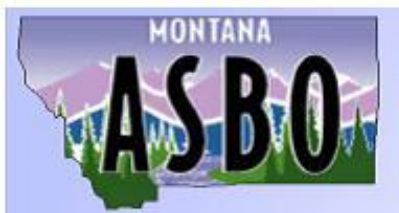




MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS DECEMBER 2014

MASBO is dedicated to training and supporting the people responsible for business operations in Montana schools. Our goal is to enable members to manage the business in order to support education for Montana children.



MASBO Staff

Denise Williams, Executive Director
406-461-3659 or dwilliams@masbo.com

Marie Roach, Administrative Assistant/
E-rate Specialist
406-461-8804 or mroach@masbo.com

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

MSUIP/MTSBA ANNUAL HR (EMPLOYMENT) SYMPOSIUMS

Offered by MTSBA and sponsored by MSUIP, the HR Symposiums will be held at the locations and dates shown below. Click on the location for more information and to register for the session.

Helena	January 28
Havre	February 3
Glasgow	February 4
Sidney	February 5
Miles City	February 6
Billings	February 7
Frenchtown	February 11
Whitefish	February 12

FREE TO MSUIP MEMBERS and no limit on the # of attendees from the same member district. Non-member districts may also attend for a fee.

INFINITE CAMPUS TRAINING FOR NEW AIM USERS

The OPI Staff, in conjunction with Infinite Campus, will be providing a one-day training **in Helena on Wednesday, January 14, 2015**, for district staff new to reporting student data in the AIM system. The focus will be on basic system functionality including: navigation, student information, creating enrollment, records transfer, adding or modifying user accounts, and creating household. Anyone new to using the AIM system in the last year is encouraged to attend this training. New users may register at this link on the OPI AIM web page under 'Trainings':

<http://www.keysurvey.com/f/690392/135a/>

MASBO BUDGET WORKSHOPS

Mark your calendars! The annual MASBO Budget Workshops are tentatively scheduled to be held in Great Falls on March 24, Miles City on March 30, Billings on March 31 and Missoula on April 8. More information and registration is coming soon.

MASBO REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Each MASBO region director holds an annual spring regional workshop in March/April. Please contact your region director (see name and email address below) if you have ideas or special requests for topics.

- Region 1 Director: Cindy Foley, West Valley Schools, cfoley@westvalleyschool.com
- Region 2 Director: Lucinda Woodland, Cascade Schools, lwoodland@cascade.k12.mt.us
- Region 3 Director: Rhonda Opp, Medicine Lake Schools, ropp@nemont.net
- Region 4 Director: Lori Carey, Jefferson County HS, lorie.carey@jhs.k12.mt.us
- Region 5 Director: Rita Huck, Huntley Project Schools, rhuck@huntley.k12.mt.us
- Region 6 Director: Jen Mettler, Baker Schools, mettlerj@baker.k12.mt.us

MASBO Board of Directors

President	Mike Arnold, Havre Schools	Region 1 Director	Cindy Foley, West Valley Schools
Vice-President	Tammy Tulberg, Target Range Schools	Region 2 Director	Lucinda Woodland, Cascade Schools
Past President	Jacki Young, Fairview Schools	Region 3 Director	Rhonda Opp, Medicine Lake Schools
Fiscal Agent	Kim Aarstad, East Helena Schools	Region 4 Director	Lorie Carey, Jefferson Co. High School
Ex-Officio, MSUIP	Denise Williams	Region 5 Director	Rita Huck, Huntley Project Schools
Ex-Officio, OPI	Janelle Mickelson	Region 6 Director	Jen Mettler, Baker Schools

Summer Conference Theme: **GREAT Today, GREATER Tomorrow**

At its October meeting, the MASBO Board of Directors decided to set a summer conference theme that focuses on the key characteristics that make our public schools so great, as described in "The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools, Volume II" (http://www.mtsba.org/Webinar/books/Great_Works_Web/index.html). These characteristics are briefly described as:

- G**overned by Elected Trustees
- R**esponsive to the Needs of Each Community
- E**xcellent, Efficient, Equitable and Empowered
- A**dvancing Student Achievement for Each Child
- T**rusted through Transparency and Openness

School business officials and other business office staff are instrumental in helping their school district attain and support these characteristics. MASBO's goal is to enable our members, through training and technical support, to manage school business operations in order to support public education for Montana's children. As stated in our Core Organizational Values, MASBO:

- is focused on our membership;
- is committed to absolute integrity and accountability;
- embraces and respects Montana public schools' commitment to meeting the needs and differences of every child, every day;
- embraces change, innovation and new ideas; and
- encourages involvement, collaboration and community.

Join us at the 2015 MASBO Summer Conference to celebrate your work to promote, support, enhance and preserve the key characteristics both today and into the future. The conference will be held at Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish, June 17-19, with New Clerk Academy on June 15-17 (software user group meetings on June 16 for all, including new clerks). See www.masbo.com for more information.

IN MEMORIAM - JIM DRISHINSKI

Jim Drishinski, District Clerk/Business Manager of Fairfield Schools, died unexpectedly from a brain aneurysm on Sunday, November 16. In addition to his job at the school, Jim was an enthusiastic supporter of the Fairfield Eagles sports program and wrote several articles about the home team for the Sun Times newspaper. An active MASBO member since 2012, Jim attended several events, including New Clerk Academy, budget workshops, regional workshops and the annual summer conference. We will miss his smiling face and his nice singing voice. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, co-workers and Fairfield community.





HAVE YOU SENT YOUR ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT TO BMO?

Your master agreement requires you send your annual audit report to the BMO Financial Group. Here’s how:

Mail a hard copy to: **BMO Harris Bank
Institutional Markets, Floor 5C
Attn: Michael Murawski
111 West Monroe Street
Chicago, IL 60603**

---OR---

Send an electronic (.pdf) copy to: pcard.reviews@bmo.com

---OR---

Fax a copy to **(312) 293-5811** attn. Michael Murawski

---and, to make it even easier ---

Add BMO to your distribution list

If you have an email distribution list of people/entities that you send your audited financials to each year, add pcard.reviews@bmo.com to your list.

Are your audited financial reports available online?

If your audit reports are available each year on a state or district website, please send that link to pcard.reviews@bmo.com along with your district name, city and state. For your convenience, each year BMO will proactively look for your audited financial reports at the appropriate time of year and download them themselves.

GOT ANY GOOD IDEAS TO SHARE?

Please send any P-card tips or best practice ideas to Denise or Marie and we’ll share it in future newsletters.

*Best Wishes for a
Wonderful Holiday
Season!*



MASBO CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

MASBO offers a voluntary program of professional certification to provide a recognized standard of competence for school district business managers, district clerks, and specialists eligible for active MASBO membership.

All MASBO members who are in active membership status and who meet the standards and qualifications established by the MASBO Board of Directors may, upon application, be certified for a period of four years. Available certification includes those for Business Specialists, District Clerk/Business Manager (Standard) and Montana Registered School Business Official (MRSBO). One of the criteria for obtaining MRSBO Certification is successful completion of three separate tests. Applicants pursuing the MRSBO may hold a Professional Level I, Professional Level II or Professional Level III Certificate while in the testing process.

Interested? Click on this link to learn more: <http://www.masbo.com/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3311> about the MASBO Certification Program.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MASBO PRESIDENT . . .

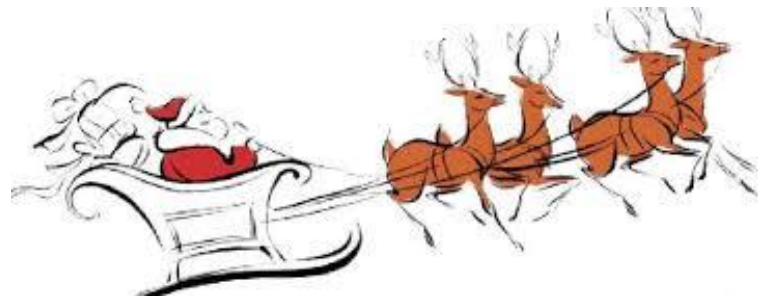
Merry Christmas to everyone. All year I've always said Christmas is going to be here before we know it and it got here sooner than I expected. It's been a busy year, lots of new faces have joined MASBO and with that, means we have lost familiar faces in the organization. This brings me to a topic that I believe is very beneficial to our membership. We just had our Fall session of the New Clerk Academy in Missoula on November 20 & 21. I visited about our mentorship program with these folks at that workshop, but would like to get the word out to everyone. Our mentorship program matches a new clerk with a more veteran clerk.

We are always looking for veteran clerks to be willing to help out a fellow "new" clerk. The mentor doesn't need to be able to have face-to-face meetings with the new clerk, just be someone that the new clerk can feel free to pick up the phone and call or email. We also try to match up everyone with a clerk that has the same software and comparable size school district. As a mentor, you may not know everything, but you more than likely know where or who to get the information from. You may even surprise yourself on what you do know. I find myself thinking that same thing, but then when I start getting questions, I surprise myself that I do know the answer. Another benefit is you get to know other clerks in the association, and the new clerks get to know you. So, if you are willing to be a mentor, please let Denise or Marie know and they will keep you in mind when they are matching new clerks.

While I am on my soap box, if you want to get more involved with MASBO, we are always looking for people to sit on the various committees that make up the MASBO organization. For a list of committees, check out our website. Most of the committees do not require you to be out of the office, but to contribute ideas and input into various issues via email or phone conference. Be looking out for information from our MASBO office after the first of the year about committees.

I know you are all very busy and don't want to take any more of your time, so here's to a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a great Happy New Year.

Sincerely,
Mike Arnold, President



WELL DONE!



These MASBO member school districts received the following awards for their FY2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR):

GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Billings School District
Bozeman School District
Helena School District

ASBO Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting

Billings School District



PAYROLL REMINDERS

DECEMBER

December 31 is the end of the 4th quarter as well as the end of the calendar year. Check with your software vendor to see if a calendar year back up is required. Also, remember to reconcile your quarterly payroll reports for 2014 with the totals for 2014 Form W-2.

JANUARY

- Before processing any payroll in January, update tax tables, EIC tables and Social Security limits.
- Run calendar year-end rollover, if applicable (check with your software vendor to see if this is required).
- 2014 Form W-2 is due to employees by January 31, 2015.
- 2014 Form 1099-MISC is due to recipients (vendors) by January 31, 2015.
- 4th quarter (October 2014 – December 2014) Form 941 report is due January 31, 2015.
- 4th quarter workers compensation insurance and unemployment insurance reports are due. Check with your specific provider (i.e., MSGIA, Montana State Fund, MSUIP, State of Montana or private insurer) for exact filing dates.

HANDY WEBSITE REFERENCES

Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov)

2014 General Instructions for Forms W-2 and W-3 <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/iw2w3.pdf>

Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Form-1099-MISC,-Miscellaneous-Income->

2015 Form W-4 Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf>

MONTANA MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Effective January 1, 2015, the Montana minimum wage will increase from \$7.90 to \$8.05 an hour based on the cost-of-living adjustment. The Montana Minimum Wage poster has been updated to reflect a new minimum wage rate. This mandatory change requires all employers to update their labor law posters **by December 31, 2014** to stay compliant. Obtain a free poster by clicking on this link: <http://assets.dli.mt.gov/erd/lsdocs/dli-erd-ls012.pdf>

2015 REGULAR SCHOOL ELECTION DAY IS MAY 5, 2015

ELECTION HANDBOOK AND CALENDARS

Click on the following links to access the updated resources related to the 2015 Election cycle:

2015 Election Handbook: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFinance/ElecHB/15ElectionManual.pdf>

2015 Election Calendar: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFinance/ElecHB/15ElectionCalendar.pdf>

2015 Mail Ballot Election Dates:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFinance/ElecHB/MailBallot/MailBallotDates.pdf>

School Election Resources, including sample forms and documents:

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#p7GPc1_7

Special thanks to Nicole Thuotte at OPI for her work on the updates to these important resources!

UPCOMING ELECTION TASKS

During December 21, 2014 through March 26, 2015, trustee candidates may file a Petition for Nomination, accompanied by an Oath of Candidacy and an Affidavit of Signature Gatherer. You can find sample forms by going to http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/SchoolFinance/Index.html#gpm1_7. At the bottom of the page, click on Basic Election Forms. The first tab on the left contains links to sample form related to Trustee Candidates.

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION NEWS

2nd SEMESTER BUS INSPECTIONS

Remember to have the buses you use to transport students to and from home and school inspected by the Montana Highway Patrol by **January 31, 2015**. This is one of the requirements for receiving state and county transportation reimbursement for 2nd semester. For more information, contact Donell Rosenthal at OPI at 444-3024.

MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION LIFTS WAIVER ON DRIVING RECORD FEES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2015

The Department of Justice, Motor Vehicle Division has determined that it can no longer waive its driving record request fees for school districts. Effective January 1, 2015, school districts will be required to pay the applicable fees shown in Section 4 of Form 34-100, Release of Driving Records (<https://media.dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/34-0100-and-34-0100A.pdf>).

Background: Effective August 8, 2014, the Bus Driver Certification Requirements for Reimbursement (see Administrative Rule 10.7.111 at <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/ARM/10-7-111pro-arm.pdf>) were changed to clarify the process for obtaining bus driver certification. One of the requirements for reimbursement calls for school bus drivers to be “qualified” as provided in 20-10-103, MCA (<http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/10/20-10-103.htm>) and ARM 10.64.201 (<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/ARM/10-64-201pro-arm.pdf>). One of the qualifications is proof of a safe driving record, which may not have evidence of any of the following:

- a. More than one moving traffic violation within any 12-month period of the preceding 36 months;
- b. Any conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs within the preceding 36 months; or
- c. A conviction resulting in mandatory revocation or suspension of a driver’s license in the previous five years.

To obtain a copy of a driving record, complete Form 34-100 Release of Driving Record and mail, along with a warrant for the applicable fees, to: Motor Vehicle Division, P.O. Box 201430, Helena, MT 59620-1430. Section 4 of the form shows the fees, so check the applicable boxes for what you want. The fee for the record itself is \$4.00. If you want the record faxed back to you, provide your fax number and add the \$3.00 fax fee (for a total of \$7.00 on your warrant). If you’d rather have the record mailed to you, you can either pay an additional \$3.00 mailing fee, or you can include a self-addressed stamped envelope, in which case the mailing fee would be waived. The MVD will do its best to return requests for driving records as quickly as possible.

OPI SCHOOL FINANCE DIVISION DISCONTINUES MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Recently, you received an email notification from the OPI School Finance Division that they have discontinued their monthly newsletter. Several MASBO members contacted me to express their concerns as many of you rely on this communication for reminder of deadlines, etc.

All is not lost! The information that you previously received in the OPI School Finance Newsletter will continue to be communicated through the OPI Monthly Summary of Activities (a.k.a., OPI Monthly Summary). In fact, the OPI Monthly Summary has always been available on the OPI website and there has always been a section for the School Finance Division. So, effective December 2014, you’ll just have to find the information in a different way. Here’s how:

- Go to www.opi.mt.gov
- Hover your cursor on “Resources” (third tab in from the right), then “OPI Information” on the drop-down menu; then click on “Monthly Summary of OPI Activities”. Here’s a quick link: http://www.opi.mt.gov/OPI_Summary/.
- On the left side of the page, under Division Summaries, click on School Finance Division.

For more information, and to sign up to join the OPI Listserv and receive monthly notifications about the OPI Monthly Summary of Activities, contact Debbie Casey at 444-3096.

MASBO ENDORSES THESE PROGRAMS



Montana School Unemployment Insurance Program
Theresa LeSueur, Director
406-457-4407
tlesueur@mtsba.org
<http://mtsba.org/InsuranceServices/tabid/98/Default.aspx>



Montana Schools Property & Liability Insurance Plan
Dave Pillatzke, Program Manager
406-457-4531
dpillatzke@paynewest.com
<http://msplip.com/>



Montana Schools Group Insurance Authority
Workers Compensation Insurance
Shawn Bubb, Director of Insurance Services
406-457-4500
sbubb@mtsba.org
<http://msgia.org/Home.aspx>



Healthcare Reform
Section 125 Services
Health Savings Account Services
Debbie Braden, Fringe Benefit Consultant
866-576-0201, ext. 26
Debbie.Braden@americanfidelity.com
<http://www.americanfidelity.com/home.aspx>



Health, Dental, Vision, Life and Long-Term
Disability Benefits
Eric L. Schindler, Chief Executive Officer
406-457-4510
eschindler@ms-sf.org
www.mustbenefits.org

The Value of a Good Home - The Rise of School District Provided Housing in Montana

By Shawn Bubb, Director of Insurance Services, MSGIA-WCRRP

The housing sector in today's economy has definitely seen its ups and downs over the past decade. In Montana, the demographics and, more specifically, the demographic concentrations have likewise continued to evolve. One key area where school districts have looked for a competitive advantage over their fellow educational institutions in this shifting climate is employee-provided housing. In fact, because the residential inventories have in recent years become tight, some Montana districts now view district-owned housing as the best available option for recruiting and retaining employees. Under these relatively new circumstances, districts have responded in a number of ways to the housing/recruitment issue – some of these responses have been helpful to employees and districts alike, while others have resulted in potential problems pertaining to either IRS or workers' compensation carrier audit findings.

Some districts have provided housing at no charge *or* they have done so at a rate lower than market value. Each of these options may result in an IRS taxable fringe benefit, depending on the outcome of the IRS tests for taxability of that benefit. (For this determination, one would need to consult a local certified public accountant for advice on the correct amount to report to the IRS.)

Other districts have simply charged the going rate, or what some call "fair market rental rate." This rate is comparable to other options available in the area, as reflected in newspaper listings or as determined by local real estate agents. The amount deemed includable as compensation for IRS reporting purposes represents the first part of the equation. The second half of the equation pertains to the value associated with workers' compensation payroll reporting purposes. Seemingly simple on the face of it, this method of reimbursement requires perhaps a more granular elaboration.

Accordingly, if the value of housing *is* considered a benefit and thus does *not* run through regular payroll, one might wonder *why* it should be included in amounts reported to the school district's workers' compensation carrier. The reason is that when someone files a claim against the school district's policy all compensation – both monetary and non-monetary – is considered in cases determining the workers' compensation wage-loss benefits. As such, any fringe benefit amount attributable to the employee-provided housing for school district employees needs to be added to any regular payroll numbers reported to the district's workers' compensation carrier. For instance, if the district provides a teacher as part of his or her compensation package a 2-bedroom house with utilities, and if the fair market value of a similar property in that community is \$550, then annually the district should be including \$6,600 (12 x \$550) of additional compensation on the regular payroll report provided to the MSGIA or other workers' compensation carrier – this would be the full fringe benefit for the non-reimbursed fair value of the housing benefit.

In this same example, the value of that fringe benefit and reportable amount for workers' compensation purposes is reduced by any amount the employee pays the district monthly for that rental property. The full amount of the fringe benefit and the reportable amounts for workers' compensation then goes away when the employee pays the full fair market value for the rental property, because in this case there is no employee benefit provided but instead an arms-length rental transaction. In other instances, districts have not included any value for employee-provided housing on their regular quarterly workers' compensation reports because employees paid the district the rent value set in a housing agreement.

In either case, the key is to be sure to report to your workers' compensation provider the fringe benefit portion of the housing, which may require investigating other sources in order to be sure you know what the full fair market value of the housing benefit is and compare that to the amount you are charging the employees to determine if any amount of the benefit is considered a fringe benefit. If the amount you are charging is lower than fair value for your area, then the district needs to report the difference between the fair value and the lower amount charged to the employee as additional compensation on their regular payroll reports to the workers' compensation carrier.

The reason for reporting the full non-reimbursed fair value for housing to your workers' compensation carrier derives from the process used to calculate the benefits owed to an injured employee for a wage loss claim. That calculation requires that *all* employee compensation be considered, not only the employee's regular salary.

Districts needing assistance determining what a fair value might be for their housing in their area might likely elect to consult county-wide indexes that provide averages for those costs by county. However, rental values within a county in Montana will vary greatly from city to city; so, while this resource provides a working guide, I believe districts would be better off determining accurate comparables by analyzing local rents charged in your direct area – this latter method will help ensure that down the road districts do not have to pay unplanned costs for the aforementioned IRS or workers’ compensation carrier audit findings.

To find average rental values by county for Montana, districts can review the US census website at the following link: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/30000.html>. Select your county and hit go (this is in the upper left side of the screen). Then on the middle right portion of the screen – click on “Want more data sets” for your county – then on the next screen select Housing Characteristics – median rental values are listed toward the bottom of this screen.

You can also look to the Montana Realtors Association to find a local real estate agent in your community who can help you establish a rationale for what a true fair value would be for rentals in your area.

To be sure, oil-impacted regions of our state are not the only ones seeing a boom in this employer-provided benefit area. As noted above, the de-population of certain areas in Montana has created an erosion of the local housing opportunities for school district employees. In consequence, many more school districts find themselves playing the dual roles of landlord and employer. This raises considerations in the property and liability arena as well as in the workers’ compensation space.

If your district has questions about values to include for workers’ compensation reporting, please contact me at 1.877.667.7392.

Be Well and Be Safe!

SAFETY REMINDERS

Excerpts from the December 2014 Montana School Pool Newsletter
by Brodie Loushin, Commercial Insurance Safety Specialist, Western States School Program

Checking Schools

It seems that every year during the holiday break cold weather rolls down from Canada and freezes pipes in one location or another. With this in mind please ensure that there is a holiday break schedule for inspection of the school. Long periods without occupants often lead to extensive damage when water problems are not detected early. The best prepared have a schedule for maintenance or administration to check the facilities at least once a day during the holiday break. We strongly encourage this practice.

Recitals and Plays

Holiday programs always bring many visitors to the school. Always ensure that safety equipment is on hand and in good condition. Make certain that a snow removal plan is in place prior to and following all programs. Slip and fall accidents can ruin the holidays for a family if a relative injures themselves on school sidewalks and stairs.

During the preparation for the program ensure that all electrical safety procedures are followed. Do not overload the plug ins and never remove the third ground prong from three pronged plugs. Each year a fire or electrical accident occurs during the holidays in a Montana school. Don’t be the statistic this year, keep your school safe and make sure electrical safety is a first concern.

Information from: Consumer Product Safety Commission



MASBO EXHIBITOR MEMBERS

RESA4U/Southwest MT School Services Bruce Grubbs bgrubbs@resa4u.org	Ron Foltz CPA firm Ron Foltz, CPA Ron.foltz@ronfoltzcpa.com	Foxie Lady Computers, Inc. David Bardwell foxieladyc@aol.com
MT Schools Health & Welfare Plan (MSHWP) Sarah Harne sarah-harne@leavitt.com	Anderson, Zurmuehlen & Co. Stefeni Freese, CPA sfreese@azworld.com	Infinite Campus Stephanie Sondrol Stephanie.sondrol@infinitecampus.com
Todd Watkins Consulting Services Todd Watkins Toddwatkinsconsulting101@gmail.com	American Fidelity Assurance Company Debbie Braden Debbie.Braden@americanfidelity.com	TCPN (The Cooperative Purchasing Network) Derek Anderson danderson@tcpn.org
Tyler Technologies Jeff Melugin Jeff.melugin@tylertech.com	Pine Cove Consulting Brandan Bassett bbassett@pinecc.com	Rudd & Company, PLLC Julie Kostelecky, CPA, CVA jkostelecky@ruddco.com
Aesop Substitute Placement Service Jim O'Halloran jim@ohalloran.cc	United Pension Administration Elizabeth Harris upahelp@msn.com	Horace Mann Keith Jorgensen keith.jorgensen@horacemann.com
Black Mountain Software Teresa Van Buren teresav@blackmountainsoftware.com	VALIC John Wing John.wing@valic.com	Fellon Insurance Services Dale Fellon fellonins@msn.com
Montana Schools Unified Insurance Program Theresia LeSueur tlesueur@mtsba.com	Western States School Program Dave Pillatzke dpillatzke@paynewest.com	Stifel Nicolaus Bryan Stelmack yroybal@stifel.com
MSGIA-WCRRP Shawn Bubb sbubb@mstba.org	D.A. Davidson & Co. Bridget Ekstrom Bekstrom@dadco.com	CHMS, P.C. Doris Leader, CPA doris@chmspc.com
Klimas Financial Services, Inc. Charles Klimas Charles.klimas@securitiesamerica.com	Edie Barnard Edie Barnard Edie.barnard56@gmail.com	Galusha, Higgins & Galusha Kim Dare, CPA Kimberly@ghg-cpa.com

2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION NEWS



LEGISLATIVE AUTOMATED WORKFLOW SYSTEM (LAWS)

(The following information was taken from “The Interim” Newsletter – December 2014 Issue

<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/Interim-Newsletter/2014-Interim-Newsletters/December/2014-December-interim-newsletter.pdf>, pages 10-11.)

The Legislative Automated Workflow System, known as LAWS, provides timely information before, during and after a legislative session, including

- an up-to-date status for each introduced bill and pending bill draft request;
- the text of introduced bills and completed bill drafts;
- hearing schedules for House and Senate committees; and
- agendas for the House and Senate floor sessions.

Users also may set up Preference Accounts, allowing them to track lists of specific bills as that legislation makes its way through the process. Preference Accounts also allow the user to receive e-mail notices when committee hearings are scheduled for bills selected for that account.

The LAWS web site for the 2015 session can be found at www.leg.mt.gov/laws.htm. It also can be accessed from the legislative branch homepage, www.leg.mt.gov, by selecting “Bills” in the menu on the left-hand side of the page and then selecting “2015 LAWS” from the drop-down menu.

The Legislative Service Division has created a library of almost 40 instructional videos that can be viewed and listened to on the Internet by anyone wanting to learn more about navigating the LAWS online system. The link to the LAWS Instructional Video Library is found at the bottom of the LAWS Session Information page (www.leg.mt.gov/laws.htm).

The instructional videos range from about 90 seconds to 6 minutes, depending on the complexity of the subject. They cover everything from basic navigation to advanced maintenance of preference lists. The videos are free and allow users to learn about LAWS at their own pace.



*MERRY CHRISTMAS from your
friends at MASBO!*

*Everyone celebrates the season a
little differently. We hope you
take time for fun, rest and
reflection during your holiday
break. Safe travels and peace to
all. May 2015 bring you the best
of health, happiness and
prosperity.*

Denise and Marie