

City of Colstrip

November 2010

Mayor's Message



- Mayor John Williams
- Rick Harbin
- Dan Becker
- Evan Stewart
- Tom Jankowski

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>SHAC</i>	4
<i>Bicentennial Library</i>	5
<i>Volunteer Fire Dept.</i>	5
<i>Tree Board</i>	6
<i>City Court</i>	6



One of the most important meetings we hold each year in city government is the final adoption of our new year's budget. Prior to the adoption of the budget a public hearing is held.

At this year's public hearing only one resident made comments and at the final adoption there was no input from the public. I don't know if this is a sign of apathy toward your city's future operations or a sign that you are generally satisfied with the overall operations of your city. I would hope it's the later of that comment. Although it would be more satisfying to me, as your Mayor, with more public involvement.



The city has successfully adopted a new budget for 2010-2011 and the mill levy has been set at 29.80 mills, a slight increase from last year's mill of 27.43. This slight increase allows the city to keep pace with cost increases and the ability to continue to work on major projects within our city and at the same time to continue to provide our residents quality services they are deserving of. The city tax mills assessed to our residents is the lowest of any city in the state due to our high taxable valuation. A benefit we all have as property owners and residents alike.

This levy will generate \$2,188,788 in property taxes of the total required of \$4,468,700. The remainder of the funds, or \$2,279,912, come from non-tax revenues and carry over funds from previous years. Our budget also includes \$1,015,000 (27%) reserve. The budget reflects a taxable valuation of 73,448,600 a decrease of 1,838,823 from last year.

The major component in our budget this year is the Appaloosa, Sweetgrass, and Prairieview Street Renovation Project. This large project has a cost of approximately \$676,000 and is currently in its final stages of completion. We have also budgeted \$20,000 for the storm sewer renovation on Plum Court and Olive Drive. We plan on working on that project next spring.

The overpass approach failure somewhat complicated our budgeting process since it was totally unexpected. Although a lot of rumors have been going about regarding the overpass approach failure the cause for the failure is simply poor construction techniques when it was built. The geotechnical evaluation had indicated compaction between 80 and 90%. This should never have occurred but unfortunately it did and now the city is faced with the cost and responsibility of the repair. Our cost estimate for this repair is \$235,000. The city along with Rosebud County, who actually owns the overpass, are planning on going before the Montana Coal Board for some funding assistance.

The city also plans on renovating our animal impound facility. The existing facility was transferred to the city from Rosebud County and is in very poor condition. The renovation for this facility is not expected to exceed \$75,000. Our plan is to come in well under that amount and also to have a respectable facility to house our impounded dogs and cats.

We are also in the process of making improvements at our Wastewater Treatment Plant with the installation of a new circulation motor in the oxidation ditch. The installation of this new equipment will increase the efficiency of the wastewater plant and help reduce electrical costs associated with that operation.

Mayor's Message continued page 7

Police Department

Larry Reinlasoder, Police Chief



The Colstrip Police would like to take the opportunity through the city newsletter to warn the community about several unscrupulous scams that have attempted to defraud our citizens. Scam artists have used the internet, the telephone and U.S. mail in an attempt to get money from Colstrip residents. Here are some of the things to be aware of:

- (1) You receive an internet letter saying you have come into SUDDEN RICHES. They say you have won a foreign lottery or sweepstakes. REALITY: But that's impossible unless you traveled to that country to enter, since it's illegal to buy or sell tickets across the U.S. border. Note that they may not even have your name in the e-mail. It is easy to get a persons e-mail address, but most often your name is not attached when it is used to send out mass e-mails. You are not the only one receiving this e-mail telling you that YOU have won the lottery.
- (2) The notice comes by regular mail, phone, fax, or email. REALITY: If you'd won a cash prize or inherited money, you'd be notified by certified mail.
- (3) You receive a letter often in response to an email including an enclosed check for MORE than the amount they say you won. They want you to correct their "MISTAKE" by depositing the money and sending them a cashiers check or money order for the difference. Never send any money to an unknown person via a Western Union transfer or a Wal-Mart money wire transfer. Those types of money transfers can be picked up anywhere in the World even when you think they are going to Toledo, OH, or some other U.S. city. REALITY: The checks, although they look real, are actually fakes, forgeries, or even in some cases stolen. You deposit the money and send them a good check and by the time your bank notifies you the deposit as "bounced" it is too late to cancel your good check. You are out the money and very possibly responsible to the bank to make good on the entire amount deposited.
- (4) You think you have found someone special online and they want to be your friend and even promise to travel to the U.S. to be with you. REALITY: You have been duped. There is no way you know what the person on the other end of the email looks like, who they really are or where they really live. If you start to send them money as they often request they will find reasons to ask for more including claiming they were in need of medical care or more travel money. The scam ends when you don't hear anything more from them, or you receive an email saying your new pen pal friend was killed on the way to the airport to come and meet you.
- (5) You receive foreign business offers or other offers of millions of dollars in inheritance money from complete strangers. REALITY: Offers come in many varieties, from many countries, but none of the promises will come true. Real companies and government agencies don't contact strangers in other countries to offer business propositions.
- (6) Work-at-home scams that promise easy money working from your residence, or they ask for help processing payments. REALITY: If it was so easy why wouldn't we all be working in our pajamas. If they ask you to deposit checks and send them their money minus your "pay" you will be finding out too late that the checks they sent you are bogus. Real companies don't do business in this manner.

Recently we have had reports of unauthorized charges to their accounts most likely using their account information or debit card information. Guard your financial information and keep a close eye on your credit card statements and bank statements to make sure your accounts have not been compromised. Sometimes the credit card companies have their on-line sites hacked and then lose their clients (you) account information.

Many scams that we deal with originate in foreign countries and in the vast majority of the cases the criminal jurisdiction lies with those governments. The Colstrip Police Department passes these reported cases along to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Postal Authorities, but there is little to nothing that can be done about it because the perpetrators aren't in territory under U.S. criminal jurisdiction. Did you know for instance that the number two industry in Nigeria is scamming Americans out of their money? The best defense we have is education and smart citizens that recognize these get rich schemes for what they are and don't allow themselves to fall victim. Also remember never to share your banking, credit card or social security information with these people, or anyone you don't know and trust completely.

Public Works Department

John Bleth, Public Works Supervisor



The city contracted with CMG Construction of Billings to complete the phase two portion of street rehab in the Sweetgrass residential area. The total cost of the project was \$675,460 including engineering and the 200 foot Prairieview extension. The project was completed with very few problems encountered. When flat driveway entrances or aprons were installed it lowered the elevation by six inches. In some cases on the slanted driveways this resulted in a slightly steeper drive access. In all refurbishment projects the new construction has to match the existing grades. In the overall aspect, the project went very well with only one change order on Prairieview Drive. I hope everyone enjoys the new streets.

The city has had two professional structural engineers inspect the bridge structure on Power Road. Both have stated and agreed that the structure is safe and in good shape. The sub-grade behind the east abutment is the issue. The city had SK Geotechnical bore down 55 feet on the east side behind the abutment. The compaction percentages ranged from a few highs of 90% down to 80%. Compaction levels should be at 95% or higher to maintain stability. This is stated by our engineering firm. Obviously this is why we have been repaving these two sides for the past 25 years. The main objective is to fix the problem permanently. Our engineering firm is looking at several alternatives to accomplish this. We are moving forward as fast as possible, however; the end project must be safe, functional, and permanent. I also want to mention that the west side of the road will have the same thing done to prevent the same problems as the east side.

This is a friendly reminder to all residents of Colstrip for the safety of vehicular traffic depositing snow in the middle of the street is against Ordinance 00-16. Refer to the City of Colstrip's website for further information. The city's website is www.cityofcolstrip.com.

Public Works Department continued page 8

Building, Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement

Jan Morgan



One of the sure signs of warmer weather in a community is the appearance of garage sale signs each weekend. Often these signs are taped or wired to the stop signs at the main intersections in town.

Although many may not be aware of it, Montana State Code prohibits placing garage sale or other advertising notices on stop signs or any other traffic sign. The code goes on to state that cities can grant permission for the signs to be placed on the land beside the sign but may not allow the notice to be placed on the sign itself or to hide the sign from view.

Reflecting on this, I can see the validity of the code. Signs advertising garage sales often block visibility at intersections. A clear line of vision is important for traffic safety. Clear visibility at corners usually restricts shrubs or objects to less than three feet tall and tree trunks no wider than eight inches. To some extent the signs also impede the flow of traffic at the intersection when drivers pause to read the sign instead of checking for oncoming vehicles and proceeding into the intersection. Accumulated debris is the other problem. While many residents promptly remove their garage sale signs others will leave them for several days or not remove them at all.

Recently a community bulletin board was placed on the side of the octagon storage kiosk across from Car Quest on the City Hall lot. This bulletin board is available to the public for notices of such things as garage sale listings. If we all started to use the community bulletin board to list the sales many problems could be alleviated.

In the past garage sale signs placed on traffic signs were removed as per state code. It's conceivable that if an accident were to occur at an intersection with a garage sale sign and the sign impeded vision or traffic flow, both the city and the resident posting the sign may be liable. As you can see these rules need to be followed both for safety and liability risk. The city will be enforcing state code.

Schoolhouse History and Art

Lu Shomate, Director

As with each new season, the Staff and Board of Directors are preparing for another successful Fall and Winter.

Our Educational Director, Carol Oberth, has suffered a stroke recently, Board Member Tammy Venne has stepped in to fill Carol's shoes. Tammy has her work cut out for her but she is diligently preparing classes for our communities. Tammy is our environmental artist, always looking at something old, polishing it up and making it a work of art for many of us. We appreciate all the work Carol has done for the Schoolhouse, we wish her a speedy recovery and we welcome Tammy to our programs.



It is membership renewal time for SHAC. Remember membership to the Schoolhouse is very reasonable. Family memberships are \$35.00; Single memberships are \$25.00. Stop in and see what membership affords you. Without our members, our grants, and funding from the City of Colstrip we wouldn't be able to bring Art and Education to our communities. Each of you does so much more than you could ever know by being a friend to SHAC. Your loyalty lays the foreground for our many good works which are watched over by a diligent Board of Directors.

Justin Bonomo of Forsyth has become our newest board member replacing Mark Stevens. Mark brought so much to our pottery program. We will miss Mark, and appreciate Justin stepping in. Justin is a well rounded artist who enjoys carvings, drawing and painting. Tom Crippen is our President, Paula Peplow our Vice President, Cathy Frank our Treasurer, and Sue Neiman our Secretary. Board Members are Marilyn Watson, Joe Oberth, Evelyn Broadus, Scott Egan, Donna Rogers, Barb Needham and Betty Grinsell.

We have a new website www.colstripshac.org. Please take a moment to check it out. If you have suggestions for our website, please let me know. Your comments are appreciated.

Check out our Gallery Exhibits. In October we will be hosting Ben Steele. Ben is a survivor of the Bataan Death march. Ben will be showing some of his art depicting life during his experience as a POW. In December we will have local artist, Heather McDonald, displaying her amazing photographs. As always the Colstrip Medical Center will have their annual Christmas Gala in late November. Remember we will also have a Santa's mail box for all the little children at SHAC. They can drop their letters in the mail box, and each letter will be answered by our own little elves. We look forward to visiting with you when you stop by, our Gallery enjoys your company.

Our gift shop is becoming very popular in our community. If you haven't had an opportunity to visit, stop in to see what we are all about and support your local artists. We regularly go to market, so we have the latest and greatest at prices you can afford. If you are a local artist and would like to have a place to sell your artwork, stop in and talk to our Gift Shop committee, we would love to share our shop with you.

As always, the Board and Staff at SHAC thank you for your patronage, your contribution through volunteering, and your financial support through membership and donation. Because of you and your participation, we can offer wonderful educational programs, speakers, and Gallery Shows to our communities.

Colstrip Chamber of Commerce

A new Business Directory will be coming out in 2011. The Chamber of Commerce is having a membership drive to insure all businesses are included in this directory. We do not want to miss anyone that would like to be listed in this directory so if you have a home based business we may not know of you. Do not miss this opportunity to get included in a widely used directory.

For more information please contact Terry Currier at Colstrip Floral, 748-3333; Velvet Alder at Cozy Corner, 748-3595; Kathy LaDuke at First Interstate Bank, 748-2840; or Helen Shaw at A-1 Realty, 748-3455.

Bicentennial Library



Bicentennial Library's staff has been racking our noggins to come up with some adult programming ideas. What we have so far are trainings on our newer computer based features. Starting in November we will offer trainings on how to use our website, Montana Library's 2Go, Partners and Skype. Skype is the program most commonly used with a web camera.

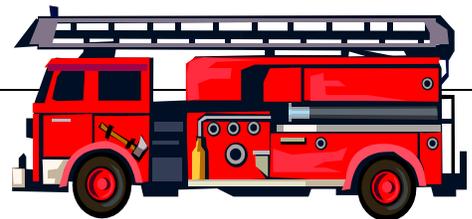
Bicentennial Library has the Kindle! These titles are preloaded on the Kindle: Mockingjay, Catching Fire, The Hunger Games, The Battle of the Labyrinth, The Last Olympian, The Titan's Curse, The Sea of Monsters, The Lightning Thief, and The Help. Bicentennial Library will add more titles as the Kindle gains popularity. The Kindle will be checked out to adults only with library cards in good standing. It will check out for two weeks and with no renewal. Patrons may not put it in the drop box, but must return it to the front desk. Fines are still very reasonable, but if you are late you will be charged full replacement cost. This cost will be removed from your account when you return the Kindle. However a processing fee will remain on your account. Bicentennial Library of Colstrip wants as many people as possible to have the opportunity to experience this new technology so we will be enforcing these policies strictly.

Bicentennial Library of Colstrip received money from the BTOP grant. This grant will allow us to remodel our computer area and increase our band width capacity. We are excited about this project and hope that everyone enjoys the faster internet and remodeled computer area once the project is complete.

Bicentennial Library Friends of the Library will have a membership drive this November. Bicentennial Library Friends of the Library largely funds our DVD collection. They contribute to all special programming in one way or another, they purchased one of the two lap-tops available at the library and they are always seeking new ideas on how to improve our library. They will have their annual Christmas Open House December 12th at 6:00 p.m.

Well, as you have read, we are very busy and continue to work hard to meet your expectations for Bicentennial Library of Colstrip. Please stop by and let us know what we can do for you.

Volunteer Fire Department



In an effort to better educate communities throughout the U.S. about smoke alarm recommendations, the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association is promoting "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!" as the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, October 3-9, which Colstrip is supporting locally. NFPA has been the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for 88 years.

"Many homes in Colstrip may not have any smoke alarms, not enough smoke alarms, alarms that are too old, or alarms that are not working," says Chris Scheese of the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department. "We want residents to understand that working smoke alarms are needed in every home, on every level (including the basement), outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. And, if a smoke alarm is 10 years old or older, it needs to be replaced."

According to Chris Scheese, smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. NFPA statistics show that working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in half. But they must be working properly to do so. The association's data shows that many homes have smoke alarms that aren't working or maintained properly, usually because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

The Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department will be visiting Little Lambs Pre-School, Pine Butte Elementary School, and children that attend home schooling during Fire Prevention Week to promote "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!" locally, and to help Colstrip students understand NFPA's smoke alarm recommendations. Through these presentations students can learn more about the power of smoke alarms, newer options for installing and maintaining them properly, and ultimately, how to better protect their loved ones from fire.

Volunteer Fire Department cont. page 7

Tree Board

The City of Colstrip completed three very challenging Forestry Projects this year. We planted a total of 74 trees. We planted Japanese Lilac, Prairiefire Crabapple, Dogo Crabapple, Chokecherry Canadian Red, Tartarian Maple, Linden Boulevard, Linden Greenspire, Birch, Skyline Honeylocust, Bur Oak, Blue Spruce, and Hackberry Trees. Part of our planting procedures include using a mulch ring around each base, placing bark on top of the ring and fencing the tree. The mulch ring will prevent weed growth, the bark provides moisture retention, and the fence will protect the tree from deer.



We provided two public educational seminars. Toby Day from the MSU Bozeman University Extension Office discussed different ways to utilize Xerscape and native trees that thrive in our area. Mike Garvey shared his knowledge regarding proper tree planting and care. He provided a dynamic slide show presentation and brought many visual examples. We plan to continue public information/education and we hope we will have more public participation next year.

University of Montana Forestry Student Adam Blythe conducted a tree inventory of the trees on public right of way. This was paid for through a Program Development Grant from the Montana Department of Natural Resource and Conservation. Some of the interesting facts that we have discovered are:

- Colstrip has approximately 856 trees on public property.
- Over 46% of Colstrip trees could use some type of pruning.
- The trees of Colstrip are worth almost 2 million dollars.
- Each citizen in Colstrip receives \$29.45 each year in environmental benefits from trees.

City Court

Judge Gail Beckham



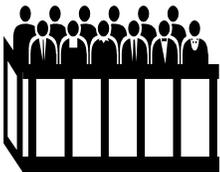
WHAT DOES *“To tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”* MEAN?

Have you ever appeared in Court, placed under oath and asked if you swore *“to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”*? Why aren't you just asked to *“tell the truth”*? Here is an explanation of what the question really means:

FIRST, a person is asked to tell *“the truth”*. This means that they are being told to be honest and to not lie in response to a question.

SECOND, the person will be asked to tell *“the whole truth”*, which means something else. For example, if a politician makes a statement like *“since I have been in office 17,000 new jobs have been created and those persons moved from welfare to being employed”*, however he omits the fact that 25,000 other people lost their jobs due to downsizing and closed businesses and went on welfare at the same time. The politician has told *“the truth”* but hasn't told *“the whole truth”*. The *whole truth* is that the number of people that went on welfare increased by 8,000, rather than being reduced by 17,000.

THIRD, the person is asked to tell *“nothing but the truth”*. If that person tells the *“truth”* when answering a question and then adds a lie, he has told *“the truth”*, but has not told *“nothing but the truth”*.



A person's failure to tell the *truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth* can result in criminal charges such as perjury.

A **“JUROR'S GUIDE”** for City Court is available at City Hall or by accessing the City of Colstrip Website. If you are called to serve as a trial juror, this guide is a great resource that will provide a variety of information about the trial process. It will explain what your role as a juror is and may answer any questions that you might have.

Mayor's Message cont.

In anticipation of a future replacement of a fire engine, we have begun setting aside funds in our capital improvement accounts. The replacement cost for this piece of equipment is in excess of \$400,000. So it is in our best interest to begin this planning.

We are looking forward to a new year for our city intending to make changes for improvements and to add quality to services we provide for our residents. As always your comments and ideas are very welcome.

In this last year I have noted many new faces in our city. As your Mayor, I welcome new residents to our city and extend an invitation to our new comers to come into City Hall. I would like to meet you, my office is always open.

The City of Colstrip and our Colstrip Seniors are once again partnering to recognize our service men and women during the Christmas season. We would like the community to join us with this recognition by donating items. If you would like to donate money, checks can be made out to Colstrip Seniors to help pay for shipping costs or cash cards.

Keep in mind the size of item being shipped; the shipping container is 12"x12"x6". The following is a suggested list of items that can be donated:

DVD Movies	Christmas Cards	Music CDs	Christmas Decorations/small	Rolls of Toilette Paper
Sun Block	Playing Cards	Baby Wipes	Ramen Noodles	Chap Stick/Lip Balm
Lotion	Jerky/No Pork	Packets of Drink Mix	Candy/(mints, trail mix, energy bars/peanuts)	

Magazines/outdoor magazines, fitness magazines, Sports Illustrated

Last year we were able to ship four containers to everyone that was serving overseas. We issued cash cards to everyone serving state side, fourteen \$30 cash cards were distributed.

Donations may be dropped off at the Colstrip Senior Center or at City Hall.

Volunteer Fire Department cont.

NFPA and the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department agree that interconnected smoke alarms offer the best protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals.

"Most people have a sense of complacency about smoke alarms because they already have one in their homes. Fire Prevention Week provides an excellent opportunity to re-educate people about smoke alarms, new technologies and expanded options for installation and maintenance," says Judy Comoletti, division manager for NFPA public education. "Ultimately, we want this year's campaign to serve as a call to action for households nationwide to inspect their homes to ensure that their families have the full smoke alarm protection that's recommended."

The Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department offers the following tips for making sure smoke alarms are maintained and working properly:

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they're 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Never remove or disable a smoke alarm.

To learn more about "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!," visit NFPA's website at www.firepreventionweek.org.

City of Colstrip
PO Box 1902
Colstrip, MT 59323

Website: cityofcolstrip.com

Phone: 406-748-2300
Fax: 406-748-2303
Email: info@cityofcolstrip.com

**PRSRT STD
PERMIT NO. 9
COLSTRIP, MT**

ECRWS

Box Holder

Colstrip, MT 59323

Celebrating 12 years

Public Works Department cont.

The city just purchased a recycling baler for cardboard through a grant. As of October 15th we are now producing cardboard bales at the warehouse. On Monday, October 18th we will place two cardboard containers for the residents to dump into. The containers will be located by city hall in the parking lot. We will also put one container up by Montana Decoy. If you choose during regular city hours Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. you can take cardboard to the warehouse. The unit is located in back of the white metal building. There is a gate on the west side to use as an entrance. Thank you for your assistance in making this a successful venture.