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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "UM bureau informs public about Montana economic issues" (1981). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 7052. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/7052>

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MEDIA RELEASE

flemming/kap
9/24/81
dailies, w/pic

UM BUREAU INFORMS PUBLIC ABOUT MONTANA ECONOMIC ISSUES

By Nicole Flemming
University of Montana
Bureau of Business and Economic Research

Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief--whatever your calling, if you are a Montana citizen, you are affected in some way by the research and service performed by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana.

Providing information about state issues and problems in economics and business is the primary charge of the bureau, according to its director, Maxine C. Johnson. And these issues and problems are directly or indirectly of concern to every Montanan.

The bureau is the research branch of the University's School of Business Administration. Established in 1948, it is located in the Business Administration Building on campus. Working here with Johnson are six professional researchers and staff members, several of whom specialize in particular areas of research.

Paul Polzin, research associate and professor, directs the analysis of local economies. Susan Selig Wallwork and Charles Keegan, both research associates, head up projects dealing with survey research and the forest products industry, respectively.

Johnson said the bureau is a research and public service agency unique in Montana. The bureau provides economic information ranging from population estimates to consumer price index figures to businesses, government officials, and the

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general public. In addition, bureau researchers collect and analyze data which are then made public.

Bureau research projects take many forms, Johnson said. A recent statewide telephone survey of Montanans to gauge public opinion on outdoor recreation issues was a major project for the bureau. Another long-term research effort involved gathering data on the forest products industries in Montana and Wyoming, and currently, in Idaho. But the bureau also does research on a smaller scale, such as economic analysis of a particular Montana city or area.

One way the bureau disseminates information on Montana's local economies is through its Economic Outlook seminars. Each year the bureau analyzes the Montana economy as well as the economies of several Montana cities, with the results presented at an outlook seminar in the respective city.

Johnson said the bureau has given seminars in Missoula, Helena, Great Falls, and Billings for the past six years. And four other cities, Butte, Kalispell, Bozeman, and Havre, have been added in the last two years.

Johnson also mentioned the bureau's regular publication, the Montana Business Quarterly. The quarterly contains articles on all aspects of Montana business and economics and is written for the non-economist. Johnson said the quarterly also publishes the results of most bureau research projects.

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