

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

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Bullock Unveils transparency.mt.gov, State Checkbook Online for First Time Ever

HELENA – Montana Governor Steve Bullock said that Montana taxpayers can now see how the state’s money is spent. Bullock unveiled transparency.mt.gov, the new online version of Montana’s checkbook.

“Montana taxpayers want to make sure we’re spending their money wisely and I’ll insist that the state never spends more than it takes in,” Bullock said in announcing transparency.mt.gov.

In Bullock’s State of the State address on Wednesday, he said that for the first time ever, Montana’s checkbook will be online.

“We’ll have a searchable database so that any Montanan – or anyone in the world, for that matter – can look at how we are spending the taxpayers’ money. It’s the right thing to do and it’ll lead to a more effective government,” Bullock told legislators in his address.

Payments made through the state’s accounting system can be searched in three ways – by department, category or who the payment was made to (the payee). A search by category allows users to track costs for expenses including utility and postage costs, supplies like ammunition or gas, or services like fire suppression.

For some payments, the payee is reported as “confidential” to protect the privacy of citizens who get tax refunds, pay child support or receive public assistance or unemployment insurance.

The website, which was created by the Department of Administration, will be continually improved and updated. More information about state government will also be added.

Bullock noted that legislators – both Democrat and Republican – have been working on this for several years, but have been unable to enact laws creating the online checkbook.

“I commend those legislators who have been involved with this issue. Transparency and openness should never be partisan, and I look forward to working with the legislature to provide a more effective government for Montana taxpayers,” Bullock said.

The expenditures detailed in the online checkbook relate to the budget approved in 2011 by the 62nd Legislature. The 63rd Legislature is currently considering budget proposals and is required to approve a balanced budget before adjourning.

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