

MONTANA CURRENTS



Sept. 2009

A message from Brad Spencer

PPL Montana's vice president and chief operating officer to retire at the end of September

As many of you know, I'll be retiring as vice president and chief operating officer of PPL Montana at the end of September.

For eight years it's been my honor to lead 500 dedicated Montanans across the state who every day produce needed energy and work tirelessly to enhance public recreation and protect and enhance fisheries, wildlife, wetlands habitat and water quality.

I'm proud of our accomplishments and the improvements that are planned for our facilities in the coming years.

We've been a leader in employee safety, becoming the first private



company in Montana to earn the federal government's highest recognition for excellence in voluntary occupational safety and health programs.

Our hydroelectric generation facilities along the Madison-Missouri River corridor have received national recognition for having one of the most effective river stewardship programs in the country.

As a power generator and the responsibilities that come with it, we've taken a variety of actions to address climate change, including membership in the Big Sky Carbon Sequestration Partnership.

Our employees have been steadfast supporters of United Way, pledging hundreds of thousands of dollars to support critical programs in our neighborhoods and donating hundreds of hours of free time to community projects.

I'm particularly proud of our Community Fund, which since 2005 has been awarding grants to organizations that support education, the environment and economic development. This fall we will mark the \$1 million milestone on this important grant program.

Looking ahead, there are several major projects under way that will help improve the supply of energy for

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PPL Montana names new chief operating officer

Butte native Pete Simonich brings operational expertise as well as a commitment to continuing PPL Montana's partnerships at the community and state level

Pete Simonich, a Butte native with 28 years of service in the generation business, has been named the new vice president and chief operating officer of PPL Montana.

Simonich, who currently serves as manager-Generating Assets for PPL Montana, succeeds Brad Spencer, who will retire at the end of September.

Simonich has spent most of his

career at the Colstrip power plant in eastern Montana, starting as a startup engineer at the plant in 1981, when it was part of the Montana Power Co. He also worked as a senior engineer, staff engineer, maintenance supervisor, director-Performance Engineering, operations manager and production area leader before being named general manager of projects at the plant in 1999.

Following the sale of Montana Power's power plants to PPL in 1999, he was named general manager-Colstrip and was named to his current position in 2004. In his current position, Simonich also has responsibility for PPL Montana's hydroelectric



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Montana Currents is introducing members of the PPL Montana Community Fund Advisory Board, a group dedicated to making a difference in the lives of Montana families and their communities.

Twice a year, PPL Montana's Community Fund awards grants to nonprofit groups to address quality-of-life issues related to education, the environment and economic development.

As a major corporation with 500 employees in Montana, PPL Montana is committed to working with Montana communities and this board to improve the quality of life for today and tomorrow.

Meet Carrie Harris

Carrie Harris is the manager of hydro engineering for PPL Montana. As a licensed professional civil engineer, her primary role is to manage the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Dam Safety Program and capital projects at PPL Montana's 11 hydro facilities across the western half of the state. She joined the PPL Montana Community Fund board early in 2009 and will serve a two-year term.

How do you see the role of the Advisory Board?

The board provides a diverse perspective and unbiased evaluation of the many excellent grant applications PPL Montana's Community Fund receives. It is a great opportunity for board members to expand their knowledge of the multitude of very deserving nonprofit organizations serving their communities and state. It brings me a great feeling of satisfaction to know that I have made a difference to an organization and touched the lives of many people.

What do you hope to accomplish during your term on the board?

I grew up in small communities on the eastern slope of the Rockies in northern Montana. My interest in construction, water and the outdoors made my career in civil engineering and hydro generation a very natural fit. Specifically I see my role on the advisory board as an advocate of environmental projects with a hydro influence. And I can't help but have a soft spot for the small-town



applications seeking to improve local economic opportunities.

What are your other interests when you're not working with Community Fund grants?

I am the typical Montana outdoor sports hound. You name it, I do it. My husband, stepson, daughter and I especially enjoy fishing, skiing, staying in cabins and hunting. I enjoy watching the kids play football, basketball and baseball. I unwind by scrapbooking the great times of my life.

Spencer *(Continued from page 1)*

our region and protect and enhance our state's valuable fish habitat.

Next spring we will begin work on a project to nearly double the amount of clean, renewable electricity produced at our Rainbow hydroelectric plant on the Missouri River near Great Falls. We will construct a new powerhouse with a 60-megawatt turbine that has an improved, fish friendly design.

At our hydroelectric plant at Thompson Falls, we've already begun work on a permanent fish ladder designed to give two rare species of trout safe passage into their native spawning waters upstream on the Clark Fork River.

On a personal level, I'm looking

forward to serving this fall as chairman of the United Way Yellowstone County's campaign. Serving on the board has been one my most rewarding experiences.

It's been my pleasure to work at this company alongside dedicated employees and to be part of our state's bright future.

In the past eight years, I've also had the very special privilege of getting to know the great people of Montana. As a person who has lived in a number of states, I can truthfully say that the people of Montana are as hard-working, genuine and dedicated to their communities as any I've met in my 38-year career.

I want to extend my congratulations to my successor, Pete Simonich. We're fortunate to have someone with Pete's operational experience and long-standing commitment to our communities and this state. Our company, our employees and our neighbors are in good hands with his proven leadership.

I look forward to staying active in the Billings community and enjoying every opportunity to spend more time with family, snowboard, golf and take my trusty mules on pack-ins to the mountains — and to seeing many of the good friends I've made over the years.

President recognizes wetlands restoration effort involving PPL Montana

PPL Montana's involvement in the restoration of a peaceful wetlands received recognition from President Barack Obama during his August visit to Big Sky Country.

During their respective visits, President Obama and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar heard firsthand how many diverse people and organizations have come together to restore an expansive spring-fed wetland complex on traditional ranch lands near Ennis.

Since 2004, PPL Montana has been working alongside landowners,

government agencies, conservation groups and private industry to restore the O'Dell Creek wetlands in the Madison River Valley.

The ongoing project, which earned PPL Montana the PPL 2008 Chairman's Award for Environmental Excellence, is being accomplished under PPL Montana's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license for its Madison-Missouri river dams.

It involves a public-private partnership to restore river and wetland habitats and protect and enhance fisheries and wildlife with willing landowners on private lands.

Obama met two of PPL Montana's principal project partners — rancher Jeff Laszlo, who opened his family's



President Barack Obama meets with Rob Hazlewood (left) and Jeff Laszlo on Aug. 14 in Bozeman. (Official White House photo by Pete Souza)

land for the project, and Rob Hazlewood of Ranchland Wildlife Consultants of Helena, a retired biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who works with PPL Montana.

Obama had planned to fish on the O'Dell Creek but inclement weather scuttled those plans. Despite the disappointment, Laszlo and Hazlewood were asked to meet the president following his public town hall meeting in Bozeman.

"President Obama was gracious and appreciative of the efforts made on his behalf so he could see the restoration project and fish this famous water," Laszlo said. "Secretary Salazar was also in attendance and was given

a copy of 'Restoring the Treasure,' a PPL Montana-sponsored film about the O'Dell Creek wetlands."

The film premiered last year at two major conservation, recreation and wildlife conferences in Montana. Available on request, the film highlights the cooperative restoration effort that began in 2003.

Since then, more than 500 acres of wetlands and six miles of riparian areas and watershed lands have been restored in the Madison River Valley, home to many wildlife species, migratory waterfowl and wild trout.

"The president was interested to learn about the very effective partnership that brought about the O'Dell



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Presidential recognition (Continued from page 3)

project and how it has become a model for how to effectively accomplish conservation projects,” Laszlo said. “He expressed a desire to someday return to Montana to fish on the O’Dell Creek and see the great work that continues to happen here.”

PPL Montana “is proud of our involvement in this important project and with all of our partners who are proving that great things can be

achieved when we work toward the worthy goal of preserving both river resources and Montana’s ranching operations,” said Jon Jourdonnais, PPL Montana’s director of Hydro Licensing and Environmental Compliance.

“We appreciate the interest shown by the president and Secretary Salazar and hope to see them at the O’Dell wetlands soon,” he said.

Simonich (Continued from page 1)

facilities in the state.

He earned a degree in chemical engineering from Montana State University and began his professional career as a process engineer at Champion International Corporation’s Frenchtown pulp mill before moving to Colstrip.

Simonich resides in Laurel with his wife, Pam. They have three sons, a daughter and one granddaughter. Simonich serves on the National Advisory Board of Montana State University-Billings, and is a past member of the parish council at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Colstrip.

Montana Currents is your source of information about PPL Montana’s commitment to the environment and our communities. It’s just one more way we’re putting our energy into Montana communities.

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