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IMMEDIATELY

\$104,000 FEDERAL GRANT AWARDED TO
MONTANA SPECIAL EDUCATION GROUPS

MISSOULA--

The Tri-County Special Education Cooperative in Broadus and the Montana University Affiliated Program (MUAP), based at the University of Montana in Missoula, have received a boost from a \$104,000 federal grant to develop an improved model educational service program for handicapped children in rural parts of southeastern Montana.

According to Dr. James Pezzino, associate director of MUAP, the project will provide in-service training for teachers and administrators within the Tri-County Education Cooperative, which is composed of school districts in Carter, Powder River and Rosebud Counties. This training will help educators make special education curriculum adjustments, meet rural needs and complete comprehensive teaching personnel preparation.

The Montana grant was one of 18 projects chosen for funding from among 230 nationwide applications. The three-year grant was awarded by the Program Development Branch of the Division of Innovation and Development in the U.S. Office of Special Education.

Pezzino, who is the project director, also said the project will help coordinate the special education resources in the tri-county area for "better accessibility" to the school-age children in the area's rural sections. Such resources include the use of telecommunication and personalized instruction and techniques.

(over)

In addition to MUAP, UM and the Tri-County Cooperative, the Institute for Rehabilitative Services at Eastern Montana College in Billings also will participate in the grant program. Pezzino said that the project will receive consultation and aid from the Programmatic Developmental Assistance Service at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Pezzino said that the project, titled "Project RURAL" or Rural Utilization of Resources Available to Local education agencies, will serve as a model for the development of rural-area special education programs in Montana and other states. He added that the project should help MUAP, which is designed for providing service to developmental disability agencies, better to demonstrate to the agencies the services that MUAP offers.

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