

# Looking forward to a busy year in Congress

**RM Question:** *To paraphrase Robert Frost, what are you looking backward to with pride for 2006 and forward to with hope for 2007?*



## By Senator Max Baucus

**H**appy Holidays! It's hard to believe that another year is coming to an end.

As I look back over the 109th Congress, I'm proud that I was able to help deliver some real wins for Montana and the rest of the country.

As a co-author of last year's multi-year highway bill, I was proud to secure more than \$2.3 billion for Montana highway construction projects. These dollars helped to create and keep more than 18,000 good-paying jobs per year in our state. This is a real investment into boosting our state's economy and keeping our roads safe and efficient.

As the highest-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee – the panel with jurisdiction over Social Security and our nation's retirement

programs – I was proud to lead the charge against privatizing Social Security. Privatization is a bad idea – one that would cause more harm than good. Privatization would add trillions of dollars to the debt and would have meant deep benefit cuts. This wasn't right. I'm glad that we put an end to it in the 109th Congress and I plan to fight any plans to privatize Social Security. Montanans can count on me to continue working together with my colleagues in the Senate on a common-sense solution that will boost Social Security for future generations.

I'm looking forward to working with Montana's new senator, Jon Tester. Together we're going to do great things for the Big Sky state.

After last week's elections, Democrats will now be in the majority in the Senate in the 110th Congress and I will be the Chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. This panel has jurisdiction over the nation's taxes, health care programs – Medicare and Medicaid, retirement programs – Social Security and trade.

In addition to being Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I will also

keep my senior posts on the Senate Agriculture and the Environment and Public Works Committees.

During the 110th Congress, I'll use my seniority in the Senate to do what's right for my 900,000 bosses. No matter what I do, Montana will come first. Some of my top priorities are to:

- Create more good-paying jobs to help boost our state's economy;
- Ensure that all Montanans have access to quality, affordable health care;
- Boost domestic energy production so we can lessen our dependence on foreign oil and energy sources;
- Write the 2007 Farm Bill so that it will help Montana producers;
- Open new markets for Montana's world-class agriculture products

We have a lot of work ahead of us but I'm confident that by working together – Republicans and Democrats – we can move Montana and our country forward.

I wish all Montanans a very happy and restful holiday season. I hope all of you have the opportunity to spend time with your family and friends. And I look forward to seeing many of you. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.



## By Senator-elect Jon Tester

**T**he last year has been filled with tremendous blessings for Sharla and me. We have had the opportunity to visit with and get to know thousands of Montanans from all over the state and we have experienced the grandeur of every corner of our state in all seasons.

Our love of this state and its people is greater than ever. Now that they have entrusted us with honor of serving Montana in the United States Senate, we expect the coming year to be one of

hard, rewarding work.

There is much to do, from making sure the 2007 Farm Bill works for Montana family agriculture, to getting serious about making America energy independent, to addressing the health care needs of Montanans, particularly in our rural communities.

As we make preparations this holiday season to pass our family farm on to the fourth generation, we would like to send our holiday greetings to families across Montana.”

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*Representative Rehberg did not respond to the RM question.*