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# OPEN SPEAR RANCH

July 11, 2007

Dear Delegates:

I write to thank you for the great opportunity I've had to serve your party for the past 2 years. The commitment I've witnessed as I've traveled in all 56 counties across Montana is truly inspiring. Together, we have accomplished much to keep Montana on the move. I will seek to lead our Party again, and will be honored to have your support on August 4<sup>th</sup> at our officers' convention.

## **Winning Elections**

With the victory of Senator Jon Tester, Montana decided control of the U.S. Senate. And the significance of Jon winning in Montana has never been greater: Montana has defeated a US Senate incumbent only 3 times in history.

## **Voicing Our Values**

Together, we passed the nation's most progressive statewide ethics and lobbying reform ballot initiative. It passed with 73% of the vote to restore the public trust in Montana government.

## **Progress for Montana Families**

We rolled up our sleeves to help Democrats in the Montana Legislature make real progress to improve the lives of ordinary Montana families—from help with soaring property taxes on the middle class to investing in public school classrooms and lowering the cost of college, to addressing a health care crisis that leaves too many Montana families vulnerable.

We provided tax cuts, made investments in Montana priorities, held the line on spending, and established a Rainy Day fund for the state. We cut more taxes for more Montanans than at any time in history. Democrats gave permanent property tax relief, created better-paying jobs, provided quality, affordable healthcare and made education a top priority. And we delivered a sustainable budget with a strong ending fund balance -- without raising taxes one dime.

## **Building Our Strength**

On my watch, we took created opportunities to compete, and successfully so, in all 56 counties: from Wisdom to Wibaux and from Ekalaka to Eureka. Our democracy is stronger when more Montanans make their voices heard loud and clear. Together, we've gone door-to-door, neighbor-to-neighbor to make our state a better place to live, work, and raise our families, launching the biggest grassroots effort to mobilize voters Montana has ever seen. We fought for better access to quality health care, good-paying jobs, and access to our public lands for hunting and fishing.

In July 2005, we had 18 counties where the Democratic Party did not have active central committees. Today, all 56 counties in Montana have Democratic Central Committees and stronger local organizations. We have made growing the grassroots a priority of our Party, and we will continue to do so.

We recruited and fielded a record number of legislative candidates to run for office in Montana in 2006, many more than the Republicans fielded, and more than any political party ever in the history of our state.

### **Strengthening our Resources**

Our success has created a tremendous surge of support for the Montana Democratic Party, and it shows. We had an historic turnout at our 2007 Mansfield Metcalf Dinner—over a thousand people attended. We've raised more money than ever before to help elect Democrats, build local organizations, and get our message out about who we are and what we stand for.

### **The successes of our state's top leaders have created a surge of support for Democrats in Montana, and I'm honored to have the opportunity to support them.**

Recent polling shows Montanans love the job that our Democratic leaders in Montana are doing. The recent Lee Newspapers poll found Montanans strongly approve of the job Sen. Max Baucus, Sen. Jon Tester and Gov. Brian Schweitzer are doing, and that they strongly approve of the legislative accomplishments of Governor Schweitzer and our Democratic legislators.

These polls prove what you and I have known all along—that the values and priorities of the Democratic Party are the values and priorities of the people in Montana.

With such strong progress comes the challenge to seize the moment and put forth the Democratic view of a better life for all Montanans, and I would like the opportunity to serve you again as we gear up to re-elect Senator Baucus, Governor Schweitzer, and other Democrats for statewide office. We must also send Dennis Rehberg packing, win strong majorities in the Montana legislature, and win the contests for the Public Service Commission. Victory is within our grasp if we seize the opportunity now.

Justice—economic, social, and environmental—is what is at stake: Working together, Montana Democrats will continue to push for better paying jobs, affordable health care, reducing our dependence on foreign oil with renewable energy, protecting access to our public lands, and an education system that is the best in the world.

I'm proud to have had the opportunity to serve as your Chair for the past two years and I hope I can count on your support at the 2007 Officers Convention as I seek re-election for another term. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dennis McDonald, Chair

Montana Democratic Party

P.S. I look forward to discussing this election for Chair of the Montana Democratic Party with you. Please feel free to contact me at any time at 406-537-2333.