

## ‘Not in the job description’

### Montana Teacher of the Year Craig Beals

MEA-MFT member Craig Beals has a message to deliver: “Those who can, teach.” Beals himself is a case in point. He has done high-level scientific research all over the world, from Belize, Mongolia, Greenland, Borneo, and Africa to Montana.

He could have worked in many scientific fields, but what fascinates him most is the science of teaching. He wants people to know that teachers are top-notch professionals in their fields who have chosen to devote their lives to young people.

Beals will get a chance to deliver this message across Montana and America in the coming year. He was chosen as the 2015 Montana Teacher of the Year this fall.

Each year, the Montana Teacher of the Year program recognizes a teacher who personifies the best in the teaching profession. The program is sponsored and administered by MEA-MFT’s Montana Professional Teaching Foundation.

Beals teaches earth science and chemistry in grades 9-12 at Billings Senior High School. He was honored at the Teacher of the Year Celebration in (Continued on p. 11)



Igniting students’ imaginations: Craig Beals demonstrates the combustion reaction of methane and specific heat of water. He covers his hand with water, grabs a handful of methane bubbles, and lights them on fire. The water protects his hand from the heat. Don’t try this at home! (Photo by Houston Harmon, art teacher at Billings Senior High)



## State Employee Pay Plan **Days of Action**

January 19 & February 16 • **State Capitol, Helena**

**Mark your calendar! Join us!** More about the pay plan on page 4.

## Worry & opportunity – 2015 legislature

BY ERIC FEAVER  
MEA-MFT PRESIDENT



Last November's legislative elections produced far less than what we wanted: more partisan balance in the state legislature. Despite efforts to elect moderate Republicans as well as progressive Democrats, we ended up with a legislature, especially a House of Representatives, that may be more hard core tea party than ever.

**Chilling to consider** the 2015 House Education Committee will be chaired and vice chaired by Montana Family Foundation favorites with limited and no legislative experience respectively but undeniable antipathy for public education along with a born-again determination to privatize for God and profit. Long, long gone are those legislative days Republicans Ralph Eudaily and Earl Lory chaired and vice chaired the House Education Committee. Bless them both as they roll over in their graves.

There is no reason to believe right now that we can stop a tax credit, pay voucher, or charter school bill in this committee. And likely not in the full House. But we will try.

Every bit as chilling to consider is the 2015 House Appropriations Committee chaired and vice chaired by legislators with little use for public schools and good government.

This is not to say we now wax enthusiastic about the 2015 Senate. But along with dragons that wait therein (e.g. some who would revisit efforts to end public employee pensions, some who would diminish the constitutional authority of the board of public education, some who would turn our schools into armed camps), the Senate enjoys some quality legislators less interested in drowning government in a bathtub and killing public schools. Or so we think.

It is enough to say the 2015 legislature challenges all who believe in and support good government, quality public schools, the folks who do work that matters therein, and the social compact to which this union is morally committed.

**So, despite the odds**, we have an agenda to pursue, an agenda that we could achieve, given a political break or two...and Governor Steve Bullock. Yes, our excellent pro-government, pro-public schools governor who is dedicated to doing the best he can for our state and ALL our

citizens...and at a minimum doing no harm.

**State employee pay plan.** Along with fellow unionists from MPEA and AFSCME we negotiated with the governor a 50 cent hourly increase each year of the 2017 biennium. Should be a no brainer. It is exactly what legislative leaders in the past two sessions told us they wanted to see: a modest, across the board, same dollar pay increase for all executive branch employees.

**Early Edge.** Governor Bullock has it right. This state spends almost nothing on pre-k education. Absurd...and everyone knows it. Regardless, for those school districts that don't want to move into early childhood education, they won't have to. And for those parents who don't want to send their children to public school at age 4, they won't have to. My guess is, however, "if we build it, they will come." Early Edge is not a Hardin jail story. It's past time for legislators to get on board with quality public schools for all our children.

**Medicaid Expansion.** Why is this an issue? Why in the world would any legislator deny health care benefits to any resident of our state? Health care in large part already paid for by our federal taxes? Why would any legislator stand by and watch small town clinics close down because they can no longer afford to provide health care for those who have little or no money to pay? Why would any legislator endorse cost shifting from those who can't purchase health care to those who can? And how could any legislator read without weeping of yet another bake sale to pay the health care costs of some family in need but without health insurance?

Is it true, the tea party has no heart?

**Build Montana.** Help me understand why the Montana state legislature would continue to fail to invest in vital infrastructure repair and development from the Bakken to Whitefish? Let's run our government like a business. And in so doing provide a modern home for our world class Historical Society.

Go here—<http://www.leg.mt.gov/css/sessions/64th/default.asp> — follow your legislator. Be informed. It's your duty. ■



## Bill Howell retires

Field Consultant Bill Howell had a sign on his wall in MEA-MFT's Missoula office saying, "I understand." And he does. Howell has been defending the rights of MEA-MFT members and other NEA state affiliate members for four decades in seven states.

Howell retired from MEA-MFT this fall.



Bill Howell

His union career began in 1974 when he went to work for the Kansas NEA, where he learned the ropes as a member advocate.

He recalls defending one teacher there for three years in an unfair dismissal case.

"She was a Hispanic woman that this blond, blue-eyed Lutheran community had hired because they wanted a native speaker to teach Spanish," he said. "Then they discovered she was Catholic and had an accent. She was a very good teacher, but she didn't fit in. That's why we protect the minority from the majority."

All the best, Bill. Thanks for everything. ■

## Other staff changes

Bill Howell's retirement triggered a chain reaction in MEA-MFT staff and leadership. To replace Howell, **Tom Burgess** has moved across the Divide to Missoula from MEA-MFT's Helena field office.

Burgess has worked as an MEA-MFT field consultant for many years. He is the dedicated dad of Briggett, Erika, and Matt. He enjoys hunting and fishing, and he builds fly rods when he can't get out in Montana's great outdoors.

To replace Burgess, **Tammy Pilcher** has stepped down as vice president of MEA-MFT to become a field consultant. Pilcher taught grades k-5 in Helena for 17 years, then served as full-time release president of the Helena Education Association. She was elected MEA-MFT vice president in 2013. She has three children: Kayla, Logan, and Lane.

## New MEA-MFT VP

To fill the vice presidency, MEA-MFT's Board of Directors voted on a replacement

as specified by MEA-MFT's constitution. The board elected **Melanie Charlson**. Charlson is the full-time president of the Missoula Education Association and MEA-MFT's NEA director.

Charlson will go where angels fear to tread in her mission for quality public education and public services and a fair deal for our members. She is the proud mom of Ben and Annika. ■

## Coming up: Rep. Assembly

MEA-MFT's Representative Assembly (RA) takes place March 27-28, 2015 in Helena. RA is democracy in action. Local members elect delegates to represent their concerns at RA. Be sure your local affiliate is fully represented!

Among other actions, delegates will elect a new NEA director. This position is now held by Melanie Charlson, MEA-MFT's new vice president (see above). The NEA director represents MEA-MFT members on the board of the NEA, one of our two national affiliates. RA delegates will also elect a new director-at-large and odd-numbered cluster district chairs and vice chairs.

Delegates will also determine budget and dues. You'll find the proposed dues at our web site, [mea-mft.org](http://mea-mft.org), by the end of January. ■📄

## Tax notice

You can deduct your MEA-MFT dues from your taxes, but only if you itemize deductions, and only if your dues plus other miscellaneous deductions add up to at least 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.

The portion of your MEA-MFT dues that goes toward our legislative activity is not deductible. For 2014, the deductible amount equals 97.1 percent of your MEA-MFT dues, all of your local dues, and all of your national dues. ■

## Membership information

In accordance with MEA-MFT Policy 603, members who wish to withdraw their membership from MEA-MFT must do so between August 1 and September 30.

Policy 603.1. Withdrawal from continuous membership must be by written notice to the MEA-MFT president. Such notice must be given between August 1 and September 30. No one may withdraw from membership by notifying their local union or management. ■



Tom Burgess



Tammy Pilcher



Melanie Charlson

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# State employees gear up to pass the state pay plan

The vote is in: MEA-MFT's state employee members have ratified the state employee pay plan agreement.

The pay plan agreement was reached November 6 by the team representing Montana's state employee unions and Governor Bullock's office.

The unions' team included members of MEA-MFT, MPEA, and AFSCME. Around 50 union members participated in the negotiations, which took place over several months.

Ratification ballots were mailed to state employee members of all three unions in November. Votes were counted December 18, and the agreement was ratified overwhelmingly.

## What's in the pay plan

The pay plan calls for:

- An increase of 50 cents per hour (\$1,040 per year) in base pay for all state employees beginning October 2015, and another beginning October 2016. That's a total \$2,080 increase in base pay.
- Increases of about \$89 per month (\$1,068 per year) in the employer's contribution to monthly health insurance premiums in 2016,

and \$78 per month (\$936 per year) in 2017.

- Meaningful discussion about inequities in the state's current broadband pay system.

"I'm very proud of our bargaining team; they did a great job," said MEA-MFT Field Consultant Larry Nielsen.

"The heavy lifting begins in January as we begin to work with the legislature. We'll need all our state employee members to get involved."

## Not a done deal: your action needed!

The next step is getting our legislators to support and vote for the pay plan. The three unions will work with Governor Bullock's office to get the pay plan (now in House Bill 13) passed through the 2015 Montana Legislature, which convenes January 5.

Because of low voter turnout in Montana's fall election, we face a difficult legislature. We'll have to work harder than ever to educate our legislators about the work we do—work that matters, work that improves Montana.

We each must talk with our legislators about why our pay plan is important to us, why it will strengthen our communities and local economies, and why it will continue to improve our state.

**We can do it!** If everyone gets involved, we can get this pay plan passed.

## What you can do

**Participate in our union Days of Action** at the state capitol in Helena. Mark your calendar and look for more information!

- Monday, January 19 (Martin Luther King Day)
- Monday, February 16 (Presidents Day)

**Help spread the word** about the pay plan with your co-workers.

**Watch for action alerts** from our union, MEA-MFT, and get ready to contact your legislators when asked to do so. It's easy and it makes a difference! ■



**We need YOU here:**  
**State Pay Plan**  
**Days of Action**  
**January 19**  
**February 16**  
**State Capitol, Helena**

**PASS HB13**

**Mark your calendar & watch for more info!**



## State employee members earn Governor's Awards of Excellence

Several of MEA-MFT's state employee members were recognized this fall by the Governor's 2014 Awards for Excellence in Performance. The statewide program honors outstanding resourcefulness, major improvements in productivity or cost savings, and teamwork.

Congratulations to the following MEA-MFT members who received Awards for Excellence:

**Tacy Herron & Joslyn Parker - Dept. of Revenue:** Herron and Parker were part of a team of employees who redesigned a state computer system, resulting in major efficiencies and reliability.

**Peter Donovan (Retired MEA-MFT member) - Board of Public Education:** Donovan took on the job of administering Montana's Board of Public Education and the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council. His success has allowed the board to move forward with major initiatives that benefit public education in Montana.

**Landee Holloway - Dept. of Corrections:** As a re-entry officer, Holloway has made major improvements in the re-entry program in Missoula. Working with community organizations, she offers opportunities for re-entry offenders to learn life and coping skills.


**Bryan Johnson, Kimberly Kessler, Julie Sagissor - Dept. of Corrections:** These folks were part of a team that implemented a new technology program to teach computer skills to adult and youthful offenders, helping them get jobs when they return to their communities.

**Rich Aarstad, Jeff Malcomson, Caitlin Patterson, Anneliese Warhank - Historical Society:** The Archives team oversaw a massive storage project to protect our state's treasured archives. The project involved moving 17,685 boxes of rare archival collections. It took 5,600 hours to complete — ahead of schedule and under budget.

**Karen Bauch, Michelle Christensen, Karla Egan, Gloria Garceau-Glaser, Bob Maxson, Kieran Roberts, Brenda Schmidt, Chesa Sullivan - Public Health and Human Services:** This team showed exceptional collaboration implementing the new Community First Choice program. Working in a short time


frame, the team had to develop a new consumer-focused approach to service delivery, train over 400 professionals, and transition 3,000 Medicaid recipients to this service option.


**Mary Croghan, Susan Johnson, Andrea Paulsen, Margaret Riddle, Rebecca Smith, Crystal Thompson - Revenue:** The success of Montana's new online service for businesses to renew their licenses is due to this team. They coordinated the online payment process, fine-tuned the online user experience, made sure all parties were consulted, tested the process to meet users' needs, documented feedback, and created instructions for users. ■



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GEO Vice President  
Nellie Ciesielski helps a  
new member sign up on  
contract ratification day.

‘It’s a huge recognition of the work we do here in both instruction and research. We started GEO because we felt our contribution was going unnoticed. We finally have a voice in how the school treats us and how our working conditions are handled.’

*GEO President  
Jim Junker*



## GEO members ratify historic first contract

MEA-MFT members working as graduate teaching and research assistants at Montana State University-Bozeman will get a fairer deal on the job, now that they have bargained and ratified their first contract.

Their local union, the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO), voted to ratify the contract December 5. The vote was unanimous in favor of the contract.

The contract is “a great first step,” said Jim Junker, president of GEO. “It’s a huge recognition of the work we do here in both instruction and research. We started GEO because we felt our contribution was going unnoticed. We finally have a voice in how the school treats us and how our working conditions are handled.”

Junker has been a graduate employee at MSU for six years, through his master’s program and now his doctoral work in stream ecology, which has included research in Iceland.

“The best part is getting some recognition — and getting a raise,” said GEO member Shari Samuels, a teaching assistant in the math department. Some graduate employees on campus have not seen a raise in over a decade.

Samuels, who is working on her doctoral degree in math education, said she got involved in forming GEO nearly four years ago when

she saw the disparities between wages and job conditions for graduate employees.

Some graduate employees are paid less than minimum wage, she said. Many have had no benefits and no grievance procedures if they had problems with their employers.

“Once I heard those stories, I really wanted to get involved,” Samuels said. “We were doing similar work but not being treated the same.”

The GEO’s new contract addresses some of those disparities. It was a long time coming. “Bargaining went on for eight months,” said Jan Boyer, a research assistant who studies native mountain whitefish in Montana rivers.

MSU-Bozeman has about 640 graduate assistants who teach and do research for various departments. They provide a major benefit to the university and its students. But the university has for years considered them to be only students and not employees.

Having a union and a contract will change that. It will help the university better understand how the graduate assistance program works, Junker said. And it will give GEO members insight into how the university functions. “It will make things more efficient and effective and help keep MSU competitive,” he said.

(Continued on p. 7)



## GEO's first contract (from p. 6)

While the contract benefits all graduate employees, only GEO members were eligible to vote on it — a fact that inspired several graduate employees to join the union December 5. “You get a seat at the table when you’re a member,” said one of them.

**Highlights of GEO's first contract include the following:**

- \$1,200 additional payment for a 10-month appointment.
  - \$360 retroactive payment to continuing graduate employees who were employed in October, November, and December 2014.
  - In-state tuition status for all graduate employees.
  - Minimum salary increased to \$650/month.
- Congratulations to our GEO members! ■



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# Good news: Montanans love their public schools & teachers

Take heart: Despite the criticism we hear from those who want to discredit and privatize public education, Montanans love their public schools. A recent poll shows Montanans rate our public schools and educators very highly.

The Montana Public Education Center (MT PEC), a coalition of public education groups including MEA-MFT, recently contracted a highly respected international polling and research company called Zogby Analytics to conduct the statewide poll of Montana voters.

Here are some key results:

**1. Montana voters give top ratings to their community schools.** 66.5% of Montana voters give their local schools an A or a B.

**2. Montana voters overwhelmingly support a well-rounded public education.** 88.8% said they wanted Montana students to have a well-rounded public education (including music, art, physical education, technology, advanced placement courses) — not just the “basics.”

**3. Montana voters believe funding for k-12 public education should come first** in state budget discussions. Voters mentioned k-12 public education more frequently (54.2%) than any other state spending priority.

**4. Montana voters trust educators most to decide what's best for kids' education.** When asked whom they trust most to decide what is best academically for students, voters ranked teachers and locally elected school boards highest.

**5. Montanans oppose tax benefits for private school tuition.** Most voters (54%) oppose giving tax benefits for tuition at private religious schools.

Opposition was even more pronounced if respondents were asked about private schools without community-elected school boards (66.6% opposed) and private schools not subject to public scrutiny such as open meeting, public document, and public participation laws (73.6% opposed).

**6. Montana voters care about our state constitutional guarantees for public schools.** A huge percentage of Montana voters said the constitutional guarantees under Article X of



the Montana Constitution are either “very” or “somewhat” important to them.

Voters gave highest marks to constitutional guarantees of adequate and equitable funding by the legislature (93.5%), supervision and control by elected school boards (90.9%), and supervision and development of academic standards by the Board of Public Education (85.3%).

## Montana's legislative majority? Not so much

The not-so-good news is that because of low voter turnout in the November election, we face a majority in the 2015 Montana Legislature with very different opinions about public schools.

We will see bills giving tax benefits for private school tuition, privatizing public schools, and weakening our Board of Public Education.

Stopping these bills will take all of us. MEA-MFT will work closely with our friends in the legislature; Governor Bullock; and our coalition, the Montana Public Education Center (MT PEC), to defend and improve our public schools. We'll need your help!

## One way you can help: Join the Day of Advocacy March 16

Friends of public schools will gather at the state capitol all day March 16 to show their support for Montana's public schools and to oppose efforts to privatize our school. Please plan to join us! Watch for more information. ■

## THE NUMBERS

Montana voters speak out about public schools

**66.5%**

Rate their local public schools “A” or “B”

**88.8%**

Prefer a well-rounded education for kids over just the “basics”

**54%**

Oppose giving tax benefits for private school tuition

**66.6%**

Oppose tax benefits for tuition if the private school has no locally elected school board

**73.6%**

Oppose tax benefits for tuition if the private school has no public accountability & scrutiny



## MEA-MFT backs governor's Early Edge plan

Montana has top-quality public schools, but a key piece of the puzzle is missing. While 42 other states invest in early childhood education, Montana remains one of the last few states that have never invested in our earliest learners.

Montana Governor Steve Bullock aims to change that. He knows Montana's greatest obligation is to the next generation. That's why he developed a plan, called Early Edge, to make voluntary, high-quality early childhood education available to every Montana four-year-old.

It's time for Montana to catch up with the rest of the country. Governor Bullock will ask the 2015 Montana Legislature to approve a \$37 million investment in Early Edge. He has included this in his proposed state budget. MEA-MFT will be right there with him, supporting Early Edge.

**Quality pre-k programs ensure all children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.** They not only prepare children for reading and math, but also for paying attention, following directions, and getting along with others.

When children have the chance to develop their social skills, the whole classroom benefits from fewer disruptions and more time

for learning. Children with high-quality early learning opportunities are more likely to read at grade level and graduate from high school.

Every \$1 spent on high-quality pre-k programs creates \$7 in future savings to the communities and states that invest.

### **Giving our children an Early Edge will:**

- Reduce crime rates for juveniles and adults.
- Develop workers with more skills.
- Attract and retain new businesses.

Gov. Bullock's proposal will make block grants available to every Montana public school district to create or expand high-quality early childhood education programs in their community. School districts will have the option of creating a new program or partnering with an existing program, such as Head Start.

### **Early Edge will make sure all Montana families have access to:**

- Highly-qualified teachers and staff.
- Safe and nurturing learning environments.
- Family engagement.
- Comprehensive family services.
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Please watch for more information on how you can help make Early Edge a reality. ■

‘It's time for Montana to catch up with the rest of the country.’





### Top ag teachers

Congratulations to these MEA-MFT members who won top honors this year from the National Association of Agriculture Educators: Shelia Schenk, National Agriscience Teacher of the Year; Kristy Rothe, Outstanding Young Member and Ideas Unlimited; and Eric Tilleman, Outstanding Teacher.

## Our foundation: leading the charge for better teaching & learning

MEA-MFT's foundation, the Montana Professional Teaching Foundation (MPTF) works to help Montana's teachers and students achieve at the highest level. Here is some of the latest news from our foundation:

**Seven new National Board Certified teachers:** Seven more Montana teachers recently joined the ranks of the nation's top teachers, with support from our foundation. These teachers are the latest to earn National Board Certification, the highest level of certification a U.S. teacher can achieve. Montana now has 125 National Board Certified Teachers.

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation has been responsible for the recruitment and mentoring of National Board Certification candidates since the process came to Montana in 1997.

Achieving National Board Certification is no easy feat. NBC candidates spend nine months of their lives subjecting their professional practice to review and criticism.

The state of Montana provides a one-time, \$3000 state stipend to all teachers who attain National Board Certification. Many local school districts honor candidates with a stipend as well. Congratulations to Montana's seven new National Board Certified teachers:

- Craig Beals, Billings Senior High School
- Georgia Laforge and Christine O'Shea, Bozeman, Hyalite Elementary

- Kelsi Luhnnow and Sharon Teague, Seeley Lake Elementary
- Anika McCauley, Boulder Elementary
- Nichole Sullivan, Boulder 7-8

**Teacher Leadership Initiative:** Our foundation recently partnered with the national Teacher Leadership Initiative, a program to develop a new generation of leaders within the teaching profession.

Our foundation recruited 32 top Montana teachers for the project. "We have so many teachers with the talent, fresh ideas, and expertise to help improve education at the local, state, and national levels," said MEA-MFT President and MPTF Chair Eric Feaver.

"Most of them don't want to leave the classroom and become administrators, and they shouldn't have to do that in order to take leadership roles."

The Montana Professional Teaching Foundation hosted a statewide meeting of the 32 Montana participants in October and recruited two coaches to lead the statewide group: Shelly Stanton of Billings and Anne Keith of Bozeman.

Teachers participating in the initiative can choose one of three leadership strands: instructional, policy, or union leadership.

Teachers earn \$1,000 by participating. Each teacher must produce a "capstone project" in one of the three areas. See the list of 32 teachers at [mea-mft.org](http://mea-mft.org). ■

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Eliza Wiley IR

**MEA-MFT** today

A publication for members of MEA-MFT





Craig Beals proclaims the Year of the Teacher.

## Teacher of the Year (from p. 1)

Missoula, held in conjunction with the MEA-MFT Educators' Conference. Also honored were finalists Casey Olsen, English teacher at Columbus High School; and Tony Riehl, math teacher at Skyview High in Billings.

"I'm incredibly humbled," Beals told the celebration crowd. "As a kid who bounced off the walls and had trouble focusing, I see some of my former teachers sitting with their mouths open, thinking, 'I can't believe that kid is up there.'"

His teachers gave him the confidence to believe he could do anything, Beals said. Now he does the same for his students.

**Exploration, inspiration:** According to Dan Bartsch, chair of the science department at Billings Senior High, Beals makes science "accessible and fun." For example, Beals taught students about the chemistry of coffee by having them roast raw green beans, collect data, and sample their product. He inspired students to design and build the largest cardboard geodesic dome planetarium in the world, which was featured in a national journal.

Beals also created the Earth Science Community Action Project, which allows students to use their science skills in projects that help the Billings community. His students have helped improve local parks, recommended new zoning, and contributed water quality data to a

national database for scientific research.

**Not in the job description:** Above all, Beals believes building strong relationships between teachers and students is key to student success. "It's not in the job description, but it's one of the most important things a teacher can do," he said.

Listening to students, asking how they are, "those little things can change the culture of the classroom, change the culture of the school. We can't do enough of it," he said.

Showing compassion is "the opposite of being 'soft,'" Beals said. "Students actually rise to higher expectations." Beals recently was selected to give a TED talk about the power of student-teacher connections at TEDx Bozeman.

**Year of the Teacher:** At the Teacher of the Year Celebration, Beals suggested rearranging the title of the event from "Teacher of the Year" to "Year of the Teacher."

"This year isn't about me, it's about us," he said. "Let's take this entire year to celebrate us and being teachers."

As Montana's Teacher of the Year, Beals will serve as an ambassador for public education, represent Montana in the National Teacher of the Year program, and attend numerous national events with other state teachers of the year.

**More about Craig Beals:** A Billings native, Beals earned a master's degree in zoology at Miami University in Ohio and bachelor's degrees in biology and broadfield science from Montana State University. He and his wife have a three-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter. ■

"This year isn't about me, it's about us. Let's take this entire year to celebrate us and being teachers."

*Craig Beals*

## Teacher of the Year process:

Teachers nominated to be Montana Teacher of the Year undergo an exhaustive application process. Three finalists are chosen for interviews. This year's interview committee included representatives from the Office of Public Instruction, School Administrators of Montana, two educators, a parent and a high school student. The committee makes the final selection after interviewing the finalists.

From left: Finalist Tony Riehl, Teacher of the Year Craig Beals, finalist Casey Olsen. Congratulations to all three!



# Helping Montanans when they need it most

## Amazing member Julianna Crowley

MEA-MFT member Julianna Crowley helps Montana people get back on their feet.

As a state employee based in Missoula, she is a Community Services Program Officer for the Department of Public Health and Human Services. She also serves as regional vice president of her local MEA-MFT union, the Federation of Public Health and Human Services.

Here's what we learned about Julianna:

**What I do:** I help facilitate the Community Services Block Grant, Emergency Solutions grants for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, and housing grants for people with HIV and AIDS (HOPWA grants).

I work on applying for federal grants and then subgranting them to local nonprofits who do the direct service assistance work, primarily HRDCs (Human Resource Development Councils) and HIV/AIDS organizations. I also work with the nonprofits on implementing the grants.

**Why it matters:** These grants help people become self sufficient and lead stable lives by alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty in Montana communities. They help our neighbors and our friends by lifting them up in times of greatest need. In a community-driven state like Montana, this also strengthens our community bonds and boosts our economy.

**Best part of the job:** I love doing



*Julianna Crowley*

grant administration and providing my skills and expertise to not only get these funds to some amazing nonprofits, but also to help implement programs that are so desperately needed in our communities.

I love working with the nonprofit staff and with my colleagues at work. We are a great team, and I could not do this alone!

**Why I'm active in MEA-MFT:** MEA-MFT has a long history of being a very successful union, fighting for the rights of members. It's very important for me to be part of that, to have a voice.

As an officer in my local affiliate, I'm working on a communications plan to bring our members from all corners of the state together and get information

to them. The way our local is set up is not very "local." We're statewide — we have over 600 members working all over Montana.

It's important to reach out to our members across the state who haven't been involved before, to let them know what our union does and how to be part of our union. We'd like to organize and have a stronger presence with our union, to make MEA-MFT a more vocal presence for public services.

**What I do for fun:** I like to travel around Montana and other states. I serve on the parish council for my Greek Orthodox Church.

**My family:** My parents live here in Missoula. Dad is from Two Dot, Montana, and Mom is from Greece. They met when he was stationed in Greece with the Navy. I also have a brother and sister and two nieces in Missoula, and my dog, Trooper.

**Thanks, Julianna,** for doing Work That Matters for Montana's people! ■

