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NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 10, 2002

Contact: Jon Rudbach, UM assistant vice president for research and economic development, (406) 243-2148.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS COME TO WOLF POINT, SIDNEY

MISSOULA—

State government and university officials will host a series of economic development meetings across eastern Montana in coming weeks in an effort to spur business growth in the region. The meetings are free and open to the public.

Business Rural and Outreach Sessions will be held in **Wolf Point** and **Sidney** on Thursday, Jan. 24. The Wolf Point meeting will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Great Northern Development Corp. The Sidney session runs from 1 to 3 p.m. at The Meeting Place, located at 1401 Ninth Ave.

Each meeting will describe resources and assistance available to businesses through the Montana University System and state government. Montana entrepreneurs will learn about grants of up to \$750,000 that they may be eligible for. They also will rub shoulders with contacts who assist emerging Montana companies with technology, business expertise and funding.

Attendees also will learn about Virtual Manufacturing Networks for Montana, which are created to help small, rural companies with specialized focuses collaborate with one another. The networks could help remote companies band together to bid on projects usually available only to larger companies.

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The sessions were organized by Jon Rudbach, assistant vice president for research and economic development at The University of Montana-Missoula. UM is collaborating on the sessions with Montana State University-Bozeman, the Montana Department of Commerce and the Governor's Office. For more information, call Rudbach at (406) 243-2148 or Rebecca Sweeney, administrative officer for the Montana Small Business Development Center, at (406) 444-6902.

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