



*Working together for
Montana's municipalities.*



2022 Photo Contest Winner City of Livingston: Photo of historic downtown Livingston, as the sun shines on the mountains. Photo by Zumpano.

Fall 2022

In this edition

- 1 League Conference Wrap Up
- 2 Winter Driving Preparedness
- 3 Get It Done in 31 - Employee Benefit Enrollment
- 4 Covering Volunteers for Workers' Compensation
- 5 League Welcomes Leandra Lipson
- 5 2022 Alec Hansen Lifetime Service Award Winner
- 6 League and MMIA Board Members Announced
- 6 2023 Executive Forum
- 7 League Partners Recognized
- 7 Photo Contest Winner Announced!
- 8 FY2021 Loss Control Award Winners

LEAGUE CONFERENCE WRAP UP

The League would like to thank everyone who attended the 91st Annual League Conference. The conference would not be possible without our members, partners, participants, sponsors, exhibitors, and volunteers. The City of Kalispell along with Discover Kalispell were gracious hosts and did an amazing job assisting with the planning and operations at the conference. We hope that everyone who attended left with newly acquired knowledge, a sense of unity within Montana local government, and the desire to serve our communities and tell our stories.

The lineup of speakers left many attendees raving and wanting to hear more. Keynote speaker Les Kodlick described true leadership and translated his talking points into relevant takeaways for all listeners. John MacDonald simplified how we can all tell our story and how local government can improve communication amongst colleagues and the public. We heard from David Sander PhD, Second Vice President of NLC, Mike Watson of AARP, and Voices of Montana hosted their live radio show giving some of our local leaders a chance to tell their story. Our breakout session speakers did a fantastic job, as the topics ranged from youth engagement to land use and everything in between, there truly was something for everyone at the conference.

If the speaker lineup wasn't enough, the entertainment was top-notch. The setting



Thomas Jodoin, Kelly A. Lynch, and Les Kodlick

for the President's Reception at the Conrad Mansion was as good as it gets for an October night in Montana. Halladay Quist and Tommy Edwards provided fantastic entertainment throughout the week. The MACOP awards concluded Thursday night festivities; the League would like to congratulate: Officers Brett Norby, Sidney Police Department (Officer of the Year); Jonathan Ryal, Sidney Police Department; and Braden Peterson, Polson Police Department (Life Saving Award recipients). We were thrilled to see these officers awarded at the annual conference.

Being the first in-person conference in three years, we were extremely pleased with the turnout, and the support we received from all who attended. We appreciate your feedback and will continue to consider your ideas and suggestions. We look forward to seeing you October 11-13, 2023, at the 92nd Annual League Conference in Helena. ■

WINTER DRIVING PREPAREDNESS

By Tyler Sanders, MMIA Risk Management Strategist

With changing road conditions and winter right around the corner it's a great time to start planning for winter driving. There are many tips and techniques that can keep you safe while on the road, but it's important to remember the basics when it comes to traveling during the winter time and how to be prepared for the unexpected.

Be Prepared

The most important aspect of being prepared for any scenario is having knowledge and understanding prior to putting yourself, or others, in harm's way. The first step to preparing for winter driving is to make sure that your employees and staff are trained in the safe operations of vehicles and mobile equipment that they work with. As we all know, not all vehicles are created equal and nearly all vehicles come equipped with different safety features. It is important that your employees are **trained and understand the safety features** associated with each vehicle or piece of equipment they operate. Under certain conditions, safety features such as lane assist or cruise control can cause a great risk on icy road conditions. Having knowledge of these features can be pivotal in protecting your employees during the winter months.

While it's important to prepare the operator of the vehicle for winter driving conditions, it's also important to prepare your vehicle. Employees should regularly inspect vehicles and equipment to make sure that all safety features, emergency signals, wheels, tires, brakes, and fluids are in good condition prior to operation. Always make sure that the vehicles are equipped with the proper supplies such as an ice scraper, gloves, sand or kitty litter, and emergency equipment such as first-aid materials, flashlight, shovel, and a blanket.

Lastly, dress for the weather. If you plan on being on the road during the winter months always wear, or have on hand, the proper footwear and clothing for the conditions. Store an extra pair of icetrekks in the vehicle and most importantly always protect yourself.

Winter Driving Tips

- ▶ **Drive slowly.** Adjust your speed to account for poor road conditions. Accelerate and decelerate slowly to maintain traction on snowy or icy roads.
- ▶ **Increase follow distance.** Don't follow other cars too closely. Increase your following distance to



between 8-10 seconds when you're driving in the winter.

- ▶ **Know your brakes.** Make sure you know whether you have antilock brakes or not, so you can brake properly.
- ▶ **Do not use cruise control.** When driving on wintry roads covered in ice and snow, cruise control can be dangerous.
- ▶ **Don't crowd snowplows.** Snowplow drivers have limited visibility. Don't drive too closely behind or next to a snowplow and use caution when passing.
- ▶ **Clear field of view.** Make sure that all windows and mirrors are cleared of snow and ice prior to departure for a clear line of sight from front to back and all sides.

Before you head out on the road for work this winter, ensure your car is well-stocked with:

- ▶ Snow scraper
- ▶ Snow brush
- ▶ Extra wiper fluid
- ▶ Wipes or rag for headlights
- ▶ Sand or kitty litter
- ▶ Jumper cables
- ▶ Flashlight
- ▶ Blankets
- ▶ Gloves
- ▶ Boots
- ▶ Shovel ■

GET IT DONE IN 31 - EMPLOYEE BENEFIT ENROLLMENT

By Chris Beskid, MMIA EB Member Relations Strategist



(The following is a hypothetical situation from the Employee Benefits program. It is only hypothetical.)

Oh no! Your town forgot to enroll a new employee within 31 days of hire. What if the enrollment rule is disregarded to allow them to enroll past the date specified in plan documents? A few months later the employee comes down with a nasty Covid infection and is on a ventilator in the hospital for an extended stay. Medical costs to the plan go over the stop-loss (reinsurance purchased to protect the pool) threshold but when the carrier performs their due diligence investigation, they see that the participant was enrolled outside of program eligibility guidelines. Subsequently, the stop-loss claim is denied and the cost falls to your town or the MMIA plan.

Enrollment practices are a group effort and errors are not any one person's fault, but the town is now in financial ruin and you're not getting invited to your co-worker's potlucks or book club anymore. How do we work collectively to create safeguards and ensure your city does not encounter this type of scenario?

1. Refresh your knowledge of the MMIA Administrative Handbook and refer to it whenever you have any questions. It is located on www.mmiaEB.net site under Documents and Employer Resources. It is concise and comprehensive. Really an enjoyable read.
2. Call your friends at MMIA EB! 800-635-3089 option 4. We're benefit geeks and seriously love talking about enrollment rules and eligibility and can help with any questions that arise! Just don't wait – call as soon as you have any questions since these issues are so time-sensitive. If it's too late after an event, program guidelines may force an unwanted outcome in what was a preventable scenario.

The example above is clearly dramatized, and we never want to see anyone become ill or hospitalized, but you can see the high amount of risk involved and how quickly and easily a simple error can snowball into a very big issue.

Here are a couple of key points to keep in mind:

- ▶ **New hire** – Complete and submit the enrollment to MMIA within 31 days of hiring date. **Get it done in 31.**
- ▶ **Qualifying event** – Complete and submit the changes to MMIA within 31 calendar days of event. **Get it done in 31.**
 - ▶ Qualifying events: getting married (or divorced), having a baby, or loss of coverage.
- ▶ **Termination** – Completed and sent to MMIA within 31 calendar days of termination date (retro termination is not an option). **Get it done in 31.**
 - ▶ In addition, if an employee has reduced hours below the minimum required by your city/town for benefits, this also needs documentation within 31 calendar days of the event. **Get it done in 31.**
- ▶ Pay close attention during the Group Elections time each year to ensure you're choosing the exact options your town would like and that are in line with your personnel policies. Once the deadline passes, these choices are set for the next year. Mid-year changes are not allowed.
- ▶ Update and improve internal processes and procedures to ensure safeguards are in place to get these tasks completed within the allotted time stated in the policy. Create a new hire packet that includes a checklist and timeline for the employee to ensure all necessary steps and documents are completed. The MMIA Human Resource Consultant can review or help create these packets/checklists. They can be reached at HR@mmia.net and (406) 495-7017.

Accidents and mistakes are a part of life, but we need to do all we can to educate ourselves about these rules and make sure everyone is appropriately covered within program guidelines. We'll work together to reduce this serious risk factor so you can get back to those delicious potluck dinners. ■

COVERING VOLUNTEERS FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION

By Ann Komac, MMIA Claims Manager

Before I discuss how to cover volunteers, I think it is important to provide you with some background on the purpose of workers' compensation coverage and why it is in the best interest of MMIA's member-owners to ensure all your employees, elected officials, volunteer emergency service workers, court appointed workers, and other volunteers are properly covered by, and reported to MMIA.

It is an objective of the Montana workers' compensation system to provide, without regard to fault, wage-loss and medical benefits to a worker suffering from a work-related injury or disease. All businesses in Montana with employees are required by law to have workers' compensation coverage. In addition to providing benefits to injured workers, workers' compensation coverage provides employers with exclusive remedy, meaning an injured worker cannot sue their employer directly if they suffer a work-related injury or disease.

In addition to employees, Montana law requires employers to cover their elected officials, volunteer emergency service workers (firefighters, police, ambulance workers) and court appointed workers. A member may also elect to cover their other volunteers.

MMIA Member's other volunteers fall into three categories:

1. The consistent volunteer is an individual who volunteers more than 15 hours per month.
2. The regular volunteer is an individual who volunteers between one and fifteen hours per month.
3. The casual volunteer is an individual who volunteers for a special activity, for example, an annual event sponsored by the city.

MMIA recommends a city elect coverage on **all** volunteers and not just a select group or groups. The coverage is inexpensive and provides the city with exclusive remedy should a volunteer sustain an injury or develop a disease while serving in their capacity as a city volunteer. Without workers' compensation coverage, a volunteer's remedy would be to file a liability claim which generally costs more due to damages beyond wage loss and medical.

The reporting requirements are discussed below. Keep in mind that payroll reporting for workers' compensation is retrospective, which allows you to have actual wage information, payroll listing and volunteer lists when you report.

1. **Volunteer emergency services personnel:** Report volunteer firefighters, police, ambulance and other emergency services wages at a rate of \$50.00 per month per volunteer (**\$50/month - \$150/quarter - \$600/year**) or their actual remuneration, **whichever is greater**. If you have individuals that serve in more than one capacity, you must report them in each capacity. Report firefighters and drivers under 7704 and police officers and drivers under 7720. Dispatchers who perform only clerical duties and who are NOT exposed to an operative hazard such as interaction with detainees may be reported under Class Code 8810.
2. **Court-Appointed Workers:** You must report court appointed workers performing community service under the control or direction of the city. Report the individuals' name, social security number, hours worked and current minimum wage for the appropriate class code for the duties they perform.
3. **Consistent and regular volunteers:** Report all volunteers on the separate form provided in your quarterly reporting packet. List volunteers under the appropriate class code with the number of hours volunteered. The assumed payroll for these volunteers is:
 - ▶ Consistent Volunteer - \$100 per month
 - ▶ Regular Volunteer - \$50 per month



LEAGUE WELCOMES LEANDRA LIPSON

Leandra will officially join the Montana League of Cities and Towns on the 24th of October as your new Public Affairs Director. Most recently, Leandra served as the Communications and Resource Development Director for Montana Nonprofit Association. She has a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver and a bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Montana. Leandra has a passion for utilizing her skills and experience in communications, advocacy, public relations, and fundraising to achieve mission driven goals and looks forward to putting this knowledge to use at MLCT. When not advocating for worthy causes, Leandra enjoys volunteering her time at her daughter's elementary school and walking the newest addition to her family, a very fun and fluffy doodle dog named Gus. ■



2022 ALEC HANSEN LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD WINNER

The League recognized Missoula City Attorney Jim Nugent as the 2022 Alec Hansen Lifetime Service Award Winner at the 91st Annual Conference. Jim was nominated for this award by Brent Brooks. In Brent's own words, " Jim has served so many for so long and this award is so appropriate for him. He has been an irreplaceable resource for the League, the MMIA and local government for what seems like forever. If there were a Municipal Government Hall of Fame or Most Valuable Player award, and perhaps there should be, Jim would surely be a charter member of such recognition. " Congratulations Jim! ■



Work Comp - Continued

Casual Volunteers

These are the special event volunteers, and the assessment is a flat fee based on the number of volunteers (see chart below). MMIA is changing our process for this type of volunteer. Members are required to provide prior written notice of the event and an estimate of the number of volunteers expected for the event. MMIA is developing an application form for members to request this coverage. The form will be available on MMIA website at www.mmia.net on November 1. MMIA will review requests/applications and approve, deny and/or request additional information. Once approval is granted, the member must submit a roster of volunteer names and the last four numbers of their social security number within two days of the event. Once MMIA receives the roster, an invoice to the member will be generated. Worker's compensation coverage for the event will be bound with the MMIA upon receipt of both the roster and payment of the assessment invoiced.

Assessment rates are a flat fee as follows:

NUMBER OF CASUAL VOLUNTEERS	STANDARD ASSESSMENT
1 – 25 Volunteers	\$91
29 – 100 Volunteers	\$161
101 – 199 Volunteers	\$186
200 – 299 Volunteers	\$238
For each 100 volunteers above 299 add	\$64

If you have question or concerns regarding the reporting instructions or use of forms, please call MMIA at 1-800-635-3089 and enter the extension for either Ann Komac, Claims Manager (ext. 121) or Kayla Forgey, Accounting Associate (ext. 140). ■

LEAGUE AND MMIA BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

League Board

Executive Committee

- ▶ Bob Kelly, President, City of Great Falls Mayor
- ▶ Joe Purcell, First Vice President, City of Hardin Mayor
- ▶ Cyndy Andrus, Second Vice President, City of Bozeman Mayor
- ▶ Steve Gibson, Third Vice President, Town of Stevensville Mayor
- ▶ Jodi Rogers, Secretary-Treasurer, City of Choteau Finance Director
- ▶ Rick Norby, Immediate Past President, City of Sidney Mayor

Directors

- ▶ Mark Johnson, District 1, City of Kalispell Mayor
- ▶ Doug Kaercher, District 2, City of Havre Mayor
- ▶ Nikki Rogers, District 3, Town of Bainville Clerk/Treasurer
- ▶ Teresea Olson, District 4, City of Glendive Mayor
- ▶ Nikki Brummond, District 5, City of Lewistown Finance Director
- ▶ Chris Hindoién, District 6, City of Choteau Mayor
- ▶ Emily Dean, District 7, City of Helena Commissioner
- ▶ Gwen Jones, District 8, City of Missoula Council Person
- ▶ JP Gallagher, District 9, Butte-Silver Bow Chief Executive Officer
- ▶ Neil Cardwell, District 10, City of Belgrade City Manager
- ▶ Bill Cole, District 11, City of Billings Mayor
- ▶ John Williams, District 12, City of Colstrip Mayor

Past Presidents

- ▶ Rick Norby, Immediate Past President, City of Sidney Mayor
- ▶ Sandra Jones, 2nd Year Past President

MMIA Board

- ▶ Kevin Iffland, Chair, City of Billings Assistant City Administrator
- ▶ Doug Kaercher, Vice Chair, City of Havre Mayor
- ▶ Jodie Campbell, Secretary, Town of Cascade Clerk-Treasurer
- ▶ Susan Nicosia, Treasurer, City of Columbia Falls City Manager



League past President Rick Norby swears in new League Board Members Cyndy Andrus, Jodi Rogers, Joe Purcell, and new Board President, Bob Kelly (left to right).

- ▶ Cassandra Tozer, City of Bozeman Human Resources Director
- ▶ Jim Nugent, City of Missoula City Attorney
- ▶ Greg Doyon, City of Great Falls City Manager
- ▶ Renee McMahon, City of Helena Human Resource Director
- ▶ Jim Kambich, Butte-Silver Bow County Chief of Staff
- ▶ Doug Russell, City of Kalispell City Manager
- ▶ Joe Purcell, City of Hardin Mayor
- ▶ Sherri Baccaro, City of Whitefish Human Resource Director
- ▶ Kitty Schmid, City of Glendive Assistant Director of Operations
- ▶ Jodi Rogers, City of Choteau Finance Officer
- ▶ Paige Fetterhoff, Member at Large, City of Livingston Finance Officer ■

2023 EXECUTIVE FORUM

Mayors, Chief Executives, City Managers!

Save the date for the 2023 Executive Forum! We will be in Helena this year at Jorgenson's Inn and Suites March 1-3.

Registration will open in December!

Watch the MMIA website mmia.net for updates. ■



LEAGUE PARTNERS RECOGNIZED

The Montana League of Cities and Towns would like to recognize their current 2022-2023 partners. These great partners have given the League the opportunity to elevate their level of advocacy, provide new services, and operate at the highest level for its members. The League asks that when given the opportunity, you consider working with one of their great partners. Please visit mtleague.org/partners/current-partners to find more information.



Diamond

- ▶ AARP Montana
- ▶ D.A. Davidson
- ▶ Discover Kalispell
- ▶ HDR Engineering, Inc.
- ▶ Jacobs
- ▶ MMIA
- ▶ Montana Department of Commerce
- ▶ Montana Department of Transportation
- ▶ NLC Service Line Warranty Program
- ▶ CentralSquare Technologies
- ▶ DJ&A, P.C.
- ▶ DOWL
- ▶ Francis Energy
- ▶ Hall & Evans
- ▶ Jackson, Murdo & Grant, P.C.
- ▶ Lexipol
- ▶ Moulton Bellingham
- ▶ NIC Montana/Tyler Technologies
- ▶ PlaySpace Designs
- ▶ Sanderson Stewart
- ▶ Stifel
- ▶ Western States Cat
- ▶ WGM Group
- ▶ Extra Duty Solutions
- ▶ Ferguson Waterworks
- ▶ First Call Computer Solutions
- ▶ Global Archives, Inc.
- ▶ GovInvest
- ▶ IMEG Corp
- ▶ isiWEST
- ▶ LaunchPoint Software Systems
- ▶ Montana Board of Investments
- ▶ Montana Cooperative Development Center, Inc.
- ▶ Montana Correctional Enterprises
- ▶ Montana Department of Labor and Industry
- ▶ Montana Local Technical Assistance Program
- ▶ Montana Rural Water Systems
- ▶ Montana State Library
- ▶ Mountain States Lighting
- ▶ Northwest Pipe Fittings
- ▶ Northwest Playground Equipment
- ▶ Professional Credit
- ▶ TD&H Engineering
- ▶ Triple Tree Engineering
- ▶ Turner Vocational Resources, LLC
- ▶ Water & Environmental Technologies (WET)
- ▶ WWC Engineering

Gold

- ▶ Ameresco
- ▶ Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Montana
- ▶ Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry & Hoven, P.C.
- ▶ KLJ
- ▶ McKinstry
- ▶ Robert Peccia & Associates

Silver

- ▶ AT&T FirstNet
- ▶ Black Mountain Software, Inc.
- ▶ Century Companies
- ▶ Charter Communications
- ▶ Dorsey & Whitney LLP
- ▶ Great West Engineering, Inc.
- ▶ Interstate Engineering
- ▶ Morrison-Maierle
- ▶ NorthWestern Energy
- ▶ Stahly Engineering & Associates

Bronze

- ▶ AE2S
- ▶ Allegiance Benefit Plan Management

Partner

- ▶ Academy Partners
- ▶ Advanced Pump & Equipment
- ▶ American Legal Publishing
- ▶ Baker Tilly US
- ▶ Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority
- ▶ Big Sky Resort Area District
- ▶ Boone Karlberg
- ▶ Collection Bureau Services, Inc.
- ▶ Datec, Inc.
- ▶ U of M Department of Public Administration & Policy
- ▶ Energy Laboratories Inc

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER ANNOUNCED!

The League and MMIA would like to announce that the City of Livingston is your 2022 League Photo Contest winner*; the photo was taken by John Zumpano and submitted by Faith Kinnick. Thank you to everyone who participated in the photo contest this year, there were so many great entries. The photos showcased landscapes, cityscapes, artwork, and more. Let's just say Montana's beauty is on full display. Keep those cameras ready, you never know when the winning shot is going to present itself! ■

*Picture shown on front page.



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Montana's municipalities.*

PO BOX 6669
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FY2021 LOSS CONTROL AWARD WINNERS



Each year the MMIA analyzes the losses of our members in the Liability Program and the Workers' Compensation Program to identify the members with the lowest claim expenditures over the previous five years. Awards are given to the members with the lowest claim expenditures/number of employees in the First Class Cities, Second Class Cities, Third Class Cities, and Towns.

Members with low incurred expenditures can represent significant cost savings not only to the municipality itself, but also to the entire MMIA pool. The Loss Control Awards recognize members of all classes who have achieved such success.

Liability	Workers' Compensation
First Class City – Helena	First Class City - Kalispell
Second Class City – Whitefish	Second Class City - Laurel
Third Class City – Three Forks	Third Class City - Colstrip
Town – Plains	Town - Fairview