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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

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BGR at University receives $17,000 federal grant for voter review of local forms of government

MISSOULA--

The Bureau of Government Research (BGR) of the University of Montana has received a $17,000 federal grant to assist Montana communities in the voter review of local government forms required by the new State Constitution.

Article XI of the new constitution required voters in all Montana cities and counties to decide within four years whether to retain their present form of government or to adopt some alternative form. To assist citizens in the review process, the BGR will prepare a citizens' handbook of information about existing and alternative forms of government. This program is partially funded by Community Service Programs, Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Peter Koehn, program director, said the handbook will include a description of available local government forms, experience with their strengths and weaknesses in various kinds of communities, nongovernmental factors to be considered in the choice of form, and procedures to be followed in conducting the voter review.

Koehn said the BGR will work closely with state and local officials, the governor's Local Government Advisory Commission, the League of Cities and Towns, the Association of County Commissioners, other units of the Montana University System and citizen groups in developing the handbook. Koehn is an instructor in political science at UM with special training in local government and administration.

Jerry R. Holloron, who prepared local government studies for the State Constitutional Convention and served as assistant staff director and local government research analyst to the convention committee on local government, will be associated with the project as a consultant.