



*November 7, 2022*

Greetings,

Fall has arrived at Montana Tech, and this week we pay special tribute to those who have served our great nation as we honor them on Veterans Day. These individuals have significantly sacrificed through their commitment to the greater good, and we are forever grateful.

In this edition of the Chancellor Check-In, we celebrate the Oredigger Volleyball team on sealing the Frontier Conference championship; Natasha Chadwell and Abby Peltomaa on being named 20 Under 40 awardees; Dr. Risser for her leadership in mathematics award; Dr. Pedulla and Dr. Daas on recent grant awards; the winners of the Homecoming bed races, and much more.

As we celebrate our veterans and those making a difference on our campus, I am reminded of a quote by Claudia Dean, *"we've all been warmed by fires we didn't build and drunk from wells we didn't dig."* I'm fairly certain we can all relate.

With gratitude,

Les



## HISTORIC AGREEMENT SIGNED

Montana Tech and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport, will enter into a historic cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA). The agreement was signed on November 2, 2022 in the Copper Lounge on Montana Tech's campus. The project builds from, and leverages, over ten years of research at Montana Tech in materials and manufacturing for defense applications, enabled through the support of U.S. Senator Jon Tester.

[Read more](#)



## DIGGERS ARE FRONTIER CONFERENCE CHAMPS



Your No. 15 Oredigger Volleyball team wrapped up the regular season as the Frontier Conference Champions last Friday. The championship is the first regular season title since 2019 and the fourth under head coach Brian Solomon. The Orediggers (24-8, 9-1) are the top seed going into the Frontier Conference Tournament next weekend, taking place at the HPER Complex. The team plays at 5:00 pm on Friday, November 11. Please mark your calendars to attend and let's pack the HPER to cheer on the Diggers!

The tournament winner receives the automatic bid to the NAIA National Tournament.



## PROVOST SEARCH UPDATE

The search for the next provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs is underway. Our three academic deans will serve on the search committee, with Deans Hardy and Lee serving as search committee co-chairs. In addition to the Deans, the search committee will include the following individuals:

- Amy Kuenzi, department head and faculty, Biological Sciences

- Matthew Haynes, faculty, Writing
- Linda Granger, department head and faculty, Highlands College
- Scott Rosenthal, department head and faculty, Mining Engineering
- Rick LaDouceur, faculty, Mechanical Engineering
- Leslie Dickerson, executive director, Admissions and Enrollment
- Colleen Fink, executive assistant to the provost
- Faculty Senate
- Natasha Chadwell, Staff Senate
- Kylie Godfrey, ASMT president, undergraduate student, Business
- Celine Beaucamp, graduate student, Earth Science Engineering

Myers McCrae Executive Search will lead the search process. They will finalize the search profile in the next few weeks, and launch the process prior to Thanksgiving.



## TRADES & TECHNOLOGY DAY 2022

Highlands College hosted Trades & Technology Day on October 6, 2022. The day consisted of hands-on interactive activities for students: tire-changing competition, construction of cornhole boards, bucket truck rides provided by Highlands College and NorthWestern Energy, taking x-rays, machining keychains, cybersecurity, and pouring concrete. 370 high school students from 32 schools and 17 counties, and 24 industry partners attended the 2022 event. The generous donations from state and local businesses and industry partners make the event possible.



## NUCOR ESTABLISHES PROFESSORSHIP

Longtime Montana Tech champion and partner Nucor announced a \$2,000,000 Endowed Distinguished Professorship in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering recently. The announcement was made during the university's centennial anniversary events for its Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Department. The Centennial Event—Celebrating our Past and Securing our Future—included technical sessions, student poster sessions, workshops, and social events.

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## TOP PRIZE AT PNWIS COMPETITION



Montana Tech students commanded the competition at the 60th annual conference of the Pacific Northwest International Section (PNWIS) of the Air & Waste Management Association, held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho on October 11.

More than a dozen representatives of Montana Tech attended the conference, which was held for the first-time post-pandemic. Three student teams from Montana Tech competed in the Environmental Challenge, which allows students one month's time to develop solutions to a mock environmental problem. They were then judged on the solution's technological, economic, safety, policy regulation, and community involvement aspects. This year's Challenge required students to think up ways to address the needs of a fictional town in Idaho struggling with energy demands as climate change lowered the amount of water available for a local hydroelectric dam.

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## GIVING BACK

Montana Tech's American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) Club, the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers (EEE) Club, and the Associated General Contractors (AGC) Club will deliver care packages to the Southwestern Montana Veterans Home (65 Veterans Circle) on Thursday, November 10 at 3:00 pm. The care packages will include a group box for each house containing games, colored pencils, coloring books, puzzles, and individual gift bags containing goodies, socks, lip balm, handkerchiefs, and hand cream. The funds were raised through individual club fundraisers.



## HOMECOMING 2022

Homecoming 2022 was a great week on campus. Congratulations to homecoming royalty Logan Reed and Eli Byrd. Logan, a junior from Oakesdale, Washington, is a member of the Digger Volleyball team and was sponsored by the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP). She is majoring in civil engineering with a minor in OSH. Eli, a sophomore from Gardiner, Montana, is a member of the track and field team majoring in mechanical engineering. The fly-fishing club sponsored him.



Also, congratulations to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), the triumphant victors of the Homecoming bed races and the Business Guild, who won the mural contest.



## CAREER FAIR SUCCESS



The 22nd annual Montana Tech Fall Career Fair was a successful event, with 135 companies attending, which included a record number of 29 new companies. The Fair had a great turnout of students, with 745 checking in and attending the event. The university had 55 companies conduct 2nd-day interviews, up from 41 last year, which included 255 students conducting 529 interviews with 50 companies.



## NSF AWARDS FUNDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

The National Science Foundation awarded \$4.5 million in collaborative grants to Salish Kootenai College, University of Montana, and Montana Tech. These awards will fund scholarships for high achieving, low-income students pursuing degrees in Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Researchers plan to use project data to better serve Native American and rural STEM students.

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## NSF AWARDS FUNDS TO PURCHASE ELECTRON MICROSCOPE

The National Science Foundation has awarded Montana Tech \$1 million that will be used to purchase and maintain a multifunctional electron microscope to significantly expand opportunities for research and discovery for the campus community and the state of Montana.

Dr. Marisa Pedulla is the primary author of the grant submitted in January 2022. Dr. Pedulla's primary research focuses on bacteriophages, viruses that infect and replicate in bacterial cells. She has photos of these tiny microbes hanging on her desk, taken with transmission electron microscopes at other campuses. The flat, 2-D images are used to give university students in

Pedulla's classes and K-12 students in the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program an idea of what phages look like.

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## REVITALIZING MINING COMMUNITIES

A new Department of Energy initiative could help revitalize mining communities' economies and utilize underdeveloped lands already mined by extractive operations.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act earmarked \$500 million that will be made available to fund up to five clean energy projects on mining lands- operating and closed. The Department of Energy is formulating parameters for these projects and are expected to have an open request for proposals in 2023.

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## RISSER RECEIVES 2022 DEAN PREBLE MEMORIAL AWARD



Montana Tech Mathematical Sciences professor and department head Dr. Hilary Smith Risser was recently honored by the Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) for her leadership in mathematics. Dr. Smith Risser received the 2022 Dean Preble Memorial Award at the MCTM annual meeting.

The memorial award is given in memory of Dean Preble, who died of cancer in 1998. Preble was recognized for his unflinching support for mathematics education in Montana. His dedication to the mathematics teaching profession, his love of his students, his involvement in state and national mathematics organizations, and his devotion to improving mathematics education for all were unparalleled.



## INVESTIGATING THE RECOVERY OF VALUABLE METALS



Montana Tech researchers have been awarded \$700,804 by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science to investigate the recovery of valuable metals from waste slags generated by mining and metallurgical industries.

The project proposes a novel technique to extract valuable metals from mixed waste slag piles. The recovered metals could then be marketed for industry, and the project will alleviate environmental metal-leaching concerns with slag piles such that the remediated secondary slag could be used in the construction industry. The project will be powered by energy recovery from diverted plastic waste streams.

The university will use the funds to purchase equipment, design a reactor, pay graduate student workers, and obtain raw materials and laboratory supplies.

*Read more*



## TEAM HEADED TO COP27



Montana Tech assistant professor of Civil Engineering, Dr. Jessica Daignault, will attend the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) in Egypt from November 6 to 18. Heads of State, ministers, negotiators, climate activists, mayors, civil society representatives, and CEOs will meet in the Egyptian coastal city of Sharm el-Sheikh for the largest annual gathering on climate action. The conference seeks renewed solidarity between countries to take action on an array of issues critical to tackling the climate emergency – from urgently reducing greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience, and adapting to the inevitable

impacts of climate change to delivering on the commitments to finance climate action in developing countries.

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## **OLDS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT GROWS**

Montana Tech alumni Nick and Kari Olds have donated \$150,000 to enhance the university's Olds Family Endowed Scholarship. The couple established the endowment in 2019. The scholarship supports students who graduate from a Montana high school, are pursuing a four-year degree, and demonstrate financial need. Nick and Kari received degrees in petroleum engineering from Montana Tech, in 1992 and 1994 respectively. This initiated rewarding careers in the oil and natural gas industry for both.



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## **ROVIG AWARDED CHANCELLOR'S AWARD OF DISTINCTION**



Flathead Valley native and retired international mining executive Dan Rovig received Montana Tech's Chancellor's Award of Distinction on September 30, during Homecoming festivities. The award, established in 2021, recognizes individuals who have achieved the most distinguished personal and professional accomplishments while also serving and bringing distinction to Montana Tech.

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## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDEES

Four alumni were recognized during Homecoming Week as Distinguished Alumni of Montana Tech. The awards were conferred by the Montana Tech Alumni Association.

In its 122-year history Montana Tech alumni have used their connections and opportunities to help change the world. This year's honorees are leaders at some of Butte's largest and most influential companies. Congratulations to Elizabeth Erickson BS '88 Geophysical Engineering and MS '95

Geoscience/Hydrological Engineering; Mike McGivern BS '89 Occupational Safety & Health; Dan Manson BS '92 Environmental Engineering; and Kristen Manson BS '92 Engineering Science.



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## DIGGER INTEGRITY DAY

The Montana Tech Writing Program hosted an escape room scenario for Digger Integrity Day 2022. The October 19<sup>th</sup> event was a huge success with roughly 70 students completing academic honesty-themed tasks as they tried to escape with their integrity. The hands-on experience mingled fun with academic integrity principles and coincided with the International Day of Action Against Contract Cheating.



The Sherry Lesar School of Nursing at Montana Tech is ranked the #1 nursing program in Montana in the 2023 Top Ranked Nursing Schools listing by RegisteredNursing.org.

The rankings are determined by comparing the past five years of first-time pass rate data for the NCLEX-RN test, a national licensing exam for registered nurses. Pass rates from the most recent test year are given more weight, and scores from five years ago are given less weight in the process.

*Read more*



Congratulations to Natasha Chadwell and Abby Peltomaa on being named to the list of 20 under 40 winners. We are so proud of both of you! Natasha is the program administrator for the mathematics and computer science departments and the College of Letters, Sciences, & Professional Studies. Abby is an adjunct faculty member in the Biological Sciences Department and is the data manager for the Department of Reclamation and Environmental Services for Butte-Silver Bow. We are so proud of each of you and thankful you are part of the Montana Tech team! Read the insert in the Montana Standard [here](#).



# SIGN UNVEILED AT HIGHLANDS



Highlands College unveiled a new sign on campus in conjunction with Trades and Technology Day. The sign, housed in the pre-apprentice line pole yard, showcases a partnership between the university and NorthWestern Energy. The sign will promote the line program to prospective students.



# ATHLETICS UPDATE

All Fall Sports teams were ranked or received votes during the fall season.

**Cross Country:** The Montana Tech Cross Country Teams finished the regular season Friday at the Frontier Conference Championships in Helena. Both men's and women's teams finished in third place. Sophomore Hailey Nielson took second place, and Carlin Manning finished in fifth, earning their way to the NAIA National Championships in Tallahassee, Florida, as individual qualifiers. The men's team is receiving votes in the NAIA Coaches' Top 25, but the team must wait for a potential at-large bid to go to Tallahassee. Edwin Kipainoi finished third, and Justin Morgan took fourth, earning qualifying as individuals for the national championships. The Orediggers also hosted the Tony Banovich Invitational at Highlands View Golf Course, their first meet since the program started.

**Football:** Montana Tech Football is 6-3 with one game left on the season. The Orediggers final home game last weekend against Montana Western in windy winter conditions was another exciting game. After starting the season unranked, the Orediggers went to No. 19 in the polls. The Orediggers travel to Havre for the final game against Montana State-Northern.

**Women's Basketball:** First-year head coach Jeff Graham started his debut for Oredigger women's basketball in a thriller against Dickinson State. The Blue Hawks forced the game into overtime, and the Orediggers came from behind in the final frame to get coach Graham's first win as an Oredigger in front of the hometown crowd, winning 61-59. The women's basketball team is on the road until the Frontier Conference opener on December 1st against Rocky Mountain.

**Men's Basketball:** The Tech Men's Basketball team is ranked No. 23 in the NAIA Preseason Poll and opened the 2022-23 season with two convincing victories. The Orediggers defeated Warner Pacific in the Montana Tech Tip-Off Classic 90-69. The season is young, but last season Frontier Conference Champions are showing that they are ready to fight for another title. The Frontier Conference coaches picked the Orediggers to finish second in the league standings, and Caleb Bellach was selected as the Preseason Player of the Year.

**Golf:** The Oredigger Golf Teams wrapped up the conference season in October, and both teams are receiving votes in the final NAIA Coaches' Top 25 Poll of the fall season, a first in program history. Both teams finished second in the regular season tournaments this fall, led by third-year head coach Sean Ryan. While the women's team is very young, they posted the best score at a 36-hole tournament in school history. The men's team improved in every tournament, highlighted by hole-in-ones by Matt Hobbs and Jhett Braley. The Orediggers start back up in the spring, and the Frontier Conference Championships are April 17-19.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The **Campus Winter Stroll** will take place on **Friday, December 2** across campus.

Come enjoy great food and time with your colleagues at the **Holiday Brunch** on **Tuesday, December 13** anytime from 9:00 am to 11:00 am in the Dining Hall.

You and a partner are invited to the **Chancellor's Holiday Party** on **Thursday, December 15** from 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the Chancellor's Residence. Appetizers and cheer will be served.



