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Governor Announces Montana Ambassador Awards

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock and the Montana Ambassadors today announced the 2014 honorees that have made an outstanding contribution to economic development in Montana.

“As Governor, I have three guiding principles for our state to strive for: better jobs, better education, and a more effective government. The Montana Ambassadors embody these principles by advocating for Main Street Montana businesses and encouraging Montana entrepreneurs, promoting STEM education, work force development, and public school funding. The Ambassadors also work closely with my office to ensure we continue to have a strong business climate. It is my honor to recognize the 2014 Montana Ambassador Award recipients.”

2014 Montana Ambassador of the Year – Pam Haxby-Cote, Nominated by Rick Edwards. Pam was chosen for her outstanding service to the organization, her tireless promotion of Montana and its entrepreneurs. Working with Sen. Tester, Pam was able to obtain a multi-million dollar grant from the Blackstone Foundation for the creation of two entrepreneurial centers; one at the University of Montana, and the other at Montana State University. In addition, Pam has set up the Women’s entrepreneurial network in Southwest Montana, and promoted Montana talent and innovation for the Pacific Northwest chapter of the Montana Ambassadors in Seattle.

The Montana Ambassadors’ 2014 Entrepreneur of the Year – Renelle Bratten; Enell Sports Bra - nominated by Chantel Schieffer who said “Renelle’s entrepreneurial spirit is the heart and soul of Enell Sport.” Selling produce she “borrowed” from a community garden, to owning a barbershop, to owning the most successful sports bra on the planet; from a young age, Renelle has been a problem solver, innovator, and an encore entrepreneur. Renelle credits her success to three values she holds true in everything she does; creativity, surrounding herself with quality people, and always providing the best customer service. That passion for service has carried over into issues related to women’s health, animal rights, and getting young women involved in sports.

The Montana Ambassadors’ 2014 Business of the Year – GTUIT; nominated by Steve Holland and Greg Kohn. Established in 2011 in Billings, **GTUIT** is the leader in Remote Natural Gas Capture; by addressing the environmental impact of flared gas and preventing waste of a valuable energy supply. CEO Brian Cebull stated, “*With our passion to innovate and our commitment to safety, we will continue to expand our product and service offerings and value for our clients.*” Serving energy sectors around the northwest and around the world; GTUIT is a great example in the industry, and a fine representative of a Montana Business.

The Montana Ambassadors Educator of the Year – Greg Kegel, MSU Northern - nominated by Chantel Schieffer. In September 2014, Greg Kegel became the Chancellor at Montana State University- Northern after serving for 12 years as the Dean of the College of Technical Sciences, where he succeeded in raising

money for the new Applied Technology Building and creating the Bioenergy Innovation Testing Center, among other projects. The creation of the testing center was made possible through Kegel's acquiring a large grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to construct the building. Recently, Kegel, along with President Waded Cruzado and several corporate partners announced raising \$3.15 million for a new automotive and diesel facility which will allow the school to nearly double the enrollment of that program.

The Outreach Montana Ambassador of the Year – Chris Aageson - nominated by Montana Ambassadors, Butte Chapter. In many ways exceeding the challenging requirements and expectations for the award, Chris's ambitions, intelligence, and accomplishments complement precisely what this award exemplifies. From helping lead the state's economic efforts through his work at the Montana Department of Agriculture, and Governor's office of Economic Development, to assisting in implementing the Seattle, Texas, and California chapters of the Montana Ambassadors; Chris has tirelessly volunteered his time and efforts, and is committed to promoting Montana as a great place to experience, expand a business, and to explore.

For more information on these awards and the annual meeting and conference, visit www.montanaambassadors.com.

The Montana Ambassadors is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization of leaders in business, education, and local and state government with a common dedication to serving the Governor, doing business in Montana, and furthering the best interests of the state.

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