



NEWS RELEASE

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2020 Economic Outlook Seminar to Visit 10 Montana Cities

MISSOULA – The Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana will begin its 45th annual Economic Outlook Seminar series in Helena on Tuesday, Jan. 28, Great Falls on Wednesday, Jan. 29, and Missoula on Friday, Jan. 31.

This half-day seminar highlights the latest economic trends for local economies and the state of Montana.

“It’s time to take a step back and think about where economic growth is heading across the state,” said BBER Director Patrick Barkey.

Every year, industry experts give their outlooks for Montana’s important sectors, including health care, forestry, travel and tourism, real estate, manufacturing and agriculture. This year, the seminar also will include the outlook for high-tech and start-up industries.

The theme of the 2020 seminar tour is “Finding Good Workers: New Challenges, New Solutions.”

After more than a decade of economic growth that has featured strong hiring and steadily falling unemployment rates, many Montana businesses are struggling to find a supply of suitable workers for their job openings, Barkey said. Some businesses even are questioning how they can continue to fill orders, let alone capitalize on new opportunities.

“As economic problems go, this may be a good one to have – too many jobs,” said Barkey. “But finding solutions to Montana’s workforce shortages will require creative thinking. While boosting worker salaries may address some of the workforce issues, it won’t solve the problem.”

Registration costs \$90. For Montana University System faculty, staff and students, registration is \$25. Attendees will receive a copy of the 2020 Montana Economic Report, a book of the PowerPoint presentations, lunch and a one-year subscription to Montana Business Quarterly, BBER's award-winning magazine. Continuing education credits are available, and groups of five or more can receive a discount.

The seminars will run from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in 10 Montana cities and towns. The full schedule is:

- Tuesday, Jan. 28, Great Northern Hotel, **Helena**
- Wednesday, Jan. 29, Hilton Garden Inn, **Great Falls**
- Friday, Jan. 31, Hilton Garden Inn, **Missoula**
- Tuesday, Feb. 4, Northern Hotel, **Billings**
- Wednesday, Feb. 5, The Commons, **Bozeman** (includes live webcast)
- Thursday, Feb. 6, NorthWestern Energy General Office, **Butte**
- Tuesday, Feb. 11, Hilton Garden Inn, **Kalispell**
- Tuesday, March 17, MSU Northern, **Havre**
- Wednesday, March 18, Central Montana Education Center, **Lewistown**
- Thursday, March 19, Lone Peak Cinema, **Big Sky**

For more information or to register, visit <http://www.economicoutlookseminar.com> or call 406-243-5113.

Established in 1948, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research is the main research unit of the University of Montana's College of Business. BBER researchers engage in a wide range of applied research projects that address different aspects of the state economy, including survey research, economic analysis, health care research, forecasting, wood products research and energy research. For more information visit <http://bber.umt.edu> or call 406-243-5113.

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