

Polson Community Selected As Finalist For Orton Family Foundation Grant

Polson was honored on Monday, October 10, to host four representatives of the Orton Family Foundation. Polson is one of five communities in the Northern Rockies region being considered for a \$100,000 two-year grant to support a community process to plan for the future and identify our shared community values.

The Orton Family Foundation works with communities to “describe, apply and uphold their heart and soul so that they can adapt to change while maintaining or enhancing the things they value most.” “Heart and Soul Planning” actively involves residents so that many voices are heard in the planning process. The goal is to retain those values a community holds dear while at the same time planning for change.

While in Polson, Orton Foundation President and CEO, William Roper, and Project Directors Alece Ortero, Betsy Rosenbluth, and Marjo Curgus, met with more than twenty community members. The community group included representatives from the business

community, schools, local Indian tribes, healthcare, and city government, volunteers, youth, and interested citizens. The Orton Foundation wanted to know more about Envision Polson!, an effort by a wide cross section of community leaders convened by the Greater Polson Community Foundation

community members who put up signs to welcome the Orton Foundation visitors, spruced up our community and have shown an interest in the success of the grant process.

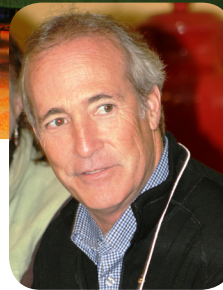
You can view the video that accompanied Polson’s application on the Greater Polson

Community Foundation Facebook page and the website, polsonforever.org. We are indebted to Darlis and Daniel Smith who wrote the application and produced the video along with Frank Tyro of Salish-Kootenai College.

The Orton Family Foundation awards two Heart and Soul grants annually in the Northern Rockies area and two in New England. Polson is competing with another Montana town, Red Lodge, plus two in Colorado (North Fork Valley and Cortez,) and one in Wyoming (Saratoga) for two grants to be awarded in the West.

The New England finalists are Eastport, Maine, Laconia, N.H., North Kingstown, R.I., Gardiner, Maine and Essex, VT.

The winners will be announced in early December.



(Above) The Polson community welcomed the Orton Family Foundation delegation with a luncheon.

(Right) William Roper, President and CEO of the Orton Family Foundation. Steve Pickel Photos

to build on Polson’s assets and work toward better lives for our citizens.

The Orton Foundation and Envision Polson! would like to thank all the businesses and

“Envision Polson!” Preliminary Survey Results Announced

Throughout the summer, everyone in the Polson community was invited to provide input on eight action-oriented Polson vision statements developed by the Envision Polson! Steering Committee. Two hundred fifty-seven people participated in the online survey. A final report will be available in November to present to the Steering Committee and action committees. “We are excited to have so much

input from citizens to help guide Envision Polson!’s plans and activities,” said David Whitesell, Youth Committee Chair. Survey participants chose the following goals (in no special order) as their favorites:

- Polson is a welcoming, beautiful, safe and clean town, and this fuels a strong sense of community pride and unity.

- Polson is a community that values and takes pride in the successful development of its children.
- Polson is a culturally diverse community that balances varied economic opportunities in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, the arts, and other industries to maintain a year-round sustainable economic base.

Treasurer's Corner

Because of our generous donors, the Greater Polson Community Foundation (GPCF) was able to add over \$50,000 to its endowment fund during the 2011 fiscal year ending June 30. As a result, the Montana Community Foundation awarded GPCF an incentive grant of \$10,000. This, when added to the earnings of the GPCF endowment fund, allowed GPCF to award nearly \$12,000 in grants among nine qualified local non-profit organizations.

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GPCF has gratefully received two \$5,000 anonymous grants since the start of fiscal year 2012 which began July 1,

2011. One of these gifts was designated for the endowment fund; the other may be used for the endowment or for operating expenses.

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GPCF qualified for a Leadership Grant offered by the Montana Community Foundation because of GPCF's plans to convene and organize a grassroots effort which became known as "Envision Polson!", an effort to engage the community in intentionally moving Polson forward and helping it become "The Gem of Flathead Lake."

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During periods of stock market fluctuation, some donors may choose to contribute to the GPCF endowment fund through pledged and planned gifts and by including the GPCF in their wills. This allows people who don't have the cash in hand because of the economy, to still help the GPCF permanent endowment grow.

La Vida Local, 2011 Passion For Polson Celebration



The setting was straight out of Sunset Magazine: a long communal table for 110 set with colorful table linen and decorations under a tent for shade in a beautiful yard on a farm that has been in the same family for 101 years. Surrounded with pastures, hayfields, and views of Flathead Lake and the Mission Range, it was the perfect setting for La Vida Local (The Local Life), theme of the Greater Polson Community Foundation's (GPCF) third annual Passion for Polson Celebration.



Guests enjoy great food and conversation during "Passion for Polson" celebration. Tina Mercer Photo

ingredients: locally grown wagyu beef from the Marchi ranch and lamb, locally made pasta from Country Pasta, salad with produce from the local farmers' market, and cheesecake with brandied Flathead Lake cherries for dessert. Award winning chef, Kristen Essig, from Rocky Point Lodge, created the menu and prepared the delicious food.

La Vida-tini, a signature martini created by Whistling Andy's Distillery for the event, featured local gin, huckleberries, and mint.

Clint Vick, a talented country singer/songwriter who has recently returned to Montana after a successful musical career in Missouri, entertained guests during the cocktail hour.



Chip and Karen Vergeront hosted the event at their farm Saturday, August 20. The appetizers and three-course sit-down dinner featured locally grown



Hawthorne House B&B was named "Best Bloomin' Business." Valley Journal Photo

Community Recognized For Beautiful Gardens

Ten Polson community members received recognition from the "Polson Community in Bloom" contest organized by "Envision Polson!" Judging took place in August, by four Polson residents—all gardeners, three of whom hold the title of Master Gardener.

The winners by category are:

- 🌿 Balconies and window boxes: *Olivia Bertsch*
- 🌿 Business: *Hawthorne House*
- 🌿 Residence: *Kari Wise and Kathy Shore*
- 🌿 Vegetable: *John Kelly*
- 🌿 Containers: *Marshall Fox*
- 🌿 Mobile home: *Sotero Muniz*
- 🌿 Perennial: *Chares Bertsch*
- 🌿 Volunteers: *Betty Bjork and Penny Jarecki*, for planting and care of Triangle Park, Hwy. 93 & 7th Street near Ducharme Park.

Judging criteria focused on "curb appeal," which included color, combinations of flowers and color, and uniqueness or creativity. Fifty nominations were received by the Beautification Committee of Envision Polson!

■ GPCF Grants Answer Community Needs

The Greater Polson Community Foundation awarded a total of nearly \$12,000 to nine qualifying non-profit organizations in the Polson area recently. Pictured (l to r) are Toni Young, *Community Garden*; Marilyn Trosper, *North Lake County Public Library District*; Cindy Willis, *Polson Community Development Agency*; John Schnase, *Boys and Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation*; Cheryl Weatherell, *Foster Grandparents*; Joanne Mangels, *Miracle of America Museum*; Kathy Farmer, *Polson Flathead Historical Museum*; and Penny Jarecki, *President of the Greater Polson Community Foundation*. Not pictured are representatives of the Carl A. Ross Memorial/Red Cross Swim Program and Loaves and Fish Food Pantry.

The Greater Polson Community Foundation distributes earnings from its permanent endowment as grants once each year for special projects to non-profit organizations with 501 (c) 3 status.



■ “Envision Polson!” ... It’s More Than Wishful Thinking!

Envision Polson! came to life early this year when the Greater Polson Community Foundation (GPCF) asked the question, “Are the grants we are making truly answering Polson’s needs?” In an effort to answer that question, GPCF convened a cross-section of community representatives who worked to create a vision of what our community would ideally become in the future.

Their vision was composed of eight goals reflecting different aspects of community life. They also suggested steps that could achieve the goals. The community at large was invited to participate via a survey posted on the GPCF website (see preliminary results in article on front page), and “action committees” were formed to begin work toward accomplishing each of the goals.

The “action committees” exemplifying the eight goals of the vision statement meet monthly; several projects have been carried out or are in final planning stages. For example:

Beautification Committee launched Clean Up! Green Up!, the community-wide clean up of downtown Polson and surrounding neighborhoods in the spring, as well as the “*Polson Community in Bloom*” contest showcasing seven stand-out examples of gardeners and/or plantings that enhance Polson’s natural beauty. Next project: a holiday decorations contest for businesses, residences, churches, and schools is in the planning stage.

Year-round Recreation Committee wants to make life more fun for permanent residents as well as summer visitors. Their goals include creating a “trailhead” with parking and a porta-potty for those

using the Carol Sherick Trail, connecting the existing trail to downtown, and launching a “film festival” in mid-February or early March.

Youth Committee will continue involving kids of all ages in the Independence Day parade as they did this July 4 as well as planning to make community service a more significant part of the school curriculum and developing programs to expose Polson youth to the broader world.

Tourism Committee repainted the “Welcome to Polson” signs north and south of town.

Economy/Standard of Living is gathering important data on Polson’s economic health, has established a website “*Doing Business from Polson*,” is creating a network among the newer entrepreneurs who have moved to Polson, and is planning a speaker series on Community Vitality.

Leadership/Communication/Collaboration invites the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes to be involved and works to keep them informed.

Other committees are **Health and Well Being**, and **Unique Features**.

Envision Polson! is a grassroots movement challenging all members of our community to help intentionally move Polson forward to make it “the gem of Flathead Lake.” Anyone wishing to learn more or to become involved may call 883-2248.

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Greater Polson Community Foundation
Making Polson the Gem of Flathead Lake

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