



Delegates at our first MFPE Annual Conference share a light-hearted moment.



'This is our time!'

Our new merged union, MFPE, holds first Annual Conference

It's official: MEA-MFT and the Montana Public Employees Association are merged.

Our new merged union, the Montana Federation of Public Employees, held its first Annual Conference in Helena April 6-7, 2018.

Nearly 400 delegates braved record spring blizzards and white-knuckle roads to take part in this historic event.

They came from every corner of Montana: Libby to Wibaux and all points in between.

"As a history teacher, it's always a good feeling to be on site when history is taking place," said delegate Jesse Barnhart, who drove 406 miles from Broadus through white-outs, snowdrifts, and black ice.

"When your union calls, you say 'YES!'" said Cara Lokken-Frandsen, who drove 455 miles from Sidney.

Jim Johnson drove from Wibaux, nearly 450 miles. Jim Keith drove 384 miles from Miles City.

Laurie Enebo drove 360 miles from Glasgow. Despite the harrowing 24-hour return trip on hazardous roads, she said wouldn't have missed it. "We travel the distance because it's our union, it's our way of life," Enebo said.

These intrepid travelers and hundreds of others met to discuss and vote on their new union's first budget, dues, officers, and new business items.

The mood was upbeat and joyful as delegates tackled these chores and paused periodically to celebrate our new union.

Delegates also heard from a number of Montana elected officials, including Gov. Steve Bullock, Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney, and U.S. Senator Jon Tester, who came to congratulate MFPE members on our new union.

"If we want to keep the middle class vibrant, unions are absolutely crucial," Tester told delegates. "We

would not have a democracy today if not for public education and public services."

"Brothers and sisters, this is our time!" said Butte delegate Amanda Curtis, who later was elected as a state officer. "We know exactly who's with us. We know exactly who's not. We have nowhere to go but forward, and we have chosen to go forward together."

Board of directors and new business items: Delegates elected statewide officers and board members (listed on page 2).

Among new business items, delegates voted on a new logo for MFPE, which you'll see throughout this newsletter. They also voted to direct MFPE to explore a better way of passing the state employee pay plan and to endorse the referendum continuing the 6-mill levy for higher education funding.

"MFPE is now the largest union in Montana history," said Eric Feaver, newly elected president of MFPE.

"As such we have an overwhelming obligation as well as opportunity to do the best we can for all our members and the work they do in large and small public communities everywhere across our state. I am confident we will rise to and above the challenges we face."



We are merged!

MEA-MFT + MPEA =
**MONTANA FEDERATION
OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

Meet the MFPE Board of Directors

Delegates to the first MFPE Annual Conference elected our new union's first board of directors.

Per the MFPE constitution, state officers and director-at-large were elected by all delegates. Other board members were elected by delegates from their districts (see district map at right). Each district has board members from the former Montana Public Employees Association as well as the former MEA-MFT.

STATE OFFICERS

President: Eric Feaver, Helena
1st Vice President: Melanie Charlson, Missoula
2nd Vice President: Bill Dwyer, Dillon
Treasurer: Rich Aarstad, East Helena
NEA Director: Amanda Curtis, Butte

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #1

Chair: Gene Marcille, Columbia Falls
1st Vice Chair: Lynne Ogden-Rider, Kalispell
2nd Vice Chair: Patti Carlson, Whitefish

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #2

Chair: Christine Kolczak, Missoula
Vice Chair: Pam Burgess, Missoula

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #3

Chair: Mike Kenison, Butte
Vice Chair: Lisa Tucker, Helena

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #4

Chair: Kathy Rutherford, Bozeman
1st Vice Chair: Eric Matthews, Bozeman
2nd Vice Chair: Colette Campbell, Belgrade

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #5

Chair: Shelli Lavinder Schwalk, Great Falls
1st Vice Chair: Yvette Smail, Great Falls
2nd Vice Chair: Samantha Harrington, Great Falls

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #6

Chair: Trista Doke, Havre
1st Vice Chair: Mark Seiffert, Havre
2nd Vice Chair: Omega Esquivel, Lewistown

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #7

Chair: Laurie Enebo, Glasgow
1st Vice Chair: Cara Lokken-Frandsen, Sidney
2nd Vice Chair: Jim Johnson, Wibaux

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #8

Chair: Jesse Barnhart, Broadus

1st Vice Chair: Karla Clark, Hardin
2nd Vice Chair: Jim Keith, Miles City

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #9

Chair: Rita Wells, Billings
1st Vice Chair: Tom Fulton, Billings
2nd Vice Chair: Brian Murphy, Billings

GOVERNANCE DISTRICT #10 (retired members)

Chair: Ron Kimmet, Bozeman
1st Vice Chair: Debbie Willis, Billings
2nd Vice Chair: Joe Cohenour, East Helena

Director-at-Large: Matt Bell, Missoula

MFPE Governance Districts



Eric Feaver was elected president of our new merged union, MFPE.

About our new union's new logo

Montana graphic designer Luke Duran designed our new MFPE logo.

Duran's final two logo choices were presented to delegates at the first MFPE Annual Conference for a vote. The logo you see at right won hands down.

Duran designed the logo to combine a grounded look with a contemporary typeface and a slash to add movement, energy, and forward direction. It exudes a sense of progress, energy, and optimism.

Just right for an energetic new organization created from two long-standing unions!



From left: Hall of Fame inductees Mary Moe, Denise Juneau, Bernie Olson, and Tom Schneider.

Hall of Fame

As part of Montana Federation of Public Employees Annual Conference celebrations, three final members of the MEA-MFT Hall of Fame were honored, along with the first MFPE Hall of Fame member.

All four of these folks have contributed enormously to the strength of our union and the well-being of Montana's people. They are among the pioneers who made MFPE a powerful force for good in Montana and in the nation.

MEA-MFT Hall of Fame inductees include Denise Juneau, former Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction; Bernie Olson, educator and former Republican legislator from Kalispell; and Mary Sheehy Moe, 1987 Montana Teacher of the Year and former Democratic legislator from Great Falls

Tom Schneider, first executive director of the Montana Public Employees Association, was inducted into the MFPE Hall of Fame.



Showing up, standing up, and speaking up at MFPE Annual Conference. MFPE is a member-driven organization and a democracy, where every member has a voice. We are also a family and one BIG union, with nearly 25,000 members living and working all across Montana.



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Upcoming events for MFPE members

State pay plan bargaining: The pay plan process has begun, and MFPE members and leaders are fully engaged in it. State and higher education members: please watch for a special alert with details.

Primary Election Day: June 5. Don't forget to vote in Montana's primary election! Watch your mail for information on MFPE candidate recommendations.

Golf Scramble: August 2, Fairmont. Annual fundraiser for our Montana Professional Teaching Foundation. Everyone is invited! Registration info at mea-mft.org.

Educator Conference: Oct. 18-19, Billings. Our annual professional development conference for k-12 educators. Find everything you need to know at mea-mft.org/educator_conference.aspx.



Scenes from our first MFPE Annual Conference. Clockwise from top left: MFPE state officer Amanda Curtis (standing) and visiting dignitary Mary Kusler of NEA; some of our 400 delegates; execs Quint Nyman and Erik Burke; former MPEA president and new MFPE board member Pam Burgess at the head table with Quint Nyman.

Find us online

Facebook: You'll find up-to-date news of our new merged union on Facebook: facebook.com/MTFederationofPublicEmployees. Please check it out, like the page, share the posts, contribute your ideas.

MFPE website coming soon: The new Montana Federation of Public Employees website is underway and will be launched in the next few months. In the meantime, you'll find MFPE news at the MEA-MFT site: mea-mft.org.