Fund
7. Fair Fund
8. Library Fund
9. Extension Fund
10. Airport Fund
11. Health Fund
12. Planning Fund
13. Hospital Fund
14. Bond Interest Fund
15. Senior Citizens Fund
16. Comprehensive Insurance Fund

CITIES - BY CLASS

Class 1

Anaconda- Deer Lodge
Billings
Bozeman
Butte-Silver Bow
Great Falls
Havre
Helena
Kalispell
Missoula

Class 2

Lewistown
Livingston
Miles City

Class 3

Baker
Belgrade
Big Timber
Chinook
Choteau
Columbia Falls
Conrad
Cut Bank
Deer Lodge
Dillon
East Helena
Forsyth
Glasgow
Fort Benton
Glendive
Hamilton
Hardin
Harlem
Harlowton
Laurel
Libby
Malta
Plentywood
Polson
Poplar
Red Lodge
Ronan
Roundup
Scobey
Shelby
Sidney
Thompson Falls
Three Forks
Townsend
Troy
Whitefish
White Sulphur Springs
Wolf Point

Town

Alberton
Bainville
Bearcreek
Belt
Big Sandy
Boulder
Bridger
Broadus
Broadview
Brockton
Browning
Cascade
Chester
Circle
Clyde Park
Columbus
Culbertson
Darby
Denton
Dodson
Drummond
Dutton
Ekalaka
Ennis
Eureka
Fairfield
Fairview
Flaxville
Fort Peck
Froid
Fromberg
Geraldine
Grass Range
Hingham
Hobson
Hot Springs
Hysham
Ismay
Joliet
Jordan
Judith Gap
Kevin
Lavina
Lima
Lodge Grass
Manhatten
Medicine Lake
Melrose
Moore
Nashua
Neihart
Opheim
Outlook
Philipsburg
Pinesdale
Plains
Plevna
Rexford
Richey
Ryegate
Saco
St. Ignatius
Sheridan
Stanford
Stevensville
Sunburst
Superior
Terry
Twin Bridges
Valier
Virginia City
Walkerville
Westby
West Yellowstone
Whitehall
Wibaux
Winifred
Winnett

COUNTIES - BY CLASS

Class 1

Big Horn
Cascade
Fallon
Flathead
Gallatin
Lewis & Clark
Missoula
Rosebud
Silver Bow
Yellowstone

Class 2

Glacier
Hill
Jefferson
Lake
Lincoln
Phillips
Ravalli
Richland
Roosevelt
Sheridan
Toole
Valley

Class 3

Blaine
Carbon
Choteau
Dawson
Fergus
Madison
Park
Pondera
Sanders
Stillwater

Class 4

Beaverhead
Custer
Musselshell
Teton
Wibaux

Class 5

Broadwater
Deer Lodge
Judith Basin
Liberty
Powder River
Powell

Class 6 & 7

Carter
Daniels
Granite
McCone
Meagher
Mineral
Prairie
Garfield
Golden Valley
Sweet Grass
Treasurer
Wheatland
Petroleum

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CALENDAR

OCTOBER

4-7: Montana County Assessors Association annual meeting, Sidney
6-8: Montana League of Cities & Towns annual meeting, Great Falls
11: Columbus Day
28: Annual financial statement due to state

NOVEMBER

2: Municipal Election Day
3: Montana Women granted right to vote (1914)
11: Veteran's Day
25: Thanksgiving Day
29: Special Legislative Session convenes
30: First half property tax payments due

DECEMBER

1: County treasurer notes personal property tax collections on assessment book
14: Missoula County created by Washington Territorial Legislature (1860)
17: Edgerton County renamed by legislature for Lewis & Clark (1867)
20: County treasurer reports taxes collected and owed to county clerk
25: Christmas Day

JANUARY

1: New Year's Day
4: Municipal elected officials take office
6: Big Horn County organized (1913)
17: Martin Luther King Day
26: First city election held, Livingston (1889)

FEBRUARY

5: Town council prohibited tango dancing at masquerade ball, Moore (1914)
13-18: MACO Midwinter Meeting - Billings
15: County clerk compares delinquent tax list with assessment book
20: Yellowstone County organized (1883)
21: President's Day

MARCH

3: First meeting, Yellowstone County Commission (1883)
7: Powder River County organized (1920)
13-18: Municipal Clerk/Treasurer's Institute - Bozeman
16-18: Municipal Officials Workshop - Bozeman

APRIL

9: First election in Yellowstone County (1883)
15: IRS Day
16-23: County Government Week
20-22: County Treasurer's Certification School, Bozeman
25: Andrew Dawson, for whom county named, born (1817)

MAY

8: Mother's Day
24: First electric street railway began service, Helena (1890)
26: Pres. Lincoln signs bill creating Montana Territory (1864)
30: Memorial Day
31: Second half property taxes due

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications are currently available from the Local Government Center, Wilson Hall, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717 (406-994-6694).

Proceedings, Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor Summit

The conference, held in Great Falls, addressed the means necessary to organize Trade Corridor efforts. The speakers evaluated recent developments regarding cross-border trade, and explored the actions that will be needed in the future to take advantage of these developments. (No charge.)

Montana Policy Review, Fall 1991

Topics addressed in the second issue include the effects of migration on small communities, state solid waste policy, the Montana Local Government Policy Council, the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor, and trends in Montana local government. (No charge.)

Montana Policy Review, Spring 1992

Topics addressed in this issue include a study of the Missoula region, privatization of solid waste, well-water protection, the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and redistricting. (No charge.)

Montana Policy Review, Spring 1993

Topics addressed in this issue deal with tax reform, municipal legislative concerns addressed by the 1993 legislature and local government bills approved revising Title 7, the local government code. (No charge.)

***Montana Local Government Profiles*, Judy Mathre, editor.**

This wall chart, updated annually, presents census, budgetary, taxation, and government structure data for Montana's 128 incorporated municipalities and 56 counties. This quick reference tool provides important overview information at a glance. The latest edition includes FY 1993 fiscal data and 1990 census data. (No charge.)

Proceedings, 2nd Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor Conference

The conference, held in Lethbridge, Alberta, addressed the potential for economic development and increased trans-border trade between Canada and the United States. The speakers evaluated trade trends following the Free Trade Agreement, and explored the actions that local leaders can take to develop linkages across the border. (No charge.)

***Reflections on Tribal Governance in Montana*, Kenneth L. Weaver, editor**

Perspectives on tribal government are provided by leaders of Montana's seven Native American communities. A brief chronology of "Federal Indian Policy" and the governing charters of all Montana tribes are also included, along with the text of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. (No charge.)