

# First Monday



---

*From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO*  
*Monday, June 7, 2004, 8:00 a.m.*

**Witness a Phenomenon.** Please plan to join us for our gala campaign kick off on Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, when we'll publicly announce our goal for the People, Pride & Promise Campaign and reveal the amount raised to date. There will be fabulous food, wine, and a wonderful time. If you haven't yet received your invitation, please contact Campaign Associate Joy Hayworth at 406-657-2244 or ([jhayworth@msubillings.edu](mailto:jhayworth@msubillings.edu)).

**Stellar Accreditation Review.** The Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities recently released its findings after an in-depth evaluation of Montana State University-Billings as a fifth-year, mid-point review in the 10-year accreditation cycle. The most prominent distinction of the report was the evaluator's summary of commendations, which listed no recommendations for improvement. The summary read: "The Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities is privileged to have among its members many fine institutions of higher education. However, MSU-Billings is surely rare even in this company. It was a true pleasure to visit this campus, and it is an institution of which the state of Montana and the Commission can be quite proud."

The evaluation commended MSU-Billings for achieving ethnic diversity on campus. Another area of praise was MSU-Billings' "online...delivery of instruction as a means to provide access and opportunity to placebound and workbound students." The report further stated: "Montana State University-Billings is a dynamic campus. Dedicated faculty and staff mentor students, many of whom are 'non-traditional' and have non-traditional needs. It is obvious during even this brief visit that the university benefits from a collaborative decision-making and thoughtful problem-solving process that reflects the strong leadership of Chancellor Sexton and his leadership team."

**New Gifts.** Thanks to the following donors who made commitments during May.

- **First Interstate Bank in Billings** pledged \$100,000 to the College of Business (COB) Faculty Excellence Initiative. This gift from the Billings market group of First Interstate Banks will be paid over a five-year period.
- **Keith Cook ('72)**, president of First Interstate Bank Billings, personally pledged an additional \$25,000 to the COB Faculty Excellence Initiative. Keith's gift will be matched 1:1 by the First Interstate Foundation. Added to his gift last year, Keith's commitment, combined with matches from First Interstate Foundation, totals \$70,000.
- **Ralph Cook ('72)**, senior vice president of First Interstate BancSystem of Montana, pledged \$5,000 to the COB Faculty Excellence Initiative. Ralph's gift will be matched by the First Interstate Foundation.

- **Lyle Knight**, CEO of First Interstate BancSystem, gave \$2,500 to the COB Faculty Excellence Initiative, which will also be matched by the First Interstate Foundation.
- **An alumnus from Arizona** who wishes to remain anonymous pledged \$25,000 over five years, with 10% directed to the annual fund and the remainder to the COB Endowment.
- **Nicki and Rick Larson** contributed \$18,000 through the scholarship lot during the 2004 Wine & Food Festival live auction. The Larsons own EBMS, a third-party employee benefits administration company in Billings.
- **John Decker** of Briggs, Distributing Company, Inc., matched the Larson's \$18,000 scholarship bid. John is chair of the MSU-Billings Foundation Board of Trustees.
- **Brenda Halpain ('82)** has committed a \$2,500 unrestricted gift. Brenda is controller for Test Advantage, Inc. She lives in Chandler, Arizona with her husband Sean and their two sons. Brenda is a member of the National Campaign Leadership Council.
- **The Montana Society of Public Accountants** sent \$2,500 for the Montana Society of Public Accountants Scholarship.

**Wine & Food Festival 2004** was a smashing success, netting an all-time record \$250,000 for student scholarships and university programs. Thanks to all our volunteers, partners, sponsors, donors, participants, and generous bidders!

**National Campaign Leadership Council member Mike Ross and Lisa Larr** recently hosted a leadership event at their home in Billings. Bruce Parker, Campaign Co-chair, and Dick Buckley, Development Officer, were in attendance to chat with guests and share news about MSU-Billings. Guests included:

- **Joel Guthals**, an attorney with Guthals Hunnes Reuss & Thompson, PC. Joel will join the Foundation's Board of Trustees on July 1, 2004.
- **Royal & Norma Johnson**. Royal is a Montana State Senator and retired investment advisor.
- **Nancy Gililland ('78) & Duey Gililland**. Nancy is a CPA, and Duey is a former co-owner of Carpet One.
- **Gene Wade ('68)** is a stockbroker at RBC Dain Rauscher.
- **Marty & Mary Lee Connell**. Marty is the owner of Yellowstone Ventures Inc. and Mary Lee is an artist.
- **Lynda Moss** is Director of the Foundation for Community Vitality.

**Prefer e-mail?** If you would prefer to receive *First Monday* electronically, please contact Campaign Associate Joy Hayworth ([jhayworth@msubillings.edu](mailto:jhayworth@msubillings.edu)).

---

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

Montana State University-Billings Foundation ▲ 1500 University Drive ▲ Billings, MT 59101  
Phone: 406-657-2244 ▲ Fax: 406-657-1600 ▲ E-mail: [foundation@msubillings.edu](mailto:foundation@msubillings.edu)