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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2015

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Lt. Gov. McLean Recognizes 13 Montana Schools as Winners of SMART Schools Challenges

HELENA – Lt. Gov. Angela McLean today recognized 13 Montana public schools as the winners of the 2014-15 SMART (Saving Money And Resources Today) Schools Challenges. Through these challenges, these schools found ways to improve energy efficiency, promote healthy and environmentally sound practices, and reduce waste by implementing or expanding recycling and composting programs. Each school will receive a \$1,000 award to support their ongoing efforts.

“I am thrilled to see the work that these nearly 50 Montana schools have done to save money and resources,” said Lt. Governor McLean. “Schools across Montana are leading the way in energy efficiency, health promotion and waste reduction. We can all be proud of the innovation of Montana students and teachers, as they work to be smart stewards of our resources.”

The winning SMART Schools are:

SMART Energy Challenge (promotes energy efficiency):

- Sweet Grass County High School/Big Timber – Saved almost \$30,000 annually through energy conservation and formed a student SMART Club
- Seeley Swan High School – Created a long-term resource conservation and energy management plan
- Broadwater Elementary/Billings – Utilized a variety of strategies to engage students in energy conservation; created a bike/walk program
- Castle Rock Middle School/Billings – Achieved more than 50 percent cost avoidance through energy conservation and a 99 Energy Star Rating

SMART Green Challenge (promotes more environmentally friendly practices):

- Red Lodge High School – Implemented a sustainable purchasing policy
- Hellgate High School/Missoula – Acquired an earth tub; switched to a local recycler
- Sleeping Giant Middle School/Livingston – Built an aquaponics system
- Seeley Lake Elementary – Created a holistic resource conservation plan and recycled 3,158 pounds of waste

SMART Recycling Challenge (implements or enhances recycling programs):

- Sand Springs School– Reused newspapers, composted, and recycled more than 111 pounds/student
- Billings Career Center – Recycled 8,982 pounds of waste; engaged students in promoting recycling
- Jefferson School/Glendive – Worked to expand recycling opportunities for all of Glendive’s residents
- Central School/Roundup – Recycled 5,039 pounds of waste in its first year recycling, collaborating with Musselshell County to create a recycling program

“Lt. Governor McLean's SMART Schools Challenge Initiative promotes the cultivation of economically resourceful schools across Montana,” said Audrey Stanton, a senior in Hellgate High School’s S.A.V.E. Club. “The Challenges allow schools to connect with one another and further environmental education. The SMART Schools Challenges provided a wonderful foundation for Hellgate High School's Students Against Violating the Environment (S.A.V.E.) to prove the value of sustainable systems. S.A.V.E. is looking forward to learning of the fantastic projects the Challenges have fostered.”

Capital High School of Helena also earned recognition for having demonstrated outstanding leadership in renewable energy use, as they installed 40 solar panels, accounting for 10 kW (kilowatts) of renewable energy. Forty-six Montana schools participated in the Challenge, representing 23,118 students. These schools saved more than \$100,000 in their energy conservation efforts over the school year. They recycled more than 62,000 pounds and composted more than 250 pounds, offsetting 123 metric tons of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and saving 913 BMTUs (million British thermal units).

“Beyond having saved our school money and resources, I have challenged my students to question what one student can do to help the environment,” said David Pettit, a science teacher at Sleeping Giant Middle School in Livingston. “Hopefully, this effort has helped create a new generation of conscience stewards of resources, which I think is the ultimate goal of the SMART schools.”

The SMART Schools Challenge just wrapped up its pilot year, and was a partnership amongst Lt. Governor McLean, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Green Buildings Council – Montana Chapter. Earlier this year, McLean received [national recognition](#) for the initiative from General Electric and the National Lt. Governor’s Association by receiving the Public Leadership in Energy and Environmental Stewardship Award.

Over the coming week, McLean will be visiting several of the winning schools to acknowledge their work and encourage them to build on their successes to save money and resources in their schools.

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