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**MAPS secures five years of funding**  
*by SEPP JANNOTTA - Ravalli Republic*

The new school year is still a ways off, but pieces to the funding puzzle are falling into place for the MAPS Media Institute.

MAPS, a program that plans to offer Ravalli County high school students and others a crack at earning professional media arts skills, has received a \$575,000 grant to be spread over the next five years.

With funding questions hanging over the program's projected fall kick start, MAPS founder and president Peter Rosten said he is happy some of the pressure is off.

"This is a big deal - it guarantees that we open our doors this fall," Rosten said of the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant focused on providing non-school-hours educational outlets for high school aged kids. "We're very grateful. In the past, I'd wake up every morning thinking, 'How the hell are we going to pay for all this.' Now I wake up thinking that every other morning."

With the after-school program in good shape, Rosten said he remains optimistic about the prospects for funding the during-school-hours portion of the program.

"I think we'll get it done," Rosten said of the hunt for the grant funding that will prove key to the public-private partnership he envisions for MAPS success. "We have lines in the water and I expect there are going to be some fish on them."

When fall rolls around, MAPS will be back on the Bitterroot educational landscape following a year-long hiatus.

News of the successful grant came just days before MAPS had other news to announce as well.

First, Rosten said MAPS has hired Laura Henderson to be the program director.

Henderson, who worked administering grant-funded programming at the University of Utah, said she's thrilled to be on the MAPS team.

"I think [Peter Rosten] is a person who says 'I'm going to do this,' and then looks at something and makes it happen," Henderson said. "I'm very excited about it."

The institute also put its newest public service piece, an anti-suicide multimedia video, on its Web site ([www.mediarts.org](http://www.mediarts.org)).

The piece, entitled "Live Life," was done at the request of Brian Cherry, coordinator of the Ravalli County Youth Suicide Prevention Alliance, and features a collaboration between MAPS and the teens from Leadership High (a Kids First alcohol and tobacco prevention program).

"When Brian approached us with the assignment, we couldn't say no," Rosten said. "The subject matter is too important."

The fact that Kids First became a part of the project dovetailed nicely with the MAPS' teaching mission and allowed the students to help craft the video's approach to the question why life is worth living, Rosten said.

"In order to encourage life, we wanted the video's visual content to show people of all ages and from all walks of life as they transitioned from year to year, decade to decade," Rosten said. "And the kids found some wonderful and positive ways to illustrate this."

In the end, Rosten said the piece illustrates the model of what MAPS can do for its students - teach them to turn around professional multimedia projects that will in turn put them in the jobs-creation pipeline.

"That's what it's all about," he said. "You can always say, 'Here's how you do this stuff,' it's another thing to say here's a job, here's some work."

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Jill wrote on Jul 1, 2009 8:19 PM:

" Hey Peter! You are on a roll. Big Time. Congratulations to you and MAPS. What a success story. I am happy to know you. "

Charmell Owens wrote on Jul 1, 2009 12:47 PM:

" Peter: On behalf of Kids First, I would like to congratulate you on your grant. We look forward to hearing about your dynamic work in the future!! "

Rick Robinson wrote on Jul 1, 2009 7:54 AM:

" Peter, that is amazing news. If it is a good thing to do, funny how money always seems to come just when we are out of answers ourselves. "

Russ wrote on Jul 1, 2009 6:14 AM:

" Congratulations to Peter and the MAPS team. Wonderful to know that Montana's children will have this opportunity for years to come. "

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