

# City of Colstrip Newsletter

Summer 2024

## Mayor's Message Mayor John Williams

**City Council** meetings are the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month unless rescheduled due to a holiday.

City Hall Open  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday - Friday

**City Court Office Hours:**  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



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*Congratulations Colstrip!* After last year's 100-year celebration the Quality of Life group met and began the planning for this year's Colstrip Days event. They set the bar high and then exceeded with this year's fabulous Colstrip Days. They are all an amazing group. Thank you to all the work and cooperation from everyone working together for the benefit of all our residents and guests to our community.

It was just over 48 years ago a small close-knit group of residents came together with an idea of a town celebration. They began the idea of what could be done for us all to get together for a celebration of who and what we all our in a fairly remote community. We were from a variety of backgrounds, moving our families to a community because of the construction of the power plants and rebirthing and expanding the coal mine. Quite a mixture of backgrounds: miners, construction workers, engineers and contractors. Some from in-state but many new to the state.

The discussion began of a town celebration to occur the last week of June prior to the Fourth of July. The celebration would begin with a parade around the city park (yet to be named Rye Park) and a big picnic in the park. It was a potluck and everyone brought a dish and fireworks. I don't think anyone realized that this would be such a lasting annual event or that it would become as successful as it has become.

This year's theme of "We've Begun 101" (thanks Leslie Hull) is very fitting as the Quality of Life group will now begin planning for next year's 50th year of celebrating Colstrip Days. We will all be looking with anticipation to the great many opportunities that have become such a great part of the quality of life that we all enjoy living in Tomorrow's Town Today!

Thank you to our Colstrip residents for voting in a positive manner for the Local Government Review in the June election. Colstrip has always indicated a progressive attitude towards our governmental process and this is represented in your 'Yes' vote. As I had indicated in an earlier newsletter, the local governmental review process is a very distinctive characteristic of the Montana political landscape providing the opportunity to modernize the performance and accountability of local government. I have been vocally supportive of this process and our City Council in its resolution did not levy any additional mills, allowing this process to be funded from the existing budget. Thus an encouragement to not detract from its consideration. This governmental review process now calls for the formation of a three member commission to be elected to begin the review.

The purpose of the study commission is to study the existing form and powers of the local government and compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state. The study commission members must then write a report detailing their recommendations for changes to the local government. The final report of the study

*(continued on page 2)*

## Mayor's Message Continued

commission will then be presented to the voters of the local government for approval or rejection. This report must be presented to the registered voters for a vote no later than the 2026 general election. The Local Government Center at MSU in Bozeman is planning to provide regional study commission training in December 2024.

We look forward to a slate of interested candidates with a sincere desire to improve upon our governmental operation for Colstrip. Interested residents for the study commission must be registered voters of and reside within the city. Filing for the election began June 18 and the last day to file is August 12, 2024. There is no filing fee and the race is non-partisan. Residents interested in being on the study commission can file by going to the Secretary of State's website and completing the Declaration of Nomination form and Oath of Candidacy. This form is found at [sosmt.gov/elections/forms/#37-45-wpfd-for-candidates](https://sosmt.gov/elections/forms/#37-45-wpfd-for-candidates). Forms are also available at City Hall. Interested candidates can also contact the County Election Administrator (Rosebud County Clerk & Recorder) in Forsyth with questions.

## Colstrip Beautification Project



Summer is in full swing in Colstrip!

The Beautification crew planted 19 flower pots for participating businesses around town. The flowers brighten up the businesses and our community. Thank-you to everyone involved in making this fun project a reality. Make sure to thank the businesses for participating. This is our third year already and a great tradition for our town.

Spring clean-up week was very successful in April, along with a quick clean-up day in June. Many thanks to all the picker-uppers and to residents who do their part in their own neighborhoods. A huge shout out to CPRD and the City for the junk pick up day in April. That is a great help to folks who don't have access to a pickup truck to haul large items to the dump.

Knapweed has met its match with the recently organized knapweed eradication group, which consists of representatives of the large land owners in town. They are doing a stellar job of coordinating with one another and have a multi-year plan to rid our town of knapweed. If any homeowners spot knapweed on their property, or anywhere else in town, please contact Amy Adler, Rosebud County Weed Coordinator at 406-351-1344 and she can assist you. Do not mow knapweed as that only spreads it, making matters worse. Knapweed is a noxious weed and does not respond to many herbicides, requiring a certified weed spray person to spray it.

This past winter was a tough one on our trees in this area. If you lost any trees, please consider planting a new tree or two; preferably trees that are native to this area. The Extension Office in Forsyth has great information on what trees do well here. Trees are so important for humans, animals and birds. They are a great investment in our future.

Thank-you to all residents who keep their property in good condition, keeping their yards spiffed up, and generally taking pride in our community. We appreciate all of you!

# Schoolhouse History and Art Center

**Kayla de la Ossa, Executive Director**

Summer is full of opportunities to immerse yourself in the arts at SHAC. The Summer Art Program started in June and the second session of classes begins July 15th. Second session youth classes are as follows: July 15th-18: Paint Camp: Textures and Colors for children aged 6-8. July 22-25: Nature’s Paint Brush: Natural Brushes & Canvas Murals; Ages 9-12. July 29-August 1: Screen Printing; Ages 13-18. These classes begin at 10 am and end at noon. All youth classes are free this summer thanks to a generous grant from the Montana Arts Council. SHAC is also hosting classes for adults. There will be a step-by-step painting class on July 16 and 17 from 1-4 pm. Patrons can choose either day, as the class is the same both days. This class is free to members and \$30 for not-yet-members. Registration is open for all classes.

SHAC hosts several events during the summer months. On July 10, we welcomed the return of Montana’s Shakespeare in the Parks. The company performed “Hamlet” at Rye Park Pavilion.

SHAC will exhibit artwork from Sean Chandler, titled “The Magnitude of No One” from July 8 to July 31. The artist will visit for an artist talk and closing reception on July 31 at 6:30 pm.

Farmers Market will begin in late August on Thursday evenings, more details will be posted soon.

Lastly, SHAC and the SHAC Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who supported our annual Brewfest. Brewfest is a fun event that gets better each year and we would not be able to continue the tradition without our community’s support.

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**DUTY TO REMOVE WEEDS/OFFENDING VEGETATION**

In accordance with City of Colstrip Code 4-2-2, the existence of weeds and offending vegetation constitutes a public nuisance. It is the duty of every owner of a developed parcel of land to cut, destroy or remove all weeds/offending vegetation in excess of nine (9) inches in height growing thereon to a height of four (4) inches or less and includes one-half (½) of any road, street or alley abutting the property.

It is the duty of every owner of an undeveloped parcel of land to cut, destroy or remove all weeds/offending vegetation in excess of twelve (12) inches in height to four (4) inches or less.

Failure to cut/destroy/remove the weeds and/or offending vegetation may cause the City of Colstrip to provide for the cutting/removal and charge the cost thereof against the property owner together with an administrative cost equal to 25% and a penalty of \$25.00 for the first cutting/removal; \$50.00 for the second cutting/removal; and \$75.00 for the third and subsequent removal. Failure to pay this charge within sixty (60) days shall constitute a lien on the property and placed on the tax rolls as a special assessment.

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## Public Works Department

Pat Zent, Public Works Director



Public Works is finally wrapping up a couple of the upgrade projects that we have been working on this past year. Our new SCADA system is up and running for both Water and Wastewater plants. We have also finished with the upgrades to the heaters, lighting, and new doors at the Water Clarifier and Treatment Building. This will help to keep the cost down in the winter time.

The City of Colstrip has updated their 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Part of this plan was to do a Pavement Management Plan, which was completed by KLJ Engineering. This plan lays out a 7-year process for the city to start working on the street improvements that are needed. This is estimated to cost around \$6,000,000 for the improvements. We will be applying for Coal Board money and other avenues to help offset the cost.

The city is looking at a couple of water line projects. The first is the North End Water Loop. This project will connect the north side of town and High School with another source of water if we have another break in the system again. We are hoping to go out for bids this July for the project. The second project that we are looking at is replacing an old ductile iron line that runs along the railroad tracks. This line has broken 3 times in the last two years. It is a major supply line to the south end of town. This will be partially funded by HB-355, which we will receive up to \$160,000.00 for the project plus hopefully other funding.

We are doing a Sludge Management Pilot Study on the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This will give us some idea what we can do with the sludge that we process at the treatment plant.

## Police Department

Cory Hert, Police Chief



We recently filled our two open positions here at the Police Department; We welcomed Kallie Scott as our new part-time 911 Dispatcher on May 8th and Herbert Posenjak as our new full-time Police Officer on May 20th. Both are completing their field training programs and will be heading to the Montana Law Enforcement Academy this summer.

We are, however, currently taking applications for another full-time Police Officer in anticipation of a resignation early this fall. Applications can be picked up at the police department or by emailing [policechief@cityofcolstrip.com](mailto:policechief@cityofcolstrip.com). This position will be open until filled.

We had another successful and enjoyable Colstrip Days, with very minor enforcement activities and all community members and visitors seemed to enjoy all of the festivities.

As most of you are probably aware, we assisted the FWP with capturing and relocating the black bear that was roaming around town. The bear was tranquilized, trapped and relocated without incident or injury. Please inform us immediately if there are any future issues of this nature so we can take appropriate actions in a timely manner and avoid anyone being injured, including the wildlife if possible.

We hope you all have a safe and enjoyable summer with whatever activities and adventures you partake in and as a reminder, please be mindful of all the youth playing around town during your travels. If you do encounter traffic issues within your neighborhoods, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to move our traffic trailer to your area, do extra patrols and take enforcement actions as necessary to curb the activities.

# Colstrip Medical Center

John Poole



Colstrip Medical Center has been awarded a \$138,000 Montana Coal Board Grant to assist with removal and installation of a new roof. The old roof was 17 years old and had an insurance claim from damages caused by two hail storms. Thank you to the Montana Coal Board for supporting our beautiful facilities and services provided in Colstrip!

CMC is pleased to announce that Kjersti Downing, FNP, has rejoined the staff as one of our providers starting August 19. Kjersti came to CMC as a Registered Nurse in February 2019. She has recently received her Doctorate of Nursing Practice/Family Nurse Practitioner this spring. She will start part-time this fall.... Congratulations to Kjersti!!!



The Mammogram Bus is coming! Next dates for 2024 will be: **Aug 19, Oct 4 and Nov 14**. To schedule your appointment or if you have any questions, please contact them at 406-237-4373.

CMC contracts with Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center in Miles City to provide mental health counseling. Our local therapist, Bridgette Spang, is available Monday-Thursday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Please contact 406-346-7654 to schedule an appointment.



Colstrip Family Pharmacy is available in the north wing of the clinic in the basement. Their hours are 8:30-1 and 2-5:30 to best serve you.

CHAMP is back!!!! CHAMP Sport Acceleration Program is back with plans to start on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This individualized 6-week program will be instructed by Jonny Dilworth (Doctor of Physical Therapy) and Becky Suhr (CSCS Certified). We are excited to offer this service to our local athletes who are looking to bring their athletic ability/competition to the next level. It does not matter your background. The fundamentals of Sport Acceleration are the same! You need Speed, Strength, Agility, Power and Quickness to compete with the best. We believe you can become the best with HARD WORK!!! Pick up a brochure or call the clinic at 406-748-3600.

Thanks to Westmoreland Coal Company (donation), Colstrip Medical Center carries CroFab. Also known as antivenom, CroFab is a medicine that is given to stop snake venom from binding to tissues and causing serious blood, tissue or nervous system problems. In the event of a snake bite, contact the clinic immediately!!!

Montana Department of Revenue Appraisers routinely conduct on-site reviews of all kinds of property in the State of Montana in order to maintain accurate records and set appraisal values in order for the city to assess taxes. This activity is not trespassing per Montana Law 15-7-139, Montana Code Annotated. Under this law, Montana Department of Revenue Appraisers may enter private land to appraise property. The appraisers typically drive state-issued vehicles with Department of Revenue magnets and carry identification cards.

Homeowners have a right to be present for on-site inspections but must notify the Department of Revenue in writing in advance to request scheduling a site visit.

# Bicentennial Library

Mary Kay Bullard, Director



Bicentennial Library is open Monday - Thursday 11:00 am - 7:00 pm; Friday 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm; and Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm. We update our Facebook page almost daily. This is a great way of keeping track of what is going on at the library.

The friends of Bicentennial Library have lowered the cost of their bags and stickers. Bags are now \$5.00 and stickers are \$1.00.

Bicentennial Library's weekly adventures was hosted by Amy every Wednesday and started June 11th and included a community rock hunt, brought to you by your skilled artist Camille Robinson, and Alicia Moreno. And of course, the reading competition. So, for those of you who are new to the competition, or you need a refresher, the minimum goal is 20 minutes a day, 7 days a week. We encourage you to read more than that, but that is the minimum. You will qualify for weekly prizes if you meet this minimum. You will win tickets for drawing prizes by reading and finding the painted rocks. The reading competition ran from June 4th- July 8th.

Camille wanted me to remind our gaming patrons that public computers will be unavailable during summer reading program events. The computers will be available as soon as the event is over. We believe it is disrespectful to our volunteers and presenters to have people gaming while someone is presenting. Summer programming events normally run an hour.

The Rosebud County Commissioners recently replaced the broken windows at Bicentennial Library. This was not inexpensive, as the windows are fairly large. We appreciate the new windows, and hope that we can have unbroken windows for a while. The Rosebud County Commissioners have also approved a new roof for the Human Services Building that houses Bicentennial Library.

We may need someone to help with watering the yard this summer. This would be a volunteer position. I will keep you posted, as I know more. This would be great way to earn volunteer hours, or just do something nice for your community.

Reading and Eating will be July 17th, 24th, and 31st. This program has become increasingly popular the past few years. We could definitely use some volunteers. Reading and Eating will be at 12:30 pm at the library.



Colstrip City Code requires all dogs and cats within city limits be licensed and vaccinated against rabies. To license your animal bring proof of current rabies vaccination and the appropriate license fee to City Hall. The rabies vaccination must be current. Please check the date on your pet's rabies vaccination certificate or contact your veterinarian if you are not sure or have lost your vaccination certificate.

Dogs also must be under the immediate, direct control of their owner/handler when off their own premises.

# Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC)

Jim Atchison, Executive Director

For the past 22 + years, I have served as the Executive Director of Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC), a regional non-profit economic development group serving the four-counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud, and Treasure. Today, I can honestly say that I have never been more optimistic about the future of Colstrip and Rosebud County than I am today. Here's a few brief updates from the last newsletter:

## **A) Grant Awards and Financing Continue to Come In:**

- Received a \$500,000 grant for Low-Interest Loans to qualified Small Businesses in the area.
- MT Coal Board awarded 3 grants to area projects this year, valued at over \$347,722.
- SEMDC worked with the State and Rosebud County on a significant federal TSED Grant for Transmission Line Impacts in Rosebud, Custer, and Fallon Counties. To be announced soon.
- SEMDC also received a \$50,000 US DOE grant for Energy Outreach activities in Rosebud County.

## **B) New Colstrip Businesses:**

- SEMDC assisted with the opening of a Daycare and Restaurant expansion in Colstrip.
- Tots 'n Dots Daycare opened in October – Location is former Play Pen Building (310 Water Ave)
- Philippine Cuisine expanded into former June's Bungalow location (122 Woodrose)

## **C) Colstrip, Rosebud County Energy Related Media Visits & Presentations:**

- Interviewed by Fox Business News Channel on Colstrip, Coal, and West Coast Cities in April.
- Spoke at the UWY Rare Earth Minerals Annual Conference as to Colstrip Coal Ash Opportunity.
- Senator Daines hosted an EPA Roundtable discussion related to recent Coal Targeted Rules.
- Voices of MT radio interview with Senator Ankney on our Small Modular Nuclear Reactor (SMR) Trip.
- Visited Craig, CO on their Coal Downsizing Impacts and how Colstrip could benefit/share assistance.

## **D) Value-Added Energy Studies:**

- All four Value-Added Energy Commercialization Technical Studies were completed in late 2023.
- Two (2) of the Four are now attracting significant investments from the private and public sectors, as an estimated \$7-12 million has been invested by venture capitalists already.
- SEMDC received a MEDA Impact Award due to our Value-Added Energy Technical Studies.

## **E) New Value-Added Energy Commercialization Opportunities:**

- Federal Technical Study continues on Small Modular (nuclear) Reactors (SMRs) in Colstrip.
- The SEMDC Business Innovation Center (BIC) building will go out for bids again in the late fall.
- Grid United continues to move forward with their 400-mile Transmission Project from Colstrip into North Dakota.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Energy Open Conference and Golf Tournament – August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in Colstrip.

Just like Value-Added Ag – we feel that by adding value and creating beneficial use opportunities with energy, it would be tremendous for all parties and thus create economic diversification for our community. Thus, one can see the tremendous opportunities to supplement our outstanding coal reserves, mining/power generation workforce and infrastructure capacity, which are already in-place. Yes, numerous Value-Added Energy Commercialization Opportunities are looking good as Colstrip diversifies itself into an Energy Hub. I can assure you that **Colstrip is Changing - - - - Not Closing!**

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PRSRST STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EDDM Retail

ECRWSS EDDM  
Postal Customer  
Colstrip, MT 59323

*Upcoming Events/Deadlines*

*July 30, 2024*

*Planning Board Meeting at 6:00 pm*

*August 8 & 9, 2024*

*Energy Open*

*August 12, 2024*

*Study Commission Filing Deadline*

*August 13 & 27, 2024*

*City Council Meeting*

*September 10 & 24, 2024*

*City Council Meeting*

*October 8 & 22, 2024*

*City Council Meeting*

*November 5, 2024*

*General Election & Election of Study Commissioners*