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### Montana business quarterly: Cell phone-only users present challenges for survey research, election polls

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Sept. 19, 2008

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### **MONTANA BUSINESS QUARTERLY: CELL PHONE-ONLY USERS PRESENT CHALLENGES FOR SURVEY RESEARCH, ELECTION POLLS**

MISSOULA --

The rise in the number of people who use only cell phones leaves election polls vulnerable to bias, according to an article in the latest summer issue of "Montana Business Quarterly." With a large majority of polling conducted using traditional telephone surveys, cell-phone-only households are being left out.

In "Cutting the Cord: Households Dropping Landlines for Cell Phones," authors John Baldrige and Jenny Donohue explain that as households continue to drop landlines in favor of cell phones, survey and market researchers realize they are missing a major segment of the population and undoubtedly making biased estimates of business or policy-relevant opinions and behaviors.

"Given the growth in cell phone use, it seems very likely that an increased share of voters will use only cell phones by November 2008," said Baldrige, survey research director for The University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Yet much of the survey methods research done by reputable organizations, such as The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, has not yet found a significant bias in election poll results caused by cell phone-only households.



Baldrige believes this is largely because of the fact that voter turnout among young adults, who make up the largest portion of cell phone-only households, is much lower than among older adults.

“If the voting pattern changes because young people are more enthusiastic about current candidates, then many election polls may obtain biased results,” he said.

Other articles in the summer issue of “Montana Business Quarterly” include:

- “Montana Economy Still Strong Despite National Economic Downturn.”
- “Economic Returns for Investing in Children’s Health.”
- “Reclaiming American Indian Maternal and Infant Health.”
- “Eco-Entrepreneur Tests Fuel-Saving Products.”

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