

University of Montana Western

November 2011 campus report to the Montana Board of Regents

While we are bound to confidentiality (when this report was written), we are pleased to report another member of our faculty will be named the Carnegie state professor of the year in Montana for 2011. This is our third consecutive winner.

In other news:

Regents Professor Rob Thomas will be received three awards for his photographs from the Geological Society of America at their October 2011 meeting.

Last April 30th at the Montana Wilderness Association's annual meeting held at Gallatin Gateway. Professor Jack Kirkley was given the MWA Founder's Award, their top award of the year. The Founder's Award is given each year to the member who best exemplifies outstanding and enduring dedication to the cause of Wilderness and the mission of the Montana Wilderness Association.

Professor Alan Weltzien participated in the biannual Association for the Study of Literature and Environment conference, last June, at Indiana University. On his panel he presented a cutting from the second chapter, "Standard Routes, Standard Highways" from his recently completed (next) book, tentatively titled Exceptional Mountains

The brand new Montana Center for Horsemanship (MCH) hosted an open house on Thursday, Sept. 29. The center is located 1.5 miles south of Dillon on Highway 91. Our Equine Studies Department, which offers the nation's only four-year natural horsemanship degree, began offering skills classes at the MCH in August 2011. Since 2004, the University has operated the unique and highly successful natural horsemanship program in close partnership with La Cense Montana. Phase one construction is done. The center is owned and operated by a private, non-profit foundation. As the center develops it will also be available to other community functions and tenets as well as to our rodeo team for practice. Phase two will include an indoor arena.

The 2012 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings are in and Montana Western was fourth in the West for Top Public Regional Colleges, up from 2011's fifth-place position. U.S. News defines regional colleges according to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education and states "these schools focus almost entirely on the undergraduate experience and offer a broad range of programs in the liberal arts." We were ranked 21st overall in the West for Regional Colleges. According to U.S. News, we improved upon last year's overall score by 12 points, boasting a 70 percent average freshman retention rate.

Just two years after its humble beginnings as a handful of garden plots and a composting pit on the edge of campus, the Community Garden is now a full-fledged garden complete with integrated renewable energy systems, two brand new greenhouses, a native plant trail and over 20 plots. Garden organizers held an inauguration and poetry reading on Sept. 8, 2011 to commemorate and showcase the new garden and greenhouse, which is now powered by energy captured from the sun and wind. "This garden is designed to be an educational resource for our students and the community as a whole as well as a source for sustainable local food," the garden's director and Associate Professor of Environmental Sciences Linda Lyon stated.