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Economic outlook seminar heads to nine Montana cities

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NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 8, 2008

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOK SEMINAR HEADS TO NINE MONTANA CITIES

MISSOULA –

“The New ICE Age: Investing in a Competitive, Educated Workforce” is the theme of the 33rd Annual Montana Economic Outlook Seminar. The seminar will visit nine cities across Montana throughout January, February and March, conducting the full program for the first time in **Lewistown** and **Havre**.

Sponsored by The University of Montana’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research, this year’s seminar will feature Montana Commissioner of Higher Education Sheila Stearns discussing the integral role education plays in workforce development in the state.

As the chief executive officer of the Montana University System, Stearns will explain how investment in education will continue to keep Big Sky Country competitive.

“From Bangalore to Billings, the evidence is compelling,” she said. “Wherever citizens invest in education, the return on the investment can be measured in economic benefits to those individuals and regions.”

As in past years, BBER Director Paul Polzin will highlight the latest economic trends and

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explain what they mean for Montana. He also will present an economic forecast for each seminar city.

“As I travel around the state, the most frequent concerns raised by businesses relate to workforce development,” Polzin said. “Unemployment is low, but Montana employers say that workers may not be properly equipped to meet the specific demands of available jobs.

Workforce development is essential to correcting the imbalances between labor supply and demand.”

Bureau researchers and other experts will examine recent trends and the outlook for Montana’s important industries – tourism, health care, agriculture, manufacturing and forest products.

The seminar series begins in **Missoula** on Friday, Jan. 25, at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center. All seminars begin at 8 a.m. and end after the luncheon at about 1 p.m.

Following is the schedule for other cities:

Helena – Jan. 29, Best Western Great Northern Hotel

Great Falls – Jan. 30, Hampton Inn

Billings – Feb. 5, Crowne Plaza Hotel

Bozeman – Feb. 6, Best Western GranTree Inn

Butte – Feb. 7, Copper King Hotel and Conference Center

Kalispell – Feb. 12, Hilton Garden Inn

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Lewistown – March 11, Central Montana Education Center

Havre – March 12, Applied Technology Center, MSU Northern

The \$80 registration fee includes the seminar, a proceedings booklet, lunch and a one-year subscription to the Montana Business Quarterly, the state's award-winning business journal (a \$35 value). Continuing education credits are available for a \$20 processing fee.

For more information or to register, visit the BBER Web site at <http://www.bber.umt.edu> or call 406-243-5113.

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Local, dailies, Lewistown News-Argus

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