

2008 Campaign Academies



All Photos from 2006 Campaign Academies

Starting in 2000, the co-sponsors have offered these *non-partisan* campaign academies every other year in Montana, and 2008 marks the fifth series. Why? Because the Montana Electric Cooperatives, Montana's Credit Unions, and the Montana Chamber of Commerce believe firmly that it is essential to Montana's electoral process that qualified individuals interested in public service are not only encouraged to run, but given the tools and knowledge they need to run smart, successful campaigns.

These affordable one-day academies address working with volunteers, fund raising, communication, campaign and finance laws, writing a campaign plan, getting out the vote, election day activities and other relevant campaign topics, including talking to the press.

2008 Dates and Locations (registration starts at 8:30 a.m.)

Great Falls – Feb. 4

Bozeman – Feb. 7

Missoula – Feb. 6

Billings – Feb. 8

Cost: The academies cost a nominal \$35, which includes lunch and training materials.

Purposes: To encourage people to at least consider running for public office; and to teach candidates the “nuts and bolts” of running effective campaigns in order to help reduce stress of organizing a campaign and campaigning.

Target enrollees: Candidates for any public office, including statewide, legislative or local offices, campaign officials, fund raisers, political party leaders, community activists.

Importance for Montana: Why are these academies so essential to the electoral process in Montana? We believe that ...

- Term limits in Montana have created a major challenge in recruiting new candidates to run for public office. (Roughly one-third of the Legislature is ineligible every election cycle for re-election due to term limits.)
- Growing disdain for politics has made it harder to attract people to run for office, including young people. (Only 32 percent of voters ages 18–24 showed up at the polls nationally in the last presidential election. This compares to 50 percent who voted in 1972, the first year people 18 and older were eligible to vote.)

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- The number of independent voters is growing and this non-partisan academy fits that trend in voter support.
- The knowledge gained at these academies helps ease the stress of campaigning.
- The non-partisan nature of these schools appeals to a large segment of candidates or prospective candidates.

Instructors: The instructors include in-state elected officials and campaign experts representing the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the National Credit Union Association.

Objectivity: These campaign academies are non-partisan and offered as a public service. Aside from their belief in a participatory democracy, the sponsoring organizations have no political agenda nor do they promote specific public policy positions.

Enrollment Numbers: Since the first series was held in 2000, more than 250 Montanans have graduated from these academies.

Graduates: Seven members of the current Legislature attended these schools in 2006, and dozens more have served in previous Legislatures. Current Supreme Court Justice Patricia O'Brien Cotter is a graduate of the academy. Many past graduates have been people seeking local office, clerk and recorder candidates, sheriff candidates, county commissioner candidates.

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