

# City of Colstrip

October 2009

## Mayor's Message



- Mayor John Williams
- B.J. Ellison
- Susan Hert
- Rick Harbin
- Dan Becker

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.

### Inside this issue:

<i>Police Department</i>	2
<i>Public Works</i>	3
<i>Code Enforcement</i>	3
<i>SHAC</i>	4
<i>Bicentennial Library</i>	5
<i>Volunteer Fire Dept.</i>	5
<i>Community Care Task Force</i>	6



We have just completed the exciting task of our new year's budget, even though we are well into our fiscal year which begins July 1st. It is usually not until sometime into August that we receive our taxable valuation.

I very much appreciate the time and effort from all our city's supervisors and the support of the City Council in adopting this year's budget.

Our budget this year was not as challenging as last years with the construction of our new city hall. I am pleased to report that our city hall has been completed and has been fully paid for. We appreciate all the support of our residents and the City Hall Committee.

Our taxable property valuation has been set at \$75,287,423 which is \$2,975,806 less than last year. The mill levy set by City Council is 27.43 which is 1.14 mills higher but 1.21 mills or \$91,097 less dollars than the maximum allowed by law. These mills will generate \$2,018,869 in property taxes of the total required to operate the city of \$5,278,300. The remainder of funds or requirement to operate our city of \$3,259,431 comes from non-tax revenues and carry over funds from the previous year.

Our cash reserve has been set at \$1,027,000. This is an increase of \$250,000. We were able to increase our reserve without it affecting any of our requirements to operate your city.

Additionally, this year we were able to continue to set aside capital improvement funds for future capital projects for the city. These funds will now total \$378,268. The major project that your city successfully completed this year was the Sweetgrass Phase I Street Renovation. This was a \$625,000 project that included Cheyenne Drive, Antelope Drive, Appaloosa Court, and Mustang Court. In addition to this project we also have budgeted for the following capital expenditures:

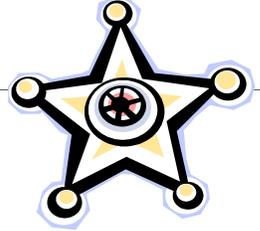
<u>Fire Department</u>	Compressed Air Foam Unit	\$40,000
<u>Police Department</u>	Finger/Palm Print Reader	\$15,000
	Police Replacement Vehicles (2)	\$65,000
<u>Public Works</u>	Replacement Pickups (2)	\$37,500
	Wacker Roller	\$22,000
<u>Administration</u>	Senior Citizen Van Replacement	\$65,000
	Paving City Hall Parking Lot	\$50,000
	Colstrip Fountain Plaza	\$25,000

The City is working with the Colstrip Parks and Recreation Department on the renovation of the Colstrip Fountain. This is a shared project with each entity participating on an equal basis.



# Police Department

Larry Reinlasoder, Police Chief



When we think and talk about drug abuse our thoughts most likely center on drug dealers and drugs such as methamphetamine, marijuana, cocaine, etc. The unfortunate truth is that we are facing a new and increasing danger with the abuse of prescription pills. Prescription pills are unlikely to raise a concern or even a second thought with parents. The pills are prescribed by a doctor for a legitimate reason and when used as directed do what they are supposed to do. However, when used by a person that does not have a legitimate need for the pills they can be very harmful and even in some cases fatal. Nationally the abuse of prescription drugs such as pain killers like oxycontin, hydrocodone or morphine has reached epidemic proportions. We have also seen abuse of drugs prescribed for hyperactivity, which used properly helps an individual suffering from attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) prescription drugs that are abused or used for nonmedical reasons can alter brain activity and lead to dependence. Commonly abused classes of prescription drugs include opioids (often prescribed to treat pain), central nervous system depressants (often prescribed to treat anxiety and sleep disorders), and stimulants (prescribed to treat narcolepsy, ADHD, and obesity). These drugs are commonly found in the medicine cabinet of any family in our community. Teens abuse prescription drugs more than any illicit street drug except marijuana. In fact, every day, more than 2,000 teenagers nationally try a painkiller to get high for the first time. It has been found in national studies that parents mistakenly believe that abusing prescription medicines is "much safer" than using illicit street drugs. We have seen the problem of abusing prescription drugs in our community, including our school system. The Colstrip Schools and the Colstrip Police Department are working together to address this serious issue. Parents need to monitor their prescriptions and take steps to secure the medicines to safeguard their family. Put a lock on your medicine cabinet if needed and talk to your children about the dangers of abusing drugs both prescribed and illegal. It is true that the best drug prevention tool we have is involved parents talking to their children. If you have prescription drugs, such as mentioned above, in your home and no longer need them then dispose of them in the trash not down the drain, or turn them in to the police department and we will dispose of them for you. Visit our web site at [www.colstrippolice.com](http://www.colstrippolice.com) for more information for parents on preventing drug abuse.

*Serving Tomorrow's Town Today Through Community Policing in Action*

## Animal Control

Several times a week we, at the Colstrip Police Department, get phone calls from cat owners who have lost their precious pets. Sadly, most of the cats never return.

According to the Humane Society the average life of an outdoor cat is 3 years. Neutering/ spaying increases that lifespan a bit.

There is one simple solution to this common problem – far easier solved than the common cold.

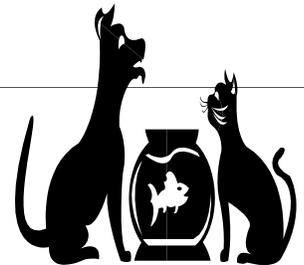
Keep the cats indoors at all times. If cats are kept inside the owner does not have to worry about the cat getting run over by a vehicle, eaten by a predator or getting into a fatal cat fight.

Even if a cat has been an indoor/outdoor cat it can be made into an indoor only cat. It is not only possible, it is quite easy and I say this from personal experience. Granted, it is easier if you begin when the cat is a kitten but it can be easily accomplished with an adult cat as well.

Many people enjoy feeding songbirds and small wildlife as a hobby. It is not their intent to fatten these creatures up only to die in the jaws of your roaming cat.

Cats are quite selfish and not good neighbors as they do considerable damage using your neighbors' flowerbeds, gardens and sandboxes as litter boxes. They also 'spray' neighbors' homes and vehicles which leaves an odor that is not easily removed.

Keeping a cat indoors requires only one extra thing from you – cleaning the litter box. Many cat owners don't like this task but they don't mind their cat destroying the area around their neighbors' homes. Be a responsible cat owner, spay/neuter your cat, be sure all vaccinations are current and keep it in your home. You will enjoy your pet more, your cat will live a long and happy life and your neighbors will be delighted. Everyone wins.



## Public Works Department

John Bleth, Public Works Supervisor



It's been another busy summer for the Public Works Department with several projects.

Our first project was not planned for until next year. However, pump failures and flooding of the dry well necessitated the replacement of the Orchard Lift Station. We had to set up a temporary bypass system for over three months while waiting for the bid process to be completed and awarding the contract. The package for the new lift station was ordered which took another six weeks. We also decided to relocate the new lift station on city owned property, instead of private property. By the time this newsletter is out the paving will be completed.

Our scheduled street project for the Appaloosa neighborhood was completed with six days left in the contract. Overall, the project went very smoothly with only a few issues. Most of these involved driveway entrances. The total cost of the project came in at just over \$625,000. The best part is the project was paid for with budgeted money from the new budget at no extra cost to the residents. Next year we are planning to complete the remaining streets in the Appaloosa area.

A lot of residents have asked about the dig out on the west side of city hall. We are adding seventeen more parking spots and new ADA accessible parking in order to better accommodate our residents.

All of our streets with markings were repainted this summer, this project cost over \$14,000 to finish.

It won't be long until the snow flies and I wanted to remind you of the street plowing schedule. **Priority I** emergency snow routes are: Pinebutte Drive, Power Road, Willow Avenue, Homestead Blvd, Main Street, Castle Rock Lake Drive, and Lakeview Court. The last street is so Dr. Ortiz can get out for emergencies. **Priority II** are based on bus routes. These are: Sweetgrass Drive, Chisholm Drive, Vista Drive, Piedmont Drive, Laramie Circle, Poplar Drive, Cherry Street, Currant Drive, Box Elder Drive, Woodrose Street, Browning Drive, Hollister Drive, and Cimarron Drive. All other streets are completed as time allows.

I hope everyone had a safe and fun summer and now we look forward to the cold and snow. Just kidding!

## Building, Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement

Jan Morgan



Much of Colstrip is interlaced with designated park lands or open spaces near residential lots. There are also unsold lots interspersed throughout each district. These areas are designed to provide space between residents. The park lands are for public enjoyment and use.

When residents store their extra cars, trailers, and recreational vehicles in open areas it defeats the purpose of the land use. For this reason CPRD and PPL have been contacted to request their assistance to require that residents remove their stored vehicles from public lots.

Please be aware when purchasing a lot that the lots are in residential districts and designated for residential buildings. That means that a home must be built on the lot. It cannot be bought for the sole purpose of building a garage or to store extra vehicles.

This office continues to receive complaints from residents concerning stored vehicles on empty lots in their areas. The complaints are usually from residents who have taken both the time and expense to store their own vehicles properly.

With winter fast approaching now is the time to make arrangements for the storage of extra vehicles. Storing vehicles on the street is not an option because the congested streets create a safety issue and interfere with both plowing and garbage removal.



In January 2009 an amendment to the City of Colstrip street parking regulations was passed. The change in code expressly prohibits parking a vehicle on the streets for the principal purpose of storing it or any vehicle or motor vehicle when not in transit or actual use and service.

*Building, Planning Zoning, and Code cont. page 4*

# Schoolhouse History and Art

Lu Shomate, Director



As the leaves begin to change and summer becomes a memory, we at the Schoolhouse are gearing up for our Fall Classes. We have added a new addition to our Pottery Room for under glazed pottery being taught by Barb Needham and Shannon Rust. If you are a pottery enthusiast come and check out this new technique. Scott Egan is bringing another drawing class to our fall lineup. Scott is a natural born teacher with so much talent; his students excel in this setting. Come and see how your artistic ability blossoms with this talented artist. Our fused glass classes have been a great success. We will be adding basic wire wrapping this fall, come check out the endless possibilities. Why not make some jewelry for Christmas!

We have partnered with Colstrip Community Education to bring Alberta Bair to Colstrip and the surrounding area. Why not take a ride on the bus, let someone else do the driving and enjoy a night on the town in Billings where we can enjoy culture at its best. All you need to do is contact us and add your name to the shows you would like to see. All shows must be paid in advance and **if you are a member you receive a \$10.00 discount** on your ticket. Remember family memberships are \$35.00, Individuals \$25.00, seniors \$15.00. The following shows are scheduled:

Annie – Broadway Show	Wednesday, January 6	\$63.00
Cirque Works – Birdhouse Factory (Circus)	Friday, March 19	\$49.00
Crystal Gale – Performer	Saturday, April 3	\$55.00
Second City Comedy	Tuesday, May 11	\$48.00

In our Gallery for October and November our exhibit will showcase “Visual Poetry”. This exhibit includes non-traditional watercolors reflecting personal experiences depicting regional and northwest imagery by artist Clint Loomis.

Remember the Colstrip Medical Center will be having their annual wreath auction in the month of November at the Schoolhouse. Now would be a good time to get started on your wreath!!

In December we are going to have Santa’s Mailbox at SHAC. Bring your children in to drop off their letters. Every letter will receive a response from the North Pole!! Who knows, maybe Santa will be making special appearances!

Don’t forget about our “Buy a Brick” program. Each year we have people stop in to see the bricks that have been purchased for them, or to share with friends and family bricks on our patio that bring back memories. What a great way to honor a special day, person, or event.

As always, admission to the Schoolhouse History and Art Center remains free because of our sponsors and those of you who become members. Why not become a SHAC member and be a part of this great service. Are you an artist? Would you love to share your craft and teach? Contact us, maybe together we can get a class started for you. Enjoy your week!

## Building, Planning, Zoning, and Code Enforcement cont.

The amended ordinance is intended to help clarify this issue in enforcement. If a trailer, boat or vehicle is blocked and sitting on the street the ordinance clearly states that it is a violation of code and needs to be removed. It is also meant to make our neighborhoods safer. Leaving vehicles on public right of ways create difficulty for emergency service vehicles, such as fire protection vehicles and ambulances, when they are responding to calls.

Please look carefully at the parking issue in your neighborhood. Be considerate of your neighbors and think about what you can do with your own vehicles to make the area safer, effective and code compliant. Be sure to call if I can be of any help. My office hours vary but I can usually be reached Monday through Thursday. If I am not in please leave a message at 748-2300 ext. 6 so I may return your call.

## Bicentennial Library



Fall is sure upon us, kids are back in school, fall sports and Monday night football is well under way and change is definitely in the air. I want to encourage all our patrons to take advantage of the partnership program. Place those holds. Place many holds. I can assure you that our library is being used so please feel free to use the Partner Libraries. Partners are different from Interlibrary Loan in many ways, you may and in fact I encourage you to place holds on new material.

The friends of Bicentennial Library of Colstrip would like to invite you to shop their Halloween costumes at Bicentennial Library. The costumes are priced to SELL and include adult, children and pet costumes.

The Friends of the Library will have their annual membership drive in November. Among the many contributions that the Friends make to the library they also provide a scholarship annually. This is a wonderful organization to join. Please consider it if you are not already a member.

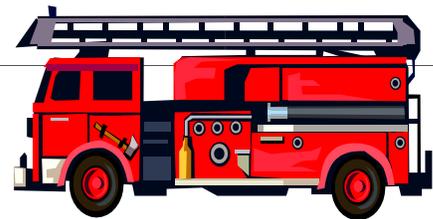
Speaking of the Friends, long time President Wendy Dennehy chose not to run again, so they have a new president. Louise Davenport will now represent Friends of the Library. Congratulation Louise!

Bicentennial Library of Colstrip hosted a book reading and signing for Wallace McRae's new book "Stick Horses and Other Stories of Ranch Life". Wow, what a turn out. Thank you, Wallace. You put on an entertaining evening. Bicentennial Library wants to thank the Friends of the Library for purchasing the refreshments for the evening and Virginia Sprague for giving me the recipe for cow pies and haystacks, the haystacks did not turn out as good as I had hoped, but that was my first time making both.

Bicentennial Library of Colstrip would like to invite you to participate in Montana Library 2Go. If you are not familiar with this project what we are doing is offering downloadable audio books through consortia associated with the state library. We do have an overdrive station available at the library and the staff and I will do our best to answer any questions you may have. Please email us at [colstriplibarymk@gmail.com](mailto:colstriplibarymk@gmail.com) or call us 748-3040.

## Volunteer Fire Department

**Fire Chief Ryan Reid**



### Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department Urges Colstrip Residents to "Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned."

**Colstrip, MT, October 1, 2009** - Once a child touches a hot stove, as the cliché goes - he learns his lesson, stay away from a hot stove. This cliché does not take into account the pain and suffering from burns, and burns should not be part of the learning process. That's why the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for Fire Prevention Week 2009 – October 4-10 – to urge Colstrip residents and students to "**Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned.**" This year's campaign focuses on ways to keep homes fire safe and prevent painful burns.

The statistics are staggering. Each year roughly 3,000 people die as a result of home fires and burns, and more than 200,000 individuals are seen in the nation's emergency rooms for burn injuries.

The most common types of burn injuries result from fire or flame burns, scalds and contact burns. Burns are painful and can result in serious scarring and even death. When we take extra caution in our homes to ensure that the curling iron is out of children's reach or pot handles are turned away from the edge of the stove, such injuries are entirely preventable. Keeping our homes safe from fire and preventing devastating burn injuries is a healthy change we can make happen.

By following simple safety rules, you can "**Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned.**"

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from tables and counter edges so they cannot be pulled or knocked over.
- Have a 3-foot "kid-free" zone around the stove.
- Never hold a child in your arms while preparing hot food or drinking a hot beverage.

*Volunteer Fire Department cont. page 6*

City of Colstrip  
PO Box 1902  
Colstrip, MT 59323

Website: [cityofcolstrip.com](http://cityofcolstrip.com)

Phone: 406-748-2300  
Fax: 406-748-2303  
Email: [info@cityofcolstrip.com](mailto:info@cityofcolstrip.com)

PRSR STD  
PERMIT NO. 9  
COLSTRIP, MT

ECRWS  
Box Holder  
Colstrip, MT 59323



**Celebrating 10 years**

## Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department cont.

- Be careful when using things that get hot such as curling irons, oven, irons, lamps, heaters.
- Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent a child from sticking an object in the outlet.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a lit candle, portable heater, lit fireplace or stove, or where a hot appliance might be in use.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Install anti-scald valves on shower heads and faucets.

Fire Prevention Week is actively supported by fire departments across the country. For 85 years fire departments have observed Fire Prevention Week, making it the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

# # #

For more information on “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned” visit [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).