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### **Poll: 30 Percent of Montanans Know the State Seal**

**MISSOULA** – “Can you tell me the words displayed on the ribbon of the Montana state seal?” According to the University of Montana’s Big Sky Poll, 30 percent of Montanans know the answer to this question.

The words “Oro y Plata,” Spanish for gold and silver, represent Montana’s mining roots, which gave rise to the

state’s nickname, the Treasure State. Accompanied by a plow, a miner’s pick and shovel, majestic mountains and the Great Falls of the Missouri River, the seal emphasizes Montana’s rich history.



“The UM Big Sky Poll is driven by an academic mission to provide our students with an applied learning experience to explore a variety of research questions,” said Sara Rinfret, associate professor and Master of Public Administration director at UM. “The state seal question allows us to explore Montanan perceptions about statewide traditions.”

Originally designed by Francis McGee Thompson and accepted through a territorial resolution in 1865, the seal has remained an emblem of tradition, a value Montanans hold dear.

While it is common for traditions to fade over time, about 65 percent of survey respondents either refused to answer or indicated that they did not know the words on the state seal, suggesting that reverence for some Montana traditions may be faltering, Rinfret said.

The poll was conducted via telephone between Feb. 1 and Feb. 19 with 603 randomly selected Montana registered voters. The poll has a margin of error of +/-4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Use of poll findings requires attribution to UM's Big Sky Poll.

The Big Sky Poll collects and reports information about Montanans' perceptions of local, state and federal issues. The poll is directed by Rinfret and Justin Angle, UM associate professor of marketing, in conjunction with seven graduate seminar students from UM's MPA and Business Analytics programs.

The survey was commissioned with support from UM's Social Science Research Laboratory. The Big Sky Poll will be offered on an ongoing basis with its next iteration planned for fall 2018.