



First Monday



From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO
Monday, September 4, 2006, 8:00 a.m.

I hope you are enjoying the last holiday of summer. By the time you receive this newsletter, Labor Day will be over and we'll be starting fall semester here at MSU-Billings. Classes begin September 6.

Tax-free, charitable transfers from your IRA are now possible! For the past ten years, the charitable community has been actively lobbying Congress on behalf of donors who would like to make tax-free transfers from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to charities. Up until now, this was not allowed. On August 17, President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA 2006) that includes a long-awaited provision that permits taxpayers to make direct charitable transfers from their IRAs. Provisions of the bill include:

1. Gifts of up to \$100,000 per year from traditional IRAs and Roth IRAs are allowed.
2. The direct charitable gift is not treated as a taxable IRA distribution.
3. This opportunity is available for 2006 and 2007 by IRA owners who are at least age 70½ on the date of their charitable distribution to MSU-Billings Foundation.
4. IRA transfer gifts made to MSU-B Foundation count toward your IRA required minimum distribution for the year.

Additional information about this exciting new way to make a significant gift can be obtained by calling MSU-Billings Foundation at 406-657-2244 or by e-mailing foundation@msubillings.edu. Please request brochure "PPA 2006."

For the 7th consecutive year, MSU-Billings has been ranked as one of the nation's 'Best Colleges' by *U.S. News and World Report*, for undergraduate through master's level academics, in the latest edition of 'America's Best Colleges 2006.' MSU-Billings was one of only 31 private and public colleges or universities in its category: 'Best Universities-Master's for the West region third tier of the United States.' According to the methodology used by U.S. News & World Report, their ranking system rests on two areas: quantitative measures that education experts have proposed as reliable indicators of academic quality, and on "our nonpartisan view of what matters in education," the publishers say.

Governor Brian Schweitzer presented a "Git 'er Done Award" to MSU-Billings and Chancellor Ron Sexton on August 4. The award recognized the university's innovative new Health Career Pathways 2+2 online degree completion pilot programs, which offer students who have already earned an associate's degree the opportunity to complete an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree.

The first cohort of 45 students has been selected and will begin classes in September. The students are from throughout Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota.

The bachelor of science in liberal studies, with a thematic concentration in healthcare management and public relations, is for those who have earned an associate of science or associate of arts degree. The bachelor of applied science, with a thematic concentration in healthcare administration, is for those who have earned an associate of applied science degree. Both of these fully online degree completion programs have been strategically designed to prepare graduates for success in leadership roles in healthcare.

Stacy Klippenstein is the new Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. He replaces Curt Kochner, who retired in June after twenty-two years at MSU-Billings. Klippenstein, who holds a bachelor's degree and a master's in education from MSU-Billings, was most recently assistant vice president for student affairs and director of university housing and student programs at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. His wife, Carrie, is also a graduate of MSU-Billings.

The Montana State University-Billings volleyball team has been picked to win the 2006 Heartland Conference championship in a preseason poll of league coaches and sports information directors. The Yellowjackets finished second in the conference last year. The volleyball team posted a school-best 20-8 overall record last season. It was the second consecutive winning season for a program that had not posted a season mark above .500 in its history. The Yellowjackets will return all eight players from last year's runner-up team.

MSU-Billings has been awarded a \$1,160,000 Indian Education Professional Development grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide training programs to recruit and graduate new American Indian teachers and school administrators. The grant will allow MSU-Billings, working in collaboration with Montana's tribal colleges and school districts on or near Montana reservations, to expand its successful teacher education programs to graduate certified American Indian teachers. Program candidates must demonstrate a commitment to work in schools serving Montana reservations.

The Big Horn Teacher Projects, a program of the Montana Center on Disabilities at MSU-Billings, will receive and implement the Indian Professional Development grant, which will be distributed by the Department of Education over a four-year period. The Big Horn Teacher Projects has administrated two previous Indian Professional Development grants.

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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