

Gargoyle

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pany of Samuel J. Jones. The façade, with its flames and gargoyles, was intended to show strength and protection from fire, which has ravaged the city more than once. "They were put up there to keep the building from burning," Rains said. "But the darned building is made of rock." Granite blocks, actually. And the gargoyles are hand-crafted from copper, which presented its own challenges during repair.

"We took the lizards down last year while the building was getting painted," Rains said. "It took me that long to find someone to repair them." The repairman was Craig Harris, a tattoo artist who works in all forms of art, from glass etching to copper pounding. "There's no one that hand-pounds copper anymore," Harris said, standing beside the gargoyles. "They stamp it now and it's all pre-formed." Harris read up on copper-pounding techniques before tackling the priceless gargoyles. He used a bag of sand and a special hammer to perform much of the

work. And there was plenty of work to do. One creature had lost its wing and a portion of its tongue. Another had lost much of its tail. Exactly where the pieces went, or when they disappeared, is something of a mystery. "Repairing them was a matter of taking the time and patience," Harris said. "What was really amazing to me — because they're so old — was the craftsmanship that went into them in the first place." The gargoyles each have one wing and one ear and sit 80 feet above Last Chance Gulch, claws out, ready to pounce.

Their torsos are twisted, as if they've been run over by a truck. Their red tongues may be the envy of Labradors everywhere, long and lapping as they are. Their coats are a pond-scum green. "That's industrial oil paint," said master painter Joe Thielen. "It's the best paint you can get. It'll probably last 20 to 25 years." Thielen, who also repainted the Woman's Mural, added the colors to the Atlas Building last year. He's impressed by the structure's heavy stone workmanship and called the gargoyles the crown jewels of a downtown gem.

Burns

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releases Burns sent out at the time the money was approved. The list was released to Lee Newspapers this fall and includes some 33 pages of more than 900 projects Burns said he either earmarked — set aside for a specific project — or otherwise secured for Montana. Most of the projects are from the early 2000s, while some stretch as far back as 1994. In Butte, the list included more than 90 projects (see sidebar).

Butte is home to a handful of companies that count on government contracts for a significant chunk of their income. A major part of the money Burns claims to have brought to Butte has gone to these companies.

One of the largest is MSE, a company that grew out of a grant secured decades ago by Montana's longtime Democratic Sen. Mike Mansfield, who once worked in Butte's mines.

The company now employs about 160 people in Butte — with about 10 others scattered in offices out of state and has done work for a variety of government agencies, working mostly on defense and energy projects, said Jeff Ruffner, president of MSE.

Burns claims to have brought almost \$178 million to MSE.

Ruffner said the company spends just over \$10 million a year on payroll, paying an average salary of about \$59,800. Last year, MSE spent \$14.8 million on equipment and just over half of that — \$8.1 million — was spent in the state of Montana. The rest, about \$6.7 million, was spent out of state on any number of things, including subcontractors, Ruffner said.

Another Butte company Burns has brought money for is Resodyn Corporation, an outfit that, like MSE, depends on government contracts for a significant piece of its business.

Burns brought more than \$23 million in projects from the Defense and Energy departments to Resodyn, said company president Larry Farrar.

About 90 percent of the federal money stayed in Butte, Farrar said. The rest went to buy motors, pumps and other equipment that are not made in Butte or Montana.

With Burns' help, Resodyn has grown and the growth is obvious in Butte.

The company now manufactures equipment to sell to the military and industrial sectors and is creating jobs,

Farrar said. Resodyn has 35 employees now and is in the process of hiring another 10 to 15 more.

The company bought a bankrupt Butte building for its headquarters and built a 23,000-square-foot manufacturing building, enhancing local tax revenue.

"There's not a lot of technology, industry, not a lot of things going on out here," Farrar said. "So the ability to secure these contracts has been really helpful to build a sustainable business."

But the money Resodyn said it has received with Burns' help — significant as it is — is less than the amount Burns claims to have brought to the company. Several of the company's major contracts are several hundred thousand dollars lower, according to Resodyn, than the list provided by Burns' campaign.

Burns spokesman Iverson said the difference is due to the way different federal agencies divvy out money.

Burns' list reflects money the senator earmarked or otherwise set aside for Montana projects. But government agencies sometimes hold some of that money back, meaning the amount of money that actually ends up in Montana may be somewhat less than the total amount Burns set aside.

It is unclear how many of the more than 900 items on Burns' statewide list also include this discrepancy. MSE's Ruffner said Burns' figures for his company sounded about right.

In at least one case, money Burns claimed to have brought to Butte never made to Montana, at all. Burns' list includes \$1 million in 2005 to an unnamed company to make special metals for the military. The money never came to Butte and was evidently included in the list as a mistake, according to a Burns spokesman.

Lobbying also seems to play a role. Of the \$246 million Burns said he has brought to Butte, more than half — about \$117 million — went to entities that employed Burns' former staff as lobbyists, according to federal lobbying records.

Resodyn's Farrar said he started working with Burns' office in 2003 — the same year the company hired lobbying firm Van Scoyoc and Associates, where Randall Popelka, who had worked for Burns for seven years, was then working as a vice president. Popelka was one of the company's registered lobbyists until the middle of 2005, when he left lobbying and went back to Burns' office as a legislative director, a high-ranking aide.

Resodyn has paid the firm about \$200,000, federal

records show. Farrar said the company chose Van Scoyoc because the firm was recommended to him and because the firm was well-known, but still had clients in Montana.

MSE has also hired Burns' former staff as lobbyists. Federal records show the company employed Anderson & Baker from 1999 to 2000. Mark Baker is Burns' former legislative director. Baker is also the unpaid chairman on Burns' re-election campaign and served as its early spokesman.

MSE paid Anderson & Baker \$120,000, Senate records show.

Since 2004, records show, MSE has retained Gage, a lobbying firm started by Burns' former chief of staff, Leo Giacometto. Gage employs several lobbyists who once worked at Burns' office.

So, far Gage has reported \$205,000 in lobbying income from MSE, the latest figures show.

MSE's Ruffner said the company hired Gage because the outfit has "key knowledge" of the kind of projects MSE works on. Asked if MSE would keep Gage as its lobbyist should Burns lose, Ruffner said he didn't know, but he added that all the company's lobbying contracts are reviewed at the end of each year and Ruffner can't say if any will be retained, regardless of elections.

MSE has more than one lobbying firm. The company also retains Patton Boggs, a major lobby house, and Kimmitt, Senter, Coates & Weinferter, another big lobbying firm with ties to both Democrats and Republicans.

Ruffner said his company works with all of Montana's three-man congressional delegation, but Burns, with his spot on the Appropriations Committee, is pivotal.

"They've all been fantastic," Ruffner said. "But with Senator Burns on appropriations, he takes the lead on funding."

In recent years, the company has been trying to diversify itself, becoming less dependent on any one source of income, including government money. Ruffner said the company "would survive" if Burns lost the election, but the absence of the senator's appropriating power would hurt.

"It would have an impact not just to MSE, but to Butte and Montana," he said.

Burns' appropriations have been a boon to Butte and the state, said Marko Lucich, executive director of the Butte Chamber of Commerce. He said for the first time in 40 years, Butte's population is growing, even if the growth is relatively slight.

Roads

continued from 1A

representing the developers of the other two proposed subdivisions, also resisted county requirements for road improvements.

Developers Bryan and Linda Heuvel are requesting a variance that would require them to upgrade Applegate Drive from Prairie Road to the north end of their proposed 10-lot subdivision, a distance of about a quarter-mile. The Heuvels would also be responsible for installing a four-way stop at the intersection of Prairie Road and Applegate Drive.

If a variance isn't granted, the couple would be required to improve Applegate Drive from Lincoln Road to Roma Road; Roma Road; Hillview Drive from Roma Road to Prairie Road; and Prairie Road from N. Montana Avenue to Applegate Drive — a total distance of about four miles. The roads would need additional gravel in some places and pavement in others, depending on traffic counts.

Taylor said the improvements would be cost-prohibitive, and said he's heard "talk and rumors" of much

further development in the area, which may bring about extensive road improvements.

"We agree that the roads need to be improved, but we don't believe it should be our burden to bear entirely," Linda Heuvel said.

Taylor also spoke out against a requirement for the developer of a four-lot subdivision on Prairie Road to add gravel to about a mile of roadway — Diamond Springs Drive between Woodland Hills and Prairie roads and west on Prairie Road to the property boundary. He said the improvements could cost between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million.

"For a four-lot subdivision, this is quite an excessive requirement," he said.

The road improvements, coupled with the county's proposed zoning regulations, signal "the death throes for any subdivision of this type," Taylor said.

He said the state statutes and county subdivision requirements referenced in the county planner's report don't authorize the commission to require the developers to upgrade off-site roads.

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Ballot

continued from 1A

unions, contributed \$310,000 to the Not in Montana-No on CI-97 campaign, and AARP-Montana, a consumer group with 150,000 members 50 years or older, chipped in another \$250,000 to the anti-CI-97 campaign.

Other contributors included the Montana Hospital Association, known as MHA, the Montana Contractors Association and the Service Employees International Union in Washington, D.C.

This range of groups says CI-97 would needlessly restrict government spending and that the state constitution already requires a balanced budget.

Supporters of CI-97, CI-98 and I-154 also are continuing to spend money on their campaigns, reporting the past six weeks, including about \$151,000 on broadcast advertising.

CI-98 would make it easier for citizens to attempt to recall judges in Montana, and I-154 would allow property owners to demand payment from government if they think government action has devalued their property.

The campaign coordinator for all three measures is Trevis Butcher, a rancher and

political activist from Winifred.

Nearly all of the funding in support of the three measures has come from Montanans in Action, a group formed this year. Butcher is the group's treasurer.

Montanans in Action now has contributed a total of \$1.1 million to the campaigns of CI-97, CI-98 and I-154. Butcher has said the group is not required by law to reveal its donors. That assertion has been challenged by a rival group and is being investigated by the state political practices commissioner.

Butcher, who did not return telephone messages Tuesday, has said the measures are meant to put more power in the hands of the voters to control government.


I-154 opponents, led by conservation and environmental groups, are going ahead with their campaign as well. But the confusing legal status of the measure has made it tough to raise money, said Janet Ellis, executive director of Montana Audubon and a steering committee member for Property Owners Against I-154.

"People don't think it's on the ballot, and then you have to explain that it is on the ballot, and that it may be off the ballot," she said. "It becomes a lot more difficult to raise funds with that kind of a message."

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