



Agriculture and Energy in Montana



**Procrastinator Theater, MSU-Bozeman
282B Strand Union Building
Friday, November 5, 2010**

Speaker Biographies

Joel Schumacher

Joel Schumacher has been an Extension Economics Associate Specialist with the Department of Agricultural Economics at Montana State University since 2006. He holds a master's degree in agricultural economics and a bachelor's degree in business from Montana State University. His research and outreach programs focus on bioenergy production opportunities, agricultural policy and consumer economics. Prior to current appointment Joel worked as a pension analyst helping small business owners design and implement retirement plans.

Vince Smith

Vincent H. Smith is Professor of Economics in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University and co-director of MSU's Agricultural Marketing Policy Center. He received his Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in 1987 and his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Manchester in 1970 and 1971. Professor Smith's current research program examines agricultural trade and domestic policy issues, with a particular focus on agricultural insurance, agricultural science policy, domestic and world commodity markets, risk management, and agricultural trade policy. He has authored nine books and monographs, including his widely known work with Dr. Barry Goodwin on *The Economics of Crop Insurance and Disaster Aid*, and published over 100 articles on agricultural and other policy and economic issues. His contributions have been recognized nationally through multiple national awards for outstanding research programs. In 2008, he became a *Distinguished Scholar* of the Western Agricultural Economics Association. From January through July of 2010, he spent a sabbatical in the USDA Office of the Chief Economist examining the supply side of the U.S. federal agricultural insurance program.

Gary Brester

Gary Brester is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. He was raised on an irrigated sugarbeet and malting barley farm near Laurel, Montana. He has two degrees from Montana State University -- a B.S. in Agricultural Business and an M.S. in Applied Economics. He received his Ph.D. degree in Economics from North Carolina State University. Dr. Brester was an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University from 1990-1997. Since 1997, he has been a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. His teaching responsibilities include farm and ranch management, agribusiness management, finance, and agricultural marketing. Brester's applied research program includes livestock and grain, risk management, international trade, agribusiness, and farm management issues. Dr. Brester is currently serving as the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*.

Myles Watts

Myles Watts is a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. After receiving a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska, he joined the Montana State faculty in 1978. He served as Department Head for 17 years, and his current responsibilities include classroom teaching, research, and outreach education. Dr. Watts has served in various editorial capacities for the *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*. He has also received multiple honors and awards from professional associations including the Distinguished Scholar Award from the Western Agricultural Economics Association. He has advised many governments and private organizations, including large international reinsurance companies on an array of financial issues, mostly focusing on agricultural insurance. He serves a variety of nonprofit economic education groups as a board member or in other leadership positions. He was recently appointed to the board of directors of Farmer Mac. His family still owns and operates the cattle and wheat ranch where he was raised in southeastern Montana.

Duane Griffith

Duane Griffith is an Extension Farm Management Specialist with Montana State University. His interests include production economics and financial analysis covering all aspects of farm and ranch business performance. His educational curriculum includes crop and livestock enterprise analysis, machinery management, marketing of agricultural commodities, complete farm and ranch financial analysis and emerging risk management issues for agricultural operations. Duane also develops on-farm decision aids for farmers and ranchers to analyze their operations. These decision aids are typically in the form of Excel spreadsheets and are available for download from the Web address listed below. Duane is also involved in research projects such as the economic implications of adopting farming practices for carbon sequestration in farmed soils at the individual producer level and using livestock grazing to manage weed and insect infestations on agricultural operations. Web address: www.montana.edu/softwaredownloads/

Ron de Yong

Ron de Yong was appointed Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture in July 2007 by Gov. Schweitzer. A member of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, he also serves as chairman of the Rural Development and Financial Security Committee, which advises federal officials and Congress on farm program and policy issues. He also served as the President of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture from Sept. 2009 through Sept. 2010. Ron owns a 320-acre family farm near Kalispell that produces wheat, barley, peppermint, peas, lentils and alfalfa. For seven years prior to becoming director, he was a lecturer at Cal Poly State University, teaching agricultural policy and economics. Ron earned a master's degree in economics at the University of Montana and undergraduate degrees from Montana State University in agricultural science and philosophy. He has participated in national and international policy discussions as a Montana state committeeman for the USDA Farm Service Agency; state director, lobbyist and national economist for the National Farmers Union; and a member of Senator Max Baucus's delegation to the 1999 World Trade Organization ministerial meeting in Seattle. In his capacity as director, de Yong serves on the Rail Service Competition Council, Noxious Weed Summit Advisory Committee, Montana Wheat & Barley Committee, Montana Agriculture Development Council and various other committees. He and his wife Dee have three children and four grandchildren.

Patrick M. Barkey

Patrick Barkey is Director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana, a sixty year old organization with a distinguished record of timely, relevant research and information on the state and regional economies. He has been involved with economic forecasting and policy research for 26 years, both in the private and public sector. Before coming to Montana he served as Director of the Bureau of Business Research at Ball State University in Indiana for fourteen years. His recent research has been on the economic impact of higher educational attainment, the effect of alcohol abuse on the state economy, and the economic impact of trade with Canada. The BBER is the state's pre-eminent business research organization. Founded in 1948, the Bureau has been involved with forecasting since its inception, with special attention paid to industries of special relevance to Montana. Since 1975 the BBER has conducted economic outlook seminars in Montana's major cities, and its 34th forecasting tour will visit nine cities across the state. He attended the University of Michigan, receiving a B.A. ('79) and Ph.D. ('86) in economics.

Tim Fitzgerald

Timothy Fitzgerald joined the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University in 2009 as an Assistant Professor. He teaches classes in Natural Resource Economics and Quantitative Methods. His research investigates agricultural, environmental, and energy topics. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

Adam Sigler

Adam Sigler is the Extension Water Quality Associate Specialist in the Land Resources and Environmental Sciences Department (LRES) at MSU-Bozeman. Adam has an MS in Land Resources from MSU and has been conducting water quality research, education, and outreach with MSU Extension since 2005. He is the Montana coordinator for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) National Water Program, teaches a junior level water quality course at MSU, works with watershed groups and Tribes around MT to build water quality monitoring capacity, collaborates with the National Park Service's Greater Yellowstone Inventory and Monitoring team on water quality monitoring and conducts educational programming for private well and septic owners in Montana. In 2006, Sigler co-produced a documentary film (Prairies and Pipelines) about Coal Bed Methane development in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana.

Richard Owen

Richard Owen was elected to the Board of Directors of CHS Inc. in 1999. Since then he has been involved with state and federal agricultural issues, testifying in Helena and Washington, DC. He is on the Board of ACDI/VOCA, a global organization, President of Montana Cooperative Development Center, Mountain View Coop, LLC director, member of Montana Grain Growers and Farmers Union. He graduated from MSU in Agriculture Production/Ag Econ and sits on the College of Agriculture Curriculum Advisory Committee. Richard farms east of Geraldine with his wife Chris. They have two sons.

William F. Whitsitt

William F. Whitsitt was elected to the position of executive vice president, Public Affairs, in August 2008. Prior to joining Devon, Whitsitt spent 11 years in Washington D.C. as a public affairs consultant representing a broad range of clients including Devon. Whitsitt previously served as director of governmental affairs for one of the world's largest law firms and held the position of vice president of worldwide marketing and public affairs for Oryx Energy Co. He has served as chief of staff to a U.S. Senator and as a legislative assistant in the Senate and House of Representatives. Whitsitt holds a doctoral degree in Public Administration from George Washington University.