

Defense dollars headed our way

*By Gerard O'Brien of The Montana Standard
July 9, 2003*

\$31.5 million for Butte clears appropriations subcommittee hurdle

U.S. Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., announced Tuesday that he has been able to garner nearly \$78 million in federal defense department spending for Montana — which includes \$31.5 million for Butte and some \$29 million for Bozeman projects.

The money is through the defense appropriations bill that passed out of subcommittee on Tuesday. The numbers may change, however, as the bill goes before the full committee Wednesday, then on the Senate floor for debate. Then, a joint House and Senate conference committee will come up with a compromise bill for the president to sign, perhaps prior to the August recess or by October.

The chances of the amount staying the same or at least close to the same are good, according to Don Peoples, head of MSE Technology Applications of Butte.

For example, last year MSE sought \$8 million and received \$7 million for the Mariah wind tunnel project. This year the amount that passed out of the Senate is \$16 million, more than double last year's appropriation. The House has appropriated \$6 million for Mariah.

The Butte area projects include:

- ✓ \$3.2 million for thermal sprays for structural protection under Resodyn Corp.;
- ✓ \$3.8 million for advanced metallized gelled propellants under Resodyn Corp.;
- ✓ \$16 million for the Mariah II hypersonic wind tunnel program at MSE's Mike Mansfield Advanced Technology Center;
- ✓ \$3 million for the innovative demil technologies project. This is an MSE project to destroy out-of-date ordnances and munitions. (The House has appropriated \$3 million as well);
- ✓ \$2 million for the waste minimization and pollution prevention project for MSE. This is a process to minimize the amount of waste created when developing weaponry;
- ✓ \$1.5 million for the machine vision confirmation of launch bar engagement system for MSE. This controls the flight of fighter pilots off aircraft carrier decks;
- ✓ \$2 million for titanium extraction mining and process engineering research, a Montana Tech project.

"The fact that this money is for MSE, Montana Tech and Resodyn Corp. puts Butte in a much stronger position (in getting the funding)," Peoples said.

"Sen. Burns recognizes the importance of high-tech job creation in our state and the funding for these projects is proof-positive of it," Peoples said. "MSE, Butte and Montana as a whole are deeply indebted to Sen. Burns for all his hard work and continued dedication.

"To get this amount of funding, at a time when Butte's economy is suffering is the best thing we've had happen in months. He's been the champion of our community for years, and right now, there seems no sufficient way to thank him for his help with this funding."

Larry Farrar, president of Resodyn Corp. in Butte said, "Sen. Burns and his staff have secured \$7 million for research at Resodyn Corp. at a critical time considering the current economic state of Butte and the state of Montana. These dollars will create new jobs at my company. I commend Sen. Burns for his consistent effort to bring jobs to Butte."

"Keeping the security of our country at the highest level possible is my top priority," Burns said in a press release. "This requires funding to ensure our men and women in uniform have the training, equipment and infrastructure they need to succeed. I am happy to see this money come out of subcommittee, and I will continue to work to make sure these funds are kept intact as they move through the full committee and onto the Senate floor."
