

First Monday

*From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO
Monday, June 5, 2006, 8:00 a.m*

Comprehensive Campaign Surpasses \$23 Million. On May 20, at the Wine & Food Festival's sold-out Saturday night dinner-auction, Bruce Parker, chairman of *People, Pride & Promise: the Campaign for Excellence at Montana State University Billings*, announced that \$23.1 million in gifts and pledges have been raised. After the jubilant crowd celebrated his historic announcement, Parker said that the 55-member National Campaign Leadership Council (NCLC) will continue its efforts through the end of 2006. Even though the campaign has surpassed its initial \$21 million goal, the remaining six months will focus on specific initiatives that have not been fully funded but remain as priorities for the university. The NCLC hopes to reach \$25 million by December 31.

In early 2000, groundwork began for the largest volunteer fund-raising effort in the university's history. The five-year *People, Pride & Promise Campaign* was officially launched in January 2002. The enthusiastic response to this campaign confirms that MSU Billings has devoted volunteer leadership and alumni and friends in Billings, throughout Montana, and across the nation who are willing to invest in the university and its students. This support has resulted in extraordinary growth since early 2000 when campaign planning began. Since then:

- foundation net assets have grown from \$7.5 million to \$17.1 million;
- foundation endowed assets have increased from \$6.1 million to \$13.6 million;
- the number of named endowment funds at the foundation has expanded from 76 to 167;
- the number of private scholarships the foundation awards annually has increased from 592 to 847; and
- private scholarship dollars awarded by the foundation each year have grown from \$430,000 to \$930,000.

Initiatives of particular focus for additional fund raising by December 31 include:

- scholarships for graduate students, student-athletes, and non-resident students;
- university honors program and university library;
- science, GIS, language, and psychology labs and equipment;
- endowed excellence funds for the five academic colleges; and
- improvements to the soccer complex, softball stadium, art gallery, and Peaks to Plains Park.

The 14th Annual MSU Billings Foundation's Wine & Food Festival filled the week of May 15 to 20 with parties, dinners, cooking schools, wine tastings and auctions: fourteen events in six days and fun for all. The weather cooperated for the most part: Saturday evening in the tent will be remembered as "A River Ran Briefly Through It" because of a short but heavy thunderstorm that sent rivulets of rainwater curling along the floor. Spirits un-dampened, partygoers enjoyed

the gourmet meal and bid generously during the auction. It will be a few weeks before foundation special events director Jeanne Moller and CFO Jon Egeland are able to accurately determine the total net dollars raised during the weeklong festival. I can tell you that “Lots of Scholarships” during Saturday’s live auction, when benefactors raise their cards to “bid” scholarship donations, raised an all-time record \$155,200. I estimate that revenue from all other auction lots and the many events throughout festival week will take the net income after expenses to at least \$250,000. Will we beat last year’s record net of \$280,000? Stay tuned...

Heartfelt thanks to Wine & Food Festival co-chairs, Jane and Joe Howell; to our many faithful volunteers; to our \$10,000 Partners: Briggs Distributing Company, Wells Fargo Bank/Wells Fargo Private Client Services, Computers Unlimited, Billings Gazette Communications, and Sodexo; and to our \$5,000 Sponsors: Albertsons, Fortin Enterprises, and Underriner Motors-Bill and Mary Underriner.

All “Lots of Scholarships” bids help students and are deeply appreciated. Some of the top “Lots of Scholarships” bidders were:

- **Sam and Judy McDonald** - \$26,000
- **Bruce Parker** - \$15,000
- **John Decker, Bernie Harrington, Nicki Larson** - \$10,000 each
- **Cheri Cox, Marilynn Sexton** - \$7,500 each
- **Bill Brown, Ben Ripley, Kathy Schruth, Dave Warne** - \$5,000 each
- **Virginia Court, Curt Kochner, Mike Matz, Larry Peterson, Mike Ross, Shelley Van Atta** - \$2,500 each

Some of the additional gifts/pledges received during May were:

- **ConocoPhillips** gave \$9,500 for the ConocoPhillips Process Operations Scholarship.
- **Troy Bruce** pledged \$6,000 for the Alumni Association operating endowment and annual fund.
- **PEO Chapter E** provided \$5,000 to the Annetta Nielsen/Grace Leuthold – Chapter E, PEO Endowed Scholarship.
- **Zoot Banking Systems/Chris T. Nelson** donated \$5,000 for the College of Business Management Information Systems Lab.
- **Ed & Becky Garding** gave \$3,000 for the College of Business Faculty Excellence Fund, which will generate a \$3,000 match from the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation.
- **Zoltron.com** provided a \$2,500 gift-in-kind for website redesign and updates for Wine & Food Festival 2006.

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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