

# The Madisonian

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## Presented Checks

by Keeley Fitzgerald

One of the area's newest venture corporations has invested in the future of the Madison Valley with donations to two of Ennis' largest construction projects:

Madison Valley Renewable Energy, LLC, presented checks totaling \$7,500 to the Madison Valley Hospital and Madison Valley Public Library construction projects Thursday. A \$5,000 check was presented to Madison Valley Hospital representatives Pete Brekhus and Dave Hajny. The other \$2,500 check was presented to Library Director Kathy Knack.

Madison Valley Renewable Energy (MVRE) is a relatively new venture to the valley. Since 2006, the company has been working to develop a 150-megawatt wind energy facility in the Norris area. In just over a year's time, the wind project has grown to encompass over 14,000 acres of agricultural grazing lands including private ranch lands and Montana state school trust lands. The project, with an estimated \$150 million price tag, could produce enough electricity to power 45,000 homes.

According to MVRE's Madison Valley coordinator and assistant consultant Shylea Wingard, the project has secured priority transmission capacity with NorthWestern Energy as well as the option to sell wind-generated power to NorthWestern and private electricity consumers in Montana and the West Coast. MVRE's partners include Les Brown, who has extensive background in environmental and energy laws, and Steve and Dean Ross, who have over 25 years of experience in development and management.

With the hopes of developing clean, renewable wind energy in the Madison Valley, MVRE says it's also working to build upon the valley's idea of community while supporting the local economy.

"Les Brown developed a fondness for the Madison Valley several years ago while on a family vacation. He wanted to do something nice for the

community and saw this as an opportunity to help the community out," said Wingard. "He hopes this donation will be the first of many that can be used to benefit the Madison Valley and its residents."

Madison Valley Hospital chair Dave Hajny hopes donations such as this continue to inspire others to invest in the future of the valley's primary healthcare resource. Since construction on the new hospital began this fall, Hajny says the hospital also received checks for \$27,000 and \$10,000 last week. With the arrival of 2008 and a new tax year, Hajny wants donors to know that every little bit helps.

"The donations are still coming in. All the ten dollar and hundred dollar checks are just as important as those one hundred thousand dollar checks. They really add up. Every donation is important to us and shows that this project is important to our community. It also shows some of the larger donors that people in this community really support this project," said Hajny.

Hajny says the hospital still needs to raise a little over a half million dollars for the \$6 million dollar building project. The new hospital facility is expected to open its doors late fall 2008.

The Madison Valley Public Library has been fundraising for a new library for four long years. Construction is well underway. Thursday's \$2,500 donation from MVRE was enough to put the library over the top for its December 31 deadline for Kendeda Fund grant money. It was also enough to put a smile on library director Kathy Knack's face as community support continues and another fundraising milestone reached.

"As far as construction and the Kendeda Fund, this meets the goal. This is perfect. It was a real push to meet the December 31 deadline," said Knack of the library's most recent donation.

The Kendeda Fund grant challenge, launched in June, matched all donations to the



Madison Valley Renewable Energy LLC coordinator Shylea Wingard (center) presents a check to Dave Hajny and Pete Brekhus for the Madison Valley Hospital/Clinic.



Kathy Knack accepts a donation from Shylea Wingard of the Madison Valley Renewable Energy LLC for the Madison Valley Public Library.

library 1:1 up to \$162,500. The library had until December 31 to raise the funds for the matching grant.

Knack says the library will still need to raise additional funds for things inside the library. Additional donations to the library will help pay for a long list of items including book bins, shelving, a new circulation desk, computer tables, office furniture, an additional 9-12 computers, an updated wireless computer system, and an additional book drop at the rear entrance.

Construction for the new library will cost approximately \$657,000.