MONTANA POLICY REVIEW

A Publication of the Local Government Center Vol. 12 No. 1 Spring 2005

MSU Extension in the 21st Century: Serving Montana's Communities

A biannual analysis of public policy issues confronting Montana's communities and those who serve them.

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Reflections on Local Governance

By Jane Jelinski, MPA, Director
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If your image of the Extension Service remains focused solely on 4-H and agriculture, prepare to be amazed. While 4-H and agricultural programs continue to provide important services to our citizens, the Extension Service of the 21st Century has stepped up to the plate and delivered an extraordinary variety of programs designed to serve the public.

Montana's Extension Service contributes to health care, law enforcement, fire protection and suppression, nutrition and food safety, disaster and emergency services, youth programs, land use planning, community visioning, economic development and information technology.

If you have the impression that Montana's University System doesn't have programs that directly benefit the public, take a look at what is going on all around you. These programs save property taxpayers tens of millions of dollars by delivering essential research, technical expertise and just plain hard work

In a recent publication of the Rural Policy Research Institute, Nancy Stark, Director of the Rural Governance Initiative, outlines eight key principles of effective rural governance. The Extension programs described in this issue of Montana Policy Review exemplify each of these principles of effective rural governance, illustrating that our MSU Extension Service is on the cutting edge in terms of how it serves the needs of local governments and their communities .

Stark tells us, "A meaningful visioning process equips ordinary people with sufficient knowledge and tools to rationally chart a different future." [1]

This issue of the Montana Policy Review is an unapologetic show-piece for Montana's Extension Service. Quietly and effectively, they develop new knowledge, transfer skills to communities, assist local government officials to provide critical services and promote positive and effective civic engagement.

The next time you see an Extension Agent, give him or her a pat on the back and say "thanks." Their work truly is spectacular.

Eight Key Principles of Effective Rural Governance

1. Collaboration (Crossing sectors (public, private, and non-profit)
2. Crossing political boundaries and recognizing regions
3. Sustained Citizen Engagement. Welcoming new voices (especially underrepresented individuals & youth)
4. Visioning a different future (bottom-up process)
5. Leveraging Regional Resources. Analyzing a region's competitive advantages (focus on strength & identify clusters)
6. Strengthening competencies of local elected officials
7. Engaging key intermediaries
8. Investing local capital.

Stark page 7

Notes:

[1] Nancy Stark, *Effective Rural Governance: What is it? Does it Matter?* Rural Policy Research Institute, (Washington, D.C.) p. 17.

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The Rural Health Initiative

A New Venture for MSU Extension Service

By David Young, PhD
Rural Health Resource Specialist
Extension Service, Montana State University

Health matters. Health matters to individuals. Health matters to communities. Health matters to institutions. And health care is expensive. Health care costs are the number one cause of family debt and bankruptcy for Montana residents as well as for all Americans. Health matters also to local, county and state governments, not to mention the federal government. Issues of rising health care costs, access to health care and increasing health disparities have surfaced as top priorities locally and nationally. The National Association of Counties (NACo) recognizes that county governments have multiple responsibilities for health care and thus play an essential role in policy making that impacts the health care delivery system. In most states, county governments are ultimately responsible for health care of the poor, uninsured, unemployed, incarcerated and indigent, regardless of their ability to pay. This increasing cost burden of uncompensated care is depleting many county budgets.

The Extension Service is dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives and strengthening the social, economic and environmental well-being of families and communities.

Health matters to the MSU Extension Service. The Extension Service is dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives and strengthening the social, economic and environmental well-being of families and communities. The Extension Service encourages Montanans to take advantage of opportunities to be a positive force for change in their own lives as well as for their families and communities. One new venture for MSU Extension is the establishment of a Rural Health Resource Program designed to assist rural under-served, under-represented, vulnerable and special needs populations and communities in taking advantage of opportunities to improve their quality of life and daily functioning. Some opportunities come in the form of calls for grant proposals. However, most rural Montana communities lack the necessary resources to prepare competitive applications. Unfortunately, a significant amount of public funds go unused each year because the application process is too confus-

ing and/or too time consuming. In addition to federal grants, a large amount of funding was awarded in 2004 to state and local governments and organizations from various philanthropic, charitable, and private foundations.

So what will be the inter-relationship between this new Rural Health Resource Program, the MSU Extension Service and healthier Montana communities? Land-grant institutions, such as MSU, were originally designed to be 'people-serving institutions.' Starting in 1862, the federal government granted land to each state for the development of an institution of higher education that would serve the citizens in the areas of research, education and extension. The nation's 100 plus land-grant institutions have a federal government-mandated extension (outreach) responsibility. The U.S. Congress created the extension system nearly a century ago to address exclusively rural, agricultural issues. The Extension Service of land-grant institutions has the critical mission of *"reaching out and extending resources, solving public needs with university resources through non-formal, non-credit programs."* The key operative phrases in the mission statement are *'reaching out'* and *'solving public needs.'* The range of unmet social and health service needs across Montana's rural communities is shocking. A review of applications submitted over the past three years from Montana organizations requesting funds to build capacity in health and social services has provided a revealing spectrum of unmet needs. This observation, along with Montana's poor ranking in a number of key health indicators, underscores the critical nature of health and social services that need to be addressed in order to improve quality of life. For example, nationally Montana ranks as follows:

The primary mission of the Rural Health Resource Program will be reaching out to needy rural Montana communities and providing technical assistance to local government, Extension Agents and health-related organizations in addressing health and social service needs.

- 1st in percent of state and local government expenditures used for health programs
- 1st in percent of Medicare beneficiaries living in rural areas
- 1st in alcohol abuse/dependence by children ages 12-17 (twice the national average)
- 1st in those needing but not receiving treatment for alcohol use in the past year for children ages 12-17 (twice the national average)
- 2nd in illicit drug abuse/dependence by children ages 12-17 (40% above the national average)
- 3rd in those needing but not receiving treatment for illicit drug use in the past year for children ages 12-17 (25% above the national average)
- 6th in percent of the population without health insurance (approximately 20%)
- 6th in health care expenditures as a percent of gross state product.

In addition to these dismal health-related rankings, health care costs in Montana are running in excess of $4.4 billion annually, nearly twice the annual cash receipts credited to Montana's agricultural industry. So the primary mission of the Rural Health Resource Program will be *'reaching out'* to needy rural Montana communities and providing technical assistance to local government, Extension Agents and health-related organizations in addressing *'health and social service needs.'* A major objective will be to assist needy communi-

ties in seeking outside sources of funding to address unmet health and social service needs.

Health matters locally, too. The saying that *"all health care is local"* is supported by reports showing that individual health is closely linked to community health, and community health is influenced by collective beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Thus, issues of health, health care and health care outcomes are both personal and communal. The increasing numbers of uninsured and rising cost burden of uncompensated care has pushed local governments to work more closely with state governments to find and implement solutions. This fact, along with a widening gap in health disparities between rural and urban rural residents, provides a great opportunity to enlist community stakeholders in the pursuit of the two overarching goals of the national health agenda, *Healthy People 2010*: (1) to increase quality and years of healthy life, and (2) to eliminate health disparities. *Health disparities* are defined as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health events that exist among and between specific sub-population groups. These differences are usually the result of complex interactions involving a multitude of factors including genetic, social, economic, ethnic, cultural, behavioral, geographic, and environmental factors.

In addition, access to health care, health promotion, diagnostic screening and personal life style choices are key elements of the health disparities equation. A *health inequity* is a lack of fair and appropriate distribution of resources such that all individuals have 'fair and equal' opportunity to achieve their full health potential through affordable access to the known prerequisites and treatments for good health and disease prevention. *Healthy People 2010* challenges communities, states and other organizations to take a multidisciplinary approach to achieving *health equity* – "an approach that involves improving health, education, housing, labor, justice, transportation, agriculture, and the environment, as well as data collection itself."

In the face of a national effort to achieve health equity and reduce (eliminate) health disparities, an assessment of key health indicators reveals a widening gap in health disparities between urban and rural communities. For instance, rural residents are more likely than their urban counterparts to: (1) have unintentional injuries and injury-related deaths; (2) suffer premature death from heart disease, cancer, diabetes and suicide; (3) self-report being in poorer health and suffer from chronic or serious illness and disability; (4) be uninsured or under-insured; (5) have low income or be living in poverty; (6) have high incidence of substance abuse and domestic abuse; and (7) lack access to health screening, health care and home and community-based services. In addition, rural areas have a higher percentage of Medicare beneficiaries and a disproportionate number of elderly living with chronic conditions. Furthermore, people living in rural areas do not have ready access to emergency services or specialty care and are less likely to exercise regularly, use preventive screening services or use seat belts. The combination of a depressed agricultural economy, rising health care costs and increasing numbers of uninsured and underinsured has resulted in a health care crisis for many rural residents,

The combination of a depressed agricultural economy, rising health care costs and increasing numbers of uninsured and underinsured has resulted in a health care crisis for many rural residents, families and communities.

families and communities.

Finally, America's rural history is replete with stories of pioneers, frontiersman and settlers heading west in search of riches, such as gold, silver and oil. At the same time, Native peoples traveled the plains in search of the abundance of the buffalo. Ironically, rural America sits on a vein of untapped riches in the form of social capital - *those specific processes among people and organizations, working collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust, that lead to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit.* The principles of social capital – collaboration, partnerships, alliances, coalitions – are cornerstones for community health promotion strategies. Studies have shown that well-planned community-based programs do yield positive results. Successfully mining Montana's rich vein of social capital will make rural communities healthier by promoting healthier lifestyles through education, advocacy, prevention and intervention. Once again Montana will be known as the 'Treasure State.'

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MSU Extension Fire Services Training School

By Brian Crandell, Operations Officer

Our customers ask the Fire Services Training School to provide research based technical support, a variety of communications media, a diverse resource center, a nationally accredited professional qualifications certification program, and on -site expertise.

The MSU Extension Fire Services Training School was created in 1977 by the Montana Legislature to provide fire service training to firefighters and communities throughout the state. Montanans are served by 432 fire departments with 12,000 firefighters. Our customers ask the Fire Services Training School to provide research based technical support, a variety of communications media, a diverse resource center, a nationally accredited professional qualifications certification program, and on-site expertise. The Fire School staff is made up of 4.5 field staff positions, 2.25 positions supporting the resource center and providing administrative support, and a Director. All of the Fire School staff have extensive experience serving Montana's firefighters. The field staff are active members of the fire service, most having more than 20 years experience.

Value

Montana's size and space contribute immeasurably to our quality of life. These same wide open spaces offer challenges to fire fighters needing educational and information support to serve their communities. The Fire School offers educational products and services to Montana firefighters and communities to overcome the information and educational challenges of distance in our state. The Fire School provides on-site educational support by delivering fire service expertise literally to the door of local fire stations across Montana. The efficiency and cost effectiveness of sending one instructor to a fire station, rather than having 20 firefighters travel to another site outside their community is significant. By providing on-site, local outreach support, the Fire School can return services at a fraction of the cost of a local fire department sending fire fighters out of town for the same service. The savings to local government as a return on investment are in the

400 to 1,000 percent range. For every dollar invested in the Fire School, local firefighters and communities receive more than four dollars in service. The Fire School's service is performed in the public interest of local communities and firefighters, unlike some profit driven information sources. By offering daily, weekly, and monthly e-based and paper newsletter services, the Fire School serves as a conduit for gathering and distributing timely information about fire service related topics. Fire fighters in Montana use the educational products and information to save lives, reduce property loss, and save their community money through insurance savings. Our firefighters trust the Fire School to deliver top quality training and information to their community.

For every dollar invested in the Fire School, local fire fighters and communities receive more than four dollars in service.

Quality Educational Products and Services

The Fire School uses research based information and educational techniques in all its service delivery. Curriculum is developed using best/smart practices information from leading fire services sources worldwide. The state of the art information is developed into products, approaches and formats that are applicable in local communities in Montana.

The importance of the Fire Services Training School cannot be overstated as we prepare for what many anticipate will be a record-setting fire season. Years of drought have resulted in ever increasing fire danger. Our job is to help local firefighters and local governments to prepare for an active fire season, institute fire prevention measures, provide instruction on urban-wildland interface issues, and to assure the safety of our citizens and their property.

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Meth in Montana: The Extension Partnership Response

By Michael P. Vogel, PhD
Extension Housing & Environmental Health Specialist

In Montana, the dangers and problems of methamphetamine reach well beyond its users or manufacturers. The drug has created significant challenges to the law enforcement and corrections systems, and its effects on families and children can be devastating.

Methamphetamine in Montana Quick Facts

9.3 percent of Montana high school students admit ever using methamphetamine, compared to 7.6 percent of young people nationwide.
(U.S. Sentencing Commission, Office of Policy Analysis).

According to data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission Office of Policy Analysis, 48.3% of federal sentences in Montana were drug-related; 74.4% of those—as compared to 15.5% nationally—were meth-related.

In federal fiscal year 2004, 63 Montana meth labs required removal of hazardous material by a specialized contractor. Cost to taxpayers was $194,230.
(Drug Enforcement Agency)

In federal fiscal year 2002, 122 Montana meth labs required removal of hazardous material by a specialized contractor. Cost to taxpayers was more than $1 million. (DEA)

What is the Issue?

Methamphetamine is unlike any other illegal drug. Montana has never seen anything like it. Meth is highly addictive and the addiction is difficult to treat. It is relatively easy to make and may be found in cities and in rural areas. The clandestine labs in which it is cooked are so small they can be assembled in apartments, hotel rooms, cars, camper trailers, abandoned buildings and campgrounds. It can be marketed to a wide range of Montanans. Dealers may portray it as a diet aid for adolescent girls, an energy supplement for overworked moms or an escape from everyday reality for bored young adults. Meth's physiological effects can be devastating, ranging from missing teeth and skin lesions to permanent brain damage. Meth production creates significant amounts of toxic waste. Meth is often accompanied by crime, and the people under its influence can be violent.

WHAT is METH?

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive drug that users swallow, snort, smoke or

inject. While low intensity users may swallow or snort it, as users grow addicted and evolve into binge or high-intensity users, they may smoke or inject the drug to achieve a faster and stronger high.

Methamphetamine is odorless, bitter-tasting and crystalline, and may be white or very light pink or yellow. It dissolves easily in water or alcohol. Meth hydrochloride—crystal meth, or "ice"—is clear and chunky, like rock candy. It is a concentrated, pure, highly addictive form of the drug. Users heat it, then inhale the vapors released by the heat.

How does meth affect the body?

Meth affects the central nervous system and causes the brain to release dopamine, a natural chemical that is vital to normal brain function. Initially, a methamphetamine user may feel a sense of euphoria. Meth has a toxic effect, however, and ultimately alters brain chemistry. Meth also speeds up the body's metabolism, increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Immediately after smoking or injecting, the user may experience a rush that lasts a few minutes.

The most dangerous stage for users, medical personnel and law enforcement is "tweaking." Tweaking occurs at the end of the high, when the user feels emptiness and anxiety, and nothing seems to take that feeling away, including taking more meth. A meth user who is tweaking has probably not slept in days, and could be irritable and paranoid. Confrontation increases the chances of violence, but provocation is not necessary for the user to behave or react violently.

The effects and volatility may be intensified by the use of alcohol or other substances.

Common outward behavioral signs of meth use include:

- compulsive behavior, like repetitively sorting or taking apart and putting together objects
- decreased appetite
- general agitation and increased levels of physical activity
- intense paranoia
- occasional episodes of sudden and violent behavior
- sight or sound hallucinations

Common physiological signs include:

- grinding of teeth
- high blood pressure
- increased body temperature
- insomnia
- irregular heartbeat or chest pain
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- shortness of breath
- tremors

Long-term physiological effects include:

- damage to the brain and central nervous system—similar to Alzheimer's or stroke
- psychotic symptoms, including paranoia and auditory hallucinations
- organ damage
- cardiovascular problems
- dental problems, including lost teeth
- damaged blood vessels
- skin damage, including lesions or abscesses
- increased risk of HIV and hepatitis, particularly for users who inject the drug

The MSU Extension Service Response

According to Montana Attorney General Mike McGrath, "as Montana fights the use, sale and manufacture of methamphetamine, public education and outreach are essential. ... There is no single, simple solution (to meth). We cannot arrest, prosecute

and jail our way out of the meth problem. Law enforcement is an important part of the answer, but it must be balanced by equally strong treatment, education and prevention components."

The mission of the MSU Extension Service is to provide public education and outreach, so a partnership with the Montana Department of Justice is an appropriate response to the statewide meth epidemic. Through Extension's network of county and Tribal offices, the MSU Extension Service Housing and Environmental Health Program is reaching out to Montanan's to provide resources and educational programs.

Meth Outreach Toolkit for Community Educators and Teachers.

To guide the MSU Extension and Dept of Justice initiative, the partnership developed the *Meth Toolkit for Community Educators and Teachers.* The Toolkit is intended to provide comprehensive but easy-to-understand information related to methamphetamine use and production affecting Montana youth and families, businesses and communities.

Toolkit Contents.

The toolkit is designed as a self-guided and self-contained teaching tool to serve as a community resource for meth education programs. It can be used for short or long presentations for targeted or general audiences. The Toolkit includes these materials:

Meth in Montana booklet

Toolkit Outreach Objectives

Objective 1. To create greater community methamphetamine awareness of the drug's health, economic, and disposal impacts.

Objective 2. To encourage citizens to respond appropriately and timely to law enforcement with the discovery of meth wastes, meth use and suspicious neighborhood activity.

Objective 3. To encourage agricultural producers, landlords, rental property managers, realtors, highway workers, hotel and motel owners and operators, storage unit owners and operators, and other people who have access to property to regularly examine their properties with an eye toward the discovery of materials and signs of methamphetamine production.

Objective 4. To involve parents of youth and teens in the understanding of meth and its appeal to children, the reality that their child or friends could be a meth user and to pursue safe alternative activities with their children.

A 24-page, pocket-sized, full-color piece that offers basic information about meth, links and contact information, references to Montana law, photographs of materials used to make meth.

Meth insert focus cards
Insert cards fit into the booklet. Information is tailored to these audiences:

- *"For people who spend time outdoors"*
- *"Homes, Rental Properties, Motels and Storage Units"*
- *"Retailers and Pharmacists"*
- *"Auto Rental and Repair Shops"*
- *"Agricultural Producers and Retailers"*

Filler ads
Ads are in a variety of sizes, and present basic anti-meth messages. They may be placed into newspapers, newsletters, bulletins or mailings.

Public service announcements
Three 30-second video public service announcements are on a DVD. There is a general law enforcement video, one featuring Mary Haydal (of Miles City) talking about her daughter Cassie who died from meth use, and one in which Mary Haydal discusses the serious threat meth poses to Montana teens.

Poster
The 11" x 17" poster can be customized with local contact information or to promote a community meth awareness program.

Bookmarks
To be used as a mail insert, distributed at a public meeting or location, bookmarks have basic information, including contact information

Meth Videos
The Toolkit contains a DVD with four teen-audience videos and the Montana specific video, *"Dark Cloud Over the Big Sky - METH"*.

Meth PowerPoint Presentation
To support workshops a PowerPoint presentation is provided on the Toolkit CD. The presentation is divided into three parts:
Part 1. Meth and It's Health Effects
Part 2. Meth Production
- where is it made
- what to look for
- dangers

Part 3. Meth Impacts
- Environment and Cleanup
- Abuse and Neglect

Crime

Leader's Guide
To assist the educator plan and implement a meth outreach program, the Toolkit contains a Leader's Guide. The Guide includes a description of the toolkit pieces, basic information about methamphetamine, messages for general and targeted audiences, planning and evaluation forms, and outreach support materials.

Tools for Schools Resource Kit
In July 2004, a team of faculty members at Montana State University received a grant from the Office of Public Instruction to develop a series of educational PowerPoint presentations aimed at young people for use by teachers and other community educators as another tool in the state's efforts at combating meth use. The PowerPoint programs are targeted to youth in grades 6-12. The MSU Meth Education Partnership has developed 10 **PowerPoint educational presentations** of no more than 20 minutes in length, with facilitator guides, suitable for presenta-

tion by teachers in schools and other group settings. Facilitator guides offer suggestions and tips for presenting, additional resources and ideas for auxiliary projects.

"Tools for Schools" includes ten dynamic PowerPoint presentations—

For Middle School Students

- Basic Information About Meth (for 6-8th graders)
- Resistance Skills (6-8th graders)
- Meth and Your Future (6-8th graders)
- Dieting and Body Image (6-8th graders)

For High School Students

- Basic Information about Meth (for 9-12th graders)
- It Can't Happen to Me (9-12th graders)
- Friends and Meth (9-12th graders)
- Media Advocacy (9-12th graders)
- Meth & Impacts on Families (9-12th graders)
- Meth and Impacts on Community (9-12th graders)

Each PowerPoint presentation comes with:

- a detailed lesson plan for educators
- teaching tips
- suggested additional activities
- key vocabulary
- additional resources

web links

A "Jeopardy-style Game" is also included to test your student's knowledge about the dangers of meth. All units are designed to be taught in 20-30 minutes.

Materials are designed to be used in a variety of settings and classes—

- English teachers
- physical education classes
- family life classes
- health educators

and many more

Methamphetamine in Montana Quick Facts

The number of admissions to state-approved chemical dependency treatment providers in MT in which the patient listed meth as his or her primary drug:

- ***734 in 2000***
- ***820 in 2001***
- ***903 in 2002***
- ***1,012 in 2003***
- ***1,124 in 2004.***

Of the 1,124 patients who named meth as their primary drug in 2004:

- ***545 (48%) named injection as the primary route of use***
- ***481 were men, 452 were women***
- ***Almost 65% were ages 18 to 34.***

(DPHHS)

The top 5 conviction offenses for women in the MT Women's Prison include possession of drugs (#1) and sale of drugs (#5). Theft, forgery and bad check—crimes associated with meth use and sale—are the other three.
(MT Department of Corrections)

2005 Montana Legislature Deals with Meth

Cleanup

The 2005 Montana Legislature passed legislation setting decontamination standards for indoor property contaminated by the manufacture of methamphetamine. The bill addressed "inhabitable property," meaning homes, apartments, storage facilities, mobile homes or recreational vehicles that may be sold, leased or rented for any length of time. Existing state standards address contamination to water or sewer systems, land or water outside a building. The legislation also included requirements and recommendations for property owners and government agencies.

Anhydrous ammonia

Under a Montana law passed in 2005

- Theft of any amount of anhydrous ammonia to make meth is a felony.
- The definition of "criminal possession of precursors to dangerous drugs" includes possession of anhydrous ammonia with intent to manufacture meth.

Another law passed in 2005 requires locks on anhydous ammonia tanks and gives the Montana Department of Agriculture funds to provide them to anhydrous distributors.

Pseudoephedrine

Under a law passed by the 2005 Montana Legislature:

- Cold tablets containing pseudoephedrine must be placed "behind the counter, " in an area not accessible to customers.
- Tablets may only be sold in licensed pharmacies, by pharmacists, pharmacy technicians or interns.
- Purchasers must show valid ID and sign a record of purchase.
- There are limits on the amount of product a consumer may buy in a 30-day period.

The law does not apply to non-tablet forms of pseudoephedrine, the liquids and gel-caps.

The law also has exceptions for Montana counties without a licensed pharmacy. In these counties, retailers many apply to the Department of Justice for certification to sell pseudoephedrine.

This article is compiled from excerpts from the *Toolkit Leader's Guide* and *Meth in Montana* booklet.

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Weed Whacker Rodeo:

Helping Local Government By Building Coalitions

By Dan Clark, MSU Teton County Extension Director

How is a group of Weed Wranglers, pulling spotted knapweed on a hot July morning, helping local government? As participants of the Weed Whacker Rodeo, they are assisting county weed districts reduce weed populations and preventing its spread into difficult to manage and ecologically significant areas.

County weed districts along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains struggle to meet the escalating demands of a prolific weed population. Funding and staffing levels are such that it is difficult to maintain a county right-of-way spray program and also meet the ever increasing need to educate the public in a meaningful and proactive way. The best long term sustainable solution to noxious weed management by county governments is to have a weed savvy citizenry doing its part to prevent further spread of weeds and control the exiting weed population.

The best long term sustainable solution to noxious weed management by county governments is to have a weed savvy citizenry doing its part to prevent further spread of weeds and control the exiting weed population.

How does a local government create a weed savvy citizenry? The answer to that question can be found at the MSU Teton County Extension Office. As the Extension Educator, I was successful in building a *coalition* that has found a unique way to get the public involved in noxious weed management.

Building coalitions is an effective method of addressing relevant community needs. Often the leadership from County Extension faculty serve as the essential spark necessary to catalyze people with common issues and needs into cohesive groups. Coalitions are most successful when they share a common vision, articulated goals and possess strategic ownership.

The beauty of a coalition is that each member has a unique strength they add to the group and create a synergistic environment. The success of a coalition is proportionate to its commitment to their vision and the collaborative spirit of its members.

During my first year in Teton County, I identified a number of agencies and private organizations dedicating time and resources to conservation education. I felt that these agencies and organizations could realize a greater potential with respect to their educational efforts if they worked together. Recognizing a need, I was able to facilitate the birth of a new coalition by

bringing twelve groups and agencies together into one coordinated group. As a result, the Front Range Conservation Education Group was created.

The purpose of the Front Range Conservation Group (FRCEG) is to develop an integrated approach to conservation education along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Montana and to address the educational needs of students, teachers, landowners and managers. Another goal is to develop appropriate programs and activities necessary to further conservation education in the region. Sponsoring six major events each year, the FRCEG reaches over 400 constituents annually.

Often the leadership from County Extension faculty serves as the essential spark necessary to catalyze people with common issues and needs into cohesive groups.

Recognizing an opportunity to collaborate with county weed districts in satisfying an unmet potential, the Front Range Conservation Education Group took the initiative to develop a noxious weed education and awareness campaign that would compliment the county's existing weed program. By integrating the *action* of the weed district with the *education* of the FRECG, the county is receiving a "bigger bang" for its tax buck.

One objective identified by the FRCEG was to help the public understand the economic, biological and ecological impact of exotic species on native landscapes, and the role individuals can play in preventing their continued proliferation. The group desires that participants of their educational programs will leave knowing they can make a difference in how noxious weeds impact society. Each person can take the skills and knowledge gained and use it in their own neighborhood, farm, ranch and favorite recreational area across Montana.

The marquee event sponsored by this coalition is the famed Annual Sun Canyon Weed Whacker Rodeo. This annual weed pulling event is held on the second Saturday of July each year in Sun Canyon, west of Augusta. The focus of this event is to educate people about their role in contributing to the spread of noxious weeds and providing a solution to the problem. The Weed Whacker Rodeo's target audience is national forest users and recreationists, agriculture producers, cabin owners, wildlife and wilderness groups, and local youth. The day consists of a short presentation followed by an hour and a half weed pull in campgrounds, at trail heads and fishing access areas. All weeds pulled by participants are bagged and later weighed. At the conclusion of the pluckfest, a lunch is provided to everyone followed by the dissemination of door prizes and an awards program.

Sun Canyon was selected as the site of the Rodeo because it is the primary entry point for people accessing the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, and the river that flows through it irrigates more than 200,000 acres of agricultural land. The Sun Canyon also provides critical wildlife habitat for North America's second largest migrating elk herd, a foundation bighorn sheep herd, mountain goats, grizzly bear, black bear, deer, upland game birds, fish and rare native plants.

The FRCEG just celebrated its 7th Annual Sun Canyon Weed Whacker Rodeo in July of 2004, boasting 83 participants pulling 1,482 pounds of noxious weeds in less than two hours. Over the past seven years, 610 people have participated in this event, harvesting 8,350 pounds of weeds. As a gauge to measure success, several historic weed pulling sites are no longer targeted by Rodeo participants due to a lack to noxious

weed plants.

Offering incentives is important to motivate people to drive 30 miles on a dirt road to pull weeds on a hot Saturday in July. Through creative fundraising, the group is able to offer weed pullers a free lunch, a new pair of gloves, a commemorative T-shirt and a chance to win many quality door prizes. Recently participants were eligible to win weed sprayers, weed identification handbooks, camping gear, herbicide and a sixteen foot canoe as the grand prize. These door prizes and awards are financed through grants and donations from businesses, private organizations and government agencies.

The effort put into planning, organizing, and executing this and many other events, far exceeds the time and resources available to local government. Coalitions often generate a critical mass of resources and abilities that collectively exert influence and access opportunities that would be unattainable if tried individually. The diversity of funding sources is one example of how the skill set and influence of a coalition can add value to projects.

Due to the proven effectiveness and success of the Sun Canyon Weed Whacker Rodeo, several groups from other regions of the State are attempting to model this event as part of their weed education strategy. In July of 2005, the Teton River Drainage will host its first Annual Weed Whacker Rodeo.

The Front Range Conservation Education Group is one of many examples of Montana State University Extension professionals building grassroots coalitions that work in partnership with local government. Through a synergistic relationship, the coalition was successful in expanding the capacity and impact of a county weed district far beyond its resource level.

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MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

Understanding School Finances

By Douglas J. Young, PhD and
Myles J. Watts, PhD
Professors of Economics

In 2004 Montana courts ruled that the method of financing K-12 education is unconstitutional, and the legislature is charged with devising a new plan that will pass constitutional muster. Taxpayers worry that their property tax bills will skyrocket, and school teachers and administrators worry about how a new plan will affect their individual districts. Parents, meanwhile, are mainly concerned with educational quality – they care less about the financing method than about the results achieved: graduation rates, test scores and other measures of educational outcomes. Adding to the difficulties, the current funding method is already complex and thus poorly understood, yet an understanding of where we are now is essential for making reform a success. This paper contributes to the policy discussion by reviewing current funding for K-12 education in Montana, including expenditure comparisons over time and with other states, federal, state and local revenue sources, and the relationship between educational outcomes and inputs.

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Expenditures

Spending on education is the largest single component of Montana's state and local government spending. In 2002 K-12 spending was $1.2 billion, or about five percent of total personal income in the state, a figure that ranked Montana seventh highest in the country. [1] Expressed on a per student basis, however, Montana's rank is lower. As Table 1 indicates, current expenditure per pupil was $7,027, about 10 percent below the national average of $7,701. There is considerable variation among the states in the region, with Idaho, North Dakota and South Dakota spending less than Montana, while Wyoming spends 23 percent more.

Table 1. Current Expenditure per Pupil

	$/Pupil	Rank
Montana	7,027	29
Idaho	5,923	47
N. Dakota	6,728	35
S. Dakota	6,319	40
Wyoming	8,667	10
US Average	7,701	

Source: Morgan and Morgan (2005) for 2002.

K-12 expenditures have grown substantially in recent decades. As Table 2 indicates, current spending increased from about 600 million dollars in 1970 to over a billion dollars by 2002.[2] Over the same period, enrollment declined from 175,000 students to about 150,000. As a result, spending per student increased more rapidly than total spending, more than doubling since 1970.

Table 2. Growth of Current Expenditure

	Total $millions	Enrollment Thousands	Dollars Per pupil
1970	590	175	3,375
1980	782	158	4,493
1990	883	151	5,836
2002	1,072	153	7,027

Sources: NCES (2003), Morgan and Morgan (2005)

Why Have Expenditures Grown?

These data raise the question: Why has spending on K-12 grown so much? One reason is that incomes have grown just as fast as spending. [3] With higher incomes, Montanans can afford to spend more on their children's education. But where is the money going? How is it being spent?

Education is a very labor-intensive industry, with personnel costs making up about three-quarters of current expenditures. Teachers' salaries are in turn the largest part of personnel costs. Montana teachers' salaries are low in comparison with national averages, although about in the middle among the surrounding states (Table 3).

Table 3. Teachers' Salaries

	Salary	Rank	Relative	Rank
Montana	$35,754	46	1.35	7
Idaho	$40,148	30	1.42	3
N.D.	$33,869	49	1.25	27
S.D.	$32,416	50	1.21	37
WY	$38,838	35	1.32	13
US Average	$45,930			

Source: Morgan Quinto (2005) for 2003 "Relative" to All Workers for 2002.

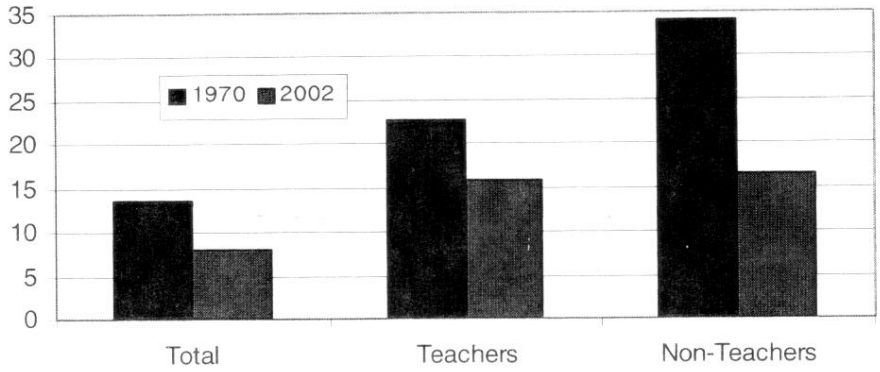
Another way to look at salaries is in comparison with other occupations in Montana. As the "Relative" column in Table 3 indicates, teachers are paid about 35 percent more than the average worker, and this is the seventh highest in the nation. Thus, while Montana teacher salaries are low in comparison with national averages, they are high in comparison with other workers in Montana. Teachers may be tempted to leave the state for higher pay elsewhere, but teaching remains an attractive occupation if one intends to stay in Montana.

Have increases in teacher's salaries caused the rise in spending? Perhaps surprisingly, the answer is, "No." National average salaries rose from about $42,000 in 1970 to $46,000 in 2003, after adjustment for inflation. This amounts to less than 10 percent over 40 years. Teachers' salaries in

Montana actually declined by about 2.5 percent over the same time period. As a result, Montana salaries fell from 88 percent of the national average to 78 percent today. [4]

The main force driving K-12 spending has been increases in staffing. As Figure 1 indicates, in 1970 there were about 14 pupils for each staff member. By 2002, there were only about 8 pupils per staff member. The increase in staffing was partly a result of lower pupil to teacher ratios, which fell from 23 to 16. In addition the ratio of pupils to non-teachers, which include administrators, instructional aides and others, fell from 34 to about 16. Thus, overall staffing rose about 70 percent relative to the number of students, and increased personnel costs by about the same amount, even in the absence of salary increases. [5]

Figure 1. Pupil to Staff Ratios

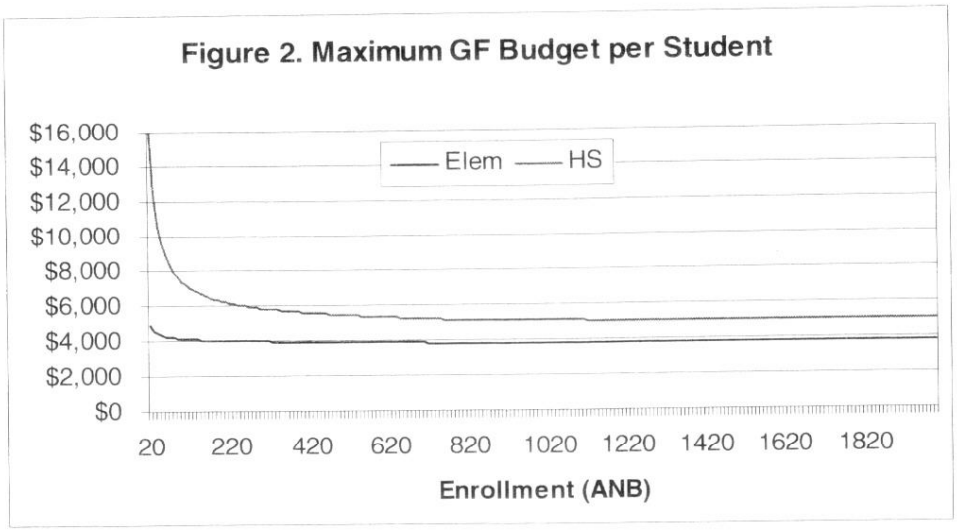


Source: NCES, Digest of Educational Statistics 2003, Tables 64 & 79

How Are Expenditures Determined?

School expenditures are set at the local level by the district trustees. However, the state and Federal governments also influence the process in a variety of ways. Expenditures are based on a series of budgeted as well as non-budgeted funds. The largest is the General Fund budget which includes most personnel and operations costs, and includes about three-quarters of all budgeted funds. The remaining one-quarter is for Retirement, Transportation, Bus Depreciation, Debt Service, Building Reserve, Tuition, Adult Education, Non-Operating, Technology, and Flexibility funds. The rules about sources and uses of monies vary among the different budgets, making it difficult for trustees – let alone interested citizens – to gain a full understanding of the process.

The legislature sets a Maximum General Fund Budget per Student based on school size. Maximum budgets are higher for smaller schools, especially at the high school level, in recognition of higher costs per student (Figure 2).[6] For example, even small high schools are required to offer a full range of math, science and other courses, although enrollment in each class may be small.



The state also specifies a minimum general fund budget that is 80 percent of the maximum. Each district must adopt a budget that is between the minimum and the maximum, with certain adjustments for special education students, declining enrollment, or previously existing high budgets that are "grandfathered" in. Some of the state requirements were adopted in response to a 1988 court ruling that found Montana's school finance system to be unconstitutional because of large spending disparities among districts. [7]

Revenue Sources

Montana schools receive 13 percent of their funding from the Federal government. This figure is similar to the Dakotas, but considerably higher than Idaho or Wyoming (Table 5). About 60 percent of Federal funds are distributed through the state's Office of Public Instruction. These funds are for Special Education and Compensatory Programs, Child Nutrition, and Vocational and other programs. The remaining 40 percent of Federal revenues flow directly to the districts. The largest direct flow is Federal Impact Aid (PL 81-874) that compensates districts for Federal activities that remove land from the tax base, for example reservation land or Malstrom Air Force Base.

Table 5. Revenue Sources (Percent of Total)

	Federal	State	Local
Montana	13	48	39
Idaho	9	61	31
N. Dakota	14	38	49
S. Dakota	14	37	49
Wyoming	8	49	43
U.S. Average	8	49	43

Source: Morgan and Morgan (2005) for 2002

One of the issues in the current and past court cases has been whether or not the state is paying its proper share of education costs. Part of the problem is that the proper share is not clearly spelled out in either the state constitution or law. As Table 5 indicates, state government in Montana provides about half of the revenue, a figure that is similar to Wyoming and the national average, higher than the Dakotas, and lower than Idaho. State aid is divided among several programs, including direct state aid and guaranteed tax base – both of which are aimed at helping districts obtain the minimum general fund budget levels – special education, transportation and facilities, and block grants. The remaining 39 percent of K-12 funding comes from local sources, primarily district and county property taxes.

Conclusion: Educational Inputs and Outputs

School funding is a critical issue in providing "a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools," as the Montana constitution requires. [8] But funding is the means, not the end, and the distinction is important for public policy. School funding and other measures of inputs such as accreditation standards, teacher certification, class size, etc., are important to the extent that they contribute to the output, i.e. "develop[ing] the full educational potential of each person."

Montana is educating its children well according to most of the standard measures. Montana ranks 10th in the nation in high school graduation rate, 14th on ACT scores, and 20th, 9th, 3rd, and 4th, respectively, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress Math and Reading scores for fourth and eighth graders. In addition scores have been increasing over time. [9]

Despite this good showing, there is room for improvement. Native American children lag behind the statewide averages, as do children from disadvantaged backgrounds. International comparisons suggest that the USA as a whole could do a better job, particularly in math and science.

The important point is to focus on the outputs rather than the inputs. It is not enough just to change the structure of funding or to provide additional resources to our schools – the crucial decisions concern how these resources can best be deployed to enhance educational outcomes.

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Endnotes

1 Fiscal year 2002 is the latest year for which comparable data is available across states. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2004), Tables 1 and 12.

2 Current Expenditure excludes capital outlay, interest and some other items amounting to $83 million in 2002. Expenditures are adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index.

3 Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/spi/drill.cfm. K-12 spending was 5.1% of income in 1970 and declined slightly to 4.8% in 2002.

4. However, personnel costs encompass benefits—including the employer portion of social security taxes, health insur-

ance and retirement—and benefits increased during these years.

5. Montana's pupil to staff ratio of 7.8 is close to the national average of 8.1.

6. There are separate schedules for the 55 combined K-12 districts.

7. See Young (1997) for a discussion.

8. Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 1.

9. Morgan and Morgan (2005). Much of this data is also available on the OPI website: http://www.opi.state.mt.us.

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MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

Food Safety Training for Montana Tribal Communities and Colleges

By Lynn C. Paul, EdD, RD
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist

Health care costs and lost wages resulting from food borne illnesses put an enormous strain on economically challenged tribal communities. Successful strategies for fulfilling the project's objectives include creating on-going educational partnerships for food safety training, policy development, and building community capacity.

The goal of the food safety education project is to develop culturally sensitive food safety training and community competence to address food safety hazards. Through partnerships, this project works toward the following six primary objectives:

1) Project development, sustainability, transferability, evaluation/impact,
2) Building upon tribal community capacity, partnerships, and policy development,
3) Tribally-based Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) and other food safety training,
4) Promoting a food systems "farm to fork" approach to food safety and food production,
5) Promoting food safety within nutrition, health promotion, and prevention programs,
6) Assisting in economic development, tourism, job security, and youth workforce preparation.

Since 2000 Montana State University-Bozeman Extension has become more effective in developing partnerships with Montana's 1994 Land-Grant Colleges on seven reservations, tribal communities and other local/state agencies including Tribal/Indian Health Service sanitarians and the Montana Department of Livestock.

Health care costs and lost wages resulting from food borne illnesses put an enormous strain on economically challenged tribal communities. Successful strategies for fulfilling the project's objectives include creating on-going educational partnerships for food safety training, policy development, and building community capacity. Nationally recognized food safety training programs with options for certification such as ServSafe are taught using culturally relevant learning techniques. Tribal colleges and communities have expressed interest in a holistic "farm to fork" food safety approach, which includes value-added agriculture and food production.

The tribes have also expressed interest in workforce preparation, community, youth and economic development, safe food operations for tourism and trade, and establishment of credentialed educational classes offered by each Tribal College. This project emphasizes tribal-specific delivery plans, developing mentors, and assists with follow-up training. MSU Extension Food and Nutrition has been successful in receiving funding since 2000 from the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service because of the quality of trainings, successful partnerships, ability to provide relevant resources to tribal communities, and professional deliverables.

Many of Montana's Native American Reservations have progressive food safety policies. For example, several tribes have instituted a policy that requires all food vendors to attend a food safety education class prior to serving food at a pow wow.

Accomplishments Since 2000

1. Starting a Specialty Food Business: Video and Resource Guide.

Running a food business may be a profitable venture for Native Americans but getting started can be a challenge. To help, in 2003 MSU Extension produced a video that will aid in tapping into "value-added agriculture" food markets. This video highlights Native American food processing businesses and specific resources for Native American entrepreneurs. This valuable food processing and safety project covers: 1) developing a feasibility study, business plan and marketing strategy; 2) product development-quality control and food safety, 3) labeling requirements and assistance, 4) packaging and co-packing, and 5) tribal, state, and federal regulations and resources.

2. ServSafe Food Safety Training

MSU Extension Food and Nutrition partnered with Montana county and tribal extension agents and sanitarians to provide the nationally recognized ServSafe certification class on two Montana Reservations – Northern Cheyenne and Crow. On each reservation, the course was provided as a two-day class, and was designed to include an abundance of visual stimuli and hands-on activities for the audience. Success of the program depended on local marketing and coordination efforts. Fourteen (93%) of the participants passed the course and are ServSafe Certified. The average passing score was 86.8%. Four participants (29%) passed with a 90% or greater score and are eligible to apply for ServSafe Instructor status.

3. Tribally-based Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Basic Meat Microbiology Training with Focus on Cultural Food Products.

This cuttng-edge information was identified as a need by each Montana reservation as well as other Native American communities across the United States. Representatives from all but one Montana tribe attended this class as well as tribes from North Dakota and South Dakota. Mary Cutshall, Director of Small and Very Small Plant Outreach, Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, has requested that this curriculum become available to share with other tribal communities and states.

4. The Montana Food Safety Works Program.

This program has been used successfully within reservation and non-reservation Montana high schools for sev-

eral years. It is a hands-on food safety curriculum, which provides job training skills and a safe food handler certificate upon completion of the course. The course is taught in conjunction with Family Consumer Science teachers and local extension educators/agents. It is easily adapted to a variety of other audiences such as local cafeterias, daycares, senior centers, Head Start programs, 4-H clubs, junior achievement groups, or any groups who serve food, as very few Montana counties or reservations require food safety training for employees or volunteers.

5. "Celebrating Safe Food:" Pow Wow Video on Food Safety and Sanitation.

Strategies for temporary food booths, such as pow wows is presented in a video that can be used as a training tool for sanitarians and other food safety educators on Montana Indian Reservations. The significance of this training need is heightened with consideration of the tribal promotion of tourists attending pow wows during the upcoming 2005-6 Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration. The plan for developing and promoting the video/resources includes working closely with the seven Tribal Colleges to create video clips, artwork, and script development. These video/resources would be shared with tribal communities along the Lewis and Clark Trail. The video was released May 9, 2005. Copies of the video can be ordered through:
Montana State University Extension Publications, MSU, PO Box 172040, Bozeman, MT 59717, (406) 994-3272,
http://www.montana.edu/publications.

Assessment of Current Food Safety Policies.

Many of Montana's Native American Reservations have progressive food safety policies. For example, several tribes have instituted a policy that requires all food vendors to attend a food safety education class prior to serving food at a pow wow. This is just one example of numerous polices that have been put in place to ensure the health of consumers. Assessing current food safety polices at each reservation will provide models of policy "best practices" that can be transferred to other reservations nationally. In addition, food safety professionals will provide suggestions for areas of further policy development.

For further information about these programs, please contact:

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MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

Partnerships in Action

By Linda Williams, Chouteau County
MSU Extension Agent and
Disaster & Emergency Services Coordinator

Saving lives and saving money, while providing valuable public service adds up to a winning combination for MSU Chouteau County Extension Service and local government. The challenge of rural addressing and enhanced 9-1-1 phone system development is an example of partnerships in action.

Chouteau Commissioner Harvey Worrall stated, "As Chouteau County Commissioners, considering the vital importance of 9-1-1 and rural addressing, we knew first hand the financial limitations we faced, as well as the potential hazards of poor planning. The Extension office was the driving force for the project and with dedication they helped us to achieve a successful completion." Following is the history of the planning, development and implementation of an E-9-1-1 and rural addressing system in Chouteau County.

Considering the vital importance of 9-1-1 and rural addressing, we knew first hand the financial limitations we faced, as well as the potential hazards of poor planning. The Extension office was the driving force for the project and with dedication they helped us to achieve a successful completion.

Chouteau County formed their 9-1-1 Advisory Board in September of 1987. Members include city and county government officials, MSU Extension Agents, Sheriff's department personnel and emergency services staff members. The Board provides the impetus to strive forward while considering alternatives to efficiently advance 9-1-1-system development. The initial goal to provide county-wide basic 9-1-1 services was achieved in July of 1990. That was only the first stage of what continues to be a long, yet rewarding journey toward a goal of Extension - "to make a difference and have a positive impact for Chouteau County residents."

Time is Critical in an Emergency
Enhanced 9-1-1 Can Make the Difference

An E-911 system provides the ability to have automatic number identification (ANI) and automatic location identification (ALI). Since Chouteau County did not even have road names, much less locatable addresses, the sys-

tem development was a monumental undertaking. Chouteau County officials were able to achieve their goal due to the amazing support of the public as well as the hard work and dedication of countless individuals.

Enhanced 9-1-1 goes "live" in Chouteau County in June 2002

The Extension Service is in a unique position to facilitate orderly change in a community. This is essential in a project as diverse and potentially controversial as road naming and addressing. Public input was solicited during every stage. Following are just a few steps that were followed for this journey: GPS mapping of all county roads and structures, community meetings to name roads, assigning addresses for all structures, postal notification letters to residents of their new addresses, 9-1-1 equipment research and bids, updating phone company database, printing county maps and atlases, phone company simulations to assure accuracy of database, road sign installations, E-9-1-1 equipment installation, dispatcher training on new equipment and system "testing." All of these steps culminated in June of 2002 with a public promotion campaign, as the county successfully went "live" with enhanced 9-1-1.

Road sign installation takes a high level of coordination and cooperation.

Road sign installation was very complicated due to the need to clear each location of underground utility wires or pipes prior to digging for the sign post. Chouteau County Extension Agents helped to facilitate a pre-construction meeting with all of the affected underground utility companies. After working out the procedures and guidelines, the county planning board and commissioners finalized the details of hiring contractors to install the posts and signs. The county was divided into areas, sign locations labeled, and stakes were installed by the county road department so that the utility locators and the contractors would be able to identify correct spots for installation.

County Addressing System Provides Rapid Response

The public and emergency responders utilize new addresses, county road maps and signs to facilitate timely response to emergencies. Highwood resident Craig Graves stated, "The county 9-1-1 system worked very well for my son, Tyler, who has Down syndrome. He was scared and called 9-1-1. Emergency personnel responded appropriately to assist him."

The Extension Service is in a unique position to facilitate orderly change in a community.

Emergency dispatchers report that the public readily began using their new addresses. A mapping software program was installed in the dispatch center that shows the location of all emergency calls on the county map. Now, whenever the public makes a 9-1-1 call, in addition to their phone number and address showing on a monitor, their actual location is highlighted on the county map. This visual reference aids the dispatcher to give clearer directions to the emergency response personnel. With the benefit of ANI and ALI, emergency personnel will be able to quickly respond to the location even if the caller is unable to speak or give directions.

Funding Found

Extension agents researched sources of funding & grants to help alleviate the financial impact on the county. The original cost of the project included the following: mapping and addressing - $85,960; 9-1-1 dis-

patch phone equipment - $140,182; road sign project - $31,700 – for a total of $257,842. Of that amount $69,695 was paid with grant money; of the remaining, $117,343 was from 9-1-1 funds and $70,804 from county funds.

The Work Continues

Address database updates and enhanced 9-1-1 development is a continuous, on-going process. As stated by Kim Burdick, Chouteau County 9-1-1 Dispatch Supervisor, "The enhanced in E-9-1-1 is usually used to describe a service. In Chouteau County, the "enhanced" also describes the union of 9-1-1, law enforcement, fire, and ambulance services. It's the tool that has brought us together to better serve the citizens of Chouteau County."

Going "live" with enhanced 9-1-1 was not the end of the project, but only a major stepping stone in this journey along the path of ever changing developments and technology. The maps and database will provide information for local government to utilize as they face growth issues in the county. The Advisory Council is now considering the issue of cell phone calls to the 9-1-1 emergency dispatch, since those calls do not have the advantage of Automatic Location Identification. Public safety personnel are also exploring options to provide "reverse 9-1-1." This is a process whereby groups of individuals can be notified easily in case of an emergency such as an evacuation of a subdivision in the event of a wildland fire or a flood threat.

This partnership between Extension and local government has led to a long journey of discovery and is an example of a successful cooperative effort as the county faced the challenges. The MSU Extension Service mission states, "an educational resource dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives." Chouteau County Extension Agents and local government officials have demonstrated that mission through teamwork with county planners and public safety officials to provide cost effective services that have enhanced the safety for the citizens of the county. With "partnerships in action," our journey continues.

The 'enhanced' in E-9-1-1 is usually used to describe a service. In Chouteau County, the 'enhanced' also describes the union of 9-1-1, law enforcement, fire, and ambulance services. It's the tool that has brought us together to better serve the citizens of Chouteau County.

MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

Anaconda/Deer Lodge County Master Plan

By Barbara Andreozzi, MSU Extension Agent
Anaconda-Deer Lodge County

With long range planning to direct growth and development, our community will continue to be a safe place where individuals and families can work, play, and learn based on strong commitment to basic values, sound education, and mutual respect.

The MSU Extension Service has assisted the Anaconda-Deer Lodge City-County Government in many programs over the 60 years an agent has been in the 1898 gray stone courthouse. When I was hired in July 1988, the commissioners directed me to change the focus of the Extension Office from past programs to Community Development projects. The county tried unsuccessfully for 100 years to pass a Master Plan with ordinances. I was asked to assist the Planning Department to try again.

I brought the Extension Service's holistic community design process to Anaconda-Deer Lodge, involving a large group of community stakeholders. We began with a community wide Visioning Process that involved a Steering Committee of more than 30 individuals, six task forces involving more than 150 individuals, focus groups and presentations to local service clubs that involved more than 600 residents and multiple public community forums involving more than 900 individuals. The results benefited the county with an adopted Vision Statement in 1995, an adopted overall Master Plan and 'permitting system' by 2000 with the growth policy currently being drafted.

The Visioning Steering Committee developed these six major goals volunteers have been implementing:

- Enhance the visual character of Anaconda's entry corridors and the central business district;
- Develop housing for low and middle-income individuals and families;
- Preserve the historic character of Anaconda;
- Increase the density of retail and commercial activity in the central business district;
- Link Anaconda to the numerous recreational

opportunities available in the area; and
- Develop new facilities for public service.

The Visioning Steering Committee decided to revisit their adopted Vision statement in 2000 after completing all their goals. I continued to facilitate their meetings. They again held public forums, focus groups and used the input from a community-wide survey the Extension office conducts every five years to gather the top county concerns. All agreed to keep the current Vision statement.

Anaconda- Deer Lodge County will, as a Community, preserve our rich heritage and common values while retaining and enhancing our turn-of-the-century image. With long range planning to direct growth and development, our community will continue to be a safe place where individuals and families can work, play, and learn based on strong commitment to basic values, sound education, and mutual respect. The preservation and development of our resources will be for the betterment of all citizens, now and in the future.

The Visioning Process also yielded successful volunteer projects that I coordinated via the Visioning Steering Committee including the development and completion of the Smelter Viewing Interpretive Site, Revitalization of the Commons Park in the center of town, and the Downtown and Community Street Tree Project which will again bring in 225 new 6-8 foot trees to Anaconda this year. They also helped develop a Tax Increment Finance District (TIFD) in the downtown area.

As their Extension Agent, I also facilitated a downtown Anaconda theme project, involving the MSU School of Architecture Design Center to draft multiple historic themes for the Chamber of Commerce and business community. The businesses with the Tax Increment Finance District adopted an historic theme, and developed design guidelines for implementation. The process now allows the City-County to allocate Tax Increment Finance District funding to implement the design guidelines. The application process for facade and signage improvements is scheduled for Fall, 2005.

Anaconda- Deer Lodge County will, as a Community, preserve our rich heritage and common values while retaining and enhancing our turn-of-the-century image.

Anaconda-Deer Lodge County identified the need for increased communication and customer service workshops for all employees after the 2000 community survey. I also organized and conducted the workshops for all county employees in addition to monthly community workshops on leadership and communication. We also conduct Business Workshops for the Chamber of Commerce and the business sector of the county. These are also open to city-county employees and board members.

The holistic community design process has proved an effective way to engage the community in numerous projects to the benefit of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County. The Extension Office played a key role in the success of these projects by providing cost effective facilitation expertise.

MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

MSU Extension, Local Government and Community Development

By B. John Halpop
MSU Extension / Sanders County

Montana State University Extension is often uniquely positioned to work with local government in a variety of areas, including economic and community development. Extension specialists are providers of technical assistance and other forms of research and information. A basic mandate that all first year extension faculty learn is to utilize "research-based" information sources. The standard is that extension strives to reference non-biased sources for their clientele. Indeed there is great value connecting community concerns with the expertise available on University campuses.

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Extension field faculty, working with local government officials, are able to conduct problem solving activities through peer agents and other campus based professional staff. In Montana that includes departmental faculty at Montana State University (the Land Grant Institution), the University of Montana, as well as the campuses located across the state. Departments like the MSU Montana Manufacturing Center work with the private business sector on the production side. The Local Government Center has been an important partner for the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) and with municipal governments for years. Specific faculty in the respective schools of Business, UM Bureau of Tourism and other departments continually work with local governments in a problem solving capacity.

More often than not however, the relationship is more process driven. This is sometimes referred to as the "co-learner" model. While the terminology may be recent, the method has been used for many years. Placing land grant university faculty in the communities they serve has been a guiding principal of Extension since its inception nearly 100 years ago with the Smith-Lever Act.

The co-learner methodology refers to problem solving where the outcome is not a forgone conclusion at the outset. Local government is highly dependent upon citizens' input and expertise through their participation on boards and committees. Local citizenry is a powerful factor supporting the vitality and direction of our communities. Since Extension has no regulatory authority, it occupies a special niche in the community.

Extension agents typically work with a wide cross-section of the community. These combined traits allow most Extension faculty to operate without an organizational agenda. In supporting the decision-making process there generally is not a vested interest in the outcome.

Why is the co-learner approach important? How many times have you participated on a board or committee and while a particular decision may have been justifiable, the method used to arrive at that point violated someone's sense of "justice?" At this point, there is usually an insurrection of some degree, and the decision is not supported, regardless of its merits. Decision - making models will vary according to the issue. However bringing stakeholders to the table, taking time to listen to those voices and identify concerns accomplishes a great deal in legitimizing the outcome. Most Extension agents have training and experience to facilitate this kind of inclusive decision - making process. Sanders County utilized this experience to develop important community development projects in the past several years.

Extension's role does not directly determine outcomes, but is more in assisting the committee and the community in their efforts to identify projects through an input process. This method isn't new to the world of extension, but it is a tried and true technique of community assistance.

Community Development efforts are largely driven by volunteers. Volunteer efforts provide numerous strengths because people typically bring an acute interest in community health to the table. The corresponding weakness in volunteer-driven development programs is the lack of ability to follow through with project ideas effectively. In Sanders County, the Sanders County Community Development Corporation (SCCDC) operated completely in a volunteer format for many years. Fortunately that organization now has a paid economic development director.

This transformation came about as a result of financial support from the Sanders County Board of Commissioners and a strong partnership with Lake County Community Development. The Sanders County fund base has proven invaluable to gaining additional grant dollars. In 2004 SCCDC leveraged an additional $84,000 in grant funds. The ability to have a paid staff has opened program doors that were not accessible to a volunteer organization. For example, the SCCDC obtained a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with the cities of Hot Springs and Plains administering the grant for infrastructure projects.

USDA funding sources often carry relatively strict reporting requirements. Local communities may or may not be equipped to work with the administrative portion of a grant, whereas a community development organization may have the time and expertise to accomplish this task. If so, community needs are met and the development organization realizes some degree of funding. This capacity building applies to the building of human capital as well as expanding financial support. Since most public funds are now awarded on a competitive grant basis, having dedicated and professional staff time to meet those needs has been invaluable.

Community Tourism Assessment (CTAP) is another example of local program planning conducted in partnership with MSU Extension county offices, the MSU Community Development Program under the direction of Extension Specialist Dave Sharpe and the Montana Department

of Commerce with the assistance of Victor Bjornberg. The CTAP process involves identifying a community steering committee, working through a community survey and needs assessment and finally a tourism project identification. Many communities in Montana have benefited from involvement in the Community Tourism Assessment Program. Extension's role does not directly determine outcomes, but is more in assisting the committee and the community in their efforts to identify projects through an input process. As previously mentioned, this method isn't new to the world of extension, but it is a tried and true technique of community assistance.

Local governments and extension have traditionally been linked through agricultural issues such as noxious weed control. While not typically categorized as "community development," protecting the remaining landscapes of Montana is an important issue to all citizens in the state. In terms of models, the relationships of county commissioners, local governments, MSU Extension and county weed districts, as well as the community, will vary depending upon local need with regard to the weed issue. The Extension Agent may serve as a weed district advisor, as the county weed coordinator, or s/he may be involved as an educator.

Montana communities take pride in their long-standing tradition of local ownership. By design Extension also has deep roots in the philosophy of local ownership. Extension Agents have discovered that the noxious weed problem in the West is as much sociological as it is ecological. Along with one-on-one contacts with landowners, developing effective partnerships is a key requirement. For many new landowners, simple awareness is the first step. It has been our experience that most new landowners are drawn to the state in large part due to the landscapes we enjoy, and they in turn become strong advocates of weed management programs when they are provided with information about the problem and how to manage their land. Extension Agents are key players in the battle against noxious weeds. Programs will vary from county to county as you cross the state and are as unique as the landscape and communities they serve, but you will always find a county Extension Agent working with the local governments to serve the citizens.

Note: Thanks to Doug Steele, Carol Brooker, Jerry Marks and Rae-Lynn Benson for their contributions to this article.

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MONTANA
POLICY REVIEW

Global Informational Systems: A Tool With Endless Applications

By John Pfister, MSU Extension Agent
Musselshell-Golden Valley Counties

Sheriff Fisher now uses GPS/GIS knowledge in his job for criminal investigation, fire documentation, evidence documentation, search and rescue, ambulance response, and updating the county's rural addressing.

In the early 1990's I discovered that that GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and (GIS (Geographic Informational System) are extremely useful tools with virtually endless applications. At that time the county weed boards were transitioning from doing their own spraying to hiring a contractor; they quickly realized there was no documented inventory of the scope of their weed problems. There was no record of locations of infestations, the identification of weeds, and no record of past weed control activities. After some research, I realized the value of using GPS/GIS to solve this problem. I acquired a noxious weed grant to bring Diana Cooksey from Montana State University Bozeman to conduct a workshop on the use of GPS/GIS for a noxious weed control program.. The weed mapping team, Weed Board members and I attended the training, which resulted in Musselshell/ Golden Valley Counties being two of the earliest counties to use this technology to inventory their weed control responsibilities.

Since that time, I have taken on the role of the trainer. We have conducted over 30 training sessions in 15 different counties. The audiences in these workshops range from county commissioners, firefighters, Disaster and Emergence Services personnel, local planners, agriculture producers, Search and Rescue units, law enforcement personnel, ambulance personnel, weed controllers, Extension Agents, 4-H youth, youth from the Montana Heritage program, teachers from the Montana Heritage program and the occasional recreationist.

One of the first workshops was for the Board of Oil and Gas Conservation Division of Natural Resources. GPS's are now used to locate wells when inspectors need to oversee plugging and other activities. The Board of Oil and Gas also has the wells logged on a GIS program.

When the federal government removed the scramble of the satellites, there was a big change in GPS/GIS opportunities. This allowed the recreational grade GPS's to become more accessible by lowering the cost of equipment. Consequently the types of trainings changed. Prior to that time most of the training was done with the ArcView computer program and GIS and Mapping grade GPS's. Now training is also being done with less expensive software and equipment. This allows local fire departments and law enforcement agencies to acquire and use this technology.

One of the biggest success stories from this training belongs to Golden Valley County Sheriff, Floyd Fisher. After a local rancher was injured and HELP flight had trouble locating the victim, Sheriff Fisher could see a need for GPS/GIS technology. He received individual training and attended group training. Sheriff Fisher now uses that knowledge in his job for criminal investigation, fire documentation, evidence documentation, search and rescue, ambulance response, and updating the county's rural addressing. "This GPS/GIS data has really helped in the documentation for grant writing" Sheriff Fisher stated.

Golden Valley is not the only county to use this technology in law enforcement. Musselshell County Under-Sheriff Jon Goffena used GPS /GIS in a wildlands fire arson investigation. Under-Sheriff Goffena was able to piece together the evidence in this case and get a confession from the suspect.

Farmers and ranchers are also students in these workshops. Many of these producers go on to inventory their property for such things as weeds, water, and poisonous plants and they can calculate acres in fields and pasture. It is also an excellent tool to assist in range and water monitoring. As cattlemen move into premise identification, the GPS can be used as a means of ranch location.

We also provided GPS/GIS training for youth around the state. The young folk learn to run this equipment quickly and easily. They have lived in a world of pushing buttons and they are not intimidated by technology. 4-H youth enjoy "geocashing," which is a treasure hunt with GPS equipment. A person can find latitude and longitude for geocaches that are hidden in their area and navigate to the hidden cache. [the treasure can be found at http://www.geocaching.com}. The 4-H youth have also used the knowledge for the more serious task of mapping a Boy Scout camp, mapping community assets, the heritage program and mapping walking trails. We have also worked with the Roundup High School students in the Montana Heritage project to enable them to do on-site mapping of historical sites.

MSU Extension Agents and specialists across the state continue to provide local governments with a valuable tool with which to meet the demands of the 21st Century. This work contributes to the health, safety and welfare of all of our citizens.

Our Extension Office also assisted the Musselshell County Schools and the County Superintendent of Schools in mapping bus routes. These routes were mapped for mileage, stops, and safety. If there is a proposed route change, the route is mapped so the Transportation Board can make an educated decision.

I have personally used the GPS/GIS for numerous projects. I helped the Department of Natural Resources to map fires. When the local property ownership maps for Musselshell and Golden Valley counties became

outdated, I used the GIS to make new maps and made them available to the public. A local group was applying for grant dollars to develop a river walking trail system, so I worked with local youth to collect information and develop maps for the proposed project, which has since become a reality.

The demand for workshops continues to grow, so Paul Dixon, Yellowstone County Extension Agent, and I provided training for other Extension Agents and Specialists across Montana. The goal of this education is for the agents to take the knowledge back to the local communities to help meet their needs. Thirty four agents and specialists were in attendance at that training. MSU Extension Agents and specialists across the state continue to provide local governments with a valuable tool with which to meet the demands of the 21st Century. This work contributes to the health, safety and welfare of all of our citizens.