

First Monday

*From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO
Monday, July 3, 2006, 8:00 a.m*

Happy Independence Day! As we celebrate the founding of this magnificent nation, let's remember that much of our country's greatness is built upon access to education for all Americans.

The Beardsley Society includes all individuals who have made provisions for a contribution to the MSU-Billings Foundation through deferred gift planning, i.e., Will or living trust bequest, charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity, life estate agreement, charitable lead trust, or gift of a life insurance policy or commercial annuity. The society is named in memory of Charles Beardsley ('29), the first male graduate of Eastern Montana Normal School, who topped off his lifetime of generous gifts to the foundation with a bequest exceeding \$500,000, which he planned and discussed with me in advance of his death in January 2002 at age 91. There are 124 Beardsley Society members.

On June 28, fifty of those members came to campus for a luncheon in their honor. Beardsley Society chairs Ken and Lena Heikes welcomed their fellow philanthropists, and Chancellor Ron Sexton and I addressed those present, sharing information about the university and foundation and expressing our deep gratitude for the philanthropic legacy each has established through his or her planned gift. It was a lovely gathering on a sunny day with a group of big-hearted people who exemplify the definition of generosity.

MSU-Billings earned the Heartland Conference Overall GPA Award for 2005-2006 with an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.14 for its athletics programs. Overall, the Heartland Conference averaged a combined 3.02 GPA.

The Heartland Conference is an NCAA Division II conference, founded in 1999, that currently consists of nine schools, six from Texas, and one each from Missouri, Montana, and Oklahoma. The 2006-2007 academic year will be the second and final year in the Heartland Conference for Montana State-Billings.

Beginning with the 2007-2008 seasons, MSU-Billings will join the Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

Three juniors at the College of Business recently finished one-two-three in an international business management competition. Sherry Murphy, an accounting major from New York, won first place in the Foundation Business Simulation competition. Classmates Jacob Robison, from Billings, finished second and Jason Harman, also of Billings, finished third. Each student in the competition begins the simulation competition with a single product, electronic sensors, but can develop a portfolio of up to five products during eight simulated years in business. During each simulation year, the students make key decisions on research and development, marketing and production. Benchmarks used to measure success include return on equity, return on investment, market share (in dollars), market capitalization, cumulative profit, stock price and asset turnover. Pat Holman, who teaches a business class that uses the simulation concept, said it was impressive to see her MSU-Billings students do so well against students from around the world.

Charitable giving in America rose 6.1% in 2005 to \$260 billion—up \$15 billion from \$245 billion donated in 2004. As head of an organization dependent upon charitable gifts to help our university and our students, I am grateful to all those who make philanthropy a part of their lives.

Who donated all these dollars? According to Giving USA, individuals and their families contributed 76.5% of all donations. Foundations gave 11.5% and businesses donated 5.5%. Bequests (gifts at death) accounted for \$18 billion or 6.5% of all donations. Americans—our family members, our friends, our co-workers, our fellow citizens—are truly generous neighbors! *Please accept my heartfelt thanks to all of you who make Montana State University-Billings Foundation a priority for your donations.*

Prefer e-mail? If you would prefer to receive *First Monday* electronically, please contact administrative assistant Shannon Behounek (sbehounek@msubillings.edu).

First Monday is provided to the supporters of the Montana State University-Billings Foundation to advance the cause of philanthropy.

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