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### Economists present forecasts during seminar series

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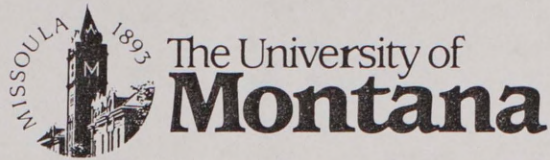
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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Jan. 21, 2005

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**ECONOMISTS PRESENT FORECASTS DURING SEMINAR SERIES**

**MISSOULA —**

Montana continued to post above-trend economic growth rates of 3.8 percent in 2004, but for the first time since 2000 did not exceed the U.S. economic growth rate of 4.4 percent, according to a University of Montana economist.

This changing situation is not because of a slowing Montana economy, said Paul Polzin, director of UM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. Montana's growth is no longer outpacing the nation, he said, because U.S. job creation has resumed and the economy has recovered from the 2001 recession and Sept. 11 aftermath.

Polzin and other economists and experts from BBER, Montana State University and UM's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research will examine local, state and national economic trends at the 30th Annual Economic Outlook Seminar series, to be held in nine cities across Montana.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer will make a special luncheon presentation at the first seminar in **Helena** on Tuesday, Jan. 25, at the Great Northern Hotel. This year's theme is "High Taxes, Low Taxes: What's Next for Montana?" and is presented by BBER and First Interstate Bank.

In addition to economic forecasts, the seminar will include a presentation on the state's changing mix of taxes by Douglas Young, an MSU professor and one of the state's leading tax

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experts.

“In Montana, the overall level of taxation has declined, but the burden of paying taxes has shifted from natural resource industries to property and income tax,” Young said. He will discuss fundamental tax reform, as Montana remains one of the only five states without a general sales tax.

Following is the schedule for the other cities:

- **Great Falls** – Jan. 26, Holiday Inn.
- **Missoula** — Jan. 28, Holiday Inn Parkside.
- **Billings** — Feb.1, Northern Hotel.
- **Bozeman** — Feb. 2, Holiday Inn.
- **Butte** — Feb. 3, Ramada Inn Copper King.
- **Kalispell** — Feb. 8, Kalispell Center Hotel.
- **Sidney** — March 8, Sidney Elks Club.
- **Miles City** — March 9, Town and Country Club.

Registration is \$70 and includes the seminar, proceedings booklet, lunch and a one-year subscription to the Montana Business Quarterly. Continuing education credits are available for an additional \$20. For more information or to register, call (406) 243-5113 or register online at BBER’s Web site, <http://www.bber.umt.edu>.

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