

City of Colstrip

May 2012

Mayor's Message



- Mayor Rose Hanser
- Tom Jankowski
- Lawretta Miller
- Evan Stewart
- John Williams

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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Happy Spring, Colstrip,

This year it was a little hard to tell when winter ended since it never really visited in its usual fashion. However, the budding leaves and blooming daffodils leave no question. I think we all enjoy the changing of the seasons. And speaking of change, there are a couple of new ideas floating around city hall. Did you know you? We are on the web at: www.cityofcolstrip.com We are looking forward to updating our site in the near future. Keep your eyes open for changes.

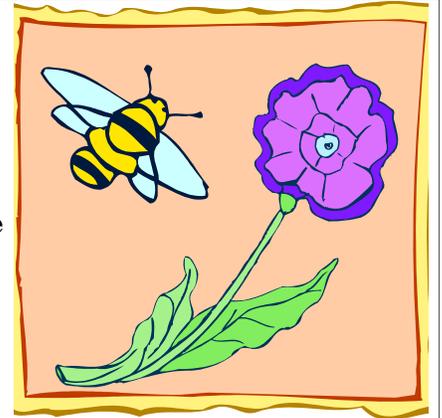
Speaking of websites, how about paying your city bill online? We truly enjoy getting to personally meet you when you come in to pay your bill or make an inquiry. On the other hand, we recognize you may not have the time to stop by. You can use your bill paying service to dash off your payment.

We plan on publishing the city newsletter in very limited quantities; mailing only to those personally requesting a hard copy. It is available on the website. Currently it is costing the City approximately \$700 every 4 months to send the newsletter. Do the math; we are talking \$2,800 a year. I expect we could save at least \$1,500 a year as people begin to use our website more often. A few hard copies would be available at city hall. If you want a copy mailed to you, please contact city hall; talk to Paula or Tana at 748-2300.

As your mayor, I wanted to assure you all that our Colstrip Police Department is on the job. Sgt. Cory Hert has been appointed as Acting Chief of Police during the ongoing investigation. Acting Chief Hert is serving our city well and supporting the officers and staff at the Colstrip Police Department. Be sure to see the article from him on page 2

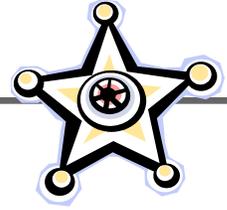
The Coal Board meeting on April 20th went very well. Public Works Director John Bleth, Tracy Haag and Doug Whitney of Kadrmas Lee & Jackson, and myself presented requests for help with the new city shop and a Water Facilities Master Plan. The City of Colstrip was awarded \$236,662 for these projects. Thank you John, Tracy and Doug for all the preparation and hard work to get this far. We look forward to getting our projects going with the summer weather.

I wish the best to all of our graduating seniors as they step out into life.



Police Department

Cory Hert, Acting Chief of Police



We, at the Colstrip Police Department, are sure enjoying the nice weather and hope you are as well. With the nicer weather come increased outdoor activities for our youth including bike and skate board riding. Though these individuals are supposed to follow the “rules of the road” remember, they are kids and don’t always do what they are supposed to. With that in mind, please be extra cautious before and after school hours while driving as we have had several reports of these youth darting out in front of vehicles. We have increased our school patrols and have also been in contact with school officials regarding these issues. We certainly don’t want to be called to an accident involving one of these youth being struck by a vehicle.

May will also bring the graduation of our senior class and we would like to congratulate the seniors for all of their hard work and dedication during the past four years and wish them all the best in their upcoming endeavors!

Graduation is a time for celebration and we hope that parents and graduates alike will make the right decisions when planning their upcoming festivities. Please think about the possible consequences before hosting a graduation party which involves minors and alcoholic beverages. We hope that your celebrations are memorable ones, but not for the wrong reasons!

We are continuing to move forward with the Emergency Warning System for the Colstrip community as mentioned in the previous newsletter. The system will enable us to sound alerts in times of severe weather as well as other emergencies.

Lastly, we would like to wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer!

Public Works Department

John Bleth, Public Works Supervisor



Our ten year issue with the Department of Environmental Quality on the Water Treatment Plant Backwash System is finally being resolved. The city now has two years to run tests and develop the best option. Design of the new system and construction will follow. I expect this new addition to the plant to be expensive, however; the city has no other alternatives.

Two big projects are scheduled for this summer. The first is Pinebutte Drive Overlay, this will involve dig outs on bad sections, leveling of all dips and a three inch overlay. The project will be split into two phases. The first phase, this summer, will begin at the Power Road intersection and end at Prospector Drive. This funding will come out of the 2012-2013 General Fund budget.

The second project involves the construction of a new city shop. Our current stone building, next to the police department, was inspected by OSHA and found to be structurally unsound. In addition, the building has asbestos above the ceiling and in the ceiling itself. Our operation has outgrown the old building. We are applying for a \$200,000 grant from the Montana Coal Board to help pay for the new building. The funding for this project will come out of our current General Fund budget.

Please be considerate and throw only corrugated cardboard in the city’s cardboard containers. Thank you for your help in recycling.

Also please remember that the city’s refuse containers are for domestic garbage only. Items like wood, metal, appliances, tires, batteries, paint, motor oil, ashes, gas, and hazardous waste are not only a danger to the environment but some of these can actually damage the ram system, rollers and runners on the garbage truck. The old garbage truck sustained damages and had to be replaced sooner than the city anticipated.

Building/Zoning/Code Enforcement

Jan Morgan



As a part of the ongoing fight against noxious weeds in Montana, a task force of local area agencies met to review weed identification and weed locations within the city limits. These agencies have worked together for several years to identify areas of concern and to take responsibility for spraying.

While checking properties for weed violations during the summer months, I have noticed several private property owners with infestations of Spotted Knapweed, Canada Thistle and Field Bindweed within the city limits. It is against the law to allow noxious weeds to propagate and it is the property owner's responsibility to get rid of all such weeds. Since many residents are unaware of the issue of weed control, the county offers many services to help land owners in the identification and elimination of noxious weeds. The city also has some booklets that may be of help to residents. Just stop by city hall and pick one up.

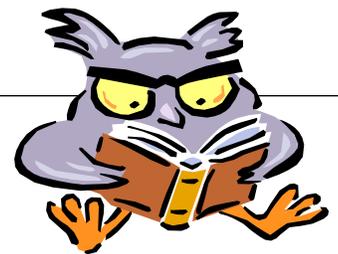
Also, please remember that although it is sometimes difficult to keep the grass or weeds under the four inch (4") height as stipulated in code, it is the property owner's responsibility and letters will be going out to owners found in violation of this code.

Now is the time to start clearing those lots that have started to accumulate an assortment of trailers, junk vehicles and debris over the winter. These accumulations of junk, as well as RV's, boats, trailers, snowmobiles and anything else that lays around gathering weeds underneath it instead of being properly put away or stored, are unsightly and infringe upon the rights and valuations of neighboring property owners. Letters will be going out to those property owners found in violation to remind them of the city codes that prohibit such accumulations.

Please be aware that RV's and other recreational vehicles are not to be stored on public streets but on off street parking spaces. Those spaces by code must be located on the same lot as the dwelling, and may not be located in any front yard except in the driveway.

The city receives many complaints concerning the above violations every year. Many more go unreported because people do not wish to complain or cause other people problems. Be considerate of your neighbors. Code compliance is simply a part of living in a community. Call if you have any questions or concerns. My office hours vary but you can usually reach me Monday through Thursday. If I am not in please leave a message at 748-2300 ext. 2305 so I may return your call.

Bicentennial Library



Bicentennial Library has a secret. But I am lousy at secrets and the staff and I are just so excited we can't keep it in much longer. Courtesy of the BTOP grant that we received last year, we are getting some extra goodies. That's right; the goodies don't stop with the new computers that you are using now. We will receive a nook for in house use and exploration, a kindle with a keyboard and a kindle fire, and to top off this list of fantastic FREE stuff we are receiving an IPAD!!! All these devices will be available for you to use and utilize in the library any time we are open. These items will be available in the next three months for in house use.

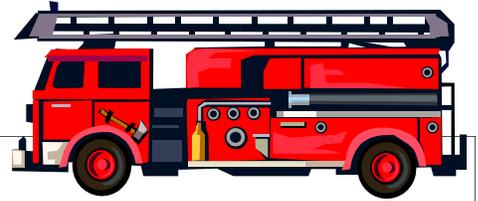
Cheryl Smith is looking for more volunteers to help with the Friends of the Bicentennial Library Book Sale during Colstrip Days. Please contact the library at 748-3040 if you are interested in volunteering for this fun event. Last year we had as much fun as our shoppers. Hours for the sale will be from 7:00 -8:00 p.m. on Friday and 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Time to talk Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is "Dream Big" and we hope you do!! Registration will start May 29th and run until June 2nd. This year for summer reading we will have a magician and a star lab. We will have an adventure at SHAC as well as another activity that we haven't planned yet. I would like to talk a little bit

Bicentennial Library continued page 4

Volunteer Fire Department

Ryan Reid, Fire Chief



As we move into summer, fire danger moves outside. This last winter season saw a decline in house fires in Colstrip. That may have been due to the mild winter or hopefully may have been caused because you are doing a great job of being careful with fire.

There have been many grass fires across the state this spring. There is still a lot of dead grass from last year and the weather has not been as wet as we may have wanted. Please be careful when burning and get a burning permit from the Colstrip Police Dept. dispatch before burning. Burn permits are free and are just a courtesy call to make sure the Fire Department does not respond to a controlled burn.

Ed LaDuke is retiring from the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department this year. Ed has put in 20 years as a Colstrip volunteer fireman. The last 5 years he has been our Safety Officer. Ed has always done a great job and we will miss him. An estimate of the amount of time Ed has put in over the last 20 years would be something like this:

Training hours—minimum 30 each year = 600 hours

Fire Responses—15 each year = 300 responses @ an average of 2 hours per call = 600 hours.

Community Service including fireworks, Christmas decorations, and fund raisers = 200 hours

This is just an estimate and I know Ed did much more than this. Even at the minimum, he would have 1400 hours of service for Colstrip. To put that in perspective, if he was working a 40 hour a week job, it would take 35 weeks to put in that many hours. That is service for which he received no pay. I am sure if we took time to go back and total up hours, the total would be doubled or tripled. Thank him for his many years of service if you see him.

On a side note, I see that Colstrip has the same ISO rating as Billings does. The ISO rating is an insurance rating that determines what you as home owners pay for insurance. It is determined by water supply, fireman responses, and fire equipment among other things. Not bad for a volunteer fire department.

Bicentennial Library Continued

about our afternoon activities. We will start out the “Dream Big” Theme with a Magic Show Thursday, June 7th at 11:00 a.m. I am mentioning it because it was a team effort with other libraries and Cherie Hesper from Rosebud County Library coordinated this event. So thank you Cherie for all your hard work in making sure that we have great entertainment to kick off our summer reading program. Our SHAC program is sponsored by the Friends of the Library this year and we will make Humming Bird Feeders with Tammy Venne, who is Awesome! Our Star Lab will be at Frank Brattin Middle School and will be Thursday, June 28th. This was a collaborative effort as well between Joette Speake and Frank Barreto.

As brains wind down and kids get anxious for summer: I want to express the importance of continuing to learn and read during the summer months. If traditional learning is not on your to do list, why not try our Rosetta Stone language learning set: We have both Spanish and French. We have moved that computer to a more private location so that our patrons may feel more comfortable utilizing the program to its fullest.

The staff of Bicentennial Library hope to see a lot of people using the library in the upcoming months. We hope you enjoy the new computer area and lounge. The desks that have received a lot of attention were hand crafted by Dade Allison, so great job Dade! The electrical work was done by Electrical Services LLC who did a fantastic job as well.

We appreciate the community support we continue to receive and are happy to serve the citizens of Colstrip and the surrounding communities.

Schoolhouse History and Art Center



The Schoolhouse is looking forward to all that Spring has to offer. We are already planning our Summer Program for the kids and adults. If you are looking for something positive and fun to do this summer please check out this exciting program with Tammy Venne, our Education Director. Classes are limited so you might want to sign up early. The flyers are posted around town, or you can stop by and pick one up.

In the month of April a MAGDA show by Eric Johnson called "At the Bottom of Everything" is waiting for you in our Gallery. This large printmaking exhibit is very original. Eric uses the city and the tree to represent the anxiety, as well as other emotions associated with life changes. A very thought provoking show. The colors are vivid; your imagination will be tested as you view this body of work.

May will be an exciting month for us. Our first SHAC Scholarship Award will be presented. The artwork of all the applicants will be displayed in our Gallery. Board Members have worked extremely hard to encourage and assist continuing education for a creative minded CHS Senior. There will be a reception on Friday, May 11th to honor all of the students that participated. Please join us in saluting all of our candidates.

In June we will host the 33rd annual juried Southeastern Montana Traveling Art Show. This all medial exhibit represents professional and amateur artworks from across Montana and adjoining states. Local artists, Scott Egan and Sharon Dinstel are showcased in this juried show. A reception will be planned sometime in June, please watch for this event.

Obert and Signe Rye, long time residents of Colstrip, loved their garden and Rosebud County. Signe always brought fresh flowers to church during the growing season. The Rye gardens were an envy to this community. Upon the passing of these treasured residents, the Board of Directors of the Schoolhouse recognized a beautiful garden area would compliment our historic building. To commemorate Signe, our garden consists of blooms of bricks that continue to flower every time a brick is purchased. If you would like to walk through our garden and see the many blooms we have placed there, please do so. If you have someone special you would like to remember as part of our treasured history let us know.

SHAC will continue to bring positive choices to our community. The Board and staff are able to provide these services because of the generosity of the City of Colstrip, Montana Arts Council, our loyal members, and local businesses. Thank you for partnering with us! Through education we have been able to reach our youngest and our oldest community members. Each year our goal is to make our good better and our better best. We invite you to enjoy the opportunities at the Schoolhouse; you will always be a treasure to us!

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Celebrating 12 Years