



Greetings Montana Tech Family,

Every summer I'm energized by the incredible community we are a part of. From the Montana Folk Festival which entertained 160,00 people with great music, dancing, and art, to the Butte 100, the most difficult mountain bike race in the country, held just out of town along the Continental Divide, the last couple of weeks have truly had something for everyone. We are lucky to have the opportunity to take advantage of these events and so much more filling our spirits and rejuvenating our souls.

Last week we received notice that we are officially reaccredited through Spring 2031. Congratulations to all who contributed to the recent NWCCU accreditation process. The evaluation process is valuable and we will work through the recommendations provided to strengthen and position Montana Tech for an even more exceptional future.

Construction on campus is continuing in full force. The signs of progress are everywhere! Park Street is torn up with the installation of the new heating system. Bob Green Field has a brand-new look, and a firm has been selected to shepherd our LRBP bundled projects through to fruition. It's an exciting time to be an Oredigger!

Dr. Tim Elgren joined us in mid-July as our new Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor and has hit the ground running. We're excited to have him on board and look forward to all we will accomplish together. Thank you to Dr. Michele Hardy and Dr. Katie Hailer for stepping up during the transition.

I hope you'll enjoy this edition full of stories that demonstrate why every day is a great day to be an Oredigger. Please make the most of the next few weeks of summer to enjoy and

make memories. And, also, please mark August 20th on your calendar and plan to participate in the Advancing Tech Fall Kickoff & Professional Development Day. It's the perfect way to bring in a new academic year.

With gratitude,

Les



CONSTRUCTION/PARKING UPDATE

Park Street through campus will remain closed through at least mid-August when a single westbound lane on the south side of the street may be opened for one-way traffic. This is subject to change based on whether other construction issues are encountered.



Starting on orientation move-in on August 21, parking along Broadway Street south of the Natural Resources Research Center (NRRC) and Engineering Laboratory Classroom Building (ELC) will be suspended. This area will be used for two-way traffic to get to Prospector Hall, and to exit the Prospector parking lot. This will remain until Park Street can be completely re-opened. The temporary entrance off Granite Street to the Prospector parking lot will be removed on August 21.



Please join us on **August 20th** for a reconfigured Fall kickoff beginning with the Advancing Tech Forum and a Keynote Address by Alex Beard, founder of the [Beard Collaborative](#). Everyone is invited for lunch in the Marcus Daly Dining Hall immediately afterwards. The afternoon will include an assortment of professional development sessions.

Details will be available [here](#) soon.



COMING SOON: DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY SENIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS

Montana Tech and the Department of the Army are finalizing an agreement to create a National Guard Extension Unit at the University that will create a Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (SROTC).



The United States Army offers ROTC programs nationwide at more than 1,000 colleges and universities. These programs provide classroom instruction and training from active-duty Army and National Guard officers and enlisted service members in areas of expertise, including military intelligence, aviation, logistics, combat arms, and more. [Read more](#)



HIGHLANDS COLLEGE UPDATE



HIGHLANDS COLLEGE SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAMS: CNA & CDL

Highlands College offers School-to-Work programs in Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Commercial Driver's License (CDL). School-to-work programs are crucial in preparing students for successful careers by providing real-world experience, career exploration opportunities, professional networking, and personal growth. By bridging the gap between education and employment, these programs help students transition smoothly into the workforce, ultimately benefiting individuals, employers, and the economy as a whole.

This year, Highlands College had 23 high school students become CNAs from six high schools across Montana and nine high school students earn their CDL from three high schools. The two School-to-Work programs are offered to high school students across the state. To be eligible for the CNA program, students must be at least 16 years of age and for the CDL program students must be at least 18 prior to January 2025. Students enrolled

in the CNA program can earn a 13-credit certificate in the Foundations of Health Care. CDL students can earn their CDL or a 12-credit certificate in Commercial Truck Driving in addition.



STUDENTS RECEIVE CERTIFICATION THROUGH OPERATION NEXT

A dedicated team at Highlands College has experienced great success since January 2023, when it began educating veterans and their families through a program called Operation Next.



Operation Next provides free welding or CNC certification and training to veterans or immediate family members. It's a program that fills a gap for military families. While the veteran unemployment rate was 2.9% in May 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Defense surveys note that rates of unemployment for spouses of military members has been higher than 20% for more than a decade. [Read more](#)



COLLEGE OF LETTERS, SCIENCES & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES UPDATE

\$900,000 GRANT TO BOLSTER DATA SCIENCE ENROLLMENT

The Montana Tech Department of Mathematical Sciences and the College of Letters, Sciences and Professional Studies (CLSPS) have been awarded a five-year, approximately \$900,000 grant from the National Institutes of



Health/[Montana IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence \(INBRE\)](#) to bolster the pipeline for undergraduate students trained in the field of data science at Montana Tech. INBRE grants are given to eligible Ph.D. and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions nationwide to support increasing biomedical research capacity that includes faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students, as well as resource infrastructure. [Read more](#)



WRITING DUO MAKE MONTANA TECH EDUCATION MORE AFFORDABLE BY PRODUCING THIRD OPEN TEXTBOOK

Writing instructors Dawn Atkinson and Stacey Corbitt have penned their third textbook, *Advanced-Level Writing in the University Classroom and Beyond: Mindful Practices for Technical, Business, and Scientific Communication*, which is available for download from the [Open](#)

[Textbook Library](#) and [OER Commons](#). Acknowledging gaps in existing commercial and open textbook catalogs, Atkinson and Corbitt set out to develop a comprehensive product that can be used in all upper-division writing courses taught at Montana Tech—technical writing, business writing, scientific writing, and technical editing—and is freely available to students, instructors, and members of the public as a quality learning tool. The open-source textbook can be adopted as is or customized for learners and teachers in various classes and contexts thanks to its copyright permissions. [Read more](#)



MONTANA TECH TO DEVELOP PHOTONICS TESTBED FACILITY AS PART OF \$41 MILLION HEADWATERS TECH HUB FUNDING

Montana Tech is proud to announce the development of a rugged terrain test bed facility for unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned ground vehicles, other types of robotics that utilize photonic sensor systems at its 150-acre Energy,

Environment, & Innovation Field Campus, which is adjacent to the west side of campus.

The project will be funded through \$41 million awarded to Headwaters Hub from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. [Read more](#)



ASSISTANT PROFESSOR PRESENTS ASPHALT PAVEMENT RESEARCH AT CONFERENCE

Assistant Professor Bongsuk Park presented, “Enhanced Approach to Develop the International Roughness Index (IRI) Prediction Model,” at the International Society for Asphalt Pavements (ISAP) conference in Montreal, Canada. [Read more](#)



STUDENTS LEARN HANDS-ON SKILLS IN FIELD GEOLOGY COURSE

Several students at Montana Technological University spent much of the month of May completing hands-on learning via fieldwork in the picturesque mountains of Southwestern Montana, mapping and collecting data for a Field Geology course.

Field camps usually take place before or after senior year for geological engineering students. They help students gain practical experience in measuring and creating maps or reports, all of which are required by employers. [Read more](#)



VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE TURNS INTO CAREER OF SERVICE

If you are out enjoying Montana's public lands this summer, you are likely to encounter teams of young adult volunteers, armed only with simple tools and hand-held power equipment, tackling a bevy of conservation goals. They're part of the Montana Conservation Corps, an AmeriCorps program whose mission is to inspire young people to be leaders, conservation stewards, and engaged citizens. [Read more](#)



IT'S A GREAT DAY TO BE AN OREDIGGER



RIPPLE: THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND ECOSYSTEM STUDIES LEADS BUTTE STUDENTS IN EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY CLEANUP EFFORTS

More than 520 students participated in a community cleanup around their schools in Butte in the last two weeks of May and into June. The cleanup was led by Ripple: The Center for Education and Ecosystem Studies. [Read more](#)



GLASS BEADMAKING, TOURS, HANDS-ON METAL FORGING HIGHLIGHT SUMMER CAMP

Thirty students from across Montana and the U.S. spent a week at Montana Technological University in late June at the Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Summer Program, hosted by the University's Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Department. [Read more](#)



STUDENTS INVITED TO ENROLL IN ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL FOR FALL 2024

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MINERAL MUSEUM OPEN

The Mineral Museum has re-opened after undergoing some renovations. The Museum is home to many geological wonders. There's a gigantic 27.496-ounce gold nugget, forearm-sized quartz crystals, large amethyst geodes that sparkle, a mammoth tusk and rhinoceros jaws that have been fossilized, and a whole collection of rocks that phosphoresce under ultraviolet light. [Read more](#)



ATHLETICS UPDATE



THREE OREDIGGERS NAMED FINALISTS FOR NATIONAL NAIA AWARDS

Frontier Conference Commissioner Dr. Scott Crawford Three Orediggers have been announced as conference award winners and NAIA Awards Day nominees for the 2023-24 academic year.

Athletic Director Matt Stepan was honored as the Co-Athletic Director of the Year, sharing the honor with Charlie Gross from Carroll College. Men's basketball player Michael Ure is a nominee for the Emil S. Liston Award, and women's track and field star Abby Clark is a nominee for the A.O. Duer Scholarship Award. [Read more](#)

LIBERTY ENERGY PARTNERS WITH MONTANA TECH TO MAKE NEW TURF ON BOB GREEN FIELD POSSIBLE

Montana Tech Director of Athletics Matt Stepan announced the 2024 Oredigger Hall of Fame Class today. The newest individual members are Roderick Hurd, Katie (Lewis) Daly, and Lorenzo Snyder. Coach Bill Connor will be inducted. The 1987-1988 men's basketball team will be honored, and Dennis Zander will go in as a contributor.

Hall of Fame Weekend is slated for October 18-19. The Oredigger football team hosts Simpson University on Saturday, October 19 followed by Oredigger volleyball hosting Carroll College. [Read more](#)



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MNEWS IS HERE

The Spring 2024 edition of [MNews](#) is available for your reading or sharing of stories. If you have friends, family, or prospective students who would be interested in any of the stories within this edition, please feel free to share.

Hope you enjoy this edition.



[Researchers train robot to search for critical minerals in abandoned mines:](#) The U.S. Department of the Interior estimates there could be as many as 500,000 abandoned mine sites on federal land, and researchers are using novel robotic technology to see if any of those already disturbed sites might hold critical minerals.



[Stick Leg Ranch: A Story of Success:](#) A quarter-century after Becker lost his legs in a drilling accident during a petroleum engineering internship in the Gulf of Mexico, he's used good humor, perseverance, and ingenuity to build a successful regenerative ranching business with his wife Jennie.



Award-winning winery: When one thinks of being a *vintner*, or winemaker, it might conjure images of perfectly lit evening walks between rows of grapes, vaults of aging barrels, and tables of folks sharing laughs over full glasses of their favorite variety. Sarah (Morris) Lathrop (B.S. Professional and Technical Communication, '02) loves owning Liberty Lake Wine Cellars, located in a suburb of Spokane, Washington, but she is quick to rip off the Rosé-colored glasses when she describes her work.

Lathrop knows what it takes to run a successful winery.



Liberty Energy Scholarships Transform Lives of Montana Tech Students: The Liberty Energy scholarships were established in 2019 with a \$400,000 gift that will be expended over a 10-year period.

Beauty and Impactful Research: To the untrained eye, the breathtaking images generated in the Nanotechnology Laboratory resemble painted masterpieces possibly inspired by Pablo Picasso's works in cubism—but to the students who created them, these micrographs hold much more critical data than that of simple abstract beauty. Clues about structure and composition can be gleaned to learn more about the optical, electronic, or mechanical properties of materials students work with, which could be critical building blocks to solving some of the world's most pressing issues.



Building Dreams: When Andy Larson was in high school, his mom signed him up for a summer internship with a homebuilder in Utah. The teen was hooked, and Larson knew he wanted to make construction a career.



Dream Careers in Data Science: If there ever was a pure embodiment of the term “determined doers,” Kaitlyn and Jeff Preston would be it. Kaitlyn is currently a lead process management analyst at NASA, and Jeff works as a data scientist at Disney.



Taking the Stage: The students know Research Associate Grant Wallace as a professional materials scientist focused on rare earth element recovery, but what many do not know is that Dr. Wallace also has an artistic side.



Welding opens opportunities for artistic expression: When people envision a welder, images of workers on pipelines or in manufacturing factories might come to mind. “Most people immediately think of welding as industrial,” welding instructor Dennis Noel said. “They don’t think of it as artistic.” A long line of projects created by students showcase the artistic possibilities within the welding field.



Electric Vehicle Market Offers Opportunities for Students in STEM: Sean Everett graduated from high school in Libby, Montana, just as cleanup began at the site of one of America’s worst human-caused environmental disasters. Two decades later, Everett has taken his education and is impacting the world around us via his position as Electric Vehicles Power Lead at HDR in Missoula.



Venison in the Vines raises funds for Oredigger scholarships: What started several years ago as an informal cookout between friends has grown into a successful annual fundraiser for Montana Tech.



On the Court: Basketball Alum begins Career as Attorney in Helena: Kale Guldseth comes from a long line of Oredigger competitors. His grandfather and father played basketball at Montana Tech.



Chasing Gold: Montana Tech's history is steeped in mining. In the fall of 2005, then-chancellor Dr. Frank Gilmore initiated the National Student Awards Committee (NSAC) to mine for the highest level of student recognition available nationally. NSAC focused on the Goldwater Scholarship, long recognized as the premier undergraduate award for science, math, and engineering. In the 100 years prior to the National Student Awards Committee, Montana Tech had one student recognized with the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. Since the NSAC was formed, 11 Montana Tech students have been honored, and an additional five have received honorable mentions.



Upcoming Events

- 8/15:** Big Sky Volleyball Challenge: Tech vs Doane University (1:00 pm, HPER)
- 8/16:** Big Sky Volleyball Challenge: Tech vs Dakota Wesleyan University (2:00 pm, HPER)
- 8/17:** Big Sky Volleyball Challenge: Tech vs Loyola University New Orleans (11:00 am, Butte Civic Center)

8/20: [Advancing Montana Tech Forum & Professional Development Day](#)

8/21-25: [Fall Orientation](#)

8/26: Fall classes begin

8/29: Copper Football Game vs Georgetown College (6:00 pm)



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