



MEDIA RELEASE

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IMAGE: MCC Staff and Board of Trustee members pose with award

MCC receives local Business of the Year award; nods for Opportunity Realized Program

MILES CITY, MONTANA: Miles Community College has been named the recipient of the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce award for Business of the Year, given out at the 2023 Miles City Citizens of the Year banquet held Thursday night. Nominations are submitted anonymously through the chamber by local community members and organizations.

"We're so excited and honored to be recipients of this award," stated MCC President Ron Slinger, who accepted the award on behalf of the college. "I hope that you're proud of our college because we're proud of being your college," he said, as he spoke to the banquet guests.

During the banquet, Chamber Executive Director John Laney spoke of the nominations submitted on behalf of MCC. "The college was nominated for several things, such as enrollment numbers, diversity, and a positive work environment. But the heart of the nomination was based on the pilot program (they) introduced."

Laney referred to the work of the Opportunity Realized Program developed at MCC and piloted in the spring of 2023. This program offers a free, one-credit college course to Montana students through partnering school districts. "This (Business of the Year) award is based primarily on the implementation of the Opportunity Realized Program; for the defined path of education implementing basic skill sets."

Slinger thanked the business community during his acceptance address. "We are getting national recognition for the program and the reason is this: we are creating tomorrow's workforce. Whether a student wants to go onto college or not...we want them to be job ready. We also want them to be trained in the skills that our business community has asked of us, like the soft skills that we all know they desperately need. And now, we're doing just that."

During the night, Slinger also mentioned the work of his executive team and board of trustees, many of whom were on hand during the banquet and had provided feedback based on conversations with the community. "They share with me what they've heard from you and the visions that you have," he stated to the banquet audience. "We develop our strategic plan around that. We develop initiatives and expectations around what we want to be. And I can tell you...we're thriving."

MCC has continued to see growth in enrollment throughout the last several years and is projected to have record headcount enrollment this academic year. Slinger stated during his address that the college is on track to serve well over 1300 students this year, compared to the 943 students enrolled in 2021.



IMAGE: MCC Executive Staff Members enjoying the banquet

Slinger continued speaking about the success of the Opportunity Realized Program and its workforce solutions, and joked that most colleges including MCC, give away "letters", referring to the acronyms used to name the specific degree awarded. "What we really want to give away is a J-O-B," stated Slinger.

The president continued with the specifics of the program and its aimed goals of preparing students for the workforce, including the 30 schools across Montana who are currently committed to providing the resources of the program to their students. "One of our 30 school district partners is Darby. If you know where Darby is, you

can throw a rock into Idaho. We also have Townsend, we have Lewistown, we have Sidney, we have our locals: Terry, Jordan, Plevna, Baker, Wibaux.”



IMAGE: MCC President Slinger during his acceptance speech

“And I'm excited to let you know that we have talked with Superintendent (Meghan) Brown, and I am confident this fall, we will also be in Custer County District High School.”

Slinger rounded out his speech with one last thank you to the community. “From the bottom my heart, thank you. And thank you so much for the support you give us.”

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