

BUSINESS

Workplace

watercooler

Seeing red cars

How can you get more of what you want? By focusing on what you do want instead of what you don't want.

A free seminar at noon May 13 at The Summit in Kalispell, titled Seeing Red Cars: Leaders Focus on What They Want, will offer motivation to make better decisions, combat negativity and create a positive environment.

Facilitator Allison McCarthy has spent 12 years providing training and consulting in the Flathead and more than 25 years as a manager and leader in the banking industry and for Procter & Gamble.

It's part of the Blueprint for Business Success brown-bag series sponsored by the Job Service, its Employers Council, The Summit, Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell Chamber, Flathead Trainers and Educators Consortium and Flathead Regional Business Center.

Contact Terri Haueter at 758-6279 thaueter@mt.gov.

Marketing alternative healing

Ina Albert, author and 35-year veteran in health-care marketing, public relations and communications, will headline a seminar for alternative healers and therapists on May 16 in Columbia Falls.

She will present a formula for successful marketing, Vision + Strategy + Communication = Results. The seminar is from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Imagine Health, 305 First St. W.

Albert believes that marketing mind/body/spirit therapies rests on the integrity of the practitioner and the ability to empower the client to live consciously and participate in his or her own healing. Practitioners, she said, must get a clear vision for the future to market effectively.

To reserve space, call 863-2333 or e-mail inaibert@aol.com. Visit www.writeyourself.com for more information about Albert.

Kudos for family businesses

Do you know of a family-owned business that deserves state recognition for contributions to the community?

Montana State University wants you to nominate them for the 2009 MSU College of Business State Farm Insurance Family Business Awards. The nomination deadline is May 18.

This year's nominated businesses then have until July 6 to submit applications.

It's a chance to recognize those family-owned businesses with which you have had positive experiences. Last year the School of Business had 50 nominations and conferred five awards in a variety of categories.

For nomination rules, judging criteria and a nomination forms, call the school at (406) 994-6796 or e-mail family-business@montana.edu.

— The Daily Inter Lake

Conservative Union leader to speak in Kalispell

The Daily Inter Lake

A nationally known proponent of conservative business principles is the keynote speaker for the Flathead Business and Industry Association's annual meeting Tuesday.

David A. Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union, will discuss what can be done locally to protect Flathead Valley and Montana businesses and jobs.

The luncheon meeting starts at noon in the Red Lion Hotel Kalispell. The public is invited.

With the economy in recession and a local unemployment rate of 12.7 percent, up from 3.5 percent just last fall, local businesses and job-seekers are scrambling to figure out what can be done to keep local businesses strong and viable.

"David Keene is a fellow Montanan and a Washington expert on

political and grass-roots efforts," Bigfork resident Gen. Paul Vallely (Ret.) said. "He knows and understands economics and business, what is happening in our country and what needs to be done now to restore our economy."

Flathead Business and Industry Association President Don Dulle said the association is dedicated to protecting the local economy from overly burdensome public policy and encouraging rather than hindering business growth. Dulle is convinced Keene has answers for local action.

Both Haley Beaudry of Columbia Falls Aluminum Co. and Steven Thompson of Semitool Inc. back Keene, too.

Last summer CFAC was one of the first to announce layoffs. Beaudry, CFAC manager of external affairs, said business owners must understand how much they

can do at the local, state and regional levels to ward off heavy-handed policies and regulation and create a pro-business environment.

More recently, Semitool employees have faced layoffs. Thompson, Semitool's project manager, argued that the government should give businesses tools to succeed, not "prevent our ability to be profitable," which he said recent local decisions have done.

Since December 1984 Keene has headed the American Conservative Union, touted as the nation's oldest and largest grass-roots conservative organization.

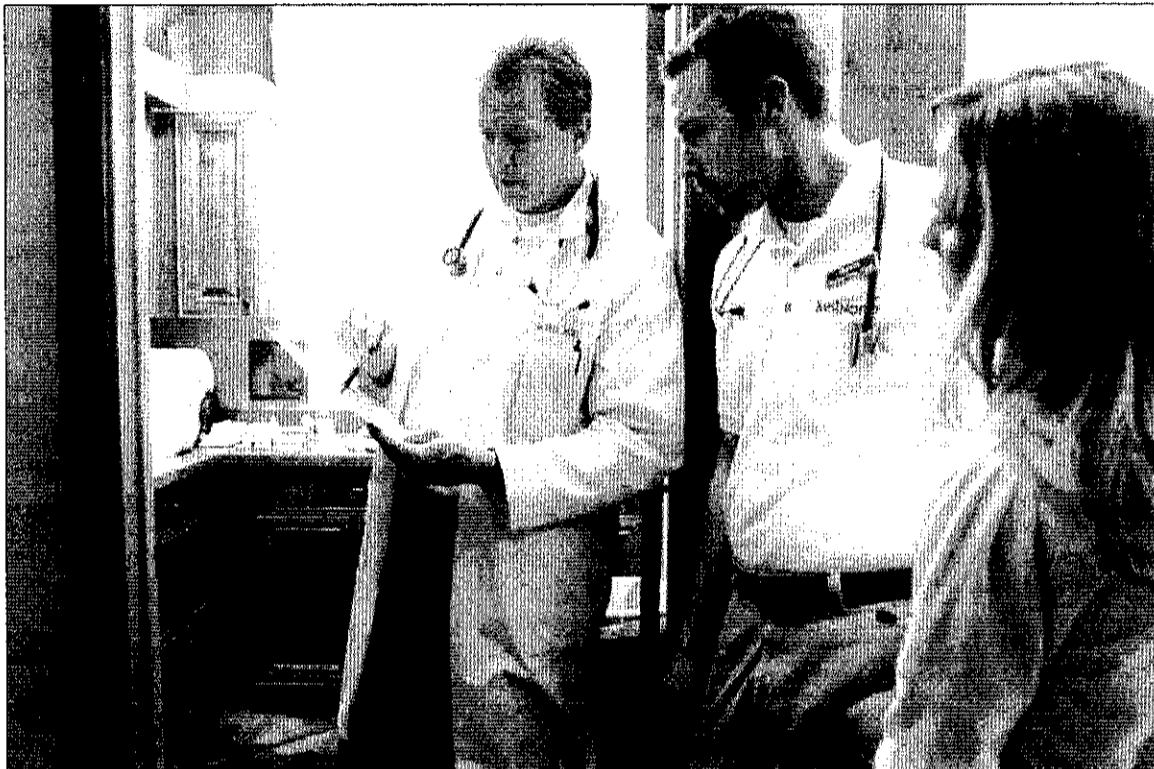
Keene attended the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he was National Chairman of Young Americans for Freedom. He's also been a First Amendment Fellow at Vanderbilt Uni-

versity's Freedom Forum, served on the Board of Visitors at Duke University's Public Policy School and sat on the National Rifle Association's board of directors.

Keene is regularly featured on radio, television and print media. He has written for National Review, the Washington Times and the Boston Globe, and is a columnist for The Hill, a newspaper covering Congress.

Denise Smith, FBIA executive director, said the annual meeting usually draws up to 100 people but this year's timely topic is bound to bring a larger crowd. Flathead Business and Industry Association members pay \$20 and nonmembers pay \$25. Tables for eight are available.

Make reservations by noon Monday by calling Smith at 752-8681. Registrations also will be taken at the door as space permits.



Nate Chute/Daily Inter Lake

DR. SHANE HILL points out some information discovered in the MedNorth Urgent Care lab to clinical technician Kevin Wise and medical assistant Jackie Linstead. The clinic opened April 16 in north Kalispell.

'Urgent care is retail medicine' New clinic strives for streamlined service

By NANCY KIMBALL
The Daily Inter Lake

A homey waiting room with a fireplace, soft leather sofas, big-screen TV and a self-serve hot chocolate and coffee station awaits patients at the Flathead Valley's newest urgent care center.

But at MedNorth Urgent Care, a new clinic that opened two weeks ago in Kalispell, it's just the front end of a high-tech health-care setting designed to ramp up the level of short-term treatment.

"Urgent care is retail medicine," Dr. Shane Hill said. "It's all about being convenient. ... This is all designed for efficiency. I'm trying to leverage technology to streamline patient service."

Hill, an emergency room physician in Libby and Ronan for the past four years, began seeing his first patients April 16 in the striking new 5,000-square-foot building that he and his wife, Susanne, had built.

Located on U.S. 93 North between McDonald's and Famous Dave's in front of Costco, MedNorth is an independent clinic unaffiliated with a hospital.

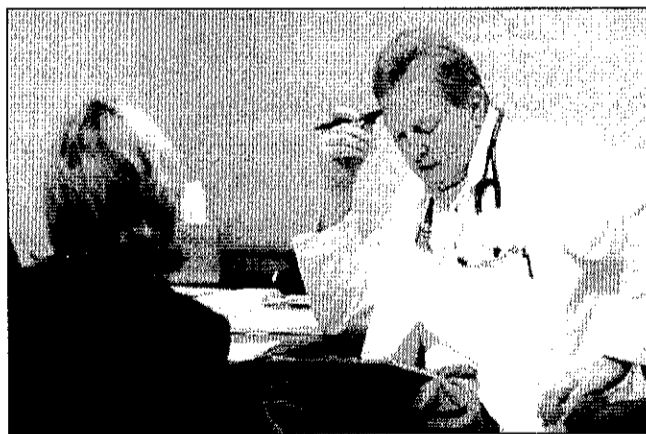
"Urgent care is one of the fastest growing sectors in medicine in the United States," Hill said. "Over 20 percent of care provided now is urgent care."

He sees himself as helping fill that niche in an 80,000-person area, not as a threat to other primary-care physicians in the Flathead Valley. In fact, he doesn't want to become anyone's primary-care physician unless he or she specifically chooses him to fill that need.

HIS WAITING ROOM'S

wireless Internet access is a precursor to what people will find beyond the doors into MedNorth's patient-care area.

A separate Internet access is in place behind those doors, allowing Hill to use a secure wireless tablet system — the only one in



Nate Chute/Daily Inter Lake

HILL GOES over patient information with Susanne Hill, his wife and office manager for their new urgent-care clinic in Kalispell.

Montana, he said — to communicate with the rest of his staff during patient visits. It allows him to order tests on one patient while he moves on to the next patient, then returns to complete the first visit.

That level of efficiency is aimed at a prime goal for the clinic: To get patients in and out within an hour.

He's using an electronic health records system. He can import and export digital radiology and other diagnostics. His lab holds the same model of chemistry analyzer that NASA sent on the space shuttle and the U.S. military sends to Afghanistan.

All data is backed up for security. Soon he will introduce online registration so patient information already is in the system when people show up at the clinic.

Meeting stringent requirements in these and other areas earned him what he said is the state's only accreditation awarded by the Urgent Care Association of America.

Soon he will launch a discount program for uninsured people and mom-and-pop businesses

who otherwise could not afford employee health insurance. He's working to develop clients for his occupational medicine and rehabilitation room that will hold an array of occupational therapy and physical therapy equipment.

HILL SAID

he is offering two primary community benefits.

First, he's taking patient pressure off of hospital emergency rooms.

"Less than 5 percent of all ER visits and ambulance runs are life-threatening situations," he said. Fewer urgent-care calls in emergency rooms means emergency-room doctors can focus on critical cases.

Second, it's a service to the community.

By keeping longer hours — MedNorth is open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m.

to 7:30 p.m. — he said he can be available when patients need the care. He noted that Kalispell's existing urgent care also expanded its hours to Sundays, a good step for the community.

Hill situated the clinic in an

easy-to-reach location close to an area many of his potential clients already frequent. Traditionally women and their children make up the biggest group of urgent-care patients, he said, so by locating MedNorth away from a cluster of other medical facilities but near McDonald's, Costco and the like, he's tapping into patients' established routes.

FOR NOW, Hill is the only physician at MedNorth. Three other doctors and five mid-level providers — physician assistants and nurse practitioners — will join the clinic as demand increases.

Susanne Hill, a veteran office manager for a group of 14 anesthesiologists in San Francisco, is MedNorth's co-owner and office manager.

Hill, 52, started life in Fairbanks, Alaska, insisting he would someday be a doctor, specifically a bush-pilot doctor. Instead, he spent the first 20 years of his career as a general contractor. A back injury led him to re-evaluate his goals and convinced him he didn't want to finish life with regrets that he hadn't tried his hand at medicine.

So he took the leap.

"Medical school was my midlife crisis," he said. From undergraduate studies in emergency medical care to doctoral studies in internal medicine and pediatrics, Hill spent 15 years on the way to his degree, primarily thanks to the support of his wife. "She had more faith in me than I did."

Her faith was well-placed. The Alaska boy and the California girl eventually settled on Kalispell for raising their family, and have launched an ambitious venture to cement their place here.

"This is where I wanted to live," Hill said, "and I carved out my niche."

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