Many thanks to MACDEP members for renewing their membership. We have 16 members this year and look forward to new initiatives through our new MACDEP program development subcommittee. Stay tuned for more info.

-Paul Lachapelle
MACDEP President

Local Government Extension Training (LGET) Web conference Feb. 24

Several MACDEP members are part of a new national initiative to promote collaboration and information exchange among Extension personnel at all levels whose programming includes research, training, and technical assistance related to local government. Look here for more info, including details on the upcoming quarterly web conference.

New Housing Increases Fastest in the Exurbs

The map below shows the change in the number of housing units in every rural and exurban county. Green counties had the largest increase in the number of dwellings; red counties had the largest decline. Coastal counties gained the most new rural housing between 2000 and 2008. But for the real growth in the housing stock outside the cities, look to the exurbs. The Census report for Montana housing is most certainly misleading. Contrary to what the map shows, Montana did not suffer a wholesale loss of housing. The map correctly reports the official Census findings. But there is a flaw in the Bureau’s methods when it comes to that state. The Census bureau relies on a number of components to track the number of housing units, including building permits. Many Montana cities do require permits and they are counted by the Census. Rural counties, however, do not generally require building permits, so their housing is undercounted.
Hotel, Helena. The Governor's Office of Community Service is sponsoring this event which focuses on meeting critical community needs together through national service and volunteerism. Registration is now available.

Montana Ambassador Annual Conference – Montana’s Recovering Economy: Where Do We Go From Here?
February 25-26, 10:30 AM, Holiday Inn, Great Falls. The conference agenda and registration are available now online.

The ‘Next’ Economy: A Statewide Public Discussion On Jobs And Innovation
April 5-6, 8:00 AM, The Grantree Inn, Bozeman. The Burton K. Wheeler Center at Montana State University announces our Spring Conference: “The ‘Next’ Economy: A Statewide Public Discussion on Jobs and Innovation” More information coming soon. Registration is open, please join us!

Council Of Development Finance Agencies' 2010 Annual Development Finance Summit
May 10-13, 8:00 AM, Portland, Oregon. The program for CDFA’s 2010 Annual Development Finance Summit in Portland, Oregon is now available. This year’s Summit will explore dozens of development finance topics, best practices, industry trends through three different tracks: Financing Continuum, Sustainable Financing Strategies, and Recommended Practices.

SAVE THE DATE! Montana Main Street Conference 2009
“Revitalizing Our Downtowns”
September 28-29, 8:00 AM, Best

Rural Housing Growth in the 2000s

Report: Wind-Generated Power Grew 39% in 2009
After a dramatic gain in 2009 in wind-generated power, the United States is closing in on getting 2 percent of its power from wind. As reported in the New York Times, the American Wind Energy Association released its annual report, which states the amount of capacity added last year, 9,900 megawatts, was the largest on record, and was 18 percent above the capacity added in 2008, also a banner year. Featured in the report, the graphics below show the U.S.’s Annual and Cumulative Wind Power Installation and Cumulative Wind Capacity by State.

U.S. Annual and Cumulative Wind Power Installations
Western Great Northern Hotel, Helena. Healthy, vibrant downtowns can help recruit new residents, businesses, and tourists, and can help keep the people who already live and work there. Main Street helps communities strengthen their historic downtowns by focusing on organization, design, promotions, and economic development.

**Grant/Award Opportunities**

**Home Depot Building Healthy Communities Grant Program**
The Home Depot Building Healthy Communities Grant Program provides support to nonprofit organizations and agencies using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their communities. Grants support community improvement projects for up to $2,500 in the form of The Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools or materials. The application deadlines for 2010 are March 1, July 1, and November 1.

**American Humane Association: Meacham Foundation Memorial Grant Program**
The Meacham Foundation Memorial Grant program, administered by the American Humane Association, provides support for local animal shelter expansion or improvements nationwide. Grants, which range up to $4,000, can only be used for animal environment enrichment, equipment that directly impacts the welfare of animals in the shelter, construction, or capital improvements. Organizations and agencies must be current members of American Humane Association at the Agency Member level. Applications will be accepted

**Ranking the Entrepreneurial States: South Dakota Down to DC**
South Dakota was recently named the most entrepreneur friendly state in the Small Business Survival put out each year by the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. Montana ranked 31st. The 2009 edition again ranks the policy environment of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia - which again finished last. The fourteenth annual index examines 36 major government-imposed or government-related costs impacting small businesses and entrepreneurs - with a heavy emphasis on various tax rates (e.g. personal, corporate, capital gains, property, sales) and regulatory costs.

**Family Can Keep Young Graduates Closer to Home**
Who moves? Young college graduates are more likely to move to a new state if they made good grades or attended top ranked colleges. Those who stay enjoy their spare time and want to live near family. Rural areas have been hit hard by outmigration. So the reasons for migration are of particular interest to
between January 1 and February 28, 2010.

**TSEP Construction Grant Applications are due April 16, 2010**
The Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) Application Guidelines provide the information needed to apply for a TSEP grant in 2010. The above link will take you to the draft guidelines, and the notice of public hearing on proposed adoption that was published in the Montana Administrative Register on January 14, 2010.

**Department of Commerce Accepting Proposals**
The Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology is accepting proposals for funding. Proposals are due March 1, 2010. The Request for Proposals can be found on the MBRCT website.

**New Grant Opportunities** have been added to the MSU Extension Website.

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**NTIA's BroadbandMatch Launches Website**
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) at the Department of Commerce, and the USDA's Rural Utilities Service launched BroadbandMatch, an online database-driven tool for facilitating collaboration and productive partnerships among applicants for Recovery Act broadband initiatives. The tool is part of a partnership with USDA's Rural Utilities Service and the White House Open Government Initiative to bring small and economically disadvantaged businesses and other nontraditional companies into partnerships with large enterprises that have resources to create strong, creative grant proposals to connect the unserved and underserved populations across the country.

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**Community Development “In the News”**

**Rural Areas Win More Than $309 Million in Broadband Stimulus Grants**
Most of the 14 grants went to last-mile projects, the primary stimulus focus of the RUS.
Montana Alberta Tie Line May Foster Wind Farms
With calls for more renewable energy increasing, new plain-looking pole-and-wire projects such as MATL are sprouting up in anticipation of the construction of more eye-catching wind farms. Billings Gazette; Jan. 28

Is Biomass the Brave New World of Energy?
It was an idea hatched in algae. Now its creators believe it could grow into a better way to power the West, and possibly beyond. Flathead Beacon; Jan. 26

Ravalli County Entrepreneurship Center Officially Opens
Officials, supporters and clients turned out last week to mark the occasion with speeches, tours and snacks. Opening of the $3.4 million center marks the end of a multi-year effort to bring a small business incubator to the county. Ravalli Republic; Jan. 26

Solar Shingles See the Light of Day
The solar shingles will cost 30 to 40 percent less than other solar-embedded building materials and 10 percent less than the combined costs of conventional roofing materials and rack-mounted solar panels, according to company officials. Technology Review, Jan. 20

Conservation Easements on the Rise
This legal device shows that profit and protection of natural resources can go hand in hand. Miller McCune; Jan. 18

MATL Could Unleash Torrent of Wind Projects in Montana
This project is part of more than $2 billion in proposed transmission projects in Montana that could progress this year, with the lines a direct response to demands from wind developers who are banking on the lines to ship power from the boondocks to big cities. Great Falls Tribune, Jan. 17.

Montana Landowners Band Together on Community Wind-Power Project
About 30 landowners in Montana's Judith Gap, Golden Valley, Fergus and Wheatland counties are working with Minnesota-based National Wind on a community-based wind-power project. Billings Gazette; Jan. 16

The World's Most Bike-Friendly Cities
AskMen.com has released a list of the world's top ten bike-friendly cities. Portland, Oregon is the one U.S. city to make the list. AskMen.com; Jan. 15

Broadband Funding: Yes, in Your Backyard
Rural communities intent on providing broadband networks can't wait for help; they have to look inward. Downhome investors are making IT advancement real. Daily Yonder; Jan. 13

The Fittest Cities in America
Travel + Leisure has released its list of America's "fittest" cities. Travel + Leisure; Jan. 13

2000 - 2009: The Decade in Planning
Planetizen's choice of the most significant stories in the realm of urban planning, design and development of the "aughts" (2000-2009). Planetizen; Jan. 11
**Why Americans Are Moving Less**
The latest Census data indicates that Americans are moving less than they used to. The New York Times asks a group of experts in demographics, sociology and urban issues why. New York Times; Jan. 12

**Small Farming: It Takes A Village**
Local food and small farming are part of a growing food trend in the U.S. But, as Steph Larsen writes, the trend is going to need more infrastructure down the supply chain to sustain itself. Grist; Jan. 7

**Six States to Develop Comprehensive Action Plans to Improve Energy Efficiency of Existing Buildings**
These measures will be used to help states design larger-scale building retrofit programs that lead to lower energy use, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the creation of new jobs. NGA, Jan. 5

**Macy's Closing: What Next for Missoula?**
Macy's Inc. announced this morning that it will be closing its Missoula store, an economic and historic touchstone for the downtown district. New West; Jan. 5