

August 3, 2017

Scott Eychner, Administrator
Workforce Services Division, DOL
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT 59604-1728

Dear Mr. Eychner,

The Ravalli County Commissioners have recently been informed that the Bitterroot Job Service will be closing. The decision to close was made without any communication or coordination with local partners and will be devastating for our community. We are writing today to express our ongoing frustration and unequivocal opposition to this closure.

Ravalli County is under constant assault from state and federal consolidation and regionalization efforts. Recently the Commissioners and Bitterroot College discussed with Ms. Arntzen from OPI, the impacts of regionalization of education funding. Under this new funding model from OPI, Ravalli County students will likely be required to travel to Missoula for services, which in most cases will be cost or time prohibitive yet OPI claims there will not be a reduction in services.

This recent decision by the MT Department of Labor is another example of smaller surrounding communities being swallowed up by the larger urban communities with the promise of the same or better services. Ravalli County is the seventh largest county in the state, but continues to lose services to consolidation efforts by the state. These promises are unrealistic and are made in Helena offices without truly understanding the impacts to the affected communities.

The Ravalli County Commissioners would request you reconsider this decision and to consider local impacts in future decisions.

Respectively,

Greg Chilcott, Chairman

Doug Schallenberger, Commissioner

Jeff Burrows, Vice Chairman

Chris Hoffman, Commissioner

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Ray Hawk, Commissioner

CC:

Senator Fred Thomas

Senator Pat Connell

Representative Theresa Manzella

Representative Ron Ehl

Representative Nancy Ballance

Representative Ed Greef