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## Greetings from Montana

*It would be a lie* to say that November has offered a much awaited reprieve from the endless political ads. I never expected to be so glad to see commercials again. Montana is once again in the record books for the most campaign spending in the history of America. Ever. The hotly contended Senate seat resulted in nearly \$600 per person in campaign spending.

Montana voted for Republican candidate Donald Trump and so did the country with 73,597,947 votes (51%) and 295 electoral votes, as of date of this article. As we know, you need 270 electoral votes to win the President of the United States and Kamala Harris fell short with 226 electoral votes and 69,277,754 votes (47.7%). States that have not been called yet are Nevada, and Arizona, but as of this article, both states look to be leaning Trump. If he takes these two additional states, he will pick up an additional 6 electoral votes from Nevada and 11 additional votes from Arizona for a total of 312 electoral votes.

After the election, Montana is a solid red state. Our Congressional delegation, all statewide offices and the majority of the state legislature are under Republican control. Senator Tester was not successful in his bid for his 4th term representing Montana in the United States Senate. We will instead send political newcomer Tim Sheehy to serve his first ever elected position. Congressman Ryan Zinke will serve a second term representing the western side of Montana and Troy Downing will transition from State Auditor to serve eastern Montana in the U.S. House of Representatives. The make-up of the state legislature will shift from the Republican super-majority of 2023 to a more moderate balance. Thirty-two of the 50 Senate seats will be red as will 59 of the 100 seats in the House.

The 2025 biannual Montana Legislature is quickly approaching. There has been a major upgrade to the bill tracking system that has been met with mixed

reviews. It has been a slow roll-out and we expect a few more changes to address early concerns; if anyone is interested in a quick tutorial, please reach out. My early impression is that up-front it seems more user friendly but may have lost some search and tracking features.

This month has been busy with federal/state/and local meetings. I attended the annual EMA/NACS Show in Las Vegas in October. I enjoyed the time with our colleagues from across the country as well as some carved out time just for our Montana members. The show was amazing as always and it will never fail to impress me just how big it is.

We had our fall regional WPMA meeting in Coeur d'Alene in October, and as always Montana was well represented. We discussed a variety of topics and were briefed on all the challenges that our member states will face during the upcoming sessions. After hearing all the other states' legislative challenges, I am thankful to be representing Montana and the great group of marketers, associate members, and other industry stakeholders.

As we prepare for the upcoming legislative session in Montana, we continue to work with our colleagues at DEQ, MDT, and several other association partners to find solutions to our many collective challenges.

Thank you to our members, associate members, and all of our trade partners. We wouldn't be as successful as we are without you and your support. As we move into the holiday season to spend time with family and friends, I want everyone to take a moment and reflect on all the great accomplishments that each and everyone of you have had this year. Our industry is strong, but with everyone's help the MPMCSA is stronger. Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to a fantastic 2025.

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