

BCC 2009-054
March 17, 2009PHONE: (406) 258-4877
FAX: (406) 721-4043

Tony Preite, Director
Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200501
Helena, MT 59620-0501

Dear Mr. Preite:

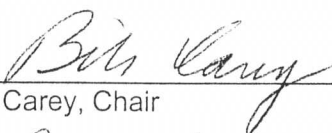
Missoula County strongly supports the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Planning Grant application for a feasibility study of the *Montana Expo Center*. The *Montana Expo Center* is a multi-purpose event center concept brought forward from a community-based organization of business leaders led by the Missoula Chamber of Commerce. A regional exposition center in Missoula would be a tremendous community asset and the feasibility study is critical in determining what market is available, the type of facility needed, and its potential for long-term financial sustainability.

We believe a multi-purpose events center would be an important economic development tool for Missoula County and Montana. A venue that has the ability to host trade shows, indoor rodeos, athletic tournaments and other large events would bring hundreds of visitors to western Montana, which would benefit the local economy.

Missoula County is in the midst of a comprehensive long-range planning process for the Western Montana Fair, which includes facilities planning. The County would like to consider a multi-purpose events center, such as the *Montana Expo Center*, as an option for this process. The feasibility study would be an integral part of that consideration. The County has allocated \$125,000 toward this planning process. However, the detailed information regarding the *Montana Expo Center* is outside the scope and budget of our current contract. Matching funds from the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund and the private sector would be critical in helping to complete this study.

We urge you to give strong consideration to the Missoula/Ravalli CRDC application for the Montana Expo Center.

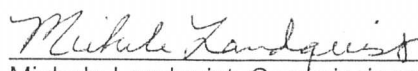
Sincerely,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Bill Carey, Chair



Jean Curtiss, Commissioner



Michele Landquist, Commissioner

BCC/ppr

cc: Kim Latrielle, Chamber of Commerce
Missoula/Ravalli CRDC