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# MACDEP<sup>e</sup> NEWS

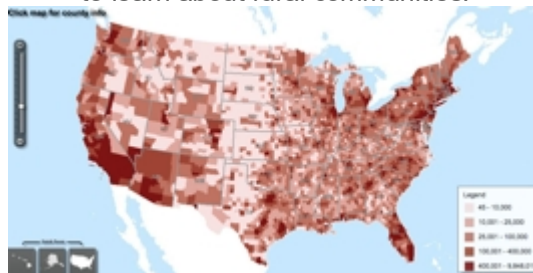
MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

June 2011

## Reports & Resources

### Atlas of Rural and Small-Town America USDA Economic Research Service | [READ STORY](#)

A new interactive tool on the ERS website allows users to learn about rural communities.



### Connected Citizens: The Power, Peril, and Potential of Networks Knight Foundation | [READ STORY](#)

A report on the effects of digital networks on communities.

### President's Corner

We've given the MACDEP e-News a major facelift! This new design is a more organized way to present community development information and resources for MACDEP members and the hundreds of individuals who are receiving the e-News. If you have suggestions about how we can present and distribute this information more effectively, please contact us at [commdev@montana.edu](mailto:commdev@montana.edu). Your feedback is welcome and appreciated!

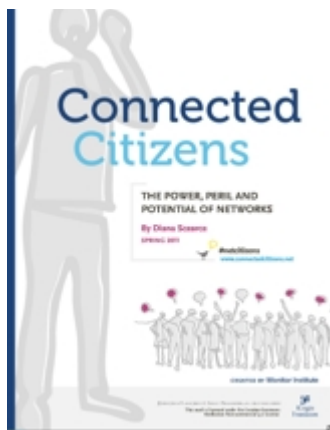
-Paul Lachapelle  
MACDEP President

### Upcoming Events

#### [Helping Small Towns Succeed Institute](#)

June 6-8, 2011  
South Haven, MI

#### [Building Strong Communities Webinar](#)



June 9, 12 PM MST  
Select the "login as guest option," previous webinars available here

### [2011 Community Capitals Institute](#)

October 10-11, 2011  
Des Moines, IA  
Abstracts due August 15

### Grants, Awards & Jobs

#### [US Harvest Awards](#)

Deadline: July 20, 2011  
Funder: Glynwood

#### [Worldwide Grant Program](#)

Deadline: July 1, 2011  
Funder: Tourism Cares

#### [Healthier US School Challenge Awards](#)

Deadline: Varies  
Funder: USDA Food and Nutrition Service

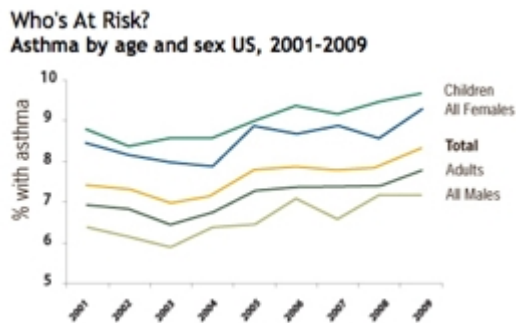
#### [Technical Assistance for Rural and Tribal Communities](#)

Deadline: Ongoing  
Funder: Community Transportation Association

### CDC Asthma Report

#### [Centers for Disease Control | READ STORY](#)

A new report details the growth in asthma and describes risk factors.



### Internet Freedom Scores

#### [The Economist Online | READ STORY](#)

A new report rates countries on the degree of government Internet regulation.

### National/International News

#### [Spent Fuel Rods Pose Threat](#)

Depleted fuel rods in US storage sites may pose a risk to the public.

Christian Science Monitor; May 25



## Housing Prices Fall, No Rise in Disposable Income for American Workers

[The Economist Online](#) | [READ STORY](#)

Low housing prices and no increase in disposable income for American workers lead the economic outlook; housing prices are compared with the S&P 500 below.



## Welfare Reform Unsuccessful, Report Claims

[Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) | [READ STORY](#)

## [Water and Energy in the West](#)

A look at the water-energy nexus in Western states.

[NewWest.com](#); May 23

## [Utah Embraces Gold and Silver Coins](#)

Utah legislature approves the use of gold and silver for transactions.

[Salt Lake Tribune](#); May 22

## [Senate Considers Per-Mile Vehicle Tax](#)

Senate Finance committee considers a bill to tax drivers based on how many miles they drive.

[Great Falls Tribune](#); May 16

## [Economists Suggest Selling Gold Reserves](#)

Some economists are suggesting that the US should reduce debt by selling gold reserves.

[Washington Post](#); May 15

## [Eliminating Oil Subsidies Could Save Billions](#)

Eliminating subsidies for big oil companies could save \$21B over 10 years.

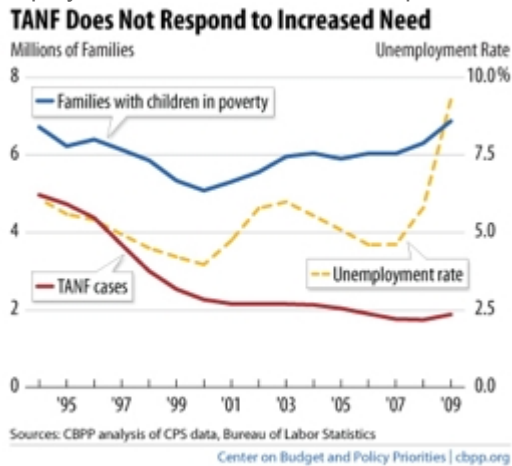
[Washington Post](#); May 10

## [April Marks Most Hires Since 2006](#)

April marks the biggest monthly new job total in five years.

[Denver Post](#); May 6

A new report suggests that TANF has not responded to unemployment rates and numbers of poor families.



## Taxation and Income

[The Economist Online](#) | [READ STORY](#)

A new report compares tax burdens on employees and employers and earnings by country.

## Montana News

### [Developer Proposes Planned Community for Billionaires in Helena](#)

A planned community proposed by a Helena developer includes an equestrian center and gold course.

Helena Independent Record;  
May 29

### [Montana-Based Company Signs \\$1.5B Expansion Deal](#)

A Whitefish-based company signs an international expansion deal.

Flathead Beacon; May 19

### [Tribes Celebrate Legislative Victories](#)

Two property tax bills were passed that benefit tribal members.

Char-Koosta News; May 19

### [Crop Planting Delayed by Weather](#)

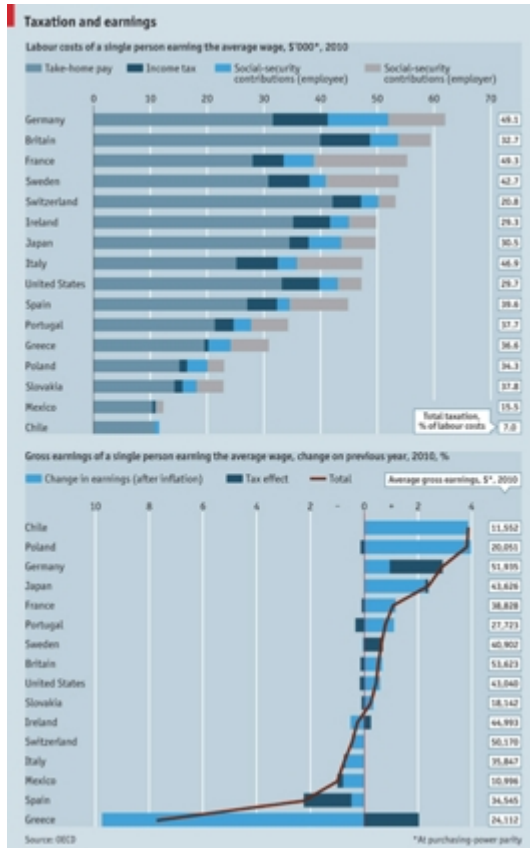
Wet ground has delayed spring planting for Montana farmers.

Billings Gazette; May 18

### [Wheat Leads Montana Exports](#)

Wheat and manufactured exports increased 33 percent from 2009 to 2010.

Helena Independent Record;  
May 12



## Local Food Distributor

### Opens

A Bozeman-area distributor helps local producers distribute their goods.

Billings Gazette; May 10

### Missoula Buses Offer Free Wi-Fi

All Missoula buses now offer free Internet access.

Missoulian; May 5

### EPA Releases Report on Libby Cleanup

The Environmental Protection Agency has released a report that indicates asbestos contamination remains after 10 years of clean-up operations.

Missoulian May 4

## The Value of College

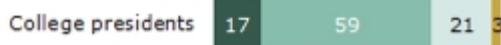
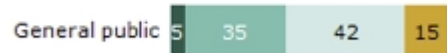
### Pew Research Center | [READ STORY](#)

This report examines the value of college by examining factors such as earning payoff and debt; attitudes about the value of college are also

### Is College a Good Value?

*% who rate the job the higher education system is doing in providing value for the money spent by students and their families as ...*

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Only fair ■ Poor



examined.

## Gas Prices and Politics

The Economist Online | [READ STORY](#)

Rising gas prices (see chart below) can generate political buzz and partisan proposals.



## Churches Contribute to Local Economies

Operation Church | [READ STORY](#)

A recent report finds that churches contribute an average of \$476,000 to local communities.

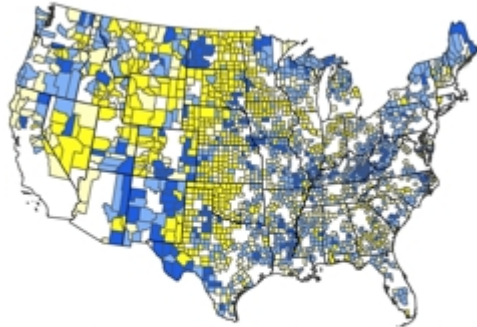


## Decrease in Rural Incomes

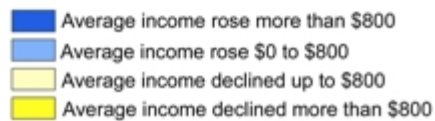
[Daily Yonder](#) | [READ STORY](#)

The average per capita income in rural counties in 2009 was 79% of the national average, up slightly from 2000.

### Rural Income, Gains and Losses 2008 to 2009



*Change in per capita income in rural counties  
from 2008 to 2009*



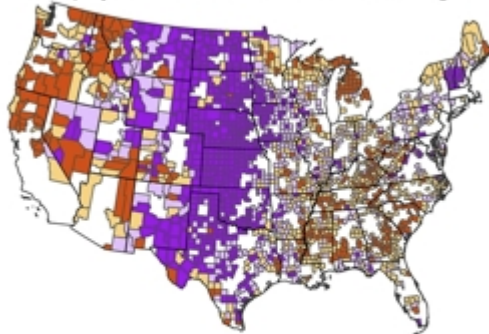
## Unemployment Falls Further in March

[Daily Yonder](#) | [READ STORY](#)

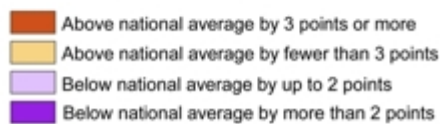
Unemployment in rural counties continued to run at a higher rate than in either exurban or urban counties in March 2011. But rates everywhere are dropping.

### Rural Unemployment: March 2011

*Most rural counties (those in purple) had March unemployment rates below the national average*



**National Average Unemployment: 9.2% in March**





## Federal Program Overlooks Rural America

Daily Yonder | [READ STORY](#)

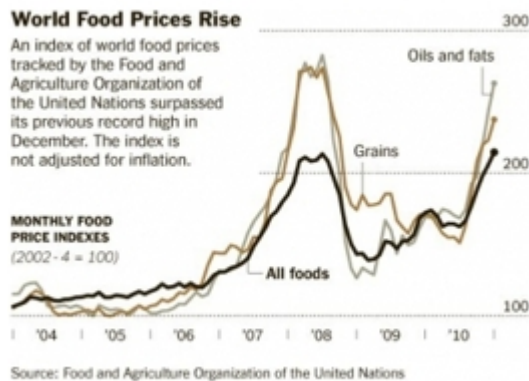
The Social Innovation Fund is a federal program aimed at encouraging community-based solutions for local problems. When the Fund gave out its grants, however, rural America was largely missing.



## Wall Street and Food Prices

Daily Yonder | [READ STORY](#)

After Wall Street figured out a way to make investments in commodities look a lot like investments in stocks, food prices jumped. Is there a connection?



## Rural America Transportation Bill

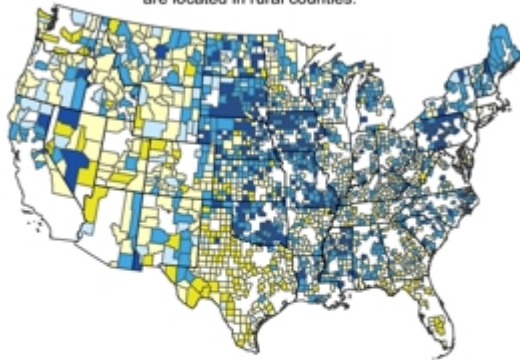
Daily Yonder | [READ STORY](#)



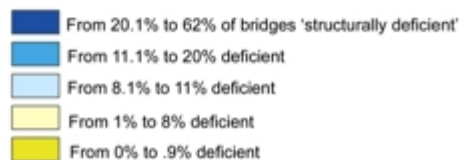
Any federal transportation policy needs to insure that rural communities have the same level of choice in pursuing multiple transportation goals and options as their urban counterparts.

### **Rural America's Worst Bridges**

Two-thirds of the highway bridges found to be 'structurally deficient' are located in rural counties.



**Bridges found 'structurally deficient' by Federal Highway Administration**



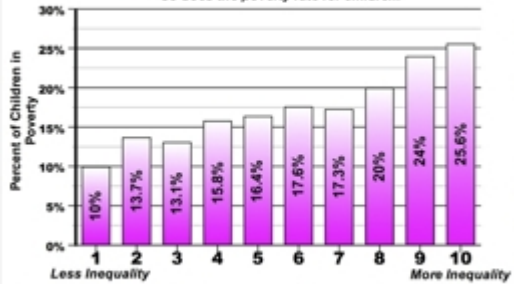
### **Increased Inequality in Rural and Urban Areas**

[Daily Yonder | READ STORY](#)

Income inequality is increasing between counties in both rural and urban America. Income gains in richer counties are outpacing gains in poorer places. Meanwhile, there is growing evidence that inequality has a number of ill effects on society.

## Child Poverty Rates

As income inequality increases in U.S. counties, so does the poverty rate for children.



Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

The Census Bureau calculates income inequality in every U.S. county. Counties are divided into ten groups, from the least inequality to the most. The percent of children in poverty from 2008 is averaged for each group of counties.



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