

Montana BPA 2012 State Leadership Conference: Unmask Your Future

Secondary and postsecondary students from across the state of Montana attended the 2012 State Leadership Conference for the Montana association of Business Professionals of America in Billings, Montana, March 11-13, 2012.

The 2012 Montana BPA State Leadership Conference was held at the Montana State University-Billings College of Technology, the Holiday Inn Grand Montana, and the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. Members from 82 secondary chapters and one postsecondary chapter joined nearly 1300 students and local chapter advisors who gathered in a spirit of friendship and goodwill as the Montana association assisted the member to “Unmask Your Future” through participation in the areas competitive events, leadership, community development, and professionalism.

During the three-day event, students demonstrated their knowledge in business and technological skills and abilities in 60 different competitive events from within the four core assessment areas of financial service, administrative support, information technology, and marketing/management/human resources. The top finalists in each event advance to compete at the National Leadership Conference this spring in Chicago, Illinois, April 25-29, 2012.

The state conference also included an inspiring and influential keynote from Garret Garrels, author of *Loops for Life* and co-owner of Pink Gloves Boxing in Helena, and several workshops on topics including the five traits of leadership, the importance of insurance, integrity and the business world, how to get and how to use credit wisely, Zumba, and Unified Sports® presented by Special Olympics Montana. Additionally, local chapters donated nearly \$5800.00 to Special Olympics Montana, Business Professionals of America's national philanthropic organization, with the three largest contributions coming from the Colstrip chapter (\$470.00), Roundup chapter (\$500.00), and the Shields Valley chapter (\$1733.00).

Community members and Montana businesses also played a tremendous role in the success of the state conference by serving as judges for the competitive events. In addition, Montana BPA has received more than \$10,000.00 in financial support and/or in-kind support Montana business and education institutions as part of the corporate sponsor and education partnership program. One significant education partner is the Montana State University-Bozeman's College of Business who awarded two \$1000.00 scholarships to Montana BPA members Catherine Cybulski from Custer High School and Ryan Frank from Skyview High School.

In non-event awards, Montana BPA awarded Silver Star Awards for Chapter Development to the Roberts, Shields Valley, and Sidney chapters; two \$500.00 scholarships to Brandi Allerdings, Plevna, and Holly Capp, Great Falls; 72 Statesman Torch Awards; and the Spirit of Professionalism Award to the Cascade High School chapter.

During the state conference 12 secondary members participated in the state officer campaign process with the following six being elected to office for the 2012-2013 school year:

- President: Nicole Moore, Sidney High School
- Vice President: Ashley Kerkaert, Shields Valley High School
- Secretary: Hannah Bloomquist, Cascade High School
- Communications Director: MaKenna Seibenaler, Glacier High School
- Public Relations Director: Miranda McNeil, Park City High School
- Membership Director: Victoria Hill, Sidney High School

Lastly, Montana BPA would like to thank Mr. Garret Garrels for being this year's keynote and the members of the 2012 State Leadership Conference Committee: Molly Barta (Skyview), Becky DePuydt (Saco), Julie O'Dell (Hardin), and Elaine Stedman (Sidney).

Business Professionals of America is the leading CTSO (Career Technical Student Organization) for students pursuing careers in business management, finance, office administration, information technology and other related career fields.

BPA has more than 51,000 members in over 2,300 chapters in 26 states. BPA is a "co-curricular" organization that supports business and information technology educators by offering curriculum based on national standards. This year, the Montana association has 1673 members and over 90 chapters.