



Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce
Candidate Questionnaire Responses
from House Districts 91-100
& Senate Districts 48 & 49



The following questionnaire was given to all candidates in House Districts 91-100 and Senate Districts 48 & 49 prior to the partnered forums that the Chamber and MAEDC hosted. Candidates had the option to complete and return the questionnaire back to be published on the Chamber's website. The following are the answers submitted by the candidates that chose to complete the questionnaire.

(Candidates who did not complete the questionnaire are as follows: Kevin Blackler HD 95, Diane Sands HD 95, Teresa Henry HD96, Michele Reinhart HD97, Elizabeth Hands HD99, Matt Lee HD99, Marge Zaveta HD 100, Monique Simone Cratty SD 48 and Will Stock SD49)

1. Why are you running for office?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

I am running for office because I want to live in Montana and raise a family here.

HD 91- Tom Opre

We have two children and I'm concerned that they will not have the opportunity to build careers in the Montana after they receive a quality education. I've been self employed my entire life and I understand, first hand, the unique issues which hard working Montanans face every day.

HD 92- Walter Hill

1. I love Montana & want to serve.
2. To build for future generations.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

I have served three previous terms and I find the work to be useful, interesting and challenging. More specifically, the last two years on the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board has convinced me that changes need to be made in planning laws. Also I am concerned that education is funded properly.

HD 93- Denise Moore

In the time that I have been a resident of this district, not once have we elected a legislator with a pro-business background. As a self-employed business person and a member of the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce, I understand full well that Montana has entered a new economic era and small business is leading the way. With all due respect to my opponent, it's time for candidates such as myself with broad based entrepreneurial experience and practical understanding of our free market system to take the lead in Helena.

HD 94- Phil Barney

As a long-time Montana Resident, I feel a need to keep Montana a place we want to live. My decision-making experience as a physician has prepared me to serve as a legislator.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

I would like to maintain and improve the quality of life for future generations.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

I am running because I have been following the school funding lawsuit and resulting legislation, and I believe the problems haven't been fixed, and thought much of the discussion didn't make sense overall. As I investigated a run for office I also discovered lingering problems with Workers Comp rates, business taxes and overspending by the 2005 Legislature.

HD 98- Holly Raser

I am running for office because I believe in public service, and having served in the Legislature for the last three terms, I believe my experience and leadership will be assets for the state.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

Voters in FID 98 deserve to have a candidate that actually lives in the district. I am different from my opponent in that I am not a single-issue candidate nor am I anti agriculture, anti business. anti traditional family, anti property tax rebate, anti school board or anti veteran education.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

A. I am 4th generation Missoulian, and I want to give back to the community that has given so much to my family over the past decades.

B. I saw the importance of personal involvement when I was in Mississippi for 3 months helping with emergency services after hurricane Katrina. I saw the role thousands of volunteers played in helping others. Most important, I saw how one person can make a difference in someone life. I want to make a positive difference in Helena for the people in House District 100 and all Montanans.

SD 48 – Carolyn Squires

1. I am experienced. 2. I live in the district. 3. Good Listener. 4. Bridge Builder 5. Respond to constituents.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

I'm tired of taxes and wasteful spending.

SD 49 – David Wanzenried

To *serve the public*. I would *like to* continue to offer my experience and background in both the public and private sectors to the critical deliberations in Helena.

Public. I have enjoyed the privilege of serving to in the Legislature for 5 terms: 1991 to 1995 from Kalispell; and, 2001 to 2006 in Missoula. In addition, I worked for state government for 12 years [1974 to 1986], including chief of staff to Governor Ted Schwinden from 1981 to 1984 and as Montana Commissioner of Labor from 1984 to 1986. This work history provides me with a unique understanding of the day-to-day operations of state government, the executive budget process and the legislative and appropriations processes.

Private. I have worked in the private sector in the transportation industry since 1986, including two and one-half *years* as an over -the-road truck driver and 17 years in marketing and sales. This experience provides me with insights to, and firsthand knowledge about, the many facets of Montana's economy and the challenges and opportunities we face as a state.

I am the only candidate for this seat who offers the public a strong mix of experiences and insights, as well as the working knowledge about how to get things done in Helena.

2. What are the two most important issues facing Montana today?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

The most important issue facing Montana is how we decide to control and/or plan growth. The second most important issue is making sure that Montanans can afford to live here.

HD 91- Tom Opre

There are more than two important issues. I want to put people before politics. I will fight to make health insurance more affordable, reduce property taxes, and adequately fund K-12 education, yet make sure we are spending taxpayer dollars smart. In addition, I will demand that State government continue to improve opportunities for small business.

HD 92- Walter Hill

Stable economy with competitive salaries
Quality, fundamental education

HD 93- Ron Erickson

The most important issue for the planet is global climate change. The most important national (as opposed to international) problem is healthcare for all. It is not possible for the Montana Legislature to “solve” either of these problems, but we can make inroads on them on the state lever (e.g. regulating how coal is burned and providing subsidies for small businesses for employee health insurance.) The most immediate problems facing Montana are CI 97 and I 154.

HD 93- Denise Moore

In order for Montana to adequately support existing services and programs, we must promote a friendly and productive business environment. The tax revenue stream created by Montana's successful businesses provide the core funding for the State.

Furthermore, our government must exercise restraint in spending and require accountability for that spending.

HD 94- Phil Barney

1. Preservation of natural resources and life-style in face of development pressures.
2. Education and employment of children.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

Funding a quality education for our youth, and providing affordable access to quality healthcare. Both of these goals would greatly benefit the Montana economy over the long term.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

1) Fixing the school funding formula while achieving true quality education and (2) reining in out-of-control spending while making prudent investments in the future.

HD 98- Holly Raser

Here's three: Investing in quality education from pre-school through post-secondary, economic development, and providing adequate health care for all our citizens.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

Jobs/Income and Taxes/Healthcare

HD 100- Bill Nooney

1. Education
2. Healthcare
3. Tax burden on Elderly
4. Use of public lands
5. Zoning and fair growth

SD 48 – Carolyn Squires

1. Health Care
2. Jobs & Economic Development

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

Reduction in taxes and business promotion.

SD 49 – David Wanzenried

Creating a political and economic environment where small businesses can exist and multiply in number. Montana is a state of small business. At least 85 percent of Montana's businesses are small businesses. Unlike most corporations in Montana, small businesses line every main street in our state and, driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, a large number are evolving in barns and living rooms every day. The health of small businesses, both now and into the future, is critical to Montana's economic, social and political health.

Setting budget priorities and sorting out the many conflicting demands for funding. First, we must honestly assess state government's ending fund balance, now approaching \$530.0 million, and determine how much of it is one-time versus ongoing revenue.

To remain competitive both nationally and internationally, we must build on the work of the 2005 **general and special sessions** to invest in an affordable and accountable system of education at all levels. We must regard education not only as a goal, but also view it as a strategy to better equip each willing Montanan with the skills needed to secure a good-paying job with benefits and to make a difference in the lives of others.

We must balance that priority of investing in education with the recognition that the national government is steadily reducing its financial commitment to the states particularly in the area of health care. Reductions in federal funding and changes in allocation rules mean that Montana will receive approximately \$10.0 to \$15.0 million less each fiscal year to support health care for our less fortunate neighbors. We must recognize the harsh reality awaiting these individuals and each taxpayer if we simply turn our backs on them. These Montanans will not vanish. Instead, when they fall ill, they will be forced to visit high-cost venues [i.e. emergency rooms]. Those of us who have access to, and can afford, medical services and health insurance will then pay more when the service providers, in order to stay in business, shift funding the responsibility. Whenever that occurs, in my book it is a 'tax increase.'

Our corrections and criminal justice systems require additional attention. Preliminary indications are that the corrections system requires an infusion of an additional \$15.0 million. We must recognize the relationship between sentencing policies [e.g. mandatory sentences] and the costs to the taxpayers.

Homeowners and small businesses must be protected against additional property taxes forced on them by the Legislature, especially in the area of K-12 school funding. Whenever the Legislature addresses tax policy, the interests of homeowners and small businesses must receive the primary consideration.

3. Will you promote business in Montana? If so, how?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

I will promote business growth in Montana. One way to promote business growth in Montana is to ensure that our education system provides the education that our businesses need.

HD 91- Tom Opre

Keep taxes low, cut red tape and promote small business. Other issues on my radar are finding solutions to the high cost of health insurance, high cost of worker's comp insurance, and marketing Montana as the top destination for small business in North America.

HD 92- Walter Hill

Yes. Invest in University- related research to attract high tech business and generate spin-off companies.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

Every national survey has shown that the most important factor in the location of new businesses is the existence of a well-educated work force. We must make our education system second to none. The other major factors for new businesses are good infrastructure, a fair taxation system, and a clean environment. Our tax system is fair and our environmental amenities are superb. We have infrastructure problems with both our transportation and communication systems. We should use some of the one time money to help.

HD 93- Denise Moore

Absolutely! I know that there are many avenues we could explore to encourage the prosperity of Montana's businesses, but for me one of the more obvious methods is to hold down the tax burden. For example, previous legislatures successfully imposed a graduated reduction of the business equipment tax, and I suspect that this is one contributor to our now growing tax revenue picture.

The Tax Foundation recently published its 2006 report on state business climates, and according to their criteria, Montana is currently sitting in the top 10, at number 9. It is interesting to note that this report points to several studies that agree that taxes are a significant factor in private sector job growth, specifically pointing to personal property tax and sales taxes as havin. the neater negative effects on annual growth of private employment.

Consider this: Promoting business growth logically leads to growth in tax revenues, without necessarily having to increase tax burden. Those tax revenues in turn fund vital programs, for example, education. In turn, our universities and colleges collaborate with private enterprise in research and development. The ultimate result is new jobs, perhaps in new and emerging fields, helping to diversify and energize Montana's economy. The interrelation cannot be overlooked.

HD 94- Phil Barney

Yes, increased funding for research to "grow" or "spin-off" high tech industry. Reduce cost of workman's compensation.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

Yes, by funding a high quality education to assure a high quality work force. Also by providing better access to affordable healthcare for small business owners and their employees.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

I would support

1. Eliminating the business equipment tax
2. Find ways to reduce Workers Comp rates
3. Improve quality of public school education

HD 98- Holly Raser

I believe encouraging and developing Montana's many small/medium businesses is vital. Areas that provide a trained workforce and community/recreational amenities are the ones attracting new business investment, and state policies need to reflect and encourage this trend. Outstanding ideas come from our university graduates and I would like to expand our ability to nurture and develop their great ideas. The Missoula Area Economic Development Corp. has done an excellent job helping businesses grow. This success should be a statewide model.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

Promote some investment R & D at University level leading to import of Hi tech and Hi science researchers that would bring grants with them. This research can lead to spin off companies with high paying salaries.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

1. Yes. First we need to work to ensure Montana has a fair, predicable, and accountable tax system.
2. Second Montana can make better use of tax credits and/or deductions for development of businesses.
3. I plan to work closely with area economic development groups to listen to their concerns and gather their input so I can carry their message to Helena.
4. Wise business growth will lead to more jobs and great revenue for all Montanans.

SD 48 – Carolyn Squires

Try to make it easier to obtain financial assistance at the Intermediate time of begin businesses- They usually fold at this level due to the lack of funding.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

Reduce taxes

SD 49 – David Wanzenried

Yes. We must focus on the challenges facing, and the opportunities available to, small businesses. State government should play only a complementary role. We must forge partnerships between small businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, financial institutions, local governments and state government to promote the health and vitality of small business. The first order of business is to attend to the challenges and opportunities facing businesses already operating in Montana.

The partnership should assist entrepreneurs seeking to add value to Montana's raw materials and unfinished goods. Example. Several Montana manufacturers produce some of the best particle board in the United States. It is shipped to distant locations [especially North Carolina], where furniture manufacturers cover it with expensive laminates and then slip it nationwide to retail furniture outlets, including stores in Montana. Why not remove the transportation costs in both directions and the middle man and create a regional market by producing furniture and laminated wood products for the Northwest and western Canada?

We must assist and encourage those who seek to create businesses and jobs by tapping opportunities that exist under our noses. A good example of this is a prospering decorative/landscaping stone "industry" Innovative Montanans are mining decorative stone in small communities like Plains, Elmo, Ryegate and Livingston and selling it as a high dollar component in high-end homes being built across the country. {Ten years ago, I never thought I would buy water from anyone. Now, I would like to meet the first guy who found a willing buyer for rocks.}

By investing in education at all levels [particularly colleges of technical education], we can ensure that businesses -will have a trained and qualified pool of workers.

The same partnership must devise and support initiatives that seek to create good-paying jobs in Indian Country, where unemployment exceeds 70 percent. The health of our state in every respect is no stronger than the weakest link.

We must build on innovative policies enacted in 2005, such as the small business health insurance tax credit and pooling bill, which I had the privilege of successfully sponsoring. [House Bill 667.]

We must encourage investments in alternative energy sources such as ethanol and wind energy. These investments should be fostered not only to create a more independent energy future, but also for the jobs they create both during construction and operational phases.

And, finally, we never again allow those speaking for our state to tell those in boardrooms that Montana has a “bad business climate.” If something is truly broken, we must be workmanlike and fix it and not place ourselves at a competitive disadvantage in the process.

4. What do you feel is the State Government’s role in economic development?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

State government can assist in economic development. One example of this is through the education system. A well educated and/or trained Montana is usually more productive and creative.

HD 91- Tom Opre

The State needs to create and maintain a constant and positive climate for business.

HD 92- Walter Hill

Invest in future development. Continue to improve the business climate for the businesses already here.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

The function of government is to provide for essential services such as education, health and human services, public safety, a clean and healthful environment, and infrastructure of all types. Regulations on the business community should be fair, easy to understand, and in accord with the essential functions. I do not believe either in subsidies to or undue governmental interference with economic development.

HD 93- Denise Moore

As one who has owned her own business, is currently self-employed, and who has worked for large and small companies, I have developed what I believe is a healthy and practical philosophy: That the best market is a free and competitive market, and the best government is the least government. In other words, our State Governments role must be to provide a workable and non-intrusive framework in which private enterprise can thrive. Interference through over-regulation, mandates, and excessive taxation strangle growth and deter economic growth.

HD 94- Phil Barney

1. Provide an environment attractive to economic development
2. Provide funding for “start-up” companies

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

We can provide workforce training resources, like those which helped bring 1000 good-paying Direct TV jobs to Missoula, a great K-12 and post secondary education to provide skilled and well-trained

workers for new and existing businesses, the necessary physical infrastructure to promote economic development, and assistance for employers to provide affordable healthcare to themselves and their employees. I helped write and pass I-149, which outlined the Insure Montana healthcare incentives for small business, and more importantly funded the programs.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

Government should provide infrastructure, low tax rates and minimal burdensome paperwork.

HD 98- Holly Raser

The State Government should provide leadership, expertise and resources, and provide opportunities for networking from the local through global levels. Policies need to be flexible enough to allow for the varied development needs and opportunities across our state.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

To be seen as business friendly allowing prospective businesses a fair predictable playing field. Establish a tax structure that doesn't unfairly punish profit motives.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

1. To support area economic groups like the Missoula Economic Development Corp. here is Missoula.
2. State needs to be involved but not actually doing it from Helena; It is better left for the representation in each local community. States should be involved by offering incentives that the local groups can work with. Then these groups need to work together.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

The State should be a partner in development of new industries i.e.) DirecTV

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

To help regulate blighted areas.

SD 49 – David Wanzenried

Combined answers for question 3 & 4. See above response in question 3.

5. Do you feel the State Departments operate efficiently and equitably; and what, if any, improvements would you like to see in place?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

Government can always be made more efficient.

HD 91- Tom Opre

I would like to see a complete reconciliation of all State Department budgets. I agree with the Governor that we probably have some waste in State government and we need to determine it's' location.

HD 92- Walter Hill

No. I would like to sunset clause most, if not all, ARMS and re-establish there. I would also like a legislative audit of personnel procedures in all state departments.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

For the most part, government is working well. The Department of Revenue needs fresh legislation and increased funding to assure that taxes are collected.

HD 93- Denise Moore

Whether a government agency or a private enterprise, I think we would all be hardpressed to find any operation that could not benefit from improved efficiency. Competition and a healthy fear of failure are what keep private business constantly seeking new and better ways to improve profit performance and leaner expense lines.

Unfortunately, most governmental operations (largely because of how they are funded and lack of competition) do not embrace the “lean and mean” SOPs that you and I have to in order to survive. What is the answer? Perhaps we should demand more transparency in spending, and accountability for results.

No single legislator is likely to institute any meaningful change in how our government uses up resources and money, but organizations such as local Chambers of Commerce can certainly help to exert pressure on all legislators to demand better planning, less waste, and improved service.

HD 94- Phil Barney

No, Need depts. to operate at level comparable to surrounding states. Need incentive program for employees.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

As a former state employee I know there is always room for more efficiency in government. I would support more funding for state agencies to provide more incentive-based funding for services to businesses and the public in general. For example, if we could provide better workforce training resources we could better lure new and expanding business to provide more good-paying jobs in Montana.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

I think the State Department business and online services have been very helpful and easy to use. There is always someone there to answer my questions when I call. If others have experienced problems there I would be interested in hearing about them.

HD 98- Holly Raser

I believe State Departments are operating as efficiently and equitably as conditions allow. Departments that can generate revenue through fees tend to be more efficient as they have the resources to provide for services. Others such as Public Health and Human Services are incredibly over-burdened and under-funded. It is unfortunate that the downturn in our state’s economy came at the time when smart investment in technology could have saved millions of dollars over the long term. I believe it would be prudent for our state to spend some of the current surplus reinvesting in our infrastructure and committing to a technology plan that will bring all state programs on line and able to easily transfer and share data, eliminating duplication and paperwork.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

I believe government should provide what we cannot as individuals cannot. Many departments seem to feel they are the end all of personal freedom. OPI and Dept. of Ed. need scrutiny.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

It seems like there is a lot of efficiency in some areas but not in others. I do not know at this current time but I am speaking with current Legislatures, small business owners and concerned people to learn more and to develop a plan to make the State Departments to work more efficiently and equitably.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

I feel the DPHHS is often over looked and is not funded appropriately. This Dept. assists the mass needy in the state from kids to seniors.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

Problems can only be seen from the inside- lets listen to the workers for solutions to those problems.

SD 49 – David Wanzenried

If we were to devise a business model in the Twenty-First Century for a \$2.0 billion dollar enterprise, we would not include a board of directors that meets for four consecutive months and then adjourns for twenty months. The over-arching ground rule for the policy-making process of state government is just that. {As a member of the Legislature, I accept the conditions and requirements determined by bosses, the people of Montana.} Given the pressure and time constraints of a 90-day session, our citizen Legislature does the best job possible to evaluate the operations and effectiveness of state government. It forecasts revenue for a two and one-half year period, balances a wide array of conflicting priorities for policy changes and allocates funding according to the best information available. For the most part, the Legislature manages the margin of error surprisingly well. Meaningful legislative oversight is difficult to achieve. At times, term limits removes experienced policymakers just as they acquire the skills and insights essential to making state government more effective, efficient and responsive to the taxpayers, who are the customers in this business model. In this regard especially, experience in the Legislature is critical.

Is there room for improvement? Yes. *Example.* In each of the 5 legislative sessions [1991;1993; 2001; 2003; and 2005] I have served, I have introduced legislation requiring a systematic, two-year examination of the executive ranch of state government. Each time, the goal was to assess different ways to organize and streamline management and operating procedures by incorporating and relying on technology and emerging management processes. State government is structured in much same way it was in 1974, when the legislature completed a four-year reorganization effort. In the intervening 32 years, businesses have been forced to dramatically alter management structures and operations in order to survive and to better compete [both nationally and internationally]. The taxpayers deserve a comprehensive effort aimed at substantially reducing the administrative costs of state government and putting more tax dollars into serving the public with the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost.

6. How will you foster communications with your constituents and other citizens of the state?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

In my first campaign I knocked as many doors as I could in my district. I have been doing the same in my reelection campaign. When a constituent has a good idea, I keep track of it and send them updates on their issue. I have sent pieces of mail with directions on how to contact me and what I have done in the legislature. I plan to do the same.

HD 91- Tom Opre

I've been working in national advertising and marketing my entire adult life. I will work to meet and listen to people of HD 91 in a regular and timely manner. I pledge to respond to every phone call, email and letter.

HD 92- Walter Hill

I will seek input on important bills. I will make my phone and email accessible.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

On a day to day basis I answer e-mails, postcards, and phone calls. In previous sessions I have written commentary in the Missoulian. At mid-session the Missoula delegation has a town meeting, open to everyone. At the end of the session I publish a newsletter to constituents.

HD 93- Denise Moore

Time and again I have marveled at how little our legislators communicate with us. And in this day and age, there is no excuse whatsoever for failing to utilize one very cheap and efficient tool: the Internet. Of course, this doesn't serve as a substitute for one-on-one conversations or neighborhood meetings, but it is a great way to spread out the net of information and communication.

One of my campaign's slogans is "Putting Represent Back in Representative". As a constituent, I have never received a newsletter or brief update from any of my legislators. In fact, the only time you usually hear from them is when they want your vote. I have already put to work a great two-way communication tool within my website (at www.denisemoore.org) by creating a Community Interests Survey which provides voters throughout my home District a direct line of communications with me - at any time.

After I am elected, this site will also serve as an informational bulletin board, providing constituents with an easy-to-reach forum and source of legislative updates and links to important informational sources.

During the last legislative session, the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce did an excellent job of keeping membership up to date on various bills and pending issues through email updates and advisories. Those updates were invaluable to me as a constituent, and showed me the incredible value of being informed.

HD 94- Phil Barney

Phone, fax & website for contact (and mailing address). Periodic written communication to constituents.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

I have a website, www.DaveMcAlpin.com, and communicate by email with constituents whenever possible. I enjoyed attending the Chamber Legislative dinner in Helena during the session and enjoy keeping in touch with Chamber members at my table like Mike and Jan Peissig of Gateway printing.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

I already give out my home phone number and email address and this will not change. I will visit with local neighborhood groups but am concerned that only a motivated minority of people participate in these usually. Most of all, I will try to be a friendly and approachable representative and not go into the shell I see others go into when they have been public servants for awhile.

HD 98- Holly Raser

Accessibility is the key. I attend a variety of statewide and local forums to communicate with and listen to constituents. I have sent out several newsletters, and am also regularly contacted by phone, email, and regular mail. I try hard to respond to them all.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

I will be a two year representative rather than an every two year representative. Direct mail and other means of contact more than just when election time rolls around.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

I encourage people to contact me by phone (406) 544-2343 and through my email address (billnooney4hd100.com). In addition, I will continue to inform people of important issues and key legislative bill through my website (www.billnooney4hd100@montana.com).

I have a network of citizens in House District 100 who volunteered to keep me informed of people's concerns and interests in their neighborhoods, their circle of friends and their business associates. After the November election, I plan to expand this group to make certain I reach more sectors including senior citizens, small business owners, sportsmen, teachers and Ag groups.

I plan on mailing a quarterly newsletter to voters in my House District and will hold public voter information sessions to update people on important issues and to solicit their input. In addition, I will meet on a regular basis with community and business organizations to listen to their concerns and suggestions.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

1. Forums on issues of interest. 2. E-mails 3. Respond to letters sent to me with questions and solutions.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

By making an effort to do so. Press Releases and possible mail outs and town hall meetings.

SD 49 – David Wanzenrie

My constituents provide me with the opportunity to participate in the legislative process and I am accountable to them first. As an incumbent legislator (State Representative - House District 97], I have fine-tuned ways to make myself readily accessible to my constituents during the legislative session, but more importantly, during the 20 months the Legislature is not in session. Constituents frequently have questions about policies and appropriations approved and defeated during a particular session; they have questions about how to resolve an issue with or seek information from state agencies. I meet with constituents routinely either individually or in groups to listen to their ideas and concerns.

During legislative sessions, I respond to dozens of inquiries by telephone and e-mail each day. I reach out to constituents by telephone and in home visits, asking them for their input on proposals awaiting legislative action. When time permits, I schedule meetings with groups of constituents during the session, both in Helena and Missoula.

Further, in the performance of my employment responsibilities, I talk to employees of small businesses every day. Because my employer requires me to continue performing many of my work responsibilities while I am in Helena, I continue to interact daily with the owners and representatives of small businesses during legislative sessions. They provide useful ideas and input from a lay, common-sense perspective.

Finally, I speak to business organizations (mostly in Missoula] roughly once a month and use the opportunities to answer questions and listen to criticism. As a result, I enjoy a very good working relationship with business people from all over the state.

7. What do you think the State should do with the current budget surplus?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

When deciding what to do with the surplus it is important to remember that this surplus probably consists of one time money. I agree with Governor Schweitzer's property tax rebate. Money is needed to make state government buildings even more efficient. I think that a rainy day fund would also be a good idea.

HD 91- Tom Opre

A large amount of the surplus comes from income tax receipts. I would support returning some of the surplus to the tax payers of Montana. Some of the surplus will have to be utilized, in an efficient manner, to alleviate some of other budget concerns.

HD 92- Walter Hill

1. Permanent property tax relief.
2. 25% of surplus into endowment account
3. Some into unfounded pension plans
4. income tax rebate

HD 93- Ron Erickson

Invest in infrastructure and other one time only investments such as the Affordable Housing Revolving Loan Account. Some of the “surplus” will be ongoing and should go to Education and DPHS.

HD 93- Denise Moore

I think we need to closely evaluate and carefully define this surplus. If we are collecting excessive taxes, then we need to rethink a few things. Do we rebate or rollback? Invest or spend? If we are over-taxing Montanans, then permanent reductions in property taxes should be considered (personal and business). I do not support creating new ways to spend, nor do I support expanding existing programs to sponge up the “excess” simply because the excess exists.

HD 94- Phil Barney

(Tax Surplus)

1. Property tax relief
2. Equalize school funding
3. Higher Education
4. Research Support

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

I support the homeowner rebate proposed by the governor and would otherwise use the one-time surplus dollars to make needed infusions into our struggling pension system and to further adequately fund our K-12 and higher educational system. As a member of the interim Revenue and Transportation Committee, I want to have some certainty tax revenues are on-going before I commit to any on-going rebates. I would never support CI-97 and encourage the Chamber and MAEDC to do likewise if they hope to benefit from any future state-funded services for economic development.

D 96- Carol Minjares

- 1) Return most of it to the taxpayers in the form of property tax relief or income tax rebates.
- 2) Invest some in UM/MSU scientific research and development.
- 3) Maybe make a one-time appropriation to make up some of the public pension shortfall.

HD 98- Holly Raser

As I mentioned in question #5, I believe we should reinvest in infrastructure such as state buildings, parks, and schools and in up-to-date technology for state departments. I also support Governor Schweitzer’s plan to provide a property tax rebate to Montana homeowners.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

Some should be returned in the way of PERMANENT property tax reduction for ALL, not rebates for a selective group. The rest should be invested in past legislative mistakes and future job growth.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

Give some back and allocate some to other needed areas.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

1. Gov's plan for \$400.00 rebate 1x- 2. _____ infusion into TRS Retirement to keep property taxes down.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

Reduce the property tax and refund part of it.

SD 49 – David Wanzenrie

Understand the underlying causes of the ending fund balance. Some argue that the ending fund balance results from tax reforms enacted by the Legislature from 1995 through 2003. [We need to carefully and critically review job growth and wage growth during this period.] Others suggest the historical high costs of crude oil and natural gas, coupled with new development and the correspondingly increased tax revenue are the cause. Still others suggest the ending fund balance results from changes in federal tax laws approved by Congress. [Federal taxes are deductible from state taxes; if higher income individual taxpayers and corporations have a lower liability for the federal government, they are able to deduct less on their state returns and, consequently, have a higher state tax liability and pay more to the state.]

Recognize that the sizeable ending fund balance will not last. Facts are stubborn things. Montana's fiscal picture changes quickly and steadily. In 2003, we faced a bleak fiscal picture; now, less than four years later, the state enjoys a large ending fund balance. This sort of reversal has occurred before---it will happen again.

With the time and resources available, determine what patterns, in terms of ongoing and one-time revenues, make up the ending fund balance. The Legislature must address these and other questions: Are there basic changes in the fiscal picture that will result in an ongoing flow of revenue above traditional levels? Or, does the ending fund balance represent a one-time anomaly that has produced a short-term infusion of funds? We must be fiscally responsible and avoid coupling a short-term revenue stream with long-term funding commitments.

Invest a portion of the ending fund balance for the long term and resist the temptation to support ongoing costs with short-term revenue. I support Governor Schweitzer's proposal to earmark a portion of the ending fund balance to homeowners, who have for too long borne the brunt (in the form of higher property taxes) of changes in tax policies approved by the Legislature. This may be accomplished either via a refund or by applying an identical amount to the statewide mill levies paid by homeowners and small businesses. We should consider investing portions .of it in an. education trust fund and use the interest to assist in funding the states' portion of school funding; and we must examine the feasibility of investing another portion of the monies in a school building trust fund and use the interest generated to assist schools with retrofits of buildings designed to conserve energy.

8. Do you support increased funding for the State's job training program?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

Yes

HD 91- Tom Opre

I don't fully understand this program and will do research in order to determine what makes sense.

HD 92- Walter Hill

No. I think we can find better ways to do this in the private sector.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

Yes.

HD 93- Denise Moore

I hate to admit it, but I don't have any knowledge about this program. Is this a program that has requested additional funds with projected outcome analysis? Is it being efficiently operated and does it have a clearly defined mission and action plan? Are potential trainees being turned away because of lack of funding or programs? I'd be interested in learning more about it before saying 'yay' or 'nay'...

HD 94- Phil Barney

If necessary –would need to review current expense and results.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

Yes.

D 96- Carol Minjares

In general I am in favor of job training and believe that the colleges of technology and local adult ed do a great job. But I assume this question relates to the Job Training Act passed in 2003 and modified in 2005. I find it a little troubling that the 2005 legislation converted the loans provision into grants and removed the criterion that the applicant firm show likelihood of future profitability. Moreover, the ability of a politically appointed committee to pick a true “winner” is also dubious. I believe some people are gaming the system and are better at getting development loans and grants than they are at actually coming up with a winning product or service. I would need more evidence of success before voting to appropriate more funding.

HD 98- Holly Raser

Yes!

HD 98- Will Deschamp

I believe funding for job training is adequate, but do think we need to lower tuition cost at the university level to allow our young students the opportunity to become employable citizens.

HD 100- Bill Nooney

Yes, for the disabled and military veterans.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

Yes I do as work force is becoming older and job requirements are new-Also training for the encumbered worker so the business may continue and there is no loss of job and an expansion of business.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

I'm not sure.

SD 49 – David Wanzenrie

Yes. Securing a reliable and permanent funding source is the challenge.

In 2005, I prepared in draft form that would have designated a portion of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to be used for job training. The fund balance is at a historically high level, well above the reserve level required by the federal government to retain the federal tax credit for businesses. The business community opposed my proposal and to spare a protracted battle, I did not introduce the bill,

The authors of the book entitled, The Jobs Revolution: Changing How America Works, make the following observations:

Unemployment insurance (UI) was designed in the labor market of the past. Companies, jobs and skills were stable and UI was only intended to provide short-term assistance during temporary corporate and economic downturns, not as a bridge to new skills and jobs.

In 2003 states spent over \$42 billion on unemployment compensation. But such assistance without parallel training and education assistance is a cruel hoax on the worker, the community and the economy. We should seriously consider transferring such a commitment into “employment insurance” with an educational component.

Those out of work deserve sympathy, support and another chance... But as a nation we are investing, arguably \$5.0 billion to enable people to stay at work (job training and vocational education programs) and \$42 billion when they do not.

The point is critical: Businesses are required set aside funds to protect workers against the economic hardship that accompanies unemployment. However, we do not effectively or sufficiently invest in initiatives to provide workers with the skills needed in the changing economy. In the jobs revolution, investments in human capital and workforce development are key. Montana's economy and its workers would benefit immensely from a relatively small commitment of funds from the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Until those who do not support my proposal show me a revenue source to fund job training for the long term, I will continue to refine and promote it.

9. Do you support legislation that would authorize local governments to enact a local option sales tax if approved by a vote?

HD 91- Kevin Furey

If that is what local governments want, then yes.

HD 91- Tom Opre

Generally I don't support burdening people with more taxes.

HD 92- Walter Hill

No-leads to a non-equitable sales tax.

HD 93- Ron Erickson

Yes, if it is coupled with a decrease in local property taxes. Residential property taxes are always identified as a problem by my constituents and a limited local sales tax on hotels, motels and restaurant meals could help with the needs of local governments and provide tax relief.

HD 93- Denise Moore

Interestingly worded question... I support keeping local issues local, yes. However, I do not support the notion of a local option sales tax and urge caution when considering it. The success of these taxes is pointed out by proponents, but they fail to mention that the success is in tourism dominated areas.

I believe that levying this type of tax in broader-based economies (Missoula, for example) could lead to a redistribution of not only customer bases, but a redistribution and relocation of businesses in order to avoid those taxes and the associated administrative expenses. Consider this: Consumer habits and the market response to those habits behave much like water - taking the course of least resistance. If local option sales taxes are levied in one town, but not the adjacent town, the consumer will travel the extra miles to avoid the tax. And so the merchant will follow, taking along the intended tax revenue.

Ultimately, I cannot support the creation of a new tax form such as a sales tax without permanent and significant reductions elsewhere (e.g., property and personal income

HD 94- Phil Barney

No. This could create a situation of high property tax plus sales tax. Any sales tax should result in lower property tax.

HD 94- Dave McAlpin

Yes, if sufficient exemptions were made for Senior Citizens and low-income Montanans.

HD 96- Carol Minjares

No, I am opposed to local option taxes.

HD 98- Holly Raser

Yes. I supported such legislation as a member of the Tax Committee in the 2005 session, and if re-elected I will continue to do so. I believe the local option sales tax is an important tool for communities to use for economic development.

HD 98- Will Deschamp

NO!

HD 100- Bill Nooney

I do not support a local option tax.

SD 48- Carolyn Squires

I oppose a local option tax-People have told us repeatedly they do not want to have a sales tax and this is a selective sales tax- If I received more mail about voting for it with a vote of the people I might reconsider.

SD 49 – Rusty Van Overbeck

I do not favor any new taxes.

SD 49 – David Wanzenrie

No.

Two questionnaires was submitted as a statements from Kandi Matthew Jenkins & Robin Hamilton. They are as follows:

HD 96- Kandi Matthew-Jenkins

Community Affairs Committee Members,

Thank you for the **opportunity** to address this committee concerning my **candidacy** in House District 96. I hope my last minute response is not taken as just forgetful, my husband is a wood craftsman specializing in 'barn wood' home furnishings needless to say we have spent our *vacation time* dismantling a shed for wood supplies, recovering and preserving a little Montana history...

I must admit I dislike answering any questions prior to a forum because one can be locked into an answer that may have changed due to evidence presented alter one has made a record of the original statement.

The following are my responses to the committee members;

I believe that there is a genuine effort in Montana to keep public information from the public. I believe that this lack of genuine effort to inform Montanans has led to a situation of 'the people' being enslaved by the "servants of the people". I do not believe that truly well informed Montana voters would allow the endless statutory restrictions upon their 'liberty and freedom' to continue

I believe that it is time that the citizens of Montana and Missoula are able to approach the question of who is really the one calling the shots in our (collectively) everyday lives, be it; private family issues, private property and inheritance, micro management of private business issues, educational issues right down to public toilets.

I believe that Montanans are not well informed of the decisions being made on their 'behalf'.

I believe that Montanans are not well informed of how the 'MONEY' is spent.

I believe that Montanans are not well informed about the total lack of enforceable oversight over mishandled government affairs that adversely affect each and every Montanan in one way or another.

I want to work toward well-informed Montanans because I believe what is good for Montanans IS good for Montana'.

I have been in business in Missoula for 18 years. Thirteen of those years my business was in a retail location. **Since**, we no longer have a **physical** location we have continued our business efforts by becoming members of the Missoula Saturday Market and the adjacent market ran by Shane Anderson, we have done several Christmas craft fairs and my husband does some custom work from our home all under the business name, Montana Craft Connection. I have lived in Montana approximately 35 years. I am a believer in all things that can be made in Montana and marketed in Montana by Montanans to the benefit of all Montanans. I promote growth of Montana businesses where ever and whenever I can and I believe there is much state government can do to promote business *growth*. My own business has relied on the 'hard working Montana character.

I have **no doubts that** certain **business regulations** are needed **especially** in this day and age. In the **years** I have been in business in Missoula I have seen radical changes take place, some of these changes have been heaped upon the *business community* at large through unrealistic codes, laws, fees, permits, licenses and business restrictions, many being very unsupported by documental evidence or proof of actual need as opposed to 'agenda' desires.

Small business, many family owned and bequeathed, is the back bone of the American economy and in recent years small business has also proved it's loyalty continuing to support this great American corporation by not moving to China, I believe we need to treat our job providers with respect for the entrepreneurship it takes to lunge out into the world of business and lessen the boulders that impede their progress. Government needs to step up to the plate of protecting the rights for free enterprise not inhibiting those rights,

I have been lobbying and advocating for parents and children effected adversely through an agency of our Montana government structure, Child Protective Services, I have frequented and testified before the legislative bodies in Helena many times and listened and learned and researched and cried...NO, NO, State Departments do NOT operate efficiently and equitably... independent audits need to be done and the findings presented to Montanans for their opinion on how they want their *government* to serve them. I will reserve my personal opinion as to the probability opening the state's books.

first effort to serve the people was as a candidate for City Council in Ward 2, in 2000 I ran for the House of *Representatives* in district 66 (Ward 2 is located in HD 66 now HD 99), in 2001 I ran for mayor of Missoula, in 2004 I ran for House of Representatives in HD95 and this year I am running for House Representative in district 96, I have shaken a lot of hands and met some wonderful people through these last years and I can only hope to foster the kind of open door policy with the people in HD 96 and any person, that will allow them to feel free to approach me with their concerns by whatever means they chose to use.

I do not believe I am well enough informed on questions 7 and 8 to give any opinion. I do believe there needs to be full disclosure of *information* as to how the 'surplus' came to be, if it really is a surplus or have taxpayers been over charged and why...one that will be interesting in this coming session,

I definitely do not support any new taxes and believe we need to find out why new taxes are on the table and where the other tax money went and why?

I am **looking** forward to **discussing these issues** further at the forum,
Kandi Matthew-Jenkins
Constitution Party Candidate
House District 96

HD 92- Robin Hamilton

I taught in public schools in Montana for thirty-two years, beginning in 1969 until my retirement in 2002. Since 1981 I had been a member of our educators political action committee; recruited, interviewed, and endorsed candidates; and traveled to Helena to testify on education issues. In the last twelve years of my career I watched the legislature cut the state share of funding and shift the burden to local property owners and so, when asked to run for an open seat in the House, I did so specifically to work on funding for education. We made some progress, but we are still a long way from having a world class educational system.

Montana has good schools and our students score well compared with students in other states, but we can do much better. A reputation as a world class educational system would do more for economic development in Montana than an other single thing, as well as providing opportunities for our children. Tied to education are growth and economic development. We are growing and will continue to grow. How we sustain and manage that growth will determine the quality of life for Montanans for the next generation. One of the keys is a smart, fair, and predictable set of rules for development. The role of the State is to provide such a set of regulations that will protect the environment and individuals without prohibiting growth.

Most of the business in Montana are small and we need to make it as easy as possible for these businesses to grow and compete. I'm part owner of the Shack restaurant, also known as Cafe 222, and that part of my experience says that we are in danger of being over-regulated. I'm aware of the delicate balance there and will usually side with small businesses. The insure Montana program started in 2005 was a step in the right direction. We can also provide incentives to companies like DirectTV (congratulations to Dick King) to bring more jobs to Montana.

In my first session in the legislature I was impressed at how much oversight there is over State Departments. We continue to try to achieve a kind of transparency for government but it is clear that we need to continue that work because it is easy for the bigger parts of government to become insulated from the average citizen.

If state revenues continue to exceed expectations, everyone will want a piece of the pie and there are several places we can spend the money. But with a surplus, we should give a break to the people who pay the taxes. *Because we don't* know yet if most of this revenue is one time only, I support Governor Schweitzer's play to give \$400 to all Montana homeowners. Of course, I will fight for better funding for education, both K-12 and higher education. I sit on the Post-Secondary Education interim committee and last week at our final meeting we sent about \$40 million in recommendations to the Governor, including a proposal to hold tuition at four-year institutions to 5% and 0% at two-year institutions.

I support the State's job training program and I think we need to consider a local option tax if part of the revenue can be returned to residents to reduce property tax.

