

## REFLECTING ON THE PAST, Embracing the Future

Dear Reader,

Five years ago, the idea of donating local protein led to the creation of The Producer Partnership. As we reflect on the achievements, challenges, and resilience that led to the **nation's first and only USDA federally inspected, nonprofit-owned and operated processing facility**, we would be remiss if we did not include the partnership with MFBN that helped shape our organization. From our beginning, MFBN embraced and supported our mission of farmers and ranchers working to end hunger in Montana. We are proud of our partnership with MFBN and share their vision of a Montana free from hunger.

The Producer Partnership works with livestock producers across the state to process donated livestock free of charge into top-quality protein. The protein is distributed statewide to schools, senior centers, and approved nonprofit organizations. Farmers and ranchers can even specify where they would like their protein contribution to go, and they receive a tax contribution letter stating the amount of protein processed.

When discussing our partnership with Brent Weisgram, MFBN's Chief Operating Officer & Vice President, he reminded us that our partnership goes both ways. Brent shared, *"Your support has been instrumental in MFBN's relentless efforts to achieve a Montana free from hunger by providing us with a consistent supply of highly needed frozen meat which we can then distribute statewide to our Network Partners who are depending on it. The Producer Partnership has become our largest protein donor and is providing every Montana stock producer with a simple way to engage and donate an animal to help their local community."* Brent went on to emphasize,



*"Together we are making a difference to ensure families have the nutrition they need to not only survive but thrive while working through challenging times."*

With MFBN as our distribution partner, our organization is able to have a greater impact in all 56 counties in Montana. In our five-year history, we have donated close to 201,000 pounds of protein to MFBN, which equates to 804,000 meals. With each pound of protein processed, we are not only nourishing bodies; we are also nurturing hope and resilience within our communities. As needs continue to increase, we remain committed to our mission of ending hunger in Montana. **As we move ahead, we invite more livestock producers to join our mission.** The more producers who contribute, the more we can amplify our efforts and continue to be effective in the fight against hunger. MFBN's support and efforts are making a difference, and our partnership will continue to be a vital part of our journey forward. We are deeply committed to our mission and look forward to our continued partnership with MFBN.

Sincerely,  
Jeri Delys, Producer Partnership Programs Manager

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## CEO CORNER



This year, Montana Food Bank Network celebrates its 41st Anniversary. As visionary as the founders were in 1984, I can't imagine they expected MFBN to grow into an organization distributing over 14 million meals yearly to 330 Network Partners. In the last 12 years, the organization has increased its distribution from 8.3 million pounds in 23 counties to over 16 million pounds serving the entire state.

In 2019, the Board of Directors and MFBN staff looked at our current limitations and recognized that we needed to invest in our future. I'm pleased to say that this investment and vision will soon come to fruition as we move into our new facility, which is double the size of our current location. It's hard to grasp the

opportunities this new facility will bring to us and our network over the coming years. More capacity to acquire and distribute food. Additional staffing space to help us grow programs and services. More opportunities for volunteer engagement. The possibilities are endless.

Time spent working with MFBN is an investment in the health and prosperity of Montana's people. We look forward to engaging with all of you as we venture into Montana Food Bank Network's new future.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature of Gayle Carlson in black ink.

**Gayle Carlson**

President and CEO

Montana Food Bank Network



April 2024



May 2024



June 2024



July 2024



August 2024

## OUR NEW 56,000+ SQUARE FOOT WAREHOUSE AND FACILITY HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE WE BROKE GROUND LAST SPRING

In April 2024, we launched our \$15 million Campaign for Bigger Impact to advance our mission of ending hunger in Montana. The focal point of the campaign is a transformational new facility and distribution center at 5780 Alloy North in Missoula. Construction is running on schedule, putting us inside the new building in the Summer of 2025.

*"It can't come soon enough,"* said Gayle Carlson, MFBN's President and CEO. *"As we see the need for charitable food resources rising across*



# GOVERNOR GIANFORTE PAYS A **visit to MFBN**

Governor Greg Gianforte visited MFBN on December 19, 2024 to tour the construction of our new facility and help pack food boxes for Montanans experiencing food insecurity.

During his visit, Gov. Gianforte expressed his appreciation, stating, *“For over 40 years, Montana Food Bank Network has supported our communities and worked tirelessly to end hunger. It was great to help pack boxes for families in need of a holiday meal this Christmas. I know I can speak on behalf of all Montanans when I say how grateful we are for the volunteers, staff, and donors who make this possible year-round.”*

MFBN staff were pleased to receive the Governor’s hands-on help and to hear his words of support. Everyone involved with MFBN’s new facility is excited about the possibilities it will bring. This includes more



Photo Credit: State of Montana Governor’s office

space to take advantage of USDA supplied foods. MFBN looks forward to providing even more food to Montana communities.

*our network, we’re eager to move into this facility that will dramatically enhance our ability to reach more Montanans facing hunger.”*

During the recent winter months, Jackson Contractor Group focused on weatherproofing and insulation measures to enable work inside the building to continue in low temperatures into the new year. Exterior walls have been treated, window and door openings have been sealed, and roofing is complete. Electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work will continue indoors, along with the pouring of concrete floors for the loading dock, freezer, cooler, and food storage areas. **We are almost there! Thank you for joining us.**

**The Campaign for Bigger Impact is the largest fundraising campaign in MFBN’s more than 40-year history. To learn more about making a gift, contact Bill Mathews, Chief Development Officer, at [bmathews@mfbn.org](mailto:bmathews@mfbn.org) or (406) 215-1777, or Todd Lengacher, Director of Philanthropy at [tlengacher@mfbn.org](mailto:tlengacher@mfbn.org) or (406) 208-3716. Gifts can also be made online at [mfbn.org](https://mfbn.org).**



January 2025



December 2024



September 2024



October 2024



November 2024

# COLLEGE CAMPUS Food Pantry Highlight

Jesse Schraufnagel, MFBN's Programs Manager, recently shared, "Hunger impacts everyone. Including students living on their own for the first time. The cost of food and availability of nutritious meals is challenging." Jesse explains that MFBN's extraordinary network growth during 2024 occurred because pantries struggled to secure the food they knew their communities needed. "That's where MFBN comes in as a network supplier and resource for them." Of the 22 partners brought on in 2024, two were campus pantries.

"MFBN's support has been incredible, and we could not do what we now do without them," says Parker Scott, Community Engagement Coordinator at Yellowjacket Pantry on the MSU-Billings campus. "We have learned a lot from the MFBN team. Our program and our clients are much better off now that we are working with MFBN for our food orders."

Marguerite Kibodeaux, Basic Needs Coordinator at Bounty of the Bridges Pantry on the MSU-Bozeman campus shared, "I cannot begin to emphasize how significant a reliable consistent source of food is for our program. There is simply no way we could rely on donations alone with the utilization we experience. A tremendous factor in student success and retention at public universities is food security. Food-insecure students are able to access food consistently to



support a well-rounded healthy diet, thanks to the support we receive from MFBN."

Across the state, MFBN partners with organizations large and small, working to make a financial and relational impact with each organization. MFBN believes that supporting students is crucial for the future of Montana.

## MFBN proudly serves these Montana college campuses:

Montana State University, Bozeman  
Montana State University, Billings  
Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell  
University of Montana, Missoula

## MFBN LICENSE PLATE Stand Up Against Hunger



Help us end hunger in Montana by choosing Montana Food Bank Network's "Stand Up Against Hunger" license plate the next time you purchase or renew your vehicle registration. Every license plate helps provide at least 80 meals for our neighbors facing hunger. Ask for the MFBN license plate at your local DMV today!



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