

# City of Colstrip

February 2014

## Mayor's Message



- Mayor Rose Hanser
- Tom Jankowski
- Lawretta Miller
- John Williams
- Greg Koczur

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.

### City Hall Information

City of Colstrip  
Po Box 1902  
Colstrip, MT 59323

#### Website:

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

**Phone:** 406-748-2300

**Fax:** 406-748-2303

### Celebrating 15 Years



Getting Ready for Spring? I couldn't be the only one looking forward to warmer weather. The seed catalogs have been on the coffee table for a month. My husband and I, along with many of you, are already planning for the garden and yard. Not unlike the seed catalog in January, this newsletter topic may seem a little premature, but Spring is coming along with the subject of Local Government Review.

In early February, Council Members Lawretta Miller, Greg Koczur and I were able to take advantage of some training in Laurel, offered for local government officials. These opportunities are a real benefit to each of us as elected officials, since one seldom knows what they are getting into till they are in it: a common experience to us all in one area or another of life. Hopefully the workshops will benefit you as we work toward doing a better job. The subjects discussed covered a broad range: local ordinances, budgeting, council procedures, libraries, safety concerns, liability issues, responsibility to the public, abiding by Montana State Law and the upcoming Local Government Review.

In the Montana State Constitution it is required that each unit of local government shall conduct an election once every ten years to determine whether the local government will undertake a local government review procedure. So, the question of conducting a review will be on the ballot on June 3, of 2014.

You, the voters of Colstrip, have the opportunity to review the form of government under which your local community has been functioning for the last ten years. It may be decided that our current form of government, Commission(Council)-Executive(Mayor), suits us well; in which case we would proceed as usual. In the case that a majority of voters felt another form of government may be a better fit for the community, a study commission would be appointed to explore options allowed by the State of Montana: Commission -Manager, Commission Government or Commission-Presiding Officer.

Colstrip has a Self-Governing Charter, with a Commission-Executive form of government. Under Montana's Constitution those with a self-governing charter-- May exercise any executive, legislative, administrative power not prohibited by the Montana Constitution, law, or charter. Charter shall define powers, structures, privileges, rights, duties and limitations of the local government. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 7-3-701 & 7-3-709. The Commission Executive form of government consists of the Elected Commission (Council) and Elected Executive (Mayor) MCA 7-3-301. Simply stated, the Council is the decision making body; the Mayor is responsible to carry out the decisions of the Council.

I would like to welcome each one of you to visit City Hall to pick up information on our current government form as well as the options available through State Law. They will be available at the front desk and on the City Website: [www.cityofcolstrip.com](http://www.cityofcolstrip.com) It will be up to you, the people who live and work in Colstrip. Does our current form of government work for us?

Enjoy the upcoming Spring celebrating new life as Easter approaches, the streams and rivers thaw, hillsides green up, flowers pop out and gardens are planted.



# Colstrip Police Department

Cory Hert, Police Chief



We at the Colstrip Police Department hope that you are enjoying your new year and for those of you who enjoy the cold outdoors we hope that you remain safe during your winter activities.

The police department is gearing up for what will be a very busy month of sporting activities; CHS will be hosting the Divisional Class B/C Wrestling tournament on Saturday Feb 8th and the District Class B Boys and Girls District Basketball Tournaments from Feb 19-22nd. We hope to see all of you out supporting our local athletes as they compete to move on in their respective sport. I am certain they will represent our community well.

The week of Feb 3-7th, CPD and RCSO co-hosted a 40 hour Instructor Development Course here in Colstrip. The course was instructed by the Montana Law Enforcement Academy and we had 20 attendees from all over the state. We will continue to host these trainings in our community as it is obviously cheaper for us to get our employees trained without sending them elsewhere and paying the associated costs and it also brings revenue to our community through meals, lodging and other activities from the outside agencies.

Rosebud County Crime Stoppers is conducting two new fund raising raffles this year and they are both underway now. The first raffle is for a 2014 Polaris Sportsman 550 Browning Limited Edition 4 Wheeler. Tickets are \$15.00 each and are limited to 1000 tickets. Tickets are available for purchase at this time at Colstrip City Hall, Colstrip Police Department; Rosebud County Sheriff's Office and will be sold at upcoming events throughout Rosebud County. The second raffle is for a Henry "Golden Boy" .22 Rifle, tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. Winners for both raffles will be drawn at the Rosebud County Fair in Forsyth on July 19th. Proceeds from raffles will be utilized to pay Crime Stoppers rewards throughout the county.

As a reminder, CPD provides fingerprinting services for employment applications free of charge to our citizens. This service is conducted each Wednesday beginning at 1:00 P.M. until completed. No appointments are necessary, just come to the PD and bring your drivers license and the required fingerprint card. Though Wednesday is our scheduled day, we will assist you with this during other times on a case by case basis.

We hope you enjoy the rest of your winter and we wish our sport teams the best of luck in their upcoming tournaments!!

# Public Works Department

Bryan Swan, Public Works Director



Winter came in like a lion in December with near record low temperatures followed by near record snowfall. Rain, freezing temperatures, a foot of snow and 40 mile an hour plus winds made conditions very difficult for snow removal. Then a cycle of warming and freezing rain formed a thick layer of ice on the streets which is almost impossible to remove. Clearing the streets was made more difficult by the number of vehicles that were parked on them. There are many streets with room for only one car to pass. This creates a safety issue for the public and the snow removal crew. I must ask that everyone remove your vehicles from the street, if possible, when a storm is forecast. This would help greatly with an already difficult job. As of the beginning of February we have put down over 120 tons of sand. The sand is mixed with salt. The sand/salt mixture works much better than sand alone and cuts down the amount of sand that needs to be applied to the streets. The Public Works Department does not have a "street crew". Taking care of the streets is only one of the many jobs that are performed daily which include refuse collection and operating and maintaining a large Water and Wastewater Treatment infrastructure. The City consists of over 22 miles of streets covering 6 square miles. The City simply doesn't have the resources to keep all streets clear at all times during snowfalls. There are a lot of vehicles parked on the streets which create a safety issue for the public as well as the public works crew. This causes delays in plowing some of these areas and some may simply not get plowed at all. Because our resources are so limited, hauling snow away from our streets is not an option. Because the equipment required in taking care of our streets gets worked very hard, keeping it maintained and running during these storms can be a real challenge and some delays are simply caused by mechanical breakdowns.

The Public Works Department has set up a priority system; however, the time required to clear the roads also depends on conditions such as the snowstorm intensity, duration and temperature. The city's priorities are based on school bus routes, emergency services, and the most heavily used streets.

- Priority 1 are the city's main arterials, which include Pinebutte Drive, Power Road, Willow Avenue, Olive Drive, Homestead Boulevard, Castle Rock Lake Drive, Lakeview Court and Main Street. When we have storms with large amounts of snow these streets are plowed several times during the day and evening.

*Public Works Department cont. page 3*

## Public Works Department cont.

- Priority 2 streets are completed next, which include Cherry Street, Currant Drive, Spruce Street, Box Elder Avenue, Poplar Drive, Browning Drive, Cimarron Drive, Laramie Circle, Piedmont Drive, Vista Drive, Chisholm Drive, Chinook Drive, Prospector Drive, Zane Grey Circle, Appaloosa Drive, Cheyenne Drive, Sweetgrass Drive, Prairieview Drive, and Antelope Drive. All remaining streets and cul de sacs are plowed as time allows which may be up to a week following the snow event.

The Public Works Department has been shorthanded this season and did not have a building in which to maintain the snow removal equipment. Without a warm building to keep it in the sanding truck was delayed a few times. The old shop had been condemned over 2 years ago and waiting for the new shop to be built seemed to take forever. Just after Christmas we were finally allowed to begin moving into the new 10,000 square foot facility.

There are 2 projects planned this year. The Pipe Replacement Project will begin in March. This job will replace some of the leaking pipes at the 30 plus year old Water Treatment Plant. This project will be in three phases allowing us to keep the plant in operation while the work is being performed. The second project will be the Water Plant Backwash Project. This involves the rehabilitation of a clarifier that has been unused since 1981 when the present Water Treatment Plant was built. The clarifier will be used to treat backwash water before being returned to Castle Rock Lake. The water plant backwash has been out of compliance with EPA rules since it became a regulated discharge more than ten years ago.

Kadmas, Lee and Jackson Engineering have completed our Water System Master Plan and are also in the process of completing our Wastewater System Master Plan. These plans will be used to evaluate our Water and Waste Water System and to make recommendations on improvements needed to comply with future rules and regulations. These will also be used to help eliminate unnecessary operational and maintenance costs.

## Bicentennial Library

When I was a child I used to question everything. How is this accomplished? Why do I have to do this? Who are they? When can we go to the library? Maybe out of sheer exhaustion my parents took me to our local library at a pretty young age, so that I would stop asking questions of them and start getting answers from books. This worked out great, including producing more questions, that I could get answered with more books. Library's still work out really well that way, even though the methods have changed. On average I answer about four questions a day. Now instead of going to an old fashioned card catalog, looking up the topic, finding the book and photocopying the text relevant to the question: I research the question on the internet, find a relevant website, copy the link into an email and send the email to the questioner. Because I was such a questioner I love to answer questions. I owe my love for answers to my childhood library that helped me answer all the who's, what's, when's where's and why's. I am fortunate now to be an answerer of questions.



The value of libraries frequently comes up for question, most especially when libraries ask for money. I would like to answer some value questions. Colstrip has 863 households. The slowest month the Bicentennial Library had in 2013 was December with 1006 visits to the library. I could argue that each household visited the library at least once, even on our slowest month. During our busiest month we had 2,238 library visits. I could argue that each household visited Bicentennial Library 2 and 1/2 times. Colstrip obviously knows the value of their library. Bicentennial Library would like to thank you for your visits, and we want to encourage you to keep coming to the library.

If you have not visited the library in a while, I think you need to know what you are missing out on: Witty, welcoming librarians, a plethora of DVD's for your at home entertainment, a constant influx of new non-fiction and fiction books, a vivacious and entertaining Story Time for young children, a cozy coffee providing lounge, and much much more. If you haven't been in to our library lately you are missing out. Come see us soon!

An annual tradition that is coming up very soon is Sweet Treats. Bicentennial Library's third annual Sweet Treats will be held this Valentine's Day February 14th from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contributors this year include: Autumn Stewart, Angela Longacre, Erika Drake, Connie McAlpine, Lawretta Miller, Mindy Kohn, Joan Anderson, Vintage Garden and I. Frank Barreto may be showing a movie at the senior's center this year as well. The movie would start at 3:00 p.m.

# Schoolhouse History and Art Center

**Lu Shomate, Director**

The beginning of a new year always brings an opportunity for new ideas, a fresh start, and endless opportunities.

But most importantly we would like to thank our many loyal members and businesses that have partnered with us through these many years. Our successes are your successes.

If you've driven by the Schoolhouse I'm sure you've noticed the new Foundation and Handicap Ramp. This project wouldn't have been a possibility without your donations through our Capital Campaign, along with donations from our local businesses, grants from PPL Montana Community Fund and the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation, the Montana Coal Board, as well as the Western Energy Company. This venture isn't totally completed yet, but each day brings us closer to fruition. Thank you everyone for your help in making this necessary project a certainty.

This past year we have enjoyed the addition of our "Farmer's Market", what a great success welcomed by our community. We hope to continue this program and hopefully watch it grow into more than it has been. If you would like to participate this year let us know. The market season is determined by the growers. As long as they have a harvest to sell they will be on our front lawn.

Tammy Venne, Education Director, is always upping her game for new classes and fun experiences at SHAC. 2014 will be no exception. Stop in to see what she's been up too! Remember, her summer program is for adults, teens, and students. Take advantage of her talent.

Our "Gone to Pieces" quilt club entices us with their beautiful works in the month of February. This is one of our most popular shows and it's perfect this time of year. When it's cold outside these quilts seem to warm us as we view the many entries with all the many colors. We look forward to working with this group of wonderful artists again this year.

In March the "All Student Art Show" will be in the Gallery. Students from Colstrip, Lame Deer, Busby, Ashland and Home schooled participate in this great show. One piece of art work per child is permitted to hang in this show. If your child is a budding artist, make sure their work is ready for this March show.

In April we will have the work of Dwayne Wilcox. This display will be of ledger drawings. Wilcox brilliantly uses humor and irony in his work. He pokes fun at often uncomfortable situations while showing us different world views that are inherently cultural. You will really get a kick out of this show. It's entertaining as well as a great art medium that is popular with the Plains people. MAGDA and the Missoula Art Museum have made this show possible for us to explore.

Our gift shop is becoming very popular with our local artists 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.

Remember our website [www.colstripshac.org](http://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. We are also on Facebook, if you want to be our friend please send us a request and we will happily add 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.



# Volunteer Fire Department

Ryan Reid, Fire Chief



Colstrip has always been known to take care of its own when there is trouble and your Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department is further proof of that. When other cities and towns have trouble getting volunteers, Colstrip has 29 volunteers on the roster. These volunteers by the end of the 2nd quarter had given their time up to work 75 community hours doing projects like the Christmas lights around Firemans Park. They have also left what they were doing to respond to a call 176 times. Also, the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department has logged 490 hours of training in the first 6 months of the fiscal year. This is another reason why Colstrip is a great place to live.

I also would like to commend the citizens of Colstrip. There have been very few fire calls this winter. That means Colstrip citizens are being careful with fire. Please continue to be so through the rest of the winter. It has been cold so please be careful with space heaters as they are involved in one third of the home heating fires and four of every five home heating fire deaths. Please move things that can burn away from your space heaters.

As spring approaches and temperatures come up, please clean your chimneys as a low burning stove will create more creosote and cause more chimney fires.

Just a few reminders:

- Be careful with hot ashes
- Stay in the kitchen when frying food
- Change batteries in your smoke detectors. Smoke detectors save lives. Nearly 900 lives could be saved annually if every home in the country had smoke alarms. If you don't have one please talk to us.
- Wear your seatbelt and drive carefully on these slick roads. Seatbelts work.
- We would like to thank you for being careful with fire. We hope the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department never has to come to help you but we train so we are always ready to help.

# Building/Zoning/Code Enforcement

Jan Morgan



## Concerning Emergency Snow Routes:

This winter there seems to be more snow on the ground and on the streets than we have received for many years. The city has received numerous complaints about snow removal, snow plowing and snow in general.

One of the issues discussed was the difficulty in navigating and plowing streets when vehicles are stored on the streets during times of heavy snow fall. Emergency snow routes are one way in which other communities address this problem. During times of heavy snow or other natural phenomenon these communities declare some streets emergency snow routes that are to be free of any parked or stored vehicles that might impede the free flow of traffic or snow removal.

The City of Colstrip established snow routes within the city limits when they incorporated to facilitate snow removal and to assure the regular flow of traffic during a snow emergency. They are now considering enforcing the snow routes by placing signs along the designated routes. Once signs are in place along those routes it will be the responsibility of homeowners to remove all vehicles from those streets during times declared as an emergency. Snow emergency streets include: Willow Drive, Power Road, Pinebutte Drive, Olive Drive, Homestead Boulevard, Main Street, Castle Rock Lake Drive, Lakeview Court and Prospector Drive.

Residents will be notified of the snow emergency status over the radio, television or news media. Once a snow emergency is declared by the city, any parked or unattended vehicles along an emergency snow route is considered a traffic hazard by the law enforcement and will be removed at the owner's expense.

Signs are not expected to go up until this spring. The City recognizes that there will be a learning curve for both residents and the city workers as this process is implemented but the hope is for better service and safer streets. If you have other ideas that you would like to see considered or incorporated stop by to visit. The door is always open.