

MBEA Recognizes Outstanding Business & Marketing Education Professionals

The [Montana Business Education Association](#) (MBEA) presented its yearly awards program during the MBEA Business Meeting on Thursday, October 19 during the Montana ACTE Fall Institute 2023 at Fairmont Hot Springs.

MBEA President Jessica Goosen (Charles M. Russell High School) presided over the meeting which included the presentation of MBEA's First-time Montana ACTE Fall Institute Attendee stipends, the MBEA Awards, and the election of MBEA officers.

This year, Bobbi Konen (Beaverhead County High School) was the recipient of a MBEA \$50 First-time Montana ACTE Fall Institute Attendee stipend. Individuals interested in applying for one of the stipends must be registered for the Montana ACTE Fall Institute and must attend the MBEA Business Meeting.

MBEA Past President Mandy Wichman (Hobson) presented the MBEA awards for 2023. The Outstanding New Business Teacher of the Year was presented to Jessica Oehmcke of Three Forks High School. Jessica was recognized for working to build the Business program at Three Forks, for writing grants, and for the development of several dual enrollment classes in partnership with Gallatin College. This past summer, she participated in the Reach Higher Externship program in order to improve the curriculum and bring real world experiences to the district. Jessica has attended several state and national professional development events and works to provide quality learning opportunities in her classroom, making accounting fun and interesting.

Heather Gray of Ronan received the MBEA Outstanding Teacher of the Year award. Heather is active within Business Education and Career & Technical Education as a BPA chapter advisor, a member of both MBEA and Montana ACTE, and is an Empowered teacher. She coordinates with other Ronan High School CTSO advisors to run the Ronan taco truck, R-Cantina, and is also a member of the Ronan Chamber of Commerce. Heather also applies her business and entrepreneurial skills as a member of the Ronan Cooperative Brewery.

The MBEA's Lifetime Achievement Award for 2023 was awarded to Julie O'Dell, a retired Business Educator from Hardin High School. Julie taught for 40 years and during her time at Hardin High School, she developed the curriculum for many of her courses to keep up with changes and advancements in technology, served on many local, state, and national boards and committees, and developed the first high school mini-bank in Montana. As a Business Professionals of America chapter advisor, she developed the Montana BPA regional leadership conference model still in use today, served as a member of the Montana BPA State Executive Board and the Region 7 Coordinator, and was a member of the conference committee for many BPA National Leadership Conferences. Additionally, Julie served as the Yearbook Staff Advisor, Hardin Bulldogs Cheer Coach, taught water safety and water aerobics, and worked with the Hardin Chamber of Commerce. Julie continues to work with Montana Business Educators and students as a member of the Montana BPA State Leadership Conference committee as the Competitive Events/Advisor-Proctor-Grader Coordinator.

The Prospects 2024 is Now Open—A High School & Middle School Business Plan & Pitch Competition

The [Montana Chamber Foundation](#) is excited to announce the 2024 edition of [The Prospects](#), an entrepreneurship competition. With over \$50,000 in cash, prizes, and scholarships available, this is a great opportunity to get your students' ideas exposed to business leaders in Montana.

[Tiana Yates](#) (tiana@montanachamber.com), the Montana Chamber Empowered Coordinator, will be your main contact for this year's competition. You do not have to be teaching [Empowered](#) to participate in the contest.

[The Prospects](#) includes both a high school and a middle school division. The Fall competition is open now with submissions being accepted beginning December 1, 2023. Submission will be judged as they are submitted with finalists being announced on February 1, March 1, and April 1. The 2024 Virtual Awards Ceremony will be held April 24, 2024.

Key Dates for The Prospects 2024

- December 1: First Submission Date
- February 1, March 1, & April 1: Advancements Announced
- March 15: Final Submission Date
- April 25: Virtual Awards Show
- May 19-21: In-person competition in Bozeman for the Grand Champion prize

The Prospects categories for the High School level include

[Existing Business Idea](#): Any high school students already running their own small business. Pitch your business and how you intend to grow and sustain it moving forward.

[New Business Idea](#): Do you have the next big thing? We want high school students to reach for stars and come up with the next amazing, new idea.

[Hack My State](#): Take time to help us come up with solutions for one of our state's biggest concerns right now, Childcare. Come up with a solution that could help solve the problem for finding childcare all across Montana.

[School Enterprise](#): Does your school, class or club run a business? If so, tell us why it exists and ways to improve or expand to benefit your school.

At the Middle School level, the Junior Prospects competition categories include

[Design Challenge](#) (6th grade only): 6th graders will be tasked to combine three items and let their creativity shine. Create the next big thing and help innovate Montana.

[Hack My School](#) (7th & 8th grade): Let's be solution makers. We want you to take a deep dive into your school and come up with a realistic and attainable solution to make your school better for everyone.

[Vacant Lot](#) (7th & 8th grade): Like Hack My School, but we want you to look at your community to be the next generation of change makers. Look at the vacant lots, existing buildings, and other areas of your community and pitch to us your solution to make your hometown better.

[Existing Business Idea](#) (6th-8th grade): Any middle school students already running their own small business. Pitch your business and how you intend to grow and sustain it moving forward.

Eligibility: Any of Montana's high school and middle school students are encouraged to submit their innovative ideas and solutions or enter their existing businesses.

Submissions: Pitch Video (2 minutes or less), Business Summary (1,000 words max.), a Waiver Form signed by an Educator and/or Parent or Guardian, and a completed W-9 Form.

Complete contest and submission details can be found on [The Prospects page](#) of the Montana Chamber Foundation website.

For questions, please contact Tiana Yates at tiana@montanachamber.com.

National Cybersecurity Teaching Academy (NCTA) Application Re-opened

The [National Cybersecurity Teaching Academy](#) (NCTA) is able to support tuition and fees for qualified applicants pursuing a 12-18 credit hour graduate certificate in cybersecurity education. The NCTA graduate certificate for high school teachers includes coursework on teaching cybersecurity, foundations of cybersecurity, and advanced cybersecurity topics.

Is the NCTA graduate certificate the right fit for you? The NCTA program is for secondary education teachers who:

- are teaching cybersecurity in the high school classroom, or
- have concrete plans to teach cybersecurity in the near future,
- have plans to build a robust cybersecurity program at their school, and
- can dedicate two summers to rigorous, synchronous and asynchronous graduate level coursework in cybersecurity.

[Ready to apply?](#) You will need to upload:

- a copy of your cybersecurity course syllabus (if you are currently teaching cybersecurity),
- a letter of support from your administration (someone who can speak to the school's commitment to continue offering or begin offering cybersecurity at your school).
- a copy of your college transcripts.

The [NCTA application](#) deadline is November 15, 2023. Questions? Contact melissa.dark@darkenterprisesinc.com.

Montana Perkins State Plan Review Survey

The Carl D. Perkins Act is federal legislation that provides funding for the specific purpose of developing career and technical education training and employability skills for secondary (high school) and postsecondary (college) students.

The State of Montana is asking you for your help in developing the state's vision and goals for career and technical education and workforce training. This [survey](#) will take five minutes or less to complete.

The deadline for taking this survey is February 1, 2024. Please share this survey widely with friends, family, colleagues, classmates, etc.

Applications Now Being Accepted for the National Center for Women and Information Technology

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Aspirations in Computing (AiC) High School Award honors 9th-12th grade students for their computing-related achievements and interests and encourages them to pursue their passions.

For a number of years, the NCWIT has given national awards to high school girls. The [NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing](#) is for young women with aspirations and achievements in technology and computing.

Applications are now open through November 6, 2023, and application materials can be found [here](#).

There are many qualified high school girls that would apply if they just had a little push from a leader like you. Any interested female high school student would need to fill in the online application, and get a parent and a school official to approve it to be entered into both the national and Montana contests.

Montana has had winners from high schools in Absarokee, Anaconda, Arlee, Beaverhead, Billings Senior, Billings West, Bozeman, Bozeman Petra, Broadwater, Butte, Cascade, Cut Bank, Great Fall High, Hamilton, Helena Capital, Helena High, Hobson, Jefferson High, Libby, Missoula Big Sky, Missoula Hellgate, Missoula Sentinel, Noxon, Park County, Red Lodge, Seeley-Swan, Sidney, Simms, and Whitefish High Schools.

The NCWIT hopes your school will be represented on the winners list this year, but girls have to apply.

NCWIT is looking forward to recognizing Montana's talent, and hope that you would encourage the young women that you know to apply. Sometimes all they need is a little encouragement and you are the person to provide that.

P.S. There also is an educator award given each year. Up to three National Winners receive a cash prize of \$2,500 and public recognition. Each Regional Affiliate Winner and Honorable Mention receives recognition, access to professional development funds, NCWIT resources, and an engraved award. Regional Affiliate Winners also receive a cash prize of \$250.

Do you know a good teacher that you should encourage to apply (maybe you?)? Encourage them to go to [apply](#).

Questions? Visit the [Aspirations in Computing Awards page](#).

Free Robotics & Career Pathways Presentation

Allow Montana State University's robotics and gaming professor, Hunter Lloyd, to share his circuitous path to robotics with your students (for free!).

"How to Train Your Robot" is a hilarious presentation (on the side he's a stand-up comedian—no joke!) with his two robots, Looney and Ocean, that is well suited to the whole school, and is adaptable to all grade levels. It isn't strictly a STEM presentation, although it does check that box and could certainly be combined with a STEM day or career day event.

His presentations can be customized to your schedule, but are roughly 50 minutes.

If you're interested in hosting Hunter and his robots for a fun, free, engaging school assembly, please reach out to Keri Hallau, keri.hallau@montana.edu.

Accounting Opportunities Experience—Request a CPA for Your Classroom

November is "Certified Public Accountants Month" in Montana—proclaimed in 2022 by the Governor (and in the works for 2023)—and this is the perfect opportunity to have one of their members come speak with your students or club.

[Accounting Opportunities Experience](#) is a collaboration between state CPA societies and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) to raise awareness of accounting career opportunities among high school students.

As the accounting profession is rapidly evolving, do not miss the chance to hear from an accounting professional who will share their real-world experience with your students. Once requested, the Montana Society of CPAs will match your classroom up with one of our CPA members.

Presentation options include

--In-Person

--Virtual Live

--On-Demand

To request a CPA for your classroom or student organization, complete the [Request a CPA](#) form or call Erinn Donnell, Director of Marketing and Communication, at 406.442.7301 for more information.

Registration is Now Open for the WBEA 2024 Conference in Eugene, Oregon

The [Oregon Business Education Association](#) (OBEA) invites all Business and Marketing Educators from the western region to Eugene for the [WBEA 2024 Conference](#), February 15-18, at [The Graduate Hotel](#) in downtown Eugene.

[Registration](#) for the WBEA 2024 Conference is now open and can be online with a NBEA-member early bird rate of \$375.00 if paid by January 1, 2024. After January 1, 2024, the NBEA-member early bird rate increases to \$425.00.

Rooms can be reserved at [The Graduate Hotel](#) online at a conference rate of \$159.00 plus tax/fees.

Interested in presenting a breakout session? The [Call for Presentations](#) can be submitted online and are due December 1, 2023.

For travel planning, a [conference overview schedule](#) is available.

Save the Date for the WBEA 2025 Wild Card Conference, *Path to Collaboration and Discovery*, February 14-16, 2025, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Billings, Montana.

Fun Facts & Trivia

Congaree National Park is a national park located in the state of South Carolina.

The park covers an area of 26,276 acres and is known for its stunning views, deep canyons, and unique geological formations.

The park is home to a number of unique geological features, including the Congaree River, which runs through the park, and the Congaree Swamp, which is a National Natural Landmark.

Congress established Congaree Swamp National Monument in 1976.

In 2003, Congress changed the park's name and designation and established Congaree National Park.

Congaree National Park preserves the largest area of old growth bottomland hardwood forest left in the United States.

Congaree is a floodplain forest, not a swamp, despite its former name of Congaree Swamp National Monument.

Congaree's floodplain forest has one of the highest temperate deciduous forest canopies in the world, with an average height of over 100 feet.

In 1983 International Biosphere Reserve status was given to the park as part of the South Atlantic Coastal Plain by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

According to the archaeological evidence, humans have inhabited this area for at least 10,000 years.

These earliest people were nomads, living in temporary camps while following the large mammals they relied upon for food and gathering whatever else they needed.

Over time these nomadic groups formed small tribes, built more permanent villages, and experimented with crops and pottery.

The introduction of corn, beans, and squash led to the eventual unification of these many small tribes into large chiefdoms with large territories.

Congaree National Park is named for the Congaree people who once lived in this region.

The Congaree Indians claimed the floodplain until European explorers arrived on the continent.

Congaree National Park was first visited in 1540 by Hernando de Soto, a Spanish explorer and conquistador who was involved in expeditions in Nicaragua and the Yucatan Peninsula.

de Soto did not stay long in the area as he was in search of gold and the park does not contain any.

He continued his quest for gold through Mississippi and Arkansas but did not survive the journey as he died of fever on May 21, 1542.

The English colonists established Charles Towne in 1670; unlike de Soto, they intended to stay and slowly moved inland as more colonists arrived.

Established as Charles Town in honor of King Charles II of England, Charleston adopted its present name in 1783.

Issues of the Wednesday Reader are archived on the Montana Business Education Association (MBEA) website at www.mbea.info. The Wednesday Readers are under the Newsletter section and listed most recent first.

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"You don't make decisions because they are easy; you don't make them because they are cheap; you don't make them because they're popular; you make them because they're right." ~Rev. Theodore Hesburgh