

1996 SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE

SMALL BUSINESS: BACKBONE OF THE MONTANA ECONOMY

The importance of small business to the state of Montana is once again evident in the 1996 Small Business Profile. The findings reported in this year's profile, compiled by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy, clearly indicate the crucial role small businesses play in the state's economy.

Of the **24,132** full-time business firms with employees in Montana, **97.9** percent are small businesses (independent businesses with fewer than 500 workers). In addition to the number of employer businesses, there were also **52,000** full-time self-employed persons in Montana in 1995, for a total estimated 1995 full-time business population of **76,132** firms.

Small Business Income - the income of sole proprietors and partners rose **8.5** percent to **\$1.6** billion in 1995, while wage-and-salary income rose **4.9** percent. Total personal income rose **4.1** percent to **\$15.8** billion. The state also exported **\$358** million of goods and services in 1995.

Montana's number of women-owned businesses, including part-time firms, increased **42.6** percent from 1987 to 1992, totaling **25,310**. The number of Black-owned firms, including part-time firms, increased **46.8** percent from 1987 to 1992, totaling **113** in 1992. The number of Hispanic-owned firms, including part-time businesses, rose **86.8** percent during the same time period with **568** firms in 1992. There has also been a marked increase

in the number of businesses owned by Asian and Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The number for the group grew from **612** in 1987, to **845** in 1992, representing a **38.1** percent increase.

Small businesses with fewer than 20 employees reported **9.5** percent employment growth from 1991 to 1995. These numbers clearly reflect the importance of small business firms as job creators in the state of Montana.

The composition of small business in Montana is very diverse. The **Eating and Drinking Places** industry is the largest small business employer in Montana. Other significant small business industries are, in descending order: Health Services, Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods, Automotive Dealers & Service Stations, and Miscellaneous Retail. The fast-growing industries include Amusement and Recreation Services, Stone, Clay, and Glass Products, Special Trade Contractors, Local and Interurban Passenger Transit, and Social Services.

The number of new firms declined **2.1** percent. Business bankruptcies increased by **5.6** percent but business failures declined by **16.0** percent.

An SBA Office of Advocacy study found that Montana's top ten lenders to small businesses in 1995 were:

1. Mountain West Bank of Helena
2. Mountain Bank
3. Rocky Mountain Bank
4. Bitterroot Balley Bank
5. First Citizens Bank North America
6. First State Bank of Montana
7. State Bank & Trust Corporation
8. Bankwest North America
9. First Security Bank
10. Bank of Baker

In sum, small businesses have a striking impact on Montana's economy. Not only do they play a vital role as job creators, but their diversity and composition provide the work force with endless opportunities.

The following three tables provide further information about the composition of

the small business sector in the state. The information is for 1993, the latest year available, and was prepared for the Office of Advocacy, U.S. Small Business Administration by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

The first table lists the industries that were the top five employers in the state, without regard to the size of the firm that provided the jobs. The next to last column in the table shows the percentage of persons employed in firms with fewer than 500 employees (small businesses) in those industries.

The second table lists the industries that employ the most people in firms with fewer than 500 employees. These are the top small business employing industries in the state. The "percent of total" column provides the percentage of total employment in the state accounted for by each of the industries listed.

The third table lists--for the 1991-1993 period--the fastest growing small business industries in the state. As many as five industries are shown. If fewer than 5 industries are shown, it is because 1991-1993 was a recessionary period in which there was little national employment growth. The industries listed represent those in which small businesses sustained the economy during a period of little aggregate employment growth.

Top Five Industries in Montana by Employment, 1993

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF JOBS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	PERCENT SMALL	RANK
Health Services	31,798	13.7	58.6	1
Eating & Drinking Places	26,761	11.5	86.7	2
Food Stores	10,181	4.4	51.9	3
Wholesale Trade-durable Goods	9,084	3.9	83.3	4
Automotive Dealers & Service Station	8,835	3.8	79.9	5
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	232,452	100.0	67.4	

Top 5 Small-Business-Dominated Industries in Montana by Employment, 1993

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF JOBS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	RANK
Eating & Drinking Places	23,202	14.8	1
Health Services	18,620	11.9	2
Wholesale Trade-durable Goods	7,568	4.8	3
Social Services	7,364	4.7	4
Automotive Dealers & Service Station	7,056	4.5	5
TOTAL, SMALL-BUSINESS-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES	156,570	100.0	

Fastest Growing Industries for Small Business in Montana, 1991 - 1993

INDUSTRY	SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYMENT IN		PERCENT CHANGE, 1991-1993	RANK
	1991	1993		
Social Services	6,293	7,364	17.0	1
Hotels & Other Lodging Places	5,473	6,334	15.7	2
Business Services	5,201	5,932	14.1	3
Miscellaneous Retail	6,200	6,843	10.4	4
Eating & Drinking Places	21,063	23,202	10.2	5

Office of Advocacy, U.S. Small Business Administration. Based upon Census data, prepared under contract.