

City of Colstrip

September 2007

Mayor's Message



- Mayor John Williams
- B.J. Ellison
- Gale Palmer
- Susan Hert
- Rick Harbin

City Offices open
9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Monday thru Friday,
except on Holidays

Court is in Session:
Tuesdays and Thursdays
10:00 a.m.

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It's been a long hot summer and I'm glad we are almost through our budgeting process. Our department heads have all done a tremendous job and as usual their focus is set on striving to provide the best service possible to our residents.

Our street project has made the biggest impact into the budgeting process. The total cost of this project including engineering will be \$741,326. A big project like this challenges the budgeting process in all areas.

Something we have learned this year is to never combine a Community Transportation Enhancement Program Grant (CTEP) with a large street project. This combination has created delays and confusion into an already complicated process. We are using the \$31,482 CTEP Grant for a portion of the new sidewalk along Olive Drive.

We had a public hearing on the city's preliminary budget on August 28th with the final approval from the City Council scheduled for September 11th. When the final budget is approved I will be preparing a report for our residents.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone on working so cooperatively with us on the street project. Thank you for all your patience and consideration. The neighborhood and schools have all been great.

The city continues to work with the Community Care Task Force. Although this activity is not a city function, we are offering our full support to this project due to its importance to our residents. We have been meeting since the Housing Summit hosted by SEMDC in February. The issue at that time was strongly identified as a need for Colstrip. Elderly care, retirement living, and assisted living needs are not being met in our community thus the formation of this committee began. Committee members include the following: Robert Schye Jr., President; Robin Shahan, Vice President; Jim Atchison, Secretary/Treasurer/Facilitator; Kelly Vjetasa, John Poole, Lloyd Gange, B.J. Ellison, Les Mahon, Tom Crippen, John Williams, Rick Harbin, and Don Tapp.

The group meets the second and fourth Tuesday every month at city hall and are open to the public. Jim Atchison has been our facilitator and along with members of his staff has been providing the guidance for this exciting process. Action items to date include: 1. Survey to determine need and support. 2. Letters to Major Resource Partners—Western Energy, PPL Montana, City of Colstrip. 3. Trip to Heritage Living Center in Ashland. 4. Application for funds to conduct feasibility study—Big Sky Trust Fund.

The feasibility study is to identify and explore the feasibility of the project-financing, location, schedule structure, type of facility. The request is for \$20,000 to conduct the study.

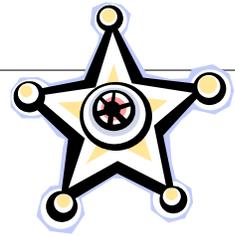
The Community Care Task Force has been funded through a \$1,000 donation from the city and a \$200 donation from our Colstrip senior citizens.



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Police Department

Larry Reinlasoder, Police Chief

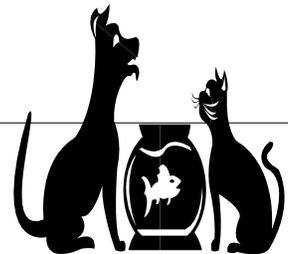


The timing of this newsletter gives me the opportunity to remind Colstrip residents of the need to remember the safety of our children. School is now in session and there will be an increase in traffic, both vehicles and pedestrians around our three schools. Motorists will soon see new speed limit and other traffic control postings around the schools and other speed limit changes in other areas of our community.

The City Council approved a speed limit change on Pine Butte Drive from the high school area to Prospector Drive where the reduced speed begins (or ends) for the Pine Butte Elementary School. There will be flashing yellow lights posted in the area from just north of the high school extending to Prospector Drive both north and south on Pine Butte Drive. When the lights are flashing the speed limit will be 25 mph through the entire length of the posted area. The lights will be timed to warn of morning, noon, and afternoon activity at the schools. The speed limit at all other times will be 35 mph. The decision on this area was made after consultation with the school administration. Motorists will also see changes in the area around Frank Brattin Middle School, which will address the issue of school hour speed limits and an increase to 25 mph on the full length of Olive Drive during other times. Police will enforce the speed limits and violators may face tougher fines as state law requires that fines double in school zones. All drivers are asked to be aware of the school zones and the special dangers that are present with small children. Use caution and your seat belts.

Residents should know that if they have special concerns about traffic control signs and other control postings in their area they can make a written notification to the Chief of Police. I will conduct a study of the area and make a recommendation to City Council, if a change is determined to be needed. It is only by authority of City Council that traffic control changes can be made in the community.

Animal Control



Colstrip community is hosting a Montana Pet Care Health Fair on October 6 and 7, 2007. The Pet Care Health Fair will be held in the city shop beside and behind the Colstrip Police Department building. The Montana Task Force will be here Saturday, October 6th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Sunday, October 7th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The Task Force will provide no cost spay and neuter service to all dogs, puppies, cats, kittens, and bunnies that have appointments. For an appointment call 748-2211. Your name and number will be taken and you will be called back by September 15th. Appointments will NOT be made with the first phone call. Someone will return your call.

The Colstrip Pet Care Health Fair will also offer low cost vaccinations, including rabies for only \$7 and mange treatment will be available as well.

For more information call 748-2211 and Nancy will return your call.

There is no age limit for the animals and there is no limit to the number of animals a household may bring in. All animals must be contained in a crate, box, or on a leash.

All animals that are to be spayed or neutered must have appointments made prior to the clinic.

Public Works Department

John Bleth, Public Works Supervisor



Summer is quickly fading into the fall. The city's street project for this year started on August 13th on Olive Drive from the Lutheran Church to Highway 39 intersection. This project includes a new sidewalk, new driveway entrances, milling off the old pavement, and four inches of bottom ash before paving. This portion is scheduled for completion on or about September 24th. This depends on the weather and other unforeseen issues. The second phase is Castle Rock Lake Drive from the Homestead Boulevard intersection to Highway 39. This project also involves sidewalks and ramps, millings, and pavement. This area is scheduled to begin on September 10th and be completed by October 11th. I would like to thank all the residents affected by these projects for their patience and understanding during this time. It is an inconvenience during construction, however; the finished product will be a great benefit for all residents of the city.

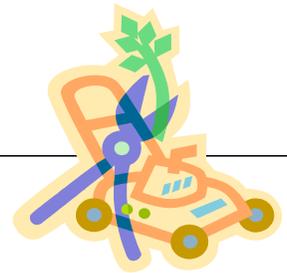
The city has another large project in the very near future. In mid-September bids will be opened and awarded for the reconstruction of Lift Station "C". This 27 year old facility is in dire need of being upgraded. This station serves all the residents in the Sweetgrass, Stillwater, and Big Timber neighborhoods except the Laramie Circle area. Construction could start as soon as the end of October with completion by the end of the year.

The city will be purchasing a new street sweeper for next year's operation. Our 2000 Tennant Sweeper has become too costly to keep up with maintenance and repairs. After the new one is ordered the city should receive the sweeper in about six months.

As we head into the fall season, I want to wish the Colts and Fillies the best of luck in their sporting endeavors.

Code Enforcement

Jan Morgan, Code Enforcement Officer



There are times when requests come before the Zoning Commission that are not fully supported by all residents. As a city, we have the responsibility of staying within the rules and guidelines of our ordinances and treating everyone fairly and impartially.

On August 20, 2007 the Zoning Commission reaffirmed the existing Conditional Use for a Mobile Home Park in the area along Chinook and Prospector Drive. That area of land has never been subdivided and sold into lots. The property has always been leased or rented as spaces to the general public on which to place mobile homes. As such, it is identified as a Mobile Home Park and this status pre-exists the incorporation of Colstrip.

Initially the property owner came to the Zoning Commission to request a variance to set mobile homes closer than the twenty feet allowed within the Mobile Park guidelines. In response to public input PPL decided to stay within the guidelines of the Mobile Home Park thereby not jeopardizing their Conditional Use status. Density will increase within the park but the twenty foot setbacks will be maintained.

On September 12, 2007 the Zoning Commission will again meet with this property owner. This time to discuss a Conditional Use to develop an RV Park in the area east of Power Road in what was once called the 76 Unit Court. The area is appropriately zoned for the development of an RV Court and guidelines are already in place.

Public input is desired but the responsibility falls to the Zoning Commission to stay within the guidelines of city ordinances and to remain fair and impartial.

Schoolhouse History and Art

Lu Shomate, Director



Boy, are we excited at SHAC. One of our lofty dreams has come true!! You have heard a lot about our Pottery Room—well, we are finally ready for classes. Starting in September we will offer classes through Community Education. Watch for their brochure which should be in the mail in early September. We are starting with pottery classes and then in the winter quarter adding stain glass classes. So if you have been thinking about opening your mind to obtainable art instruction, it's finally here! We wouldn't have been able to do this without the support of our community, SHAC members, local businesses, and grants. So thank you everyone!

Also, you might remember that normally in October we do a "Bra's for the Cause" auction, well this year that won't be happening. Now this is a good thing, however; we will miss the fun that we associate with raising money for this universal cause. The reason we aren't going to do the auction this year is we have enough money in the fund for many more mammograms. If you know of someone in Rosebud County that doesn't have insurance who could benefit from this program tell them to call the Southeastern Montana Health Coalition in Miles City at 406-874-3377. Together we can quite possibly save one life at a time. Now don't forget about preparing a masterpiece for next year, we will need your contribution and support to keep this wonderful program going into the future.

Our September show will be Jerry McPherson with his Montana Decoys. If you are a hunter, or you want to see how art and nature coexist right here in Colstrip, make sure you put us on your calendar. We are so proud of our home town boy who sells his products from Colstrip nation wide.

Our gift shop is ready for you to stop by. We regularly go to market, so we have the latest and greatest at prices you can afford. Check us out.

Don't forget about our "Buy a Brick" program. This program ensures our future by supporting our endowment fund. It's a cool program where you buy a brick and have it inscribed with the message you want for a loved one. This is a gift that keeps on giving and will always have a home on our patio. We get lots of happy recipients in to see their name on the patio. Stop by, we hope to see you soon.

Tree Board



Watering is the key to tree survival. It is suggested to water 10 gallons for each 1 inch of trunk diameter once a week during warm dry spells or times of drought. A big tree could have a need of up to 200 gallons of water per day during a time of drought.

An excellent time for tree preparation for the winter season is at the end of September. This is a good time to deep water the roots. Evergreens, such as; pine, spruce, fir, and juniper require water in the winter at least once a month.

A tree or shrub that is naturally adapted to your soil and climate will need less supplemental watering and care. When deciding what to plant, consider native species to our area. Native species are suited to our altitude, latitude, and annual temperature extremes.

Inspect your trees annually and after severe storms. You should examine all parts of a tree, including the roots, lower main stem where it joins the roots, upper main stem, branches, and branch unions. Use binoculars to see high branches. When pruning the major tree defects include dead wood, cracks, weak branch unions, decay, cankers, root problems, and poor tree form. Do not prune the top tree branches only. Pruning needle-leaf trees during the dormant season minimizes sap and resin flow, increases their fire resistance, increases their wood product value, and reduces losses from some diseases. Some trees and shrubs may need to be wrapped for winter survival.

Information is provided by outtakes from Tree City USA Bulletins, Backyard Woods, Wyoming Tree News, Rosebud Conservation District's Connection newsletter and also from your local tree board trustees to benefit your tree landscape.

Bicentennial Library



It's the Monster Mash at the library the whole month of October. The Friends of the Library are reprising their growing selection of great Halloween costume rentals. For a very small fee, moms and dads are spared the expense of buying fancy costumes that are worn once then appear in the garage sale. Lucky for us, instead of the garage sale, parents donated them here.

There are fairy princesses, Cinderellas, Spidermen, ghoulies, and even a substitute teacher costume that makes us laugh every time we look at it. Stop by the library and see what we have. Those teeny tiny toddlers are *so* cute as itty bitty skunks, bees; you name it.

Speaking of teeny weenies, the library Halloween party is Tuesday, October 23rd at 2:00 p.m. Costumes are encouraged, but not mandatory. We will have stories, games, and treats, all with fun in mind. All small children are invited to attend.

The Friends of the Library will also be launching their membership drive in November. Besides supporting the library with the nominal membership fees, you are also accorded a shop-ahead night at the annual book sale in June. You are not expected to bake endless batches of cookies for bake sales, or try to clean up big pick-ups at car washes, or even attend endless meetings. If you want to help in some way, at your choice, we'd love to have you.

The Friends fund many projects at our library and offer a scholarship each year.

This place really cooks all year long filling the needs of local and visiting folks. Library cards are free and are a great way to start out the school year. If we don't have it on the shelf, just ask and we will do our level best to track down the item you're looking for.

With six public computers, we have a steady stream of email checkers, on-line game players, practice test takers as well as distance learning students, and general surfers. The current system the library has in place is Useful, which is a service that rights whatever computer wrongs there are on each machine, remotely, and offers a smorgasbord of free software. Everyone is allotted an hour and may request extra time. For awhile we felt like we were limping along with machines as reliable as AMC Pacers, but there are few difficulties now.

If you would like to celebrate a special someone's birthday, we do welcome items earmarked to honor that person for everyone else to enjoy. You may look through our catalogs for ideas, or let us know what you have in mind, and we can help you with your selection. The person's name is preserved on a book plate in the front of the book and that person is the first to check the item out. The kids feel very special every time they see "their book" on display for others to check out.

City Hall Task Force

Progress continues on plans for the construction of a city hall. Recently, the city council decided to demolish the Cherry Street Mall and clean up the area, removing the hazard, and blight from the community. This is the most logical potential site considered for construction of a new city hall. Additionally, the city and the Colstrip Parks and Recreation District agreed to work together on the site location next to the "old" Colstrip fountain. The plan is to include the fountain area into the landscaping of city hall. An important part of our Colstrip history will be kept in place. There are a few long term residents that remember how important that fountain area was to our community. The plan is make the city hall a multifunctional facility that will serve many purposes, in addition to functioning as a city hall for our Colstrip residents.

The City Council approved hiring Durward K. Sobek to design a city hall. The architect has met with the City Hall Task Force and city staff on several occasions to discuss long-term facility needs and identify the highest priority needs. A site survey and GeoTechnical survey were recently completed and the architect/engineering firm should



City Hall Task Force cont. 7

City Colstrip City Court

Honorable Gail D. Beckham

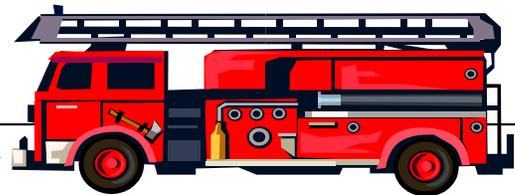


JURY DUTY SCAM: This has been verified by the FBI (their link is also included below). Please pass this on to everyone in your email address book. It is spreading fast so be prepared should you get this call. Most of us take summons for jury duty seriously, but enough people skip out on their civic duty, that a new and ominous kind of scam has surfaced. The caller claims to be a jury coordinator. If you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, the scammer asks you for your Social Security number and date of birth so he or she can verify the information and cancel the arrest warrant. Give out any of this information and bingo; your identity just got stolen. The scam has been reported so far in 11 states. This (scam) is particularly insidious because they use intimidation over the phone to try to bully people into giving information by pretending they're with the court system. The FBI and the federal court system have issued nationwide alerts on their web sites, warning consumers about the fraud.

Check the following links: <http://www.snopes.com/crime/fraud/juryduty.asp> or http://www.fbi.gov/page2/june06/june06/jury_scam060206.htm

Volunteer Fire Department

Ryan Reid, Fire Chief



I hope that when you get this newsletter, the weather has cooled off and the summer fire season is coming to an end. I don't know if that will happen until snow falls. I am sure this isn't news to you, but it is a good reminder that when it is so dry we need to be careful. We have responded to fires caused by fireworks and by cigarettes this month. Please be careful so Colstrip stays green.

You may have noticed a new addition to the parking lot at the CVFD Boese Training Center. You also may see smoke coming from it from time to time. Don't be alarmed as it is the new burn building. This trailer will give the fire department the ability to practice entering burning buildings. It allows us to experience the smoke and the heat that happens in a house fire in an environment that is controlled and repeatable. We hope and expect this will enable us to serve you better.

The fire department is strictly volunteer and is made up of 23 members who are doing this job to try to help the community that we live in. All the firefighters have full time jobs that we do during the day or night. We respond from wherever we happen to be as quickly as we can. So please excuse us if we happen to be in a hurry when we go by.

The Colstrip Fire Department is currently looking for new members. The pay is not very good but we do have a retirement, insurance benefits, and it is a fun group that is doing a job that needs to be done. If you are interested in joining please stop by city hall for an application or talk to any of the firemen. They are easy to pick out, just look for a license plate, a cap, or shirt that shows they are proud to be on the department.

City Hall Task Force cont.

have plans to present to the council in the near future.

The City Council also recently approved an application to the Montana Coal Board requesting assistance with the construction of Colstrip City Hall. If the Coal Board request of \$400,000 is approved in its entirety then the city will have over \$1.3 million to allocate towards the construction with plans to finance the rest over the next five to ten years. It is anticipated that the city hall will be built without increasing taxes.

Public meetings regarding the potential project are anticipated to be held in the near future. The City Council wants to inform the public of the project and seeks input from the community.

Mayor's Message cont.

I had an interesting visitor in my office several weeks ago. Shane Carlson representing Carlson Acquisitions and Development was here as a result of a 2004 letter that I had sent to Duckwall-Alco Stores Inc., they are a larger retail chain. My letter was intended to stimulate their interest in our city as a possible location for one of their stores. Carlson Acquisitions is under contract with Duckwall-Alco to determine a store location in Montana. Although no commitments have been made they do have an interest in Colstrip. Carlson made the comment that for a city our size we offer tremendous services to our residents. He was very impressed with Colstrip and indicated he would be getting in touch. I provided him additional information and I will be pursuing this contact further.

The city has elected to stay with our current solid waste assessments for the new year. The cost for our residential customers is \$112.50 per year for a 96 gallon container and the same for the residential customer that share a 300 gallon container. That cost is for two times a week pick up. The utility survey information that I have been able to obtain regarding cost indicates we have the lowest rate in the state for twice per week pick up for residential customers. The city began operating our solid waste collection service with our city employees and city owned equipment in February with the intent of improving the service. To the credit of our employees, I believe we have made tremendous strides in that area.

The City Council approved a mail-in ballot for the upcoming November city elections. The mail-in ballots are nothing new to Colstrip. We have had two, one for the Colstrip Medical District and the second for our Colstrip Parks and Recreation District. Turnout for those elections was 52 and 56 percent. By contrast the last two poll elections was 29 and 42 percent. The states of Oregon and Washington both conduct voting by mail ballots and other cities in Montana are considering this process. As evidenced from our previous mail elections a major reason to consider this process is the increase in voter participation. It removes barriers that can keep people from getting to the polls, it allows more time for residents to study issues and candidates before marking the ballot. In addition, it has safeguards that increase the integrity of the elections process; all important considerations.

Geri Custer is the election administrator and has submitted a prescribed written plan to the Secretary of the State. A copy of the plan is available at city hall and posted at the city's posting areas.

The following information provided by the Montana Department of Revenue lists the top ten property tax payers in Colstrip in descending order: 1. Puget Sound Energy, Inc.—Bellevue, Washington 2. PPL Montana, LLC 3. Portland General Electric—Portland, Oregon 4. Avista Corporation—Spokane, Washington 5. Northwestern Energy LLC 6. Pacific Corp—Portland, Oregon 7. Northwestern Energy LLC—Transmission 8. Portland General Electric—Transmission 9. Colstrip Comm Serv Puget Sound Power & Light—Bellevue, Washington 10. Qwest Corp

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**PRSRT STD
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COLSTRIP, MT**

ECRWS

Box Holder

Colstrip, MT 59323

Celebrating 8 years