

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONIALS  
63<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Assembly  
Friday, February 15, 2013



JMG CAREER SPECIALISTS

JMG STUDENTS

*Phil McLendon*  
Frenchtown High School

*Ana Torres*  
Frenchtown High School, Class of 2012

*Lisa Parker*  
Helena High School

*Celena Winegar*  
Helena High School, current JMG Sr.

*Yenta Jaques*  
Great Falls, Paris Gibson Ed Center HS

*Cory Buckley*  
Paris Gibson Ed Center HS, current JMG Sr.

*Fawn Thibodeaux\**  
Havre Public Schools  
*\*Written testimony only*

*Louise Martin\**  
Troy Public Schools  
*\*Written testimony only*



February 11, 2012

**RE: Montana Job Service**

**To Whom it May Concern:**

It has come to my attention that the operations of the Montana Job Service have recently been targeted as a service to eliminate from the budget. Before you do so, please consider the value that the county job service personnel and programs bring to the communities they serve, as well as, Montana.

First, if you have not seen that the staff of the Job Service are truly ambassadors for Montana, then you may be missing out on one of the most critical aspects of the services they deliver to this state. My experience with the Flathead County Job Service is that they never miss an opportunity to promote Flathead County and Montana in so many different ways -a key element in being able to assist employers in finding the skills needed to run a successful business! In addition, they integrate themselves into the community, finding out what the needs of the community are and strive to deliver programs and/or assistance that meet those needs. For example, the Brown Bag Series, sponsoring JSEC, partnering with the local colleges to develop programs and actively participating in SHRM, etc. are just a few of the deliverables that assist employers in being or becoming local employers of choice.

From a resources perspective, the Job Service gives prospective employees and employers a "one stop place to shop." Whether you need training on how to write a resume or updates on labor laws, you can find the information out from the Job Service. Need help promoting a major hiring initiative, then call your local Job Service and tell them. They will send out letters to their data base to get prospective employees to complete applications for the business.

If you need an environmental scan, then the Job Service is the best place to go. Because they are in tune with the community, they know what is currently taking place in your area. Because of this knowledge, employers are able to align their hiring needs and wages with local market factors taken into consideration and then develop their hiring strategies accordingly. I

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Columbia Falls, MT 59912

406-755-1721



personally utilize the Job Service data at least monthly so that I do not get caught off guard related to the local environment and am in a better position to forecast available workforce.

Without the data, training and resources the Job Service provides to me readily available, I would spend significantly more time, energy and resources in trying to stay current. Please take time to thoroughly review and understand what the Job Service does and provides to the communities it serves before you cut funding for this extremely valuable service.

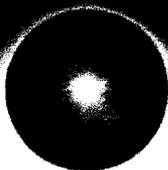
Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider my opinion and thoughts.

Sincerely,



Kathy G. Jones

Manager Employee Resources



February 11, 2013

Dear Montana State Legislature,

We regret that we could not attend in person, but we wanted to provide written testimony to the importance of the Missoula Job Service in supporting local businesses in helping both find and train employee's. Due to the relative geographic isolation of Missoula and all of Montana from major population and education centers, job training and placement services are vital for both the recruitment and growth of business in our state. Many of the industries that match well with Montana's cultural, geographic, and resource profiles require specialized staff. The skills necessary for success are not routinely taught in the education system and some aspects of these job skills can only be gained through direct experience.

The Missoula Job Service has been instrumental to Blue Marble Biomaterials growth trajectory for Montana based expansion. The On The Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs have been vital in allowing us to not only hire more staff, but also provide those staff members with specialized training and skills through our own training programs or those of our partners. As a start up company the budget for new hires is much smaller than that of most other companies within established industries and revenue streams. By utilizing the OJT program we have hired 3 of our 18 employees and in turn this allowed us to have the resource from each OJT to hire a minimum of one other. We would not have been able to bring these valuable employees on board if it had not been for the funding we received from this program, which gave us the time and resources to adjust our budgets to allow us to maintain these employees and keep hiring additional staff.

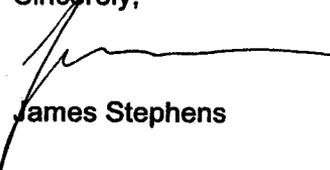
Blue Marble Biomaterials has also utilized the IWT program. This program has directly assisted 7 employees to date with outside training and travel. By the funding of these trainings and the travel associated with them, Blue Marble Biomaterials has gained knowledgeable and highly trained employees without undue financial hardship, bringing knowledge bases back to Montana where they did not exist before. Without the funding received by the IWT program, we would not have been able to send these employees to the trainings, and would have slowed and delayed our growth and expansion plans.

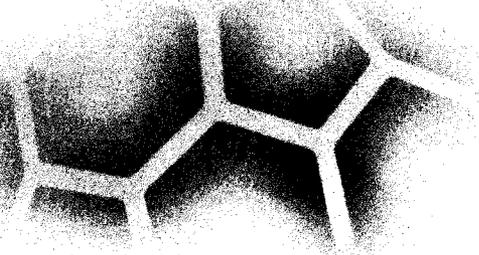
Recently we used the STEP program to hire an intern that, without this program, we would have not been able to hire. This employee is very valuable to our company and its success, and because of the three-month funding period, we were able to hire him and plan for his future with Blue Marble Biomaterials.

We have also been able to utilize free trainings and resources provided by the Missoula Job Service. The staff is knowledgeable and extremely helpful when we have questions or are in need of some sort of grant or funding to continue to grow. The Missoula Job Service and its programs have been beneficial to the success Blue Marble Biomaterials has seen this past year.

In conclusion, we see Missoula Jobs Services programs and capabilities vital for the economic health of not only Missoula but all of Western Montana, allowing companies to train Montanans in skills that are not readily available in the workforce and benefiting the community by not only putting people back to work but giving companies the resources they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

  
James Stephens



Kristi Orr, RN  
212 Project Drive  
St. Ignatius, MT 59865  
February 5, 2013

Joint Appropriations Committee-  
General Government

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ask you to support the local Job Service in Lake County. I am a 28 year old single parent who recently graduated from nursing school. Without the assistance provided by the Lake County Job Service by providing me with core services, job searching, applications, resume assistance and career guidance, I would not have been able to obtain my career goal as a Registered Nurse.

I was a general laborer at Plum Creek in Pablo until the mill was closed. At that time my son was 9 months old, and I had no way to support our little family. My son and I resided with my parents and still do. I was the main bread winner of the household and still am. At the time, I just did not know how we were all going to survive. Just after being laid-off, I received a letter from Lake County Job Services with information regarding the retraining opportunities available to me. As I had always wanted to be a nurse, it seemed the perfect pathway to obtaining my dream.

Now, three years later, I am a registered nurse. The paperwork and approval process seemed daunting at the time, but Patti Patterson and the other Job Services employees helped me every step of the way. The TAA program assisted with supplying my basic needs in order to attend school. My car was in disrepair and the program helped me fix it so that I would have reliable transportation. The program purchased the books, scrubs and other materials needed for the nursing program at SKC. Once we students began actively going to clinical sites, these programs assisted with mileage and lodging so that I was able to attend regularly in order to complete my education. Even my tuition was paid. Because of these programs, I only needed about \$6,000.00 in student loans throughout the nursing courses. I have friends who required more than \$30,000.00 in loans. The blessings I have received from the Work Force Development programs are still being felt and seen. I presently make more than I was able to at Plum Creek, my dream of becoming a nurse has been realized, and I am able to spend more quality time with my son and parents. As a thank you to these dedicated individuals and the amazing programs they run, I am telling you my story.

My desire is that you will continue to fund these amazing programs and supply these caring people with the resources to assist other displaced workers reach their goals. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
*Kristi Orr, RN*  
Kristi Orr, RN

5 Feb 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter as a brief follow up regarding my experiences with the IWT Bear (Business Expansion & Retention) Grant program and the OJT Funding.

A couple of years ago, I was made aware of the IWT Bear Grant and recently found out about the about the OJT funding and was subsequently put in touch with Mike Jackson, Mora McCarthy and Pam Haglund with the Flathead Job Service. The timeliness and professionalism these individuals exhibited by making arrangements to personally meet me, visit my studio and share knowledge of the different programs available to a small and growing business was extraordinary. They each paid keen attention to my business' needs, my own personal needs for further education, and my need for more employees.

After assessing that my business would be a good candidate for the BEAR program, Mike Jackson provided me with all of the necessary paperwork and met with me a number of times throughout the application process to ensure that I all of my questions were answered and that my application was correctly completed. The whole paperwork process took less that 3 hours to complete and my application was approved shortly thereafter.

The OJT funding took a bit more work, as I needed to find the right individual for the job. However, once the individual was found, and subsequently found to fit the parameters of the program, the paperwork was finalized and pushed through in a timely manner by Pam Haglund.

With the IWT Bear program funding, I was able to send myself to a two-week workshop in Helena, MT, that was held by world-renowned ceramic artist Richard Notkin. The workshop focus was on the direct application of mold making and slip casting of said molds and how they can be directly applied to an artists work. In my case, the application of making molds and slip casting my designs would allow me to mass produce the pieces that I am currently making by hand (of which I cannot meet the demand for); increasing not only my production scale but also efficiency. The skills that were taught had a direct and immediate impact on my business.

How has this training impacted my business? Now just two years later, 90% of my business is my handcast beer growler line. I presently cast approximately 50 growlers per week and cannot keep up with demand. I have expanded my sales nationally and internationally, and have had exponential increases in sales each month for over a year. I have also trained an employee and have hired 2 additional part time employees.

One of these part time employees was hired through the OJT program. Is presently being trained in all aspects of the my job and upon completion or training in a few months will continue on as a full time employee who will be in charge of my to be new hires – as we continue to expand.

In conclusion, the experience of applying for IWT funds and OJT funding was simple and straightforward. The assistance and guidance that I received from Mike Jackson, Mora McCarthy, and Pam Haglund was amazing; they each possess a deep sense of community service and enthusiasm for helping local businesses succeed. I have recommended this program to many of the small business owners that I know and hope

that the necessary funding at the state level continues to be supported. I have personally had a wonderful experience with the IWT Bear and OJT programs and look forward to taking advantage of further opportunities they may provide in the future. The ramifications of the training I have already received, as it relates to my business has been invaluable and the funding made available to train an outstanding new employee has been paramount to my business' continued success.

Thank you for your time. If further questions or needed testimonials as to the benefits of this program arise please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

(signed)

Tim Carlburg  
Owner - Carlburg Pottery, LLC  
Kalispell, MT  
1-406-257-4075  
tim@carlburgpottery.com

Feb 11, 2013

To whom it may concern,

Recently I was made aware of the need for testimony on how Job Services benefits our community here in Libby Mt. I am writing this letter to be a part of this study as I cannot be there in person. I work for a small business here in Libby by the name of Blossom Boutique. I started about a year ago when through Job Services, I found out about the need Blossom had for a new employee. After working approximately 8 months for Blossom I approached both the Job Services (Kari Martell) and the owner/florist of Blossom about possibly participating in a On the Job training program to the affect of becoming a trained florist.

Kari Martell and I spoke to Rhea Crismore (owner) about this proposal, as I would benefit her, in that 50% of wages earned during the training process would be refundable and the shop would have a back-up florist when other responsibilities required Rhea's attention; EPA clean up contract. This program has benefitted me beyond all of my wildest imaginations. At age 48, I am learning a skill I have always dreamed of and am a functional member of a declining work force in small town Libby, Mt. Job Services has worked to keep on more person employed and out of unemployment statistics. This is an opportunity I would not have had, had Job Services not been in the community.

Sincerely  
Tami T. Sunell

Fax to: Job Services  
Fax #: 406-758-6290  
Attn: Keith or Bill

I would like to express my admiration as well as my appreciation for the job done by the Veterans' Assistance Officers of the Montana Job Services.

Veterans are already at a disadvantage in the civilian job market when they leave the military—whether they have spent two years or 20-plus years. The time spent in the military is time that puts them behind their civilian counterparts.

It seems the experience and leadership skills acquired in the military are not considered, because "they have to do what they're told." While this statement does bear truth, we all know there is a big difference between a supervisor and a leader. If given the opportunity, a Veteran could show civilian companies that he or she has much more to offer than may first meet the eye.

Additionally, time in the military adds to the age of the Veteran seeking civilian employment. Theoretically, this should not matter but we all know it does come into play.

Having worked with the Kalispell Job Services and the Veterans' Assistance Officers there, I can state first hand what a valuable service they provide. Not only do they assist with the job search, they help with résumé writing, interview skills, and countless other little things to prepare Veterans for the civilian job market.

They are also a continuous source of moral support—an encouraging voice and a sounding board when one is feeling discouraged. The service they provide is immeasurable and, without them, it would be even harder for Veterans to transition into the civilian workforce.

I would have liked to address you in person but was unable to get the time off. Because of Job Services, I now have full time employment in a job that I enjoy.

Thank you!

SSG Dale F. Merrill, retired

Feb. 14, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Melanie Cross . My husband Andy Hurst and I own Camas Creek Yarn LLC on Main Street in Kalispell. Two years ago we learned about the Incumbent Worker's Training Program from Cathy Allard, Workforce Consultant at the Flathead Job Service. We applied for and received three grants from IWT in the 2012 fiscal year. These grants have completely changed the way we operate our small business.

We received funding for Andy to learn enough website development and operation to take over handling our website. Paying a technician to manage our website was one of our biggest and most frustrating business expenses, and we're thrilled to now have the flexibility and control that in-house operations bring us. We can use the knowledge he gained from his IWT grant to market ourselves online and keep our website current.

We also used IWT funds to continue training one of our employees, Meche Ek, who is from Germany and had a bookkeeping background. We paid for online classes from Flathead Valley Community College to begin getting her up to date with American bookkeeping practices, and then used the IWT grant to provide her with intensive in-house training. She now handles all the bookkeeping for Camas Creek Yarn, which frees me to focus on the other business details that were getting shoved aside when I was constantly buried in my books. As a result, the store is up to date on the books and functions much more smoothly and professionally.

Three years ago I applied for a license to design, manufacture and market knitting kits that allow knitters to make garments featuring official university logos. This business sideline of Camas Creek Yarn has kept me very busy ever since. We now produce collegiate knitting kits for 17 universities, with more in development. I applied for and received IWT funding which I used to make a business plan for this new venture with our accountant. We worked together to set wholesale prices, discussed best marketing plans for our nation-wide distribution of collegiate knitting kits, and set up sales projections that allowed me to apply for loans to produce the kits. This information was invaluable in getting the collegiate line off the ground.

I am very grateful for the grants provided by the Incumbent Worker's Training Program. The training we received through the program changed Camas Creek Yarn LLC into a more productive and efficient small business.

Melanie Cross, owner  
Camas Creek Yarn  
Kalispell, Montana  
(406) 755-9276

Plum Creek Timberlands, I.P.  
P.O. Box 1990  
Columbia Falls, Montana 59912  
406-892-6200



February 12, 2013

Joint Appropriation Sub-committee on General Government  
State Capitol, Room 350  
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Plum Creek Testimony

Members of the Committee,

My name is Jacey Barnaby, Senior Human Resources Manager for Plum Creek's manufacturing division. This letter is a testimony of Plum Creek's experience with the Montana Department of Labor & Industry Workforce Services Division and more specifically the Flathead Job Service.

In 2008 and 2009, Plum Creek was faced with the need to downsize in Flathead, Lincoln and Lake Counties. Throughout the downsizing, Laura Gardner and the team at the Flathead Job Service provided support to our human resources department, but more importantly support to our employees by conducting sessions assisting them with filing for unemployment, helping them to understand the grieving process associated with losing their jobs, creating resumes, and preparing for job interviews.

In addition, the Flathead Job Service personnel provided us valuable information in petitioning for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) grants. After receiving TAA and ATAA grants, Laura and her team provided hands-on seminars to walk our employees through the process of applying for these grants and ensuring they received the benefits associated with these grants.

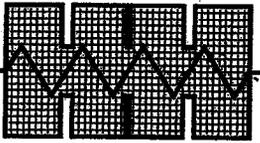
The Flathead Job Service was an invaluable partner in providing our employees with information and assistance during this most difficult time and a welcomed partner in assisting our human resources department with understanding the needs of our employees and directing us in providing timely information and support to .

We sincerely appreciated all Laura and her team did for our employees during this difficult transition and for the continued support in assisting candidates with applying for current career opportunities at Plum Creek.

Respectfully,



Jacey Barnaby, PHR  
Senior Human Resources Manager  
Plum Creek Marketing, Inc.



**HI-HEAT  
INDUSTRIES, INC.**

256 Hanover Road  
Lewistown, MT 59457

406-538-7411  
FAX 406-538-3152

February 14, 2013

Mr. Mike Cooney  
Division Administrator  
Workforce Service Division  
PO Box 1728  
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Mike:

Hi-Heat Industries is a custom manufacturing company of electric heaters used in original equipment manufacturing, production processes, and/or military targets. We increased from 75 employees January of 2012 to 100 employees as of January 2013. We started hiring in June of 2012 and it took us until January of 2013 to achieve the necessary employees to continue fulfilling the contracts we had won.

In 1994, 1998, 1999, 2006, 2008, and again in 2012, we have had to increase the number of employees drastically. It would have taken us much longer without the Job Service to complete the hiring and would have impacted our ability to meet on time delivery and our ability to grow.

Hi-Heat Industries would like to add our support for the local Job Service in Lewistown. While we have an HR department, the local Job Service guides new applicants to us. About 50 to 60% of the local applicants we see come through the Job Service. The Job Service does standard typing and Excel testing. They collect applications for us. Most importantly, the Job Service acts as the central location for applicants to find employment in Lewistown. For people moving into Lewistown, the Job Service becomes a first stop for locating potential employers. Eighty percent or higher of people relocating come to us through the Job Service.

Through the Job Service Employers' Committee, the ABC Clinic continues to come to Lewistown and at least one additional training seminar happens in Lewistown annually. This brings training to the community that would otherwise not happen. It also is very cost effective training.

The Job Services in our smaller communities provide critical services that small businesses otherwise could not access. There are no private employment or temp agencies for us to utilize. They are resources for human resources assistance.

In closing, we would like to thank you maintaining our local Lewistown Job Service and running an excellent state Workforce Service.

Sincerely,

Susan Knedler  
General Manager