

126th Annual Commencement Events, \$180,000 Raised for Natural Horsemanship Program, & Comedy Cabaret with Erik Escobar

Operations Update <operationsupdate@umwestern.edu>

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Montana Western to Hold 126th Annual Commencement Ceremony

Montana Western will celebrate its [126th Annual Commencement Ceremony](#) on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the Straugh Gymnasium on the UMW campus.

“We look forward to celebrating this important milestone for our students, and we are proud of all of their accomplishments,” said Montana Western Chancellor, Michael Reid.

350 Montana Western graduates will be awarded over 400 degrees by the end of the 2022-23 academic year. Of the 350 students, 53 have completed two or more degrees, and 70% of the graduates are receiving honors by achieving a GPA of 3.33 or higher. 160 graduates have chosen to participate in this year’s ceremony. The ceremony’s Chief Marshal will be Laura Straus, Ph.D., Professor of Education.

Commencement Speaker: Taylor Nahrgang



This year's commencement program will feature speaker [Taylor Nahrgang](#), a 2010 Montana Western graduate and Director of Western & Work Partnerships at Ariat International.

In his current role at Ariat International, Nahrgang is responsible for developing and nurturing key partnerships with stakeholders in the Western and work industries. In his personal life, he loves to rope and is a proud dad.

Nahrgang has a strong connection to the University of Montana Western, where he has served as the Rodeo Club President, ASUMW President, Montana Associated Students (MAS) Vice President, Big Sky Region Student Director, and NIRA Student President. He is also a Big Sky Region Steer Wrestling Champion and a NIRA Steer Wrestling World Champion. Nahrgang currently serves as a member of the University of Montana Western Foundation Board.

Distinguished Alumni Service Award Recipient: Phil Willett



[Phil Willett](#) graduated from Montana Western in 2003 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science and a minor in history. He went on to receive a Graduate Degree of Banking from University of Washington Pacific Coast Banking School.

Willett has been involved with Montana Western in various capacities for over 20 years. He has been on the UMW Foundation Board of Directors since 2016, serves as the Board Chairman, and is a member of the Capital Campaign Committee. Currently, Willett serves as the President/CEO of the Pioneer Federal Savings and Loan Association and serves on the Board of Directors for the Montana Independent Bankers Association.

The Montana Western Alumni Office will host a [luncheon in the Lewis and Clark Room](#) in Mathews Hall on Friday, May 5, at 11:30 a.m. to honor Willett and the Montana Western classes of 1973 and 1998. Tickets are \$20 and available by calling 406-683-7306.



Kick Off to Commencement: Legacy Plaza Celebration

An additional event honoring the 2023 Graduating Class will be held on Friday, May 5, at 3:30 p.m. on the campus's Legacy Plaza. This [celebration](#) is part of a special tradition at Montana Western held at the end of each academic year on the eve of the Commencement Ceremony that celebrates and honors the graduates for the completion of their degrees and the legacy that they will leave at UMW. The Class of 2023 will be presented with their class brick and each graduate will receive an alumni tassel.

Save the Dates

Visit our [online events calendar](#) for more information and to [submit your scheduled events](#).

May 1

- [May Day Fun](#), 3:30 p.m., Keltz Arena
- [Sketch Comedy & Improv Cabaret](#), 7:30 p.m., Beier Auditorium

May 2

- ["Interviews and Success in the Workplace" Presentation](#), 4:00 p.m., Library Basement
- [Sketch Comedy & Improv Cabaret](#), 7:30 p.m., Beier Auditorium

May 3

- Block 8/Semester Ends
- Conclusion of [Mythfest III online](#)- available for viewing April 20 - May 3

May 5

- [Luncheon Honoring Phil Willett and Classes of 1973 & 1998](#), 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Lewis & Clark Room
- [Commencement Rehearsal](#), 2:00 p.m., Straugh Gymnasium
- [Legacy Plaza Celebration](#), 3:30 p.m., Legacy Plaza

May 6

- [Bulldog Breakfast](#), 7:30 a.m., Dining Hall
- [126th Annual Commencement](#), 10:00 a.m., Straugh Gymnasium



Bulldog Breakfast

Montana Western is hosting a breakfast buffet from 7:30-9:30 a.m. in UMW's Dining Hall for all Commencement guests prior to the ceremony on May 6. [Please use this form to RSVP](#) by Thursday, May 4, 2023.

The menu will feature waffles, scrambled eggs, hashbrowns, sausage, biscuits and gravy, sweet rolls, muffins, coffee cake, fresh fruit, cereal, yogurt, granola, chilled juice, fresh brewed coffee, and assorted teas. The cost will be \$10 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under. Payment will be taken directly by Dining Services via cash or card.

UMW Places First at Road to the Horse & Idaho Horse Expo Colt Starting Competition

A team of students from the University of Montana Western's Natural Horsemanship program placed first in the [Idaho Horse Expo Collegiate Colt Starting Competition](#) held April 7-9, 2023, at the Ford Idaho Horse Park in Napa, Idaho.



Road to the Horse partnered with the Idaho Horse Expo to present this year's competition, where three teams competed for a share of the \$6,000 cash prize. Competing teams were from the University of Montana Western, Feather River Community College, and Treasure Valley Community College.

The teams worked with their colts in three hour-long round pen sessions. The finals consisted of a 40-minute timeframe that included 20 minutes in the saddling pen and 20 minutes to complete a list of rail work and obstacle components. Montana Western placed first with a total score of 1183.5, followed by Feather River with 1117.5, and Treasure Valley with 936.5.

Montana Western & Bank of Commerce Performing Arts Series Presents “Sketch Comedy and Improv Cabaret” May 1 and 2



Celebrate the conclusion of the UMW academic year and the final production in the BOC Performing Arts Series with a comedic variety show! Performances will feature stand-up comedy, short-form improvisation, and sketch comedy showcasing UMW students and faculty. Erik Escobar, the host of the cabaret, is a stand-up and improv comedian from Los Angeles, California. He has performed for theaters, night-clubs, and colleges across the nation.

Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Beier Auditorium located in Main Hall on the UMW campus. Parental guidance is recommended for children under 13 due to strong language and suggestive situations.

To purchase tickets, please visit the BOC Performing Arts Series Box Office [webpage](#). Ticket prices are \$15 for general admission, \$10 for senior, youth, military and UMW faculty/staff, and free for UMW students who present their Bulldog Cards.

2023 Colt Sale Raises Over \$180,000 for Natural Horsemanship Program

The Natural Horsemanship Program, which educates students to work with horses as part of a broad range of equine and academic studies, is a joint program of the University of Montana Western and the Montana Center for Horsemanship.



Every year, as part of the Colt Sale course, UMW students work with young horses to be trained and sold at live auction the following spring. This year's sale [generated more than \\$180,000](#) for the program for scholarships, facility updates, and other program needs.

Molly Jackson placed first in the Colt Challenge event on March 31, riding RSR Tarida from the Roaring Springs Ranch. The sale, held the following day on April 1, averaged \$10,069 per colt. The highest selling colt was MR Fritz Badger, ridden by Gus Hoffman and donated by Hollenbeck Ranch.

Facility Services Project Updates

MDT Highway Resurfacing Project

Week of May 1:

- Continue work on one lane of bridge (over the railroad) and begin bridge wall repair.
 - Traffic: single-lane bridge closures with temporary traffic lights.
- Concrete work: begin to move from East Helena Avenue down South Atlantic Street with some sidewalk removal at intersection corners.
 - Traffic: Atlantic Street is expected to have similar traffic control measures as East Helena Avenue.
 - Pedestrians: partial sidewalk closures day and night while concrete cures.
- Street driveway tie-ins along East Helena Avenue.



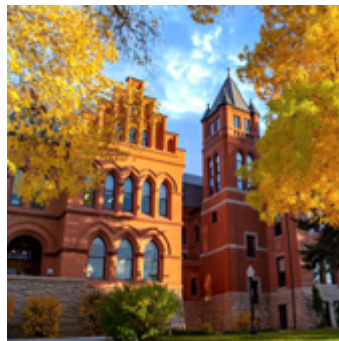
To learn more about the overall project, visit the Montana Department of Transportation [project website](#) where you can sign up for text alerts, project updates via email, or call the project hotline: 406-447-3354.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact UMW Director of [Facility Services](#), Michael Brown: michael.brown@umwestern.edu or 406-683-7142.

Submit Content to Upcoming Operations Updates

Please share your current projects, initiatives, examples of Experience One, and other updates with us so we can share them with the University Community and [let us know](#) what information you would like to see included in future updates. We'd like to hear from you!

Submit Content



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