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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Awards presented for excellence in public health research" (2009). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 21872.
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NEWS RELEASE

Aug. 28, 2009

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AWARDS PRESENTED FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH

MISSOULA—

University of Montana faculty members Curtis Noonan and Tony Ward and UM master's student Darcy Merchant are the recipients of the University's School of Public and Community Health Sciences 2009 Research Awards.

The awards, which recognize excellence in public health research, were presented at the school's Student Orientation on Friday, Aug. 28.

Noonan, an assistant professor, and Ward, a research assistant professor, are both with UM's Center for Environmental Health Sciences. They were recognized for their work analyzing changes in air quality and the health of Libby children after residents replaced old woodstoves with new EPA-certified woodstoves.

The researchers demonstrated that there was a dramatic reduction in specific indoor and outdoor air pollutants with the use of the new woodstoves, with corresponding health results still forthcoming. Their work was published in the March 2008 issue of the journal *Indoor Air*.

Merchant is an assistant injury prevention specialist with Indian Health Service in **Billings**. He was recognized for "The Crow Tribe Motor Vehicle Crash Site Identification Project."

In that work, Merchant used Geographic Information Systems spatial analysis to understand risk factors involved with motor vehicle crashes and to identify MVC cluster sites occurring on Montana's Crow Indian Reservation. He used both the Montana Highway Patrol MVC database and the Crow Tribal Law Enforcement MVC reports documenting crashes between 1996 and 2008. His research to understand factors relating to MVCs using GIS spatial analysis is one of the many effective and promising approaches to increasing traffic safety and efficiency.

The School of Public and Community Health Sciences, housed in UM's College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, offers online courses that lead to a master's degree or a certificate in public health. More information about the distance learning program is on the school's Web site at <http://www.health.umt.edu/pubhealth>.

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