

City of Colstrip

December 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

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Celebrating 16 Years



This has been a fast moving year for me. It is difficult to recall where it could have been so quickly spent. We have some new faces at the City. There are two new Public Works employees, Kelly Hert and Sam Widdicombe. The Police Department has a new officer, Andrew Martin, and two new dispatchers, Amy and Cami. Our volunteer Fire Department has a new secretary, Jaylene. Along with the new faces, some of our employees have moved on this past year, we wish them the best in the upcoming year.



With the changes of this year that is so quickly passing along with the changes that will surely come in 2015, may we remember the focal point of Christmas, Emmanuel, God with us. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all.

Mayor Rose Hanser

Colstrip Police Department

Cory Hert, Police Chief



We at the Police Department hope that you are enjoying the Holiday Season and the unseasonably warm weather!

As 2014 comes to an end it is that time of year again to renew your dog licenses. Current licenses (unless you purchased a two year tag this year) will expire January 31, 2015. You can renew your license at City Hall Monday thru Friday during normal business hours. One year licenses are \$5.00 and two year licenses are \$10.00 for spayed or neutered pets.

As a reminder, though it has been a somewhat open winter so far, please remember to keep your vehicles and trailers off the city streets in accordance with City ordinances to allow for proper plowing by our Public Works Department in the event we get some snowfall. Illegally parked vehicles could result in citations for the owner should they hinder snow removal procedures.

The Colstrip Police Department would like to wish all of our citizens a very Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year in 2015!

Public Works Department

Bryan Swan, Public Works Director



How time flies. It seems like yesterday we were gearing up for summer activities and projects and now it is almost Christmas. It seems like we were just sweeping and repairing the streets and now we are sanding and plowing snow. I am keeping my fingers crossed that we don't have another brutal winter like we had last year, so far so good. At a training a few weeks ago there was a National Weather Service meteorologist giving a presentation who was predicting a milder, drier winter. I hope he is right but just in case we have been preparing for the worst. We are better prepared this year with the ability to put more snow plows on the streets. We went into the season last year short handed and without a shop to maintain our equipment but this year we are fully staffed and have a new shop building to work out of. We feel fortunate having been provided the tools necessary to help us to better provide this service and will always strive to do our very best for our citizens.

Since winter is here, I would like to say a few words about one of the most difficult jobs we do and that is plowing and sanding the streets of Colstrip. If possible stay off the streets during street clearing operations and if you need to drive on the streets leave a little early and drive only as fast as conditions allow. Give the snow plows and sander plenty of room and please do not park your vehicles on the streets if you can avoid it. Remember it is against the law to leave trailers and other RVs on the streets during this time of the year. Keeping as many vehicles off the street as possible will help us tremendously making snow removal much safer for everyone. It will also allow us to get the streets cleared more quickly. I would like to thank everyone for their patience and cooperation as the Public Works Department performs this important task.

Also on the street this fall you may have seen our newest piece of equipment, the Duro-Patcher. The Duro-Patcher is a street patching machine that sprays a mixture of emulsion and gravel from the end of a movable boom and can be operated by only 2 guys. So far we have been happy with its performance because it allows us to make cleaner smoother quicker repairs even in cooler weather. It should also help us prolong the life of some of the streets not scheduled for repaving.

We have one construction project underway and another set to begin soon. First is the Backwash Treatment System Project at the Water Treatment Plant. Up until now the dirt that has been removed from the lake water during the filtering process has been returned back to the lake with the backwash water. Around the time the City incorporated, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) applied new discharge limits on this backwash water that the treatment plant could not meet. The City has been out of compliance with this permit ever since. The City has been working with DEQ to find a compromise or alternative which would

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Building/Zoning/Code Enforcement



Winter arrived early this year with accumulated snow and ice on city sidewalks and streets. The accumulated ice under the snow make streets and sidewalks especially slippery.

In Colstrip, the city plows the roads so that citizens can maneuver on the streets within town. The city does not have a snow removal policy because it simply would not be cost effective. That means that when snow storms are forecast, it would prove beneficial to all, if citizens would make sure to park off the streets whenever possible. Snow and garbage removal becomes a problem when plows are required to go around vehicles stored on the city streets bottlenecking traffic and creating unsafe conditions.

Clear sidewalks also make it easier and safer to get around. They are important for everyone who uses sidewalks, but they are especially important for seniors, people with disabilities and children. Snow, ice-covered or blocked sidewalks force people to travel in the street and that is unsafe.

Please remember that after a snowstorm it is the property owner's responsibility to remove accumulated snow and ice from the sidewalk within a reasonable period of time. In addition it is illegal for the snow and ice removed from the sidewalk to be deposited in the streets. Failure to comply may cause the city to remove the snow at the owner's expense. If you do not wish to remove the snow yourself, there may be students or other adults that could use some extra money shoveling snow.

Be considerate of your neighbors. Clear the sidewalks and streets to make our community a safe place for all those who walk or drive in these winter months.

Bicentennial Library

Mary Kay Bullard, Director



The last half of 2014 Bicentennial Library has had quite a few changes. Frank Barreto left Bicentennial Library at the end of July to go back to school and Autumn Stewart joined us. Autumn has been a wonderful addition to our staff. She is friendly, efficient, enthusiastic and full of ideas. That lead in will bring us to our next big change: New Hours! Autumn quickly noticed that we received many phone calls from patrons asking us when we were open, even though we have, had the same hours for many years. She made the observation that our hours of operation are hard to remember because they are not consistent throughout the week. So in November we decided to change our hours of operation so that they were consistent. We are now open Monday- Thursday 11am-7pm, Friday 12-5pm and Saturday 10am-1pm.

Mindy Kohn decided that she had too many kids missing story time because they were in Kindergarten and decided to change her Tuesday story time to 4:15 pm, so that she could accommodate the kids that still wanted to come to story time but were in school already. We hope you are enjoying these changes and have a very short one question survey asking if you like the new hours or not. We will also offer an area for comments.

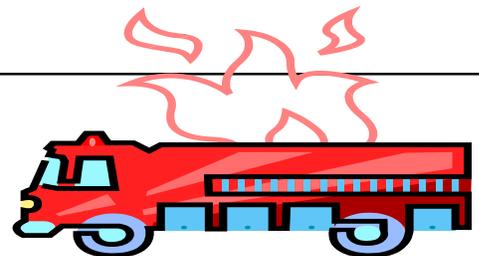
Also during the month of November, I did something that was really long overdue, I singled out some very special patrons and volunteers and wrote about them in various columns and radio shows. I'm very glad I did because Colstrip really is a wonderful community that has many people in it that deserve a thank you.

Have you visited our lounge recently? With the unsavory drop in temperature that has recently hit us, isn't it nice to know you can visit Bicentennial Library, sit in the lounge have a hot drink from the Keurig, that now features hot apple cider and flavored coffees such as caramel vanilla cream. All we ask of you is a dollar donation to offset the cost of the Keurig cups, so that we can keep buying them for your enjoyment.

One of the questions on the Survey is about a possible book mobile service. This question has received a lot of attention. Because of the amount of attention, we really need more input so Bicentennial Library is asking you, our public, to fill out our survey. As a bonus for you, we will take \$1.00 off of your fines for taking this survey. We genuinely appreciate when the public helps us by responding to our questions. So thank you in advance for taking this survey. We have 100 surveys so far and are looking to have 430 surveys before we post the results.

Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department

Ryan Reid, Fire Chief



Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department provided Fire Prevention Week training again this year for the elementary and preschool kids. This year's theme was "Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month". Some of the reminders that were gone over with the students and were supposed to be discussed with parents were:

- Test smoke alarm batteries once a month, replace the batteries once a year and replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Escape plans were to be reviewed/made with parents, which included having two ways out of every room, having a meeting place outside and practicing the escape drill twice a year.

Some statistics to think about with this years theme is that almost three of five (60%) reported home fire deaths in the past 7 years have resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms and studies have shown that working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires by at least half.

Overall it has been a year with minimal fire calls, so again we would like to thank the Colstrip citizens for being careful and staying safe.

Schoolhouse History and Art Center

Lu Shomate, Director

The Holidays are here. How did that happen already? All of us at the Schoolhouse wish you and your family a great Holiday Season!

We'd like to also thank our many loyal members and businesses that have partnered with us through these many years. Our successes are your successes; we are looking toward an exciting 2015.

If you've driven by the Schoolhouse I'm sure you've noticed the new Foundation, paved parking lot and a restored Handicap Ramp. These projects 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. We love the new look and are hoping for a reduction in our utility costs because of these improvements. We were also able to install two new furnaces for more efficiency; we thank Bo DeLattre for his guidance in this project.



The "Farmer's Market" this summer brought many people to our front lawn. If you want to participate next year please let us know, we are always looking for Farmers. The Arts & Craft Fair brought many of us together again – we look forward to all the Vendors and the Shoppers. In Colstrip this is one of the social events of the year, I hope you enjoy it as much as we do. Soon Santa's Mailbox will bring fun activity for us as this is our December Gallery Show. Be sure and bring in your child's letter with a return address by December 18th, we'll make sure every letter gets a reply from one of Santa's elves. Speaking of Santa, he will be at the Schoolhouse on December 18th from 3-5 pm, or until all the little ones have had a chance to visit with the jolly old elf. Make sure your little one stops in for a visit.

As always, Tammy Venne, Education Director, is always upping her game for new classes and fun experiences at SHAC. 2015 will be no exception. Stop in to see what she's been up too! Remember, her summer program will be here before we know it. If you have suggestions for this program, be sure to let Tammy know. Let's take advantage of her talent.

Taylor Rowley, our Bookkeeper and Pottery Artist, is new to the Colstrip area. If you are interested in Pottery, check out the Community Ed Classes this Spring. I'm sure Taylor will be offering something this Summer as well. Come on down and throw some mud!

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.

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.

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.

Public Works Department continued

allow us to comply without the expense of a major upgrade to our treatment facility. Many alternatives were explored but the determination was that compliance could not be achieved without an upgrade to the plant. DEQ has mandated the City be in compliance with the permit by the end of February 2015. The compliance plan involves the rehabilitation of the Clarifier Building that has been sitting moth balled for the past 30 years. The project has been awarded to Dick Anderson Construction who began work in early November.

We also have projects planned within our wastewater system. Last year a Wastewater Facilities Master Plan was completed by Kadmas, Lee and Jackson which identified several major deficiencies within our wastewater system. Problems identified at the Wastewater Treatment Plant will involve the construction of a second clarifier and the repair of the existing clarifier. A mechanical bar screen will be added to the headworks making the process more efficient and to protect the downstream processes by the removal of rags, sticks and other foreign material that tends to clog and damage pumps and other machinery. Another part of this project will be the installation of new aerators in the sludge storage lagoon to help eliminate the putrid odors which can emanate from them during certain times of the year. The City is currently seeking a Coal Board Grant to help offset the cost of these repairs.

A second major deficiency identified is the poor shape of three of our existing sewage lift stations. These lift stations were constructed in the early 80s during the Town Site Expansion and are the last of the City's 6 lift stations to receive major repairs. Because these remaining lift stations are in such poor shape it was decided the City proceed now with their repair before a major upset can occur. This project will involve the replacement of the Cherry Street Lift Station and the rehabilitation of the Plum Court and Laramie Circle lift stations. This project has also been awarded to Dick Anderson Construction and should proceed as weather permits.

I would like to close by wishing you and yours all the happiness and joy this holiday season has to bring.