

The Wednesday Reader

January 22, 2014

19th Annual Montana Economics Challenge

The Helena Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the Montana Council on Economic Education (MCEE) are pleased to announce the 19th Annual Montana Economics Challenge, in Helena, March 3, 2014.

The Federal Reserve Bank invites Montana high school teachers who incorporate economic learning in their classrooms to assemble teams of students to compete in a challenging array of tests covering economic concepts, issues and reasoning.

The purpose of the Economics Challenge is to increase students' exposure to and interest in economics in an entertaining atmosphere. The Economics Challenge began in 1988 as a product of the Minnesota Council on Economic Education. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis became involved in 1992 when it sponsored a playoff round for the winning schools from the state's various regional centers for economic education. The Helena Branch, along with the MCEE, participated for the first time in 1996 when it held the first Economics Challenge in Montana.

Teams are comprised of three to four students who compete individually and as a team. Essentially, each participant takes a 15-question, multiple-choice test in each of the following three areas: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and International Trade and Economics. To determine team scores, the top three individuals' scores in each category are combined. The top two teams after the first three rounds will compete against each other in a buzzer round on general economics and current events to determine the final winner. Awards for top scores are given to individuals and to teams. Please keep in mind that each school may have more than one team and that it is not necessary for a school to offer a general economics class to compete in the Challenge.

The Federal Reserve Bank will cover costs associated with the Montana Challenge, including refreshments, breakfast, the luncheon, awards, and test facilitation. The Montana Bankers Association will cover lodging expenses on Sunday, March 2 for teams who wish to travel to Helena the day before the Challenge and the MCEE will cover costs for a substitute teacher on the March 3.

Winners of the state competitions will go on to compete in a semi-final round which will be proctored exams taken at the state champions' schools. The National Economics Challenge will be held in New York on 17-19.

The Helena Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the Montana Council on Economic Education hope that you consider this opportunity for your students and look forward to seeing you in Helena on Monday, March 3.

An informational brochure about the 2014 Economics Challenge can be downloaded at <https://app.box.com/s/n1y62dmzvm384a0pt3vr>.

Registrations for this year's Montana Economics Challenge are now being accepted. The registration form can be download at <https://app.box.com/s/725tt6ycbdqh5je67zhu>. Registrations are due by February 12 and can be submitted via the information on the registration form.

If you have any questions regarding the 2014 Montana Economics Challenge please contact Rhonda Krieger at the Helena branch of the Federal Reserve at Helena.MTChallenge@mpls.frb.org.

You are welcome to bring more than one team. Teams may consist of 3 or 4 students each. Please complete a registration form for each team. Space is limited, so register early.

Resources and Activities for Economics and Financial Education

AWARE (American Well-informed on Automobile Retailing Economics) has a free Auto Financing Road Map with offers educators all of the resources to incorporate vehicle financing principles into existing classes. Included are a power point present ion; affordability gauge budget worksheet, comparison worksheet, auto financing Quiz and a glossary check it out at www.autofinancing101.org/learning_suite/roadmap.cfm

Secret Millionaires Club: Kids 7 through 14 are challenged to come up with new business ideas. Entrants will earn a chance to win a trip to Omaha to meet Warren Buffett at a special finalist celebration event--and they'll also earn a chance to win \$5,000! Teachers nominated by finalists will be eligible to win up to \$1,000 and a trip with their student(s) to meet with Mr. Buffett! <http://www.smckids.com/learnandearn/teachers>

Montana Saves Scavenger Hunt has been specifically designed for youth ages 14 to 19. Youth who complete the Montana Saves Scavenger Hunt will be eligible for a drawing for one of 31 cash awards of \$100 during America Saves week February 24-March 1, 2014.

The cash awards are courtesy of The First Interstate BancSystem Foundation and Montana Credit Unions for Community Development. Runners up will receive a financial education book. Students have until February 15, 2014 to complete the **Montana Saves Scavenger Hunt**. The activities do not have to be completed all at one time.

--Go to the website: www.msuextension.org/montanasavesscavengerhunt

--Click the continue button at the bottom of the screen.

--Under **Is this your first time here?** Click new account. Complete each field; make a note of your username and password, then click "Create my new account."

--For security purposes, a message will be sent to your email account with a link to confirm your enrollment in the **Montana Saves Scavenger Hunt**.

--Once you receive the email, click the link in the email message and begin your **Montana Saves Scavenger Hunt**.

Training and Registration for the Spring Session of the Stock Market Game

Want to facilitate learning that is exciting and fun for both you and your students?

Ask Sonja Mangel from Westby, Fred Petek from Billings West, or other teachers you know that have participated about the benefits of involving their classes in The Stock Market Game™ sponsored by the Montana Council on Economic Education.

The program is easy to administer, and teaches and reinforces these essential skills and concepts: Critical Thinking, Decision-making, Cooperation and Communication, Primary Research, and Saving and investing. Students use real internet research and news updates, making the simulation an even better mirror of the real marketplace. While the competitive gameplay creates student excitement, the educational experience delivers the biggest impact. Cash prizes are also awarded for the top three teams.

Training Webinar: A training webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. It is designed for those that have never participated in the Stock Market Game, or for those wanting to better understand the game functions. Attendance is not mandatory, but encouraged. Seating is limited. To register for the webinar, go to:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/654155721>

Registering Teams for the Stock Market Game: Competition begins on February 17, 2014, and runs for 10 weeks. To find out more information and register teams for competition, go to www.stockmarketgame.org, and click on the registration link in the upper right-hand corner.

What students gain from The Stock Market Game™ program is a remarkable experience—and even more important, an education for life. If you have any questions, please contact Tim Alzheimer, Montana Stock Market Game Coordinator, at timalz@montana.edu, or by telephone, (406) 994-2263.

High School Business Challenge Prepares for Spring Edition

The key to getting your students to understand key business concepts is through hands-on activity. If you've not yet done so, consider this simulation designed to develop management, financial, marketing and critical thinking skills in a competitive, learning enhanced environment.

The Montana High School Business Challenge, sponsored by the Montana Chamber Foundation and administered by the Montana Council on Economic Education lets your students actively participate in a state-wide simulation as real entrepreneurs. The students manage the business of a Digital Music Player manufacturer, and many daily decisions face the students, including financial, ethical, legal, and competitive issues. It is a dynamic simulation that can be incorporated into many different class disciplines.

The state-wide competition runs eight weeks, beginning Wednesday, February 19 and concluding Wednesday, April 16. College scholarships are awarded to the top three teams. The cost of participation is \$15.00 per team.

FIRST TIME PARTICIPANTS: First-time participants need to be trained prior to involvement in the Business Challenge via a two part webinar training session. Attendance is mandatory on both days. Teachers will be introduced to the concepts and procedures the simulation. It will be held on Monday and Tuesday, February 3 and 4 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. There is no charge for the training. If you are a first-time participant, or simply want to re-familiarize yourself with the fundamentals of the Business Challenge, please register online at: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/755586880>.

REFRESHER WEBINAR FOR PAST PARTICIPANTS: A webinar is scheduled on Monday, February 10 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. for teachers that have previously participated in the Challenge who want to refresh their skills and learn more about the simulation. This webinar is voluntary and free of charge, and is open only to teachers that have previous HSBC involvement. Space is limited. The web address to register for this webinar is: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/511854265>.

REGISTERING TEAMS FOR SPRING SEMESTER? QUESTIONS?: To register teams for the fall Business Challenge competition or if you have any questions, please contact Tim Alzheimer via e-mail, timalz@montana.edu, or by telephone, 994-2263 for further information. Team registration deadline is Wednesday, February 12.

ACTE Region V Conference: Energizing America's Workforce

The 2014 Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) [Region V Conference](#) will take place April 23-26 in Bismarck, North Dakota. Registration is now open with Early-Bird registration ending March 1.

Details about the ACTE Region V Conference can be found at <http://www.acteonline.org/eventcalendar.aspx?id=4726> including Call for Presentations (due February 1), registration, and hotel reservations at the [Radisson Hotel Bismarck](#).

Region V is the western region of ACTE and includes state associations in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Register Now for the 2014 NBEA Annual Convention and Trade Show

Lights, Camera, Action! The city of Los Angeles will be rolling out the red carpet for the [National Business Education Association 2014 Annual Convention, April 15-19](#). Los Angeles is a booming and vibrant city with a variety of attractions, each offering that unique LA experience.

NBEA is excited to be back in California and this year's convention will be held at the [JW Marriott Hotel](#) located in the LA Live complex—the leading entertainment district in Los Angeles. Home to the STAPLES Center, Nokia Theater, Regal Cinemas, an eclectic blend of restaurants, nightclubs, and other attractions, including the GRAMMY Museum, business educators from across the country will be energized and invigorated at this year's convention.

In addition to over 70 educational sessions, hands-on technology workshops will be offered to expand specific skills and introduce additional technology. In addition, keynote speakers, the trade show, exhibitor sessions, and networking functions provide business educators with an exceptional opportunity to learn new ideas and skills that can be utilized in the classroom and workplace.

Don't miss some of Los Angeles most famous and exciting attractions!

For more details about the [NBEA 2014 Annual Convention](#), including a preliminary [schedule of events](#) and hotel reservations, please visit <http://www.nbea.org/newsite/conferences/convention/convention.html>.

The First of the Year Marks the Beginning of Tax Season – IRS Offers Tax Tools for Teachers

Does teaching about taxes seem as intimidating as completing your yearly tax forms? Don't worry! The Internal Revenue Service has introduced the [IRS Understanding Taxes](#) program, a free online tool designed for classroom use by teachers.

[Understanding Taxes](#) is the quick and simple way to understand your taxes. For Educators, every [Understanding Taxes](#) lesson includes the correlations to national and state educational standards. Each lesson plan includes a link to the applicable national and state standards, making it simple to integrate [Understanding Taxes](#) into your existing classroom curricula.

[Understanding Taxes](#) can be customized to fit your own personal teaching style. You have the freedom to choose which activities and methods of instruction work best to meet the needs of your students.

The online [Understanding Taxes](#) site includes both a Teacher and Student site. Teaching taxes can take a traditional approach as students complete downloaded worksheets, classroom activities, and assessment pages. Or, students can complete work online and take part in interactive activities and simulations.

To learn more and to explore resources and material available, begin your journey to [Understanding Taxes](#) at <http://apps.irs.gov/app/understandingTaxes/index.jsp>.

Fun Facts and Trivia

Flathead Lake is the 79th largest of the natural freshwater lakes in the world, and it is one of the cleanest.

Average surface temperatures of Flathead Lake range from 2.3°C (36°F) in mid-January to 13.5°C (56°F) in mid-June to 20.3°C (68°F) in mid-August.

Flathead Lake is a remnant of Glacial Lake Missoula, which covered much of Western Montana until roughly 15,000 years ago.

Flathead Lake level and its outflow are regulated by Kerr Dam, which is located on the Lower Flathead River near Polson. Kerr Dam was completed in 1938 by the Montana Power Company, raised the Lake level 10 feet above its natural level, and generates 194 megawatts of electricity.

Wild Horse Island, one of Montana's State Parks, is the largest island in Flathead Lake at 2,100 acres, and rises 1,200 feet above the Lake.

The water in Flathead Lake is flushed (replaced) about every 2.2 years.

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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