

City of Colstrip Newsletter

Winter 2023

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 thru Friday
except on Holidays

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

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Greetings Colstrip Residents!!

As I begin this newsletter article, it is very timely being a period of Thanksgiving gratitude and entering into Christmas Season, I want to thank everyone for their continued support and wish all a most blessed Christmas. You have extended to me the opportunity to continue to serve you as your Mayor. I am blessed beyond expression.

Congratulations to Wayne Dudley on his re-election and to Jack Rosander on his election. Jack and Wayne will continue as council members along with Rose Hanser and Greg Koczur. I look forward to serving with this very qualified and dedicated City Council. The final vote tally after the recount is as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|
| Mayor | John Williams | 264 |
| | Joe Novasio | 257 |
| | Pat Campbell | 96 |
| City Council | Jack Rosander | 475 |
| | Wayne Dudley | 468 |
| | Rick McCulloch | 100 |
| Marijuana Sales | For | 204 |
| Within City Limits | Against | 395 |

The sale of marijuana within city limits was soundly defeated. As a Council and Mayor, we made the right decision to place this issue on the ballot providing our residents the opportunity to have their say in the process. We had a 70% voter turnout for this election and I wish to express appreciation to Rosebud County Clerk and Recorder/Election Administrator Joan Duffield for her efforts working through this process.

As we close out the 2023 year, as a city we have completed 25 years as an incorporated city. I would like to look back at our history and recognize those individuals that had a vision of becoming incorporated. I doubt that any of us that were involved at that time could have envisioned or anticipated the many successes that we have been able to achieve as we developed the plan of incorporation. None of us were completely aware that this was the best possible route for the community of Colstrip and our residents' future. This small group of community members included: Mark Stevens, Jim Obland, Marita Novasio, Nancy Brennan, John Jutila, Larry Miller, Dennis Davenport and myself, John Williams. This small group worked with Attorney Gary Ryder, who worked with us at no cost. We heavily utilized the services of Dr. Ken Weaver and Judy Mathre from the Montana State University-Local Government Center as advisors.

(continued on page 2)

Mayor's Message Continued

After the residents of the proposed city boundaries voted to incorporate, a slate of officers were voted in to run the newly incorporated city. None had any municipal experience. They included John Williams as Mayor and Councilmembers Mark Stevens, Jim Obland, Larry Pattison and Gale Palmer. This first election occurred in April of 1999. As the newly elected Mayor, the responsibility of staffing was of up-most importance. Our first full-time employee was, and currently still is, City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards followed by Public Works Director John Bleth. The success of the city's operation is a reflection of the quality of workers employed by the city.

This new year of 2024 will require that both the City of Colstrip and Rosebud County go through the Government Review Process. This requirement was established in the 1972 Montana Constitution and is mandated through statute. Every ten years each unit of local government, both County and Municipal, must undergo a citizen review of the structure of their local government. This process is very unique to the Montana political process and one of the most important innovations in modernizing the performance and accountability of our local governments. The review process will require our City Council to prepare a resolution calling for an election on the question of conducting a Local Government Review, establishing a Study Commission and determining the number of commissioners to conduct the review. The voters will make the decision on whether the review will occur by voting for or against. If the majority of voters vote in favor of the review, the city will then call for those interested in serving on the Study Commission to file for election.

The purpose of the Study Commission will be to review the existing form and powers of the local government and compare them with other forms available under the laws of the State of Montana. The Study Commission will then prepare a report with their recommendations of any changes to the local government structure. This report will be presented to the registered voters for approval or rejection. This will occur no later than November 3, 2026. This whole process is coordinated and facilitated by the Local Government Center at Montana State University. They will also provide the training for the study commissioners. More information will be made available to our residents allowing them the opportunity of an informed decision. I encourage all to take a look at the style of government we need to have in place for the future of our city.

The City of Colstrip recently received notification we will be receiving \$159,833 as a result of legislative action on House Bill 355. This bill created the State Local Infrastructure Partnership Act of 2023. The bill provides \$20,000,000 to cities and towns in Montana for maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure. We will be developing a list of potential projects that may qualify for this funding. The bill requires a 25% match for this funding. A public hearing will be scheduled to develop a recommended list of projects that qualify for this funding.

As I close out my message, I want to again wish all of our city residents and city employees a most joyful blessing with the celebration of Christmas and a very happy New Year. I am blessed to continue to serve Tomorrow's Town Today, a city that has placed many blessings on myself and my family. Thank you.

*Merry
Christmas*
& **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Colstrip Medical Center

John Poole



Colstrip Medical Center has been providing quality life through quality medicine in Colstrip for 30 years now. Thank you for your support! Here is what is new at CMC:



Dr. Cameron Grove is available for appointment on the first Thursday of every month. Dr. Grove comes to us from the Billings Clinic Heights and is also CMC Supervising Physician. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please contact our front office at 748-3600. Dr. Grove joins our Full Time Physician Assistants Jackson Craig and Darlene Sanders.

CMC has employed two full time registered nurses this quarter. Faith and Myra will join Brina Hull to provide quality and compassionate care for our patients. They are here Mon-Fri 8-5 and after hours for emergency. Please welcome them to our community!

CMC has two Full Time Physical Therapists on staff, Jonny Dilworth and Ajkena Coate. They provide routine PT services, dry needling and Pelvic Floor training. Jonny added Impact Concussion return to play testing to our services provided.

The Mammo Bus is coming! Dates for 2024 will be: **Jan 29, Mar 29, Jun 7, Aug 19, Oct 4 and Nov 14.** To schedule your appointment or if you have any questions, please contact them at 406-237-4373.



It is Flu Season....Please don't forget to ask for your influenza vaccine!!! Cost is \$40. We have plenty in stock. COVID vaccinations are being administered through Rosebud County Public Health.

Employment Opportunities: Seeking Full Time Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner. Please contact CMC for more information and application. This position will compliment Jackson and Darlene and assist with after-hours call coverage.

CMC contracts with Eastern Montana Community Health Care Center in Miles City to provide mental health counseling. Our local therapist, Bridgette Spang, is available Mon-Thur 8-5, please contact (406)346-7654 to schedule an appointment. Bridgette replaces Tim Dove who retired this last quarter. Congratulations to Tim and thank you for your years of service!

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.

City of Colstrip Police Officer Opening

The City of Colstrip is taking applications for (one) full-time Police Officer. The successful candidate must be able to work 12-hour shifts, to include nights, weekends and holidays. Candidates must also be able to successfully complete the Montana Law Enforcement Academy Basic Course within one year of hire, a pre-employment drug screening and background check, psychological examination, pre-employment fitness test, a mandatory 1-year probationary period and enroll with the Montana Federation of Public Employees-Colstrip Police bargaining unit. Must be 18 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent. Starting salary DOE but no less than \$27.50/hour. Applications can be obtained at the Colstrip Police Department, Colstrip City Hall, in writing at P.O. Box 9 Colstrip MT 59323 or by emailing policechief@cityofcolstrip.com. This position will be open until filled.

Schoolhouse History and Art Center

Kayla de la Ossa, Executive Director



When we think of winter here at SHAC, we imagine warm drinks and time well spent in the company of our closest friends and relatives. Although winter can be a long and arduous season, it is a busy time in our building. SHAC is closed during January, allowing us to spruce up the building and get things ready for the next year. During this time we deep clean, organize, and plan for what 2024 has in store. When we re-open in February, the Gone to Pieces Quilt Club's Annual Quilt Show will be hung for visitors to see. This show is especially fun, as guests can vote on their favorite quilt. We always say that no matter how many times we look through the quilts, wall hangings, and other hand-crafted items, there is always something new to see that did not catch our eye last time around. Each year, the gals of the club come together to create a one-of-a-kind quilt that gets raffled off at their closing reception. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 and can be purchased here at SHAC, from club members, and other places around town. The closing reception will be on March 3rd, 2024, times will be posted.

On another note, SHAC was lucky enough to receive funding from The Colstrip Impact Foundation this past October. The money granted by the foundation will go toward building custom tables for the downstairs classroom and ceramic studio, as well as new stools. We are so thankful for the hard work this group does in our community. This project would not have been able to be completed without their generosity. These tables will be completed and installed in January, giving the community an updated place to work on their projects.

SHAC has also been working on ways to keep art and history accessible in Colstrip. We are pleased to let you know that we will be staying open late one night per week starting in February. This will allow everyone to come in and see the galleries or work on their projects. Details are being finalized and will be shared soon. For the most up-to-date information on the goings-on of SHAC, please follow us on Facebook and consider becoming a member of this valuable institution. We are located at 400 Woodrose, open Monday through Friday, 11 am to 5 pm and you can reach us by telephone at 406-748-4822.

Police Department

Cory Hert, Police Chief



The PD has been busy with annual trainings and other professional educational opportunities the past few months. All officers have completed their annual Taser and Firearms qualifications in accordance with MT Peace Officers Standards and Training. We have had several officers and 911 dispatchers attending other professional program trainings as well to improve upon our current knowledge and skill sets which allow us to provide exceptional service to our community and citizens.

We are still having issues with junk and abandoned vehicles as well as nuisance properties throughout the community. We will be working with the City Code Enforcement Officer over the next few months in an attempt to get some of these issues cleared up. We are asking for your help and assistance with this and if you have any junk vehicles or trailers on the streets, please get them removed before winter sets in as they not only violate city code but also inhibit proper snow removal in the affected areas and neighborhoods. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

We still currently have an open position for a Police Officer and are taking applications. Applications can be picked up at City Hall or the Police Department. We offer a competitive wage and health benefit package and other various incentives. We encourage anyone interested to apply; the City of Colstrip is an equal opportunity employer.

Finally, the Colstrip Police Department hopes that all of you have a safe enjoyable winter and we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year!

Bicentennial Library

Mary Kay Bullard, Director



Bicentennial Library is open Monday-Thursday from 11:00am-7:00pm. We have Friday hours from 12:00pm-5:00pm, and Saturday from 10:00am-1:00pm.

Programming Librarians are Amy and Camille. Camille will host “Lego Club” every Monday that we are open at 4:15pm, and Amy will host “Story Time” every Tuesday and Wednesday. Tuesday’s “Story Time” is at 4:15pm, and Wednesday’s “Story Time” is at 11:15am.

We all share the hotspots. The hotspots at no time become anyone’s personal property, they are a shared resource. When a patron holds onto a hotspot longer than their two weeks, that patron holds up hotspot circulation for everyone that is waiting. Bicentennial Library has on average of 8 people waiting for a hotspot all the time. When a person chooses to keep a hotspot longer than their two weeks, they will first be banned from placing a hold for two weeks, the second time they keep a hotspot longer they will be banned for thirty days, the third time they will no longer be able to checkout hotspots. If the hotspot has to be turned off due to being kept more than three days past the due date, that patron will no longer be allowed to checkout hotspots.

So evidently, Bicentennial Library is the only place in town where people can read the Billings Gazette. Well, that’s great news for us. Please come down to the library and read the Billings Gazette. We also have the Independent Press, and the Miles City Star. We encourage you to visit the library, enjoy our comfortable lounge, and use these tax supported services anytime you would like.

The Friends of Bicentennial “Dress the Library” store is open. Cherish and Peggy did a wonderful job, and we are excited to offer these bags and stickers. Bags are \$15.00, and stickers are \$3.00. Bicentennial Library has not had bags for sale for a very long time. If you are interested in purchasing either a bag or stickers, please stop by the front desk of the library and we will help you out.

Bicentennial Library is carrying COVID tests for the Public Health Department. These tests are free to everyone. Please, if you are symptomatic, just come in and grab a test and leave. Most of the library staff has had COVID, and we would rather not get again. The COVID test are located by the front door of the library.

Coming up quick: The Friends of Bicentennial Library will have their Christmas Basket Silent Auction and Bicentennial Library will have our annual Santa visit on December 19th. We update our Facebook page daily. If you are on Facebook, that is a great way to keep up with what we are doing and what is coming up next.

Colstrip Community Kid Safe

Volunteers help to keep kids safe through emergency awareness and safety.

Group meets monthly.

The community is encouraged to attend. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!**

Next meeting scheduled for January 2024.

For additional information contact Vernita Altekruse at (406) 720-0491

Facebook Page: Colstrip Community Kid Safe

(watch for meeting dates, time and place)



Fire Department

Tony Reda, Fire Chief



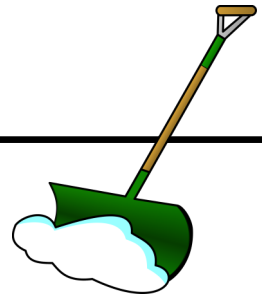
Hello Colstrip! After our winter teaser in October, a few things came to mind that I would like to share with you. If you haven't done so already, test those smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and change their batteries. They should sound different when you test them, three beeps for smoke detectors and four beeps for carbon monoxide detectors. If you don't have any smoke or carbon monoxide detectors, please consider investing in some, they could quite possibly save your life.

Also, if you are burning wood in a woodstove or fireplace, inspect your chimney at regular intervals through the winter season. Chimney fires are a common occurrence, but easily avoidable with a little maintenance and precaution. An excellent product for cleaning chimneys are Creosote Sweeping Logs. They are easy to use and are very effective at removing creosote from a chimney.

Another thing to mention is winter driving and road conditions, especially for newer drivers out there. Be sure to give yourselves a little more distance when stopping, turning or following someone. Even if the pavement looks clear of snow, it can still be icy. And please, stay off your phone while you are driving, it's a dangerous distraction while on the road. Thanks for reading this if you made it all the way to the end!

Zoning/Building/Code Enforcement

Kami Egan



Winter has arrived and with it, accumulated snow and ice on city sidewalks and streets.

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 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.

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.

The Police Department and Code Enforcement have been vigorously working to get trailers, RVs, campers, boats, and inoperable vehicles off the streets. If you have received a letter concerning this matter and are in compliance with the City Codes, I want to extend our appreciation for your cooperation in this matter.

Beautification Committee

Becky Miller



It has been a busy year for the Beautification crew.

Fall clean-up week was very successful. We noticed that there seemed to be less trash to pick up this time and hope the trend continues.

Knapweed eradication continues with a good partnership and communication between major landowners in town. Spraying was done this fall in several areas and will commence next year during the warmer weather. For any questions regarding knapweed in any part of town, you may call Amy Adler, Rosebud County Weed Coordinator at 406-351-1344.

We are looking forward to 2024 and continuing to bring out the best in our town. Activities will kick off with our spring clean-up week, which will be in either April or May, depending on the weather.

Thank-you to everyone who takes care of their property along with public spaces and takes pride in our community. We appreciate all of your efforts in making this a great place to live.

Public Works Department

Pat Zent, Public Works Director



The City of Colstrip is wrapping up two of the upgrade projects that we have been working on for the Water and Wastewater Departments. The System Controls upgrade that is being done by In-Control and Colstrip Electric should be finished and we should have the new system active by the beginning of the new year. Colstrip Electric is also working on the clarifier building and water plant building to lower the cost of our electric bills.

KLJ Engineering from Billings has started the project design on the North End Water Loop Project. This will tie our water main line from Highway 39 by the golf course/ball fields and into the water line on Pine Butte Drive. This will help us supply the elementary and high school and surrounding area with water if we have another break on Pine Butte Drive like we did a couple of years ago. Speaking of water breaks, it seems like every time we turn around we have another water leak on Chisholm Drive. We have repaired at least four breaks on Chisholm Drive this past year.

We are going to the Montana Coal Board meeting in December and will be asking them to help us fund a study to determine which streets need to be repaved or patched. This study will tell us the high priority areas that we need to concentrate on first. Our goal is to make repairing the streets our number one priority the next few years.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation

Jim Atchison, Executive Director

jatchison@semdc.org

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 excited and optimistic about the future of Colstrip and Rosebud County than I am today. Here's a few brief Updates from the last newsletter:

A) CEDS Community Input Sessions:

- These annual planning sessions give residents the opportunity to participate by providing feedback as to current Needs and possible future Solutions / Projects.
- Our seven (7) community Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Public Input Sessions are now complete. All the Recaps (including Colstrip) will be available mid-December.

B) New Colstrip Businesses:

- SEMDC assisted with the opening of a new Daycare and the expansion of a Café 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 Visits & Presentations (5) in November / December:

- University of Queensland (Australia) Professor – Coal Communities & Diversification Strategy.
- Two (2) Company Relocation Presentations to SEMDC, City and County.
- MT Department of Commerce Official Visit.
- LA Times Newspaper Media Visit.

D) Value-Added Energy Studies:

- All four (4) Value-Added Energy Commercialization Technical Studies that SEMDC contracted out were completed in late August.
- Three 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.

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, that are already in-place. Thus, Value-Added Energy Commercialization Opportunities are possible as Colstrip diversifies itself into an Energy Hub.

Yes, the pieces are coming together. Strap up Everyone - as 2024 will be a Wild Ride!

I can assure you that Colstrip is Changing - - - - Not Closing!

REMINDER!!!

1 Year Cat & Dog Licenses & 2 Year Licenses issued in 2022 expire January 31, 2024

Chicken Permits must be renewed annually by February 1, 2024

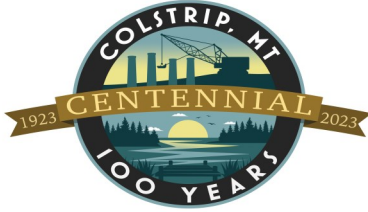


Thank you to the Colstrip Park & Recreation District After School Program kids for making Christmas tree decorations and decorating the tree at City Hall. We love your beautiful decorations and seeing your smiling faces!!

CITY OF COLSTRIP
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Colstrip, MT 59323

Phone: 406-748-2300

Website: cityofcolstrip.com



PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM Retail

ECRWSS EDDM
Postal Customer
Colstrip, MT 59323



*Happy
Holidays*

