



Contact: David Hoffman
Manager-External Affairs
406-457-5300

Montanans Expect Growth and Clean Environment

***Residents Say Good Jobs and State's Natural Beauty Can Go Hand in Hand
As They Urge Montana's Leaders to Work Aggressively to Attract More Businesses***

BILLINGS, Mont. (March 28, 2006) — A majority of Montanans don't think they have to choose between creating a stronger economy and preserving their outdoors lifestyle. In fact, they expect business growth and a clean environment to co-exist, according to a statewide survey released today by PPL Montana.

PPL Montana's quality-of-life survey shows that 57 percent of residents believe the state should be more aggressive in attracting business, and can do so without sacrificing Montana's natural beauty.

The Roper Public Affairs Group, which conducted the wide-ranging survey for PPL Montana, interviewed 1,013 adult residents across the state during a two-week period last December. The University of Montana assisted with the study.

"Our goal in commissioning this survey was to find out what is on the minds of Montana's residents and bring those issues to the forefront of public policy dialogue," said Brad Spencer, chief operating officer of PPL Montana.

"It's clear from the survey results that all of us have strong opinions about what needs to be done to continue making this state a great place to live and raise families," he said. "As a major employer, we care about the future direction of Montana. We hope that this information will engage public and private groups and individuals in constructive and vibrant debate as we work to develop solutions to the challenges Montanans say we are facing."

"Decisions affecting Montana's residents are best made when people are fully informed about what Montanans want," said Paul Polzin, director of the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research in Missoula. "PPL Montana's quality-of-life survey adds to data already collected from past surveys and research to provide a framework for meaningful public discussions."

While environmental protection and economic development are sometimes portrayed as incompatible goals, most Montanans don't see it that way.

Respondents of all ages — whether living in towns or rural areas, in western or eastern Montana, longtime or new residents, and regardless of household income — greatly appreciate and value the state's natural environment. Eight in 10 respondents say the state's clean environment and natural beauty are "very important" reasons for choosing to live in Montana. Montanans are less concerned about losing a feeling of community due to population growth in the state, but would view threats to their outdoors lifestyle more seriously.

While they are passionate about living in Montana, the survey found that many residents worry about whether they can afford to live in the state in the future. Residents see a number of social and economic challenges potentially clouding their future.

Significant majorities see rising energy costs, the lack of well-paying jobs and the affordability of health care as “very serious” problems facing the state. In addition, about four out of 10 residents foresee “very serious” problems stemming from rising property taxes, lack of affordable housing and the level of unemployment.

Six in 10 Montanans describe the current state of the economy as either “fair” (45 percent) or “poor” (16 percent). By comparison, residents are more positive about the state of their own household’s finances, with a majority rating their situation as either “good” (44 percent) or “excellent” (12 percent).

An overwhelming number of Montanans worry about available job opportunities for their children after they finish school, fearing that many will have to leave the state to find higher-paying jobs (*see related news release*).

Consequently, two-thirds of survey respondents “strongly agree” that a healthy business climate is essential for the future of Montana, and 55 percent “strongly agree” that state government should actively work to attract businesses and the resulting higher-paying jobs.

To bring about much-needed economic growth, Montana residents look to tourism and the energy sector as positives to fire up the state’s economy. Eight in 10 favor tourism playing a key role in economic growth. Nine in 10 respondents say renewable energy sources such as wind farms can help advance the dual goals of higher-paying jobs and environmental protection.

In addition, 87 percent of residents say that energy sector investment in technology and infrastructure is essential for future economic development.

Opinions on coal are mixed, with respondents divided on who should take the lead on this issue. The issues of coal reserves and coal extraction are on Montanans’ radar, but so far most don’t have fully formed opinions on either issue.

In light of their faith that economic progress is attainable, 63 percent of respondents say Montana is “headed in the right direction.” That’s more than twice as many who think the state is “off on the wrong track.” When asked to look ahead, 53 percent of the respondents believe the state’s quality of life will be better in five years, while fewer than four in 10 believe it will be worse. However, these views tend to be more moderate than extreme, survey findings show.

The positive view about Montana’s current direction is shared by most demographic groups. This optimism is part of a larger upbeat mindset that values what Montana has to offer and considers the influx of new residents as a positive force for the state.

Those in the minority, who feel Montana is off course, are concerned that changes underway in Montana today — including population and environmental issues — will bring new problems, including possibly destroying what they value most about where they live.

A copy of the survey report, including survey questions and answers as well as highlighted findings, can be found on PPL Montana’s Web site at www.pplmontana.com.

PPL Montana, a subsidiary of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), has electric generating facilities throughout the state with a combined generating capacity of about 1,200 megawatts. PPL Montana has offices in Billings, Butte and Helena, and employs 500 people. The company operates coal-fired power plants at Colstrip and Billings, as well as 11 hydroelectric power plants along Rosebud Creek and the Missouri, Madison, Clark Fork and Flathead rivers. PPL EnergyPlus, another PPL subsidiary, operates a trading floor in Butte that markets and sells power in the wholesale energy market.

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Note to Editors: This is the first of two news releases, issued today by PPL Montana, expanding on results of a statewide quality-of-life survey. Call the number above if you did not receive both news releases. Additional survey information is posted on our Web site at www.pplmontana.com. A complete videotape of the news conference will be delivered to television stations, and select audio files will be delivered to radio stations by 3 p.m. today.