



## ECONOMIC SUMMIT

### **Investments in kids pay off**

By Eva Pedersen, Whitefish, MT  
Sunday, October 3, 2010

I applaud Sen. Max Baucus' efforts to bring together business leaders, including business owners like myself, at the Montana Economic Development Summit recently. One of the best ways we can spur economic development and ramp up businesses and jobs in our state is investing in quality early care and education.

While many recognize early learning programs have long-term economic benefits, I recently learned that early learning investments can also provide an immediate boost to sales of local goods and services across Montana. According to the business leader organization America's Edge, these investments generate more in new sales of local goods and services as investments in construction, manufacturing, transportation or utilities. In fact, every \$1 invested in early learning will generate almost \$2 in new sales for Montana businesses.

These programs will also help reduce the \$3 billion annual cost incurred by businesses in the United States caused by parents missing five to nine days of work every year to deal with child care arrangement problems. In fact, I am personally familiar with many women who have had to make the decision not to work simply because quality child care is not available to them.

As Warren Buffet said at the summit, "one of the best investments people can make is in themselves." That includes investments in our kids, which will strengthen Montana businesses today, while ensuring a future work force with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills we will need to compete in a global marketplace.