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[UM Poll: Most Voters Don't Know Montana Once Had Two US House Districts](#)

UM News Service

MISSOULA – The University of Montana Big Sky Poll recently asked participants “What is the highest number of U.S. Representatives that Montana has ever had?” Only 39% of respondents answered correctly with two. Although Montana currently has an at-large congressional district that represents the entire state, Montana had two districts from 1913 to 1993.

Montana could regain a second congressional seat as a result of the 2020 census. The 2020 census in Montana will begin in February 2020. The census not only determines congressional representation, it also determines state-level funding for 300 federal programs, including allocations for Medicaid, highway construction, school lunches and Head Start.

Census data also will be used in redistricting to draw lines that link representatives to their constituents for the next 10 years. If Montana gains another congressional seat, the [Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission](#) will meet to divide the state into two districts. The results of the 2020 census will be released in early 2021.

Each iteration of the UM Big Sky Poll includes a question about Montana trivia. The spring 2019 poll included the question “From what you know, has Montana ever elected a

female representative to the U.S. Congress?” Forty-nine percent of respondents answered correctly: Jeannette Rankin was elected in 1916 and was the first female member of the U.S. Congress. In the fall 2018 poll, respondents were asked, “Can you tell me the name of the highest natural point in Montana?” Twenty-two percent answered correctly – Granite Peak.

The UM Big Sky Poll was conducted online between Sept. 26 to Oct. 3 with 303 randomly selected Montana registered voters. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 5.63 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Use of poll findings requires attribution to UM Big Sky Poll.

The poll is directed by UM Associate Professor Sara Rinfret, chair of UM's Department of Public Administration and Policy, and UM marketing Associate Professor Justin Angle, in conjunction with four graduate students from the University's public administration and business analytics programs. The survey was commissioned with support from UM's Office of Research and Creative Scholarship, Blewett School of Law Baucus Institute and the Social Science Research Laboratory. The Big Sky Poll is conducted on an ongoing basis with its next iteration planned for spring 2020.

Full results from the poll are available on the UM Big Sky Poll website at <http://umt.edu/bigskypoll>.

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