

**CHAMBER HAPPENINGS
COMMUNITY SERVICE BULLETIN BOARD**

NOVEMBER 15, 2008

This update is brought to you two times a month by the Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce. We want to let you know what is happening in the Valley and give you the opportunity to promote what is happening in your business.

Announcements are limited to 40 words and can have a link to your website. The bulletin board will be emailed on approximately the 1st and the 15th of each month. Announcements must be sent to localinfo@bvchamber.com, three days prior to the bulletin. In the subject line put BULLETIN. These publications will be limited to **EVENTS ONLY**.

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BBIA's 7th Annual Home Expo - Living Green - is scheduled for Saturday, February 7, 2009 at the Ravalli County Fairgrounds. Booth spaces available. Log on to bbiamontana.org to download the application, or call the BBIA office at 375-9411 for more information.

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The **Daly Mansion** invites everyone to participate in a Community Gingerbread House Display. Schools, families, organizations, and individuals are encouraged to take part in building gingerbread houses to display in the Daly Mansion December 13-20. Those touring the Mansion during holiday tour times and the Holiday Tour of Homes will view the displays and will vote for their favorite. A grand prizewinner will be announced on the final tour day, December 20th. Building gingerbread houses is a time honored holiday tradition and this will be the first time that the Mansion has hosted this event. All sizes and styles of houses are encouraged. To participate, contact April at 363-6004 ext. 3.

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Ravalli County Museum presents - "A Few of My Favorite Things" The Art of Arthur Norby - a collection of sculptures, paintings, and casts. Never before seen on display, in the Old Courtroom. Through January 10.

Sunday Series - November 23, at 2 pm in the Old Courtroom, Ravalli County Museum
Arthur Norby presents "An Artists' World" Presentation and discussion on Sculpture and Painting
205 Bedford St. Hamilton, MT 59840 - For more information (406) 363-3338

Hours Monday, Thursday, Friday, 10 – 4

Saturday 9-1 Sunday 1-4

Admission Family \$6 Couple \$5 Single \$3 Student \$1

Call for Group Rates

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Participate in **Curves** 10th Year Celebration! 1998 - 2008 That's how long we've been helping women in our community achieve their fitness goals. Join now & receive the Appreciation Package valued at over \$100 & help "unwrap" the new Stretching Circuit. New Members join now for only \$10, Ex-Members re-join \$0, and Sterling Insurance Members join for free!!!! Curves are located in the historical VFW Building at 924 Adirondack Avenue in Hamilton. Call 363-0393 for your 1st Visit Appointment. Celebrate your Curves!!

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NEW STUDY: MONTANA WORK COMP COSTS RANKED SECOND HIGHEST

According to a new study released today, Montana has the second highest workers' compensation premiums in the entire country. The report comes from the Oregon Department of Consumer & Business Services, and can be view at: http://www4.cbs.state.or.us/ex/imd/reports/rpt/index.cfm?fuseaction=version_view&version_tk=181097&ProgID=FEARA012.

“The Montana workers' compensation system is in crisis,” said Webb Brown, President/CEO of the Montana Chamber of Commerce, “Businesses in Montana, especially small businesses and their employees, are suffering from these high costs. We must act soon to provide relief to Montana businesses and reform the system.”

Over the past 10 years, the Oregon study has shown Montana moving up in the rankings. In 2000, Montana had the 12th highest premiums, 10th highest in 2002, 8th highest in 2004, and 5th highest in 2006. In the latest report released today, Montana moved up three spots to the 2nd highest premiums in the country, just behind Alaska. Montana's neighbors have some of the cheapest work comp premiums in the country (Idaho – 34th; South Dakota – 36th; Wyoming – 37th; and North Dakota – 51st).

“We need some big reforms in this next legislative session to bring costs down and to help our Montana businesses remain competitive,” said Brown, “We look forward to working with all lawmakers to address this important economic issue.”

The Montana Chamber will push for the introduction of bills in the 2009 Legislature that pro-actively address work comp rates, including safety reforms, utilization reforms, shoring up the Old Fund, claim closure reform, return-to-work issues, and revisiting the definition of what qualifies as a workplace injury. The Montana Chamber is also intervening in a court case called *Satterlee v. Lumberman's Mutual*, which would cost the workers' compensation system hundreds of millions of dollars if the Montana Supreme Court decides in favor of the plaintiffs.

For more information, please contact Jon Bennion, Government Relations Director for the Montana Chamber of Commerce, at 406-442-2405, ext. 104, or email him at jon@montanachamber.com.

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Celebrating Life to its Fullest

In observance of National Hospice month, Marcus Daly Hospice Service is hosting “Celebrating Life to its Fullest”, with two great movies on November 16th at the Roxy Theatre, downtown Hamilton. Doors open at 12:30pm, at 1pm watch the movie “Two Weeks”, then between movies, meet the Marcus Daly Hospice staff and enjoy fresh baked treats. The second movie is “The Bucket List” and it will begin at 3:05pm. A \$5.00 donation is appreciated. Come celebrate National Hospice Month, dignity, comfort and caring! For more information call Marcus Daly Hospice Services at 363.6503.

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R&R Conner Aviation, LLC is now offering a Holiday Special on Scenic Helicopter tours of the Beautiful Bitterroot Valley! All tours will be 10% OFF now through Dec. 31, 2008. Gift Certificates are available – perfect for the person who has everything! We offer 15 minute to 1 hour tours to suit any budget, so treat yourself, valued employees, special customers, or those you love to an experience of a lifetime! Tour times are actual air time & we depart from the convenience of the Hamilton Airport. Please call to schedule your tour or purchase Gift Certificates TODAY! R&R Conner Aviation, LLC 406-821-2286.

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SNAP: New Name, Improved Services

In Montana, buying good food is a SNAP! As of October 1st, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. SNAP is available to help Montana families, seniors, students and more supplement their food budgets.

1 in 12 Montanans participate in SNAP – it is the nation’s largest nutrition program and offers an important economic stimulus to our communities. SNAP benefits are spent at local grocery stores, helping to support businesses and sustain people.

Program improvements include:

- Increased minimum benefit for households of 1-2
- Removed cap on dependent/child care expenses, helping provide maximum support to working families
- Most tax-deferred education and retirement accounts excluded as countable savings
- Minimum deduction adjusted to inflation, making it easier for applicants to meet net income limits
- Standard Utility Allowance increased to reflect current utility costs

Income guidelines have also changed and applying is now easier than ever! Applications are available at any Office of Public Assistance, or can be downloaded and printed at <http://vhsp.dphhs.mt.gov/publicassistance/index.shtml>.

Residents have the option of applying in person at the Office of Public Assistance, by mail or by fax. Interviews with an eligibility worker can be held either in person or over the phone.

For more information, contact Bernadette Gunn, SNAP Outreach Coordinator with the Montana Food Bank Network, at (406) 721-3825 Ext. 227, or by email at bgunn@mfbn.org.

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Hamilton United Businesses will have their Christmas Kickoff on Friday, November 28. The Parade of Lights will begin at 5:30, beginning at 8th street and coming straight down Main Street in Hamilton. At 6:00 we have the annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Hamilton Post Office, then back downtown to visit Santa at Bella Boutique along with Montana A Cappella Society strolling the streets singing carols. Stores will remain open until 8:00 p.m. Stay home for the Holidays and enjoy what Hamilton has to offer.

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Chamber Gift Certificate Program: We want to help keep dollars from leaving the Bitterroot Valley. If money is spent here, it will circulate an average of 4-7 times before leaving the area, that is definitely a boost to our economy! So, if you are wonder what and how you are going to reward your employees, give the Chamber office a call today at 363-2400 and ask about our Gift Certificate Program. The certificates are very nice and come with the list of over 50 participating stores where they can be used – all in a nicely printed gift envelope.

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Sponsored by Bitterroot Job Service Workforce Center (JSEC)

Can't afford to provide your employees with benefits?
NOW YOU CAN - WE CAN SHOW YOU HOW!

Tuesday, December 9

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

at Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital

Conference Room C in Hamilton

COST: \$25 per person or

Two (2) for \$45

Benefit plans and the positive impact they have on your business and employees.

SPEAKERS: Jane Foster with Edward Jones & Adam Sangster with Apex Human Resource -

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

Due to limited seating, please register as soon as possible

To Register for the seminar . . .

Please contact Kathleen at the Bitterroot Job Service
Workforce Center at 375-6046 to reserve your space today!