**The Economic Contributions of Hutterite Communities in Montana**

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**Introduction:**

Hutterites are a communal based religious society who trace their origins to eastern Europe in the 16th century. Since coming to North America in the late 19th century, the Hutterites eventually settled in western Canada and the upper plains states of the US, especially in Montana and South Dakota, which are home to Dariusleut and Lehrerleut colonies.

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**Notable Aspects of Hutterite Communities**

- High degree of self sufficiency
- Communal financial model
- Community members receive in-kind compensation (housing, meals, etc.)
- Individual communities often own multiple farming operations
- Formal education of members beyond 8th grade less common
- More emphasis on value-added than in other Montana farming operations
- Risk market share in hog and egg production
- Diversification into services
- Isolation and cultural differences have spawned misconceptions

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**Results and Highlights:**

**Economic Contributions of the Lehrerleut Communities in Montana**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>jobs</td>
<td>2,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable Pers. Income</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>$ Millions</td>
<td>368.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>5,325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The economic contributions reported in this report are the difference between two scenarios for the state economy: the status quo economy that exists today, and a “no-Community” scenario that is carefully constructed using the BBER’s economic model. The “no-Community” economy not only is missing the Community’s production, employment and spending, but also the jobs and income in the state economy that are ultimately supported by Community activity.

Our basic finding is that the presence of the 81 farming operations owned and operated by the 38 Lehrerleut Communities examined in this study support production, employment and income in the Montana economy that are significant in size and scope.

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**Research Design**

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