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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Labor Commissioner and Montana Students Honored by Jobs for America's Graduates

(Helena) Two Montana students along with Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly were honored recently at the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Student Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. "To be recognized at the national level for what we are doing in Montana is a real honor," said Labor Commissioner Kelly who received the Government Leader Award.

Jana Tihista from Nashua High School won the national AgCareers essay contest and read her essay during the JAG National Leadership Awards Luncheon. Tihista's essay topic was "What Does Agriculture Mean to You?" There were 80 entries from across the country in the AgCareers essay contest.

Mackenzie Lapke from Scobey High School won the Employability Skills Competitive Event competing against students from 32 other states. More than 300 students attended the 2009 Leadership Conference. Other Montana students who attended the conference are Alacia Cole from Glasgow High School, Brooke Marshall from Bridger High School, Kayla Reichelt from Havre High School and Brielle Harding from Helena PAL.

Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) is dedicated to helping young people graduate from high school and make successful transitions to postsecondary education, the military of meaningful employment. JMG underclassmen have a return to school rate of 95% statewide and a 94% return in schools serving Indian youth.

Paul Pastorek, State Superintendent of Schools, Louisiana (JAG Board member); Keith Kelly, Commissioner of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry; Katie Stam, Miss America 2009; and John deJongh, Governor of the US Virgin Islands

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