

City of Colstrip Newsletter

Fall 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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I would like to begin this newsletter with a word of appreciation and thankfulness to everyone that worked so hard to make our 100-year Centennial Celebration so successful. You are all special and very representative of the quality of life we all enjoy in Colstrip. You are amazing and worked so hard to make this a memorable event.

A very important part of our celebration that was particularly rewarding to me was the dedication of the Veterans Memorial Park. It was an amazing day even though we did have a misty rain shower during the dedication ceremony. This is probably one of the high points of my service as your mayor. Everyone worked collectively together to make this so successful. A special thank you to our Colstrip students both in the middle school and high school for your essays/illustrations and poems. What began as an essay contest regarding the importance of veterans expanded into essay/illustrations and poems related to our service men and women. All of these students are declared winners and their works were all on display at City Hall. All of our veterans appreciate this and are very much appreciated.

Another high point this year was the transfer of the Colstrip Cemetery from county ownership to city ownership. This is still a work in progress but you can see the success so far in the appearance of the cemetery. A newly created board will now be involved with the future of its operation and appearance. Our first meeting to discuss the cemetery's future is scheduled for September 13th and the goal will be to make this a show-place that is respectful of all those interred there. Those individuals have made significant contributions to our city and it is our goal to give them and their final resting place the respect and consideration they deserve. They came, they stayed.

The City of Colstrip recently completed a successful audit and within the audit report is a Management's Discussion and Analysis section. This is a report that offers our residents the opportunity to read a narrative overview of the financial activities of the City of Colstrip in layman's terms making it easier to understand the city's financial position. A copy of this is available at City Hall and our residents are encouraged to review it. Several high points of this analysis is a look at your city's financial position as a whole. In our case, assets and deferred outflows of resources exceeded liabilities and deferred inflows of resources by \$31,196,222 as of June 30, 2022. The \$2,511,145 increase from the previous year was mostly due to an increase in our governmental funds. The short story is your city remains in a very healthy financial position. It is, of course, the intention for us to remain financially healthy and responsible. *(continued)*

Mayor's Message Continued

On the downside of our operations is the timing or delays of some of our projects and large purchases. But we are not unique in this situation; everyone is experiencing this.

As we go through the budgeting process this year we have noted the continuing decrease in our taxable valuation. This decrease in valuation does impact the number of mills that need to be assessed to fund the city's operation. We continue to have the flexibility of increasing the mills required with minimal impact on the residential taxpayer. An item within the upcoming budget is the Paser Study estimated at \$90,000. This study will produce information on the condition of our streets, allowing us to begin the prioritization of street repairs and maintenance throughout the city. Our priorities have been directed at water and sewer and now is the time and need to redirect our attention to streets and the appearance of our town.

We continue to have the ongoing threat against fossil fuels and plant closures. So it was very refreshing to have three congressmen in town recently that very vividly expressed their support and commitment toward fossil fuels and coal-fired electrical generation. This visit was led by Congressman Rosendale who was accompanied by Congressman Andy Biggs (Arizona) and Congressman Eli Crane (Arizona). I had the opportunity to express the city's appreciation for their support.

The Colstrip Mule Deer Management group had a public meeting in August to discuss the mule deer in and around Colstrip. To provide a little background, the community of Colstrip formed a working group in 1997 to help reduce deer/human conflict in and around Colstrip. After the city's incorporation in 1998 it continues this management plan. The stated goals continue to be to (1) eliminate individual deer that threaten human safety and (2) reduce property damage by lowering deer numbers in and adjacent to the City of Colstrip by allowing hunting in urban areas. This plan was developed in cooperation with the power plant and coal mine owners, the City of Colstrip and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). As a result of our August meeting, there will be 150 special antlerless mule deer licenses available on the FWP's website or any FWP license provider. A copy of the details of this hunt are available at City Hall.

We will be at the upcoming Montana Coal Board meeting on September 14th. We have requested funding consideration for two projects. One is to replace the audio and video equipment in the City Hall Council Chambers. The cost for this equipment is \$61,562 and our grant request to the Coal Board is for \$31,000. The other grant request is for an excavator, primarily to be used at the Colstrip Cemetery. The cost of the excavator is estimated at \$80,000 and our grant request is for half or \$40,000.

As I come to the end of my comments, I would like to give you a brief update on a major project we have been working on for several years, the Water and Wastewater Supervisory Controls and Data Acquisition System (SCADA). We are anticipating this system will be up and running by the end of November. I can't describe or emphasize enough how important this system is to the safety and continuing operations of our water and sewer systems. Thank you everyone that has been involved; it has been a challenging project.

I hope everyone has a great fall. It has been a great summer. Many thanks to our residents and employees for everyone's support in making Colstrip such a great place to live. Tomorrow's Town Today



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 appointments on the first Thursday of every month. Dr. Grove comes to us from the Billings Clinic Heights and is also the 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 two Full Time Physical Therapists on staff. Jonny Dilworth started December 1 and Ajkena Coate on June 7. They provide routine PT services, dry needling and Pelvic Floor training. We would also like to wish Kristy Logan a huge congratulations on her retirement!!!

The Mammo Bus is coming! We are so grateful that the St Vincent Healthcare provides this service to communities like ours. Getting a mammo-gram is more than just something you check off your list every year. It's a part of your overall wellness—and one of the very best ways to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages. To schedule your appointment or if you have any questions please contact them at 406-237-4373.



It is almost Flu Season....please don't forget to ask for you influenza vaccine!!! Cost is \$40 and \$85 for high dose. Talen Energy employees can receive theirs at work on September 18-19 from 6:00-9:00 am.

Employment Opportunities: Seeking Registered Nurse. Please contact CMC for more information and application. CMC offers competitive salary and benefits including a \$25K sign-on bonus, loan repayments, health, dental, vision and 401k.

The Health and Wellness Department makes custom fitted ear plugs. Call to schedule your appointment today at 406-748-3600 Ext. 134. We also have a Lumbar MEDX back machine. It is available to use for anyone. No appointment needed. If you have lower back pain or even a job where you are standing or sitting all day this is a great way to exercise your lower back and it's also good for strength and flexibility. Please give us a call for more information.



Thank you to the Colstrip Community Foundation Funds for granting CMC money to replace our 30-year-old windows. They look great and will be much more energy efficient!

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 po-licechief@cityofcolstrip.com. This position will be open until filled.

Schoolhouse History and Art Center

Kayla de la Ossa, Executive Director



As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas, and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see.- Vincent Van Gogh

Fall is a great time here in Colstrip and I think many folks share that same sentiment. As the kids go back to school and folks settle back into their regular routines, we do the same thing here at SHAC. In September, we begin our normally scheduled outreach programming. If you would like to be involved, we have monthly classes for senior citizens, home-schooled children, middle school-aged kids, young adults, and preschoolers. We have a few pop-up classes as well. Please visit us in person or on Facebook to find our schedule.

This fall we are excited to be hosting some great artwork as well. Now through October 15th, we are hosting an exhibition by Marc Steinberg. Steinberg was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and took to painting as a way to cope with his disease. SHAC will be hosting guest speaker, Melanie Thomas, on September 14th at Noon. Melanie is the program director of the Montana Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Join us for an educational lecture sharing insight on how to better communicate with our loved ones who share Steinberg's struggle and a light lunch. RSVP with SHAC at 406-748-4822.

From October 16-November 30 SHAC will be hosting ceramic works by Belgrade artist and combat veteran, Jesse Albrecht. Albrecht will have an artist's lecture at SHAC in mid-November. More details will be available later this fall.

Our Holiday Market is also on the horizon, scheduled for December 9th at FBMS. Vendor registration is \$30 and everyone is encouraged to grab a spot. Contact Leslie at shac.art400@gmail.com for more info on that. Registration will begin November 1st.

Public Works Department

Pat Zent, Public Works Director



The City hired COP Construction to replace a section of the sewer main on Olive Drive.

We were busy getting the city cleaned and looking good for Colstrip Days. We installed flagpoles and flags for the dedication of the new Veteran's Park by City Hall.

We are currently upgrading the SCADA system to our Water Treatment Plant and Waste/Water Plant. We are also working with KLJ Engineering Company for the North End Water Loop project. They will hopefully go out for bids the beginning of next year.

Bicentennial Library

Mary Kay Bullard, Director



Fall Programming is underway with Amy. Bicentennial Library will have two story times this year. Story Times will be Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

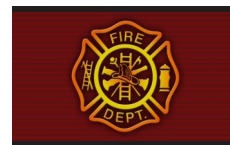
Bicentennial Library is pleased to announce we have added a new team member. Alicia Moreno has joined our team. Thank you, Alicia for joining us, and we hope we are a good fit for you.

Camille has rebooted "Lego Club". Lego club will be every Monday afternoon at 4:15pm. This club is open to all elementary age children that wish to play and build with Legos. Lego club has been a successful program for Bicentennial Library for years, and we are excited to bring it back again this fall.

A young adult to adult contest will be starting the beginning of September and run till September 30th. The contest is called "Dress the Library"; we are looking for library art work. This could be a painting, a drawing, or computer designs. Please use whatever medium works for you. The purpose of the contest is to design a bag and stickers for Bicentennial Library's Friends group to sell as a fundraiser from November 1st- December 23rd. This pop-up store will be limited to just these dates, with hope of doing it all over again the next year. New contest, new store. (continued on page 6)

Fire Department

Tony Reda, Fire Chief



Hello Colstrip! I hope everyone had a great summer! Luckily, it was a quiet few months for us with no major wildfires to report. As the hot weather dries things up, let's hope that continues! Colstrip Days was one for the books, wasn't it? Thank you to everyone who had a hand in planning the festivities. I love a good parade, even more so when I get to drive a fire truck in one. The highlight for the fire department was (and always is) setting off the fireworks. Many hours of planning and hard work go into the display, and we are rewarded with a front row seat. BOOM!

As we head into the fall season, a few important reminders come to mind. Fire Prevention Week begins October 8th. We are busy planning our annual presentations for the local schools and community. Fire prevention and safety knowledge is a valuable tool that helps keep our kids and neighbors safe.

It's also a good time to test your smoke detectors and change any batteries that need to be replaced. Functioning smoke detectors literally save lives! Keeping a stock of 9V batteries on hand for those middle of the night low battery warning beeps is always a good idea! Also, if you burn wood or use a coal stoker, sweep your chimney before starting the first fire of the season. You never know what you might find up there....

Lastly, I would like to mention that we are always looking for new firefighters. I know we all live very busy lives, and it seems like there isn't enough free time for one more activity, but it is a very worthwhile and rewarding adventure. The crew is outstanding, and the equipment and gear are top notch! The pay is lousy, but we make up for that with swag and Subway gift cards. All joking aside, there is a nice benefit package available to qualifying members and we are all treated very well. If you are interested, please get in touch with me or call the training center office at 406-748-3625. I would love to give you a tour of our facilities and invite you to one of our monthly training sessions so you can see firsthand what you are missing out on.

Thank you for the continued support and keep an ear out for us at the football games. We'll be celebrating those Colt TD's with boomers this year!

Bicentennial Library continued

As I said this is a contest, and a contest has a prize. The winner of the first “Dress the Library” contest will receive a \$50.00 gift card. Bicentennial Library staff will judge their favorite art work, and will choose the winner. If the contest becomes more popular and a bigger event, then we may adjust the rules for the next year. We are keeping the rules simple to begin with because we don’t know how successful this will be, and we have never done anything like this before. We hope you have fun with this contest and we can continue to do it in the future. Remember this contest is for young adults to adults only, not for elementary age children and younger.

Public Computer use has been on the rise. Bicentennial Library sometimes has people waiting to use a public computer. This has not happened in years, but it is a trend I have seen recently. Please be kind to one another, these are public computers, meaning everyone has a right to use them. For that reason Bicentennial Library will be strictly enforcing the one-hour time limit unless you have spoken to a librarian, and are using a public computer to do something like take a test.

Colstrip City Court

Penny McPherson, City Judge



I am completing my 4th full year of being the Colstrip City Judge. This is actually my 5th year as I completed Judge Gail Beckham’s last year when she retired in May of 2019. I thank the community of Colstrip as well as the City of Colstrip for giving me this opportunity to continue to serve you. A Judge cannot make everyone happy all the time; however my door is always open for anyone at any time. I made the statement when I accepted the position that I would like to continue, as long as I feel like I am making a difference to those that come before me and that when I don’t feel like I am, than it will be time for me to be done. At this time I still am wanting and trying to make that difference.

Over the last 4 ½ years the Court has been able to bring the bond money being held, from \$8,781.00 down to \$2,010.00 by either exonerating or forfeiting those funds therefore bringing money into the city. I also have sent out 30+ letters on old accounts with outstanding fines bringing in \$685.00 in unpaid fines and surcharges.

Colstrip City Court is a member of the Montana Magistrates Association. I was honored two years ago to be elected the Parliamentarian for the Association. We have our mandatory training in the Spring and in the Fall with testing done every four (4) years. I satisfactorily passed the Rules for Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Training and Certification of Judges at our Fall Conference.

I also am a member of the National Judge’s Association that is an association for non-attorney judge’s as the previous judge was as well. Last year I was chosen as the Montana Delegate. I was able to go to the National Convention in July and attended the National Judicial College. I was also asked to present and taught a course on Domestic Violence and the Court System.

At this time I am trying to close old files and result old hearings as we will be going from the Full Court computer program to Full Court Enterprise.

I am also working with the City and the Police Department to find a solution that would better accommodate the citizens for Colstrip in regard to our Dogs at Large, Nuisance Animal and our Vicious Dog complaints. Hopefully this can be done by possibly cleaning up the language in the City Code for those and/or possibly hiring an Animal Control Officer. Again, I stated earlier, I realize not everyone will always be happy with changes but we are hoping that the majority are, with the bottom line being to keep the City of Colstrip safe.

I hope that I am a part of keeping the citizens of Colstrip a little safer and more law abiding.

Beautification Committee

Becky Miller

It has been a busy time for the Colstrip Beautification Project. The town was spiffed up for the Centennial Celebration in June and looked fantastic. Northwestern Energy had a large group of employees come to town to help with our June clean-up day. Thanks to Molly Schwend for organizing that; the help was much appreciated!

The flower pots at the businesses have looked great all summer. Thank-you to everyone who participated and has kept up with the watering. Thanks to Trevin Bradley who helped with the flowers as well as part of his community service with Colstrip High School.

Knapweed continues to be a problem in Colstrip, but a joint effort between the major landowners in town and Rosebud County Weed District is beginning to make a big difference. Knapweed will be sprayed in certain areas each year for the next few years. This summer the first area sprayed was east of Highway 39 and north of Power Road. For any questions regarding knapweed in any part of town, you may call Amy Adler, Rosebud County Weed Coordinator at 406-351-1344.

Junk cars and abandoned trailers/properties are on beautification's radar. We are working with the City on how best to tackle these problem areas in town. There are complaint forms (you may be anonymous) available at City Hall to fill out if there are any junk cars or abandoned properties you would like to report. As a community, we need to clean up eyesores around town. Cleaning up these things makes our town more beautiful, which is where we as a group come in; but health and safety are priorities as well for us all.

Fall Clean-up Week:

Everyone is encouraged to come join in and help clean up various areas of town. Businesses and groups are welcome to come any or all of the days. Each day clean-up only takes an hour or two. Bring your own gloves and trash bags will be provided. Meet at 10:00 AM each day.

Monday, October 9: Meet at the parking lot near the car wash

Tuesday, October 10: Meet at Rock Park on Piedmont Drive

Wednesday, October 11: Meet at Castle Rock Lake

Thursday, October 12: Dump Day; if you have any large item you need to have hauled away, call Liz at 406-748-3326 to arrange pick up on this day. It is free to residents and one day only.



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.

And here's my three (3) reasons why:

A) Colstrip Economic Diversification Strategy: *"We have Planning"*

Since 2015, it became apparent that in order for Colstrip to survive as a long time Coal Community, we would need to diversify our economy urgently. SEMDC listened to the community, found the funding, and released the Strategy in 2017. This Strategy identified Six (6) major Goals and 17 Strategies that could diversify the Colstrip economy. It also collaborates with other local and regional planning documents to ensure a unified planning process. Four (4) major projects came out of this Strategy, which continues to be used to this day by the Public, Private and Non-Profit Sectors. They are:

- 1) Additional Broadband Capacity in the Community was the highest public priority.
Result – MT ARPA funds were awarded to Range Telephone Cooperative (with strong SEMDC Support) for an \$18 million Broadband Expansion Project in Colstrip and Forsyth. This expansion of Broadband Capacity will start in early 2024.
- 2) Market the Region and Colstrip as a safe and clean place to live and do business.
Result – SEMDC launched our regional Marketing and Rebranding Strategy Campaign with our www.MontanaMadePossible website for recruiting people and business into our region.
- 3) Build a Business Innovation Center (BIC) as a one-stop shop to assist with workforce retraining, entrepreneurial development including co-working offices and a maker's space,
Result – Miles Community College is discussing options with SEMDC for program expansion at the BIC. We are going out to Bid in September 2023 for construction on the \$3 million project.
- 4) Complete a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for an Industrial Site (Energy Park),
Result – The PER was completed in 2021 and is now with the site owners waiting for the right development opportunity.

B) Value-Added Energy Commercialization Opportunities: *"We have Purpose"*

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 also with our diversification efforts. Thus, SEMDC entered into four (4) contracts with private firms to conduct Feasibility and Technical Studies on:

- a) Hydrogen Research & Development,
- b) Rare Earth Element Processing,
- c) Flue-Gas Capture and Commercialization and
- d) Graphene Research – all at Colstrip and Rosebud County.

Add additional Energy Projects such as:

- 1) Construction of the state's largest Wind Farm in the region (NextEra's Clearwater Wind Farm) with transmission to the Colstrip Switch Yard,
- 2) Another Major Transmission Line (Grid United's North Plains Connector Project) starting at Colstrip and heading east into the next power grid in North Dakota,
- 3) A federal Technical Study on the possible construction of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMR's) at Colstrip and
- 4) A significant Geothermal possibility.

Southeastern Montana Development Corporation..... Continued

Thus, one can start to see the tremendous opportunities to supplement our outstanding coal reserves, mining / power generation workforce and infrastructure capacity, already in-place. Thus, Value-Added Energy Commercialization Opportunities are possible as Colstrip diversifies itself into an Energy Hub.

C) Community Infrastructure is In-Place and Continues to be Updated: *"We have Place"*

With an outstanding tax base paid by the Energy Industry, the City of Colstrip and Rosebud County have faithfully re-invested back into the basic public infrastructure over the years. This includes the Colstrip School District, SHAC, Park and Recreation District and the Colstrip Medical District. The Quality of Life for the Colstrip community is outstanding due to these infrastructure investments and benefits, such as:

- 1) Quality and Affordable Public Water and Sewer,
- 2) Additional Broadband Capacity,
- 3) Skilled and Educated Workforce with an excellent Work Ethic,
- 4) Good Housing Values,
- 5) First Class School Facilities,
- 6) Parks and Recreational Opportunities / Programs,
- 7) State-of-the-Art Health Care Clinic,
- 8) Access to Affordable and Reliable Electricity from both Renewable and Traditional Sources and
- 9) Supportive Entities such as the City and County Government, Economic Development (SEMDC), Elected Officials and Major Industry, all working together as a Team.

Thus, the pieces are in-place for significant "Value-Added Energy Projects to be successful at the Colstrip "Energy Hub."

On behalf of Team Colstrip, I can assure you that **Colstrip is Changing - - - - Not Closing!**

Zoning/Building/Code Enforcement

Kami Egan

With the beginning of the new school year starting, foot traffic along city sidewalks increases. Please be aware of the increased use and make sure that the sidewalks in front of our homes are clear. Make sure garbage containers are placed off the sidewalks and into the streets for pickup. Check the area behind any vehicles parked in driveways to make sure the sidewalk is not blocked or impeded by hitches sticking out into the foot traffic area. Cleared sidewalks make our community safe for all walkers, especially our children.

According to local noxious weed experts, September and October are the most effective months to spray those infestations of Spotted Knapweed, Canada Thistle and Field Bindweed. Remember it is against the law to allow noxious weeds to propagate and it is the property owner's responsibility to get rid of the weeds. The county has provided the City of Colstrip with weed information booklets that help identify problem weeds. Just stop by Colstrip City Hall and pick one up. Or call the Rosebud County Weed Control Official Amy Adler for help identifying noxious weeds on your property and the most effective sprays to use in your area. Amy has been in Colstrip over the last few weeks writing compliance notices for weeds.

If you have a junk vehicle and want it gone, I have a contact name and phone number for someone that will come pick up your vehicle free of charge. His name is John King (406) 351-3081. Please give him a call.

If I can be of further help, please call 406-748-2300 ext. 2305. Please leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Again, thanks for taking prompt attention helping to control our noxious weeds and sidewalk safety.

CITY OF COLSTRIP
12 Cherry Street
PO Box 1902
Colstrip, MT 59323

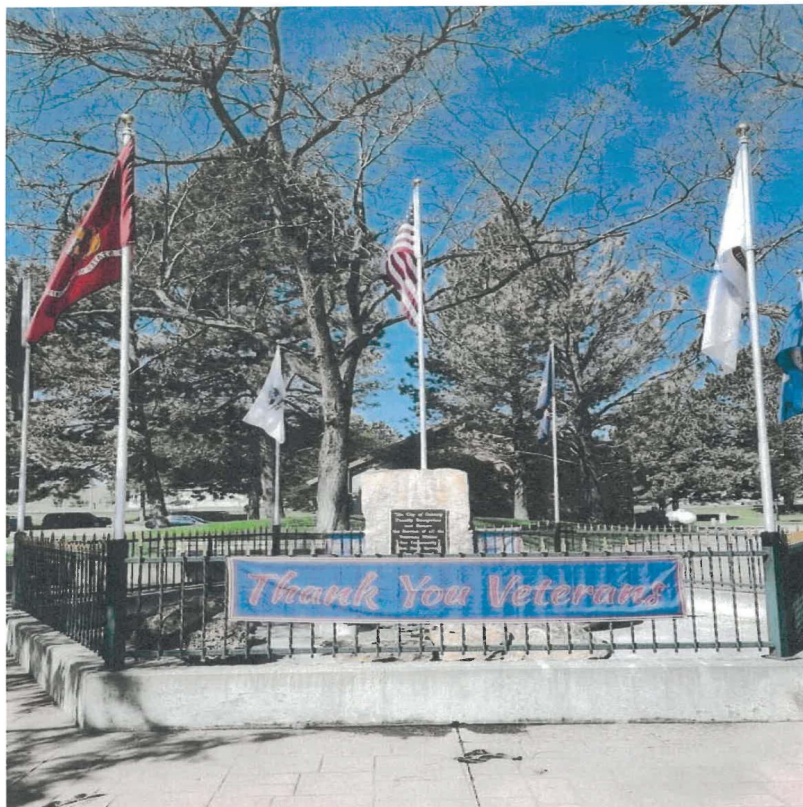
Phone: 406-748-2300

Website: cityofcolstrip.com



PRSR STD
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Veteran's Park Ceremony
Colstrip Days Centennial Celebration
June 24, 2023