

Sullivan recognized for work in hydropower

MONTANA STANDARD STAFF

Mary Gail Sullivan, director of Environmental & Lands Permitting and Compliance at NorthWestern Energy, recently received the Henwood Award — the hydropower industry's highest honor — at a conference in Sacramento, California.

According to a National Hydropower Association newsletter, the Dr. Kenneth Henwood Award is presented each year to an individual who has demonstrated unwavering commitment to the industry.



Sullivan

"I've had a tremendous career, but even as I look forward to spending more time with my grandkids, I don't plan on quitting my advocacy or support for hydropower. I plan to keep pushing for hydro to be the resource of choice to address the climate crisis," Sullivan said at the award ceremony.

Sullivan, who was joined in California by her two daughters, joined the ranks of influential industry champions and reflected on the proceedings with humility, the newsletter added.

"It feels like this award will give people at NorthWestern Energy, and others, the confidence to be involved, and I want to be seen as someone who made a difference. I like the idea that I'm moving hydropower forward as a resource for future generations," Sullivan said.

After graduating from the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation-University of Montana with a degree in outdoor recreation, Sullivan was hired by the Environmental Department at the Montana Power Co., where she held various positions, including coordinator of

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2 earn awards for education, diabetic care

The dynamic duo of Ida Reighard and Marcus Paske was awarded the "Advancing the Vision in Quality Care Award" as part of the annual diabetes professional conference sponsored by the Montana Diabetes Program & the Montana Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists, according to press release from St. James Healthcare.



Reighard



Paske

Reighard, RN, CDE is a diabetes education coordinator and Marcus Paske, PharmD, BCACP, AE-C, CPP, is an ambulatory clinical pharmacist with St. James Healthcare, now part of Intermountain Healthcare. They worked together on an 18-month quality improvement project, with the goal of incorporating pharmacy and diabetes education into provider practices and patient care management. Prior to the project, clinical pharmacists were not part of the primary care clinic and referrals to diabetes care and education services were stagnant.

"When we started the project, we found primary care providers that were very focused on teamwork. So we were able to inform them of what type of care we could offer their diabetic patients," said Reighard. "So now we've become part of their referral pattern so when they get

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PROVIDED PHOTO

Dr. Avimanyu Das, associate professor of Metallurgical and materials engineering at Montana Tech, holds samples of copper and steel slag.

Tech researchers get DOE grant for slag recovery work

MONTANA STANDARD STAFF

Montana Technological University researchers have been awarded \$700,804 by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science to investigate the recovery of valuable metals from waste slags generated by mining and metallurgical industries.

The project proposes a novel technique to extract valuable metals from mixed waste slag piles. The recovered metals could then be marketed for industry, and the project will alleviate environmental metal-leaching concerns with remediated slag piles likely being used in the construction industry.

"This project is an exciting application of Montana Tech's extractive metallurgy expertise in a way that addresses local environmental clean-up problems while also having national implications in reducing the carbon footprint," Vice Chancellor of Research Dr. Angela Lueking said. "Developing new engineering techniques that reduce carbon emissions, while utilizing waste materials and simultaneously alleviating environmental remediation concerns, is indicative of the Montana Tech commitment to earth, energy, and environment. The project was selected from a competitive national competition, which serves as yet another example of how Montana Tech faculty are breaking ground in their discipline on a national scale."

The university will use the funds to purchase equipment, design a reactor, pay graduate student workers, and obtain raw materials and laboratory supplies.

"Waste slags often contain valuable metals besides being an environmental concern," associate professor of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Dr. Avimanyu Das said. "Our research aims to recover valuable metals from the slags. We will derive the required energy and a reagent for the process from another waste, the plastics. Thus, we will adopt a waste-to-wealth concept to develop a process with a low carbon footprint in this research."

Das is the principal investigator, with Dr. Jerry Downey, department head of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering as the co-principal investigator. Their team will consist of a Ph.D. student, a master's student, and two undergraduate trainees. Dr. Guy Fredrickson is representing the Idaho National Laboratory on the project, which will take place over the next three years.

The team has not yet picked the waste slags they will experiment on, but steel and a copper

slag will be targeted. The team has also chosen the methods they will use to try to extract the valuable metals.

"We plan to employ the plasma technology to develop the reactor needed to derive the energy/reagent from plastics," Das said. "This will likely shorten the reaction time and achieve a much faster rate of plastics decomposition. The decomposition products will then be utilized in the metal extraction process from the target slags. Another important aspect of the research is that after the recovery of the metals, the remaining slag may find application in the construction sector."

The project is already underway at Montana Tech's campus, as strategies for reactor design are formulated, and raw materials are identified and procured to be used in testing.

Renters face EV charging dilemma

GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Stephanie Terrell was excited to join the wave of drivers adopting electric vehicles when she bought a used Nissan Leaf this fall.

But Terrell encountered a bump in the road on her journey to clean driving: As a renter, she doesn't have a place to plug in overnight, and the public charging stations near her are often in use. The 23-year-old nearly ran out of power on the freeway recently because a charging station she was counting on was busy.

"It was really scary and I was really worried I wasn't going to make it," she said. "I feel better about it than buying gas, but there are problems I didn't really anticipate."

The transition to electric vehicles is underway for homeowners who can power up in their own garage, but for millions of renters, access to charging remains a significant barrier. Now, cities across the U.S. are trying to come up with innovative public charging solutions as drivers string power cords across sidewalks, erect private charging stations on city right-of-ways and queue at public facilities.

The Biden administration last month approved plans from all 50 states to roll out a network of high-speed chargers along interstate highways using \$5 billion in federal funding over the next five years. But states must wait to apply for an additional \$2.5 billion in local grants to fill in charging gaps, including in dense urban areas.

"We have a really large challenge right now with making it easy for people to charge who live in apartments," said Jeff Allen, executive director of Forth, a nonprofit that advocates for equity in electric vehicle ownership and



COURTNEY BONNELL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

An electric vehicle charges at a public fast-charging station on Oct. 20 in London.

charging access.

Cities have to understand that "promoting electric cars is also part of their sustainable transportation strategy. Once they make that mental shift, there's a whole bunch of very tangible things they can — and should — be doing."

Fast chargers, also known as DC Fast, can fill up a car in 45 minutes or less. But slower Level 2 chargers, which take several hours, still outnumber DC fast chargers nearly four to one. Charging on a standard residential outlet, or Level 1 charger, isn't practical unless you drive little or can leave the car plugged in overnight.

Nationwide, there are about 120,000 public charging ports featuring Level 2 charging or above, and nearly 1.5 million electric vehicles registered in the U.S. — a ratio of just over one charger per 12 cars nationally, according to the latest U.S. Department of Energy data.

A briefing prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy last year by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory forecasts a total of just

under 19 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030, with a projected need for an extra 9.6 million charging stations.

In Los Angeles, for example, nearly one-quarter of all new vehicles registered in July were plug-in. The city estimates in the next two decades, it must expand its distribution capacity anywhere from 25% to 50%, with roughly two-thirds of the increased demand coming from EVs, said Yamen Nanne, manager of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's transportation electrification program.

Amid the boom, dense city neighborhoods are rapidly becoming pressure points.

In Los Angeles, the city has installed over 500 pole-mounted EV chargers — 450 on street lights and 50 on power poles — and wants to add 200 more per year, Nanne said.

Similar initiatives to install pole-mounted chargers are in place or being considered from New York City to Charlotte, N.C. to Kansas City, Missouri.

The utility Seattle City Light is also in the early stages of a pilot project to install chargers in neighborhoods with limited private parking.

Other cities want to amend building codes for the electric transition. Portland is considering a proposal that would require 50% of parking spaces in most new apartment complexes to have an electrical conduit; in complexes with six or fewer spaces, all of them would be EV-ready.

Such policies are critical to widespread EV adoption because with tax incentives and an emerging used-EV market, zero-emissions cars are finally within reach for more Americans, said Ingrid Fish, who is in charge of Portland's transportation decarbonization program.

The initiatives mimic those that have already been deployed in other nations that are further along in EV adoption.

London, for example, has 4,000 public chargers on street lights. That's much cheaper — just a third the cost of wiring a charging station into the sidewalk, said Vishant Kothari, manager of the electric mobility team at the World Resources Institute.

Changes can't come fast enough for renters who already own electric vehicles.

Rebecca DeWhitt and her partner string an extension cord from an outlet near their rental home's front door, down a path and to their new Hyundai Kona in the driveway. Off the standard outlet, it takes up to two days and lots of planning to fully charge their EV for a trip.

"It's inconvenient," DeWhitt said. "And if we didn't value having an electric vehicle so much, we wouldn't put up with the pain of it."

We want to find Montana's top workplaces

Today's business owners and operators know that hiring and retaining a great workforce is as challenging as it has ever been. Recruiting and keeping talent is at the heart of the Montana Top Workplaces program, which is underway for the third year.



DAVE WORSTELL

Any organization with 35 or more employees in Montana is eligible to compete for 2023 Top Workplaces recognition. The program identifies the best employers in the state as determined by the people who know best: the employees. It's an ideal way for employers to stand out in the job market, and it's a way to make sure employers and employees are on the same page.

Nomination deadline is Dec. 9.

Anyone can nominate any organization, whether it is public, private, nonprofit, a school, or even a government agency. To nominate an employer, just go to <https://topworkplaces.com/nominate/montana> or call 406-206-9789.

Workplaces are evaluated by employees using a short 24-question survey that takes about five minutes to complete. Before surveying employees, Energage contacts employers to verify they choose to participate. Montana companies will be surveyed from October to February. Energage, the Pennsylvania-based survey partner for the project, conducts Top Workplaces surveys for media in 59 markets nationwide and surveyed more than 2 million employees at more than 8,000 organizations in the past year.

After gathering data from employee questionnaires, Energage crunches all the numbers

from across the state and informs those employers who have earned the distinction of being named a Montana Top workplace.

"Through the Top Workplaces survey process, organizations get the data they need to recruit the right talent and the insights they need to retain that talent," said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. "If COVID taught us anything, it's that asking questions and listening to employees is critical to navigating this new world of work. More than ever, you need to be more intentional about your culture."

In 2022, we spotlighted 11 companies as Top Workplaces in Montana. In 2023, the top companies will again be honored in a virtual event broadcast statewide and featured in a special print section that will be inserted into the Billings Gazette, the Helena Independent Record, the Montana Standard in Butte,

the Missoulian, and the Ravalli Republic in Hamilton.

More than 2,700 employees were invited to take the survey last year, and 1,846 responded. For the 2023 campaign, the results will be published mid-year.

Why participate? It's more than just the well-deserved bragging rights that come with the honor, though impressing your clients – and competitors – is a great benefit. Being selected a Montana Top Workplace also will raise an employer's profile and serve as a strong recruiting tool.

The survey reveals the passion of employees for their jobs and gratitude for their employers. Here are some examples:

"I am appreciated for the work that I do and the effort that I put in to help the company succeed. I work with good people who care about doing their job well. My manager works hard and truly cares about me personally and

professionally." – **An employee from Computers Unlimited**

"I have the freedom to share my thoughts and feel heard and appreciated. I feel like an important and valued part of the team." – **An employee from Frontier Psychiatry**

"I feel respected, valued, and empowered to reach my fullest potential. My supervisor is supportive and motivating. The company culture encourages me to be my true self and doesn't make me feel like just another employee." – **An employee from Water & Environmental Technologies, Inc.**

The honor allows winners to celebrate that recognition with its employees, building their pride in their workplace.

Love where you work? We welcome your entry. It's time for Montana to spotlight its best.

Dave Worstell is president of Lee Montana

Shodair gets \$1.5M from trust for hospital

New \$66M facility in Helena scheduled to open in early 2023

INDEPENDENT RECORD

HELENA — M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust officials said Tuesday they have granted \$1.5 million to help Shodair Children's Hospital build the new hospital now under construction.

"Our benefactor, Jack Murdock, understood the importance of investing in mental health and well-being to help ensure that all individuals can flourish, and communities can thrive," Jill Lemke, senior director for training and capacity building, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, said in a news release.

Since 1975, the Trust has contributed \$101.8 million through 679 grants to nonprofits serving communities in Montana and \$1.2 billion combined in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Shodair continues to raise funds for the \$66 million project, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year with patients moving into the new hospital at the end of January.

Shodair officials said this latest tally toward their \$14 million fundraising goal now stands at \$11.5 million. The project has been the most significant fundraising in Shodair's history. More than 90% of project dollars will stay in Montana, officials said.

Five years ago, Shodair's leaders began meeting with clinicians, architects and former patients and families to discuss what kind of facility would serve children best.

The new 134,000-square-foot three-story hospital features a pool, chapel and smudge room since 19% of the patients are Native American. It has a pharmacy, full-court gymnasium and space for patient events.

Shodair, at 2755 Colonial Drive, will be tearing down two-thirds of its existing space, leaving the remain-

ing third as is for support and business staff.

The hospital now serves up to 74 patients at a time in 40 rooms, with patients in double occupancy rooms sharing bathrooms. The new hospital will have 82 individual rooms serving 82 patients, each with their own bathroom.

Shodair Children's Hospital has been helping Montana's children for 126 years, first as an orphanage, then as a pediatric hospital, and now as a psychiatric and genetics hospital. Shodair officials note that 20% of Montana's children experience a mental health issue.

"Shodair's ability to care for children with varying severities of mental illness — aggression for example — is somewhat hindered by the current facility because it lacks flexibility," Shodair CEO Craig Aasved said.

He said the design phase has been a collaborative effort leaning into five words: open, flexible, intentional, safe and hopeful.

"This new space is really just for the kids, and that's

design," Aasved said.

The Murdock Trust, created by the will of the late Melvin J. (Jack) Murdock, provides grants to organizations in five states of the Pacific Northwest — Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington — that seek to strengthen the region's educational, spiritual and cultural base in creative and sustainable ways. Since its inception, the trust has awarded more than 7,500 grants.

Shodair Children's Hospital is a nonprofit organization. Officials said its areas of distinction include the Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Program, Child & Adolescent Residential Treatment Programs, School at Shodair, Outpatient Services, School Based Services and its nationally recognized Comprehensive Medical Genetics Program. It is the state's only Children's Miracle Network-affiliated hospital.

For more information visit Murdock Trust at <https://murdocktrust.org/> or Shodair at shodair.org.

Diabetics

From D1

a new patient with diabetes the provider can get them in touch with Marcus to assist with their medication and with me for diabetes education."

Through their teamwork, the results were staggering. The average A1C levels of the patients referred dropped from 10.4% (abnormal) on the initial visit to 7.2% (at or close to goal) on the repeat exam. On an individual level, some results were astounding. In fact, one patient had an A1C of 16.1% at the time of referral to Marcus and Ida and after working with the

team, the patient's A1C dropped to 5.1%. These results show the strength and impact of their team-based care which occurred routinely.

"We were really focused on getting the patients we were referred into team-based care. That way we could track those patients to measure their outcomes. We've tracked some patients for over two years now and we are seeing some really good outcomes," said Paske. "I think we had 77 patients that were referred to us in that two-year time and then of those patients, we assisted 95% of them to reach their A1C level goal ... so their diabetes is under control."

Sullivan

From D1

Land Use and Recreation, director of Environmental Permitting, and, ultimately, director of Hydro Relicensing for nine hydroelectric projects on the Missouri and Madison rivers. It was in this role that Sullivan fostered innovative stewardship solutions for the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of the river

along its 525-mile route.

Sullivan transitioned to a new role as the director of Environmental Compliance, a position that demanded her expertise in auditing both safety and environmental function areas. From this role, Sullivan became director of Internal Audit, supervising a team of accounting personnel, before accepting a job with NorthWestern Energy as manager of the Environmental Department.

Remote workers could be first to go in recession layoffs

DON LEE
Los Angeles Times

Ernanda White's layoff was sudden and swift. Eight months of steady work ended in a 15-minute Zoom call.

No office goodbyes. No desk to clean out — not for White, who like millions of others across the country had been working from home.

As recession winds blow and the prospect of layoffs grows, many remote workers are beginning to worry about a potential downside to the at-home arrangement that took hold during the pandemic and has continued even as the crisis recedes.

Are those who seldom visit the office and have little direct physical contact with their supervisors more likely to be fired than those who work at desks just a few

feet away? Out of sight, out of mind?

The question has taken on new urgency as employers nationwide cut back and policymakers' strategy for fighting inflation — pushing interest rates ever higher — looks more and more like it will push the economy into a recession.

Data on the issue are almost nonexistent. The next downturn will be the first to occur with so many remote workers in play.

But in one large-scale survey by Beautiful.ai, a maker of business-presentations software, 60% of managers said remote workers would probably be laid off first.

"Workplace proximity bias could prove to be a troubling issue that managers deal with during this current economic uncertainty," said Jason Lapp, Beautiful.ai's

chief executive.

"Prejudice against remote workers is obviously not a manager's intention," he said, "but sometimes it's difficult to imagine fair treatment and trust when a batch of employees are working next to you in an office and another group of employees are working at home."

In White's case, her former employer, Momentive in San Mateo, California, would not say whether remote employees were hit harder than those working on-site.

White, who lives in Dallas, said she had no reason to think so, but added, "I really can't say."

The question began to arise early in the COVID-19 pandemic, when working from home came close to being the norm. Some executives and management

experts cautioned that it would be easier for bosses to let go of individuals they seldom saw than those they encountered every day.

Others said that even if bias could be avoided, those who were not present would miss out on opportunities to demonstrate their abilities when new and unexpected situations arose in the office.

What is certain is that many workers themselves are worried.

GoodHire, an employment screening firm in Redwood City, California, found in a survey that 8 in 10 workers felt working from home would make them more vulnerable in a layoff.

Many fretted that their bosses would view them as lazier or that they would be excluded from important meetings or projects.

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