

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

INTERNET:  
max@baucus.senate.gov  
http://www.senate.gov/~baucus

## Statement of Senator Max Baucus June 26, 2003

Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of a great Montanan and American, Anthony J. Preite.

Today, Mr. Preite, the Director of the Denver Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, is retiring. I have known Tony for about thirty years. He was raised on Montana's "High Line" in Havre, Montana. After a short time as a high school teacher and coach, he was lured by the Bear Paw Development Corporation, an EDA designated economic development district, to come to work for them in 1968. A year later, he became the Executive Director of that fledgling organization and thus began a career in economic development that is virtually unparalleled today. Under Tony's leadership, Bear Paw Development Corporation quickly developed a reputation as one of this nation's premiere economic development organizations. Tony spearheaded literally hundreds of economic and community development projects and programs in that part of northern Montana. These projects resulted in hundreds of jobs, scores of infrastructure improvements, and other activities that have improved the lives of people in that area. Among his other accomplishments at Bear Paw, he was a founding member of the Montana Economic Developer's Association, served on the Montana Private Industry Council, and was Chairman of the Governor's Economic Development Council.

Tony's work at Bear Paw Development Corporation was so successful, that I felt the need to bring the benefit of his expertise and enthusiasm to more Montanans. That is why, in 1993, I recommended his appointment by President Clinton as State Director of the Montana Farmers Home Administration. Through a reorganization at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Tony led a successful transformation of the Farmers Home Administration Agency to the current Rural Development Agency. While at the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Tony served on many national committees within the Rural Development Agency, helping to guide the agency during its formative years. The success of the Rural Development Agency and the value of its programs today, are largely due to the efforts that Tony made during his tenure there.

In December 1999, Tony accepted the position as Regional Director for the Economic Development Administration. In this position, Tony has continued to impart his expertise and enthusiasm to a ten-state region. In his professional life, Tony has received accolades and awards too numerous to mention here. Instead, let me say that I have not met anyone as dedicated to public service as Tony Preite. Tony does not leave his work at the office. He lives and breathes "public service" every day, all day. It's immediately apparent to anyone who meets him that he always cares about the people he serves. His work has made an enormous difference for Montana and for all of us who work and play there.

While Tony's retirement is a sad occasion to all of us who work with him, it is well deserved. I can take comfort that he will be returning to Montana and that he will find some other way to continue to serve his state. I wish Tony and his wife Betty all the best and I thank him for more than 35 years of public service. Good luck, Tony, and welcome back to Montana!

