

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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Photos (2) Enclosed

“POWER UP”

22nd Annual Energy Open Held at Colstrip

The 22nd Annual Energy Open Conference and Golf Tournament was held on August 7th and 8th in Colstrip the “Energy Capital of Montana.” Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC) hosted this unique event which has showcased the economic benefits of responsible energy development since 2004. “This is a great opportunity to tour unique energy facilities, network with energy leaders, decision makers, legislators, and if desired, golf one of Montana’s most challenging public courses on the second day,” noted SEMDC Executive Director Jim Atchison.

The Energy Open Conference started out Thursday at Colstrip High School with some tremendous networking opportunities along with a Podcast Taping by Big Sky Economic Development (Billings). A group of selected speakers featuring the Grid United North Plains Connector Transmission Line Project, the recent SMR (Nuclear) Study and a Regional Project Update from NorthWestern Energy. Lunch from Roadrunner Catering was served prior to the attendees departing on two different tours. The Rosebud Mine Tour featured coal mining, safety, drone use and award-winning reclamation efforts of Westmoreland Rosebud Mining. The Quality-of-Life Tour featured numerous benefits in the Colstrip community, such as Castle Rock Lake, CPRD, the new Business Innovation Center (BIC), parks and trails and the Energy (Industrial) Park site. The first day concluded with a banquet at the Moose Lodge featuring Keynote Speaker Marta Bertoglio, new Director of the Montana Department of Commerce.

On Friday, the Ponderosa Butte Golf Course in Colstrip was the site of the Energy Open 18 Hole Golf Tournament with lots of prizes, a shot at the “Coal Cup” Trophy, and the \$20,000 Hole-In-One prize sponsored by Heberle Ford. Seventy-two golfers from over five states were treated to breakfast prior to the tee time. The tournament concluded with an awards presentation featuring Six Team Payouts, Flag, and Door Prizes. The Coal Cup Champions for 2025 were the Westmorland Rosebud Mining Team of Michael Drexler, Willy Bradley, Delbert Jankowski, and Lane Bradley.

“We were very pleased with the turnout of conference attendees, outstanding tours, high number of golfers and pretty good weather.” added Atchison. “Also special thanks to Westmoreland Rosebud Mining, FM3 Creations, Grammies, Rosebud Foods along with CPRD and the Colstrip School District.”

SEMDC is a regional non-profit economic development group established in 1997 to stimulate and encourage economic activity in the four (4) Counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud, and Treasure. Today, SEMDC works with the private, public, and non-profit sectors to help create and retain jobs in these four counties. Our track record has documented over 1,249 jobs created or retained and over \$100 million dollars in project assistance since 1997. Since 2005, SEMDC has been designated by the State of Montana as a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) and the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District. For more information, contact SEMDC at 406-748-2990 or www.semhc.org.

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