

City of Colstrip Newsletter

Winter 2024

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.

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



Inside this issue:

Mayor's Message	1-2
Schoolhouse History and Art Center & Beautification Committee	3
Public Works & Police Departments	4
Fire Department & Planning/Zoning/Code Enforcement	5
Bicentennial Library	6
Southeastern Montana Development Corporation	7

Mayor's Message

Mayor John Williams

Greetings!

The success of any composition is very dependent upon the quality of its employees. The City of Colstrip has been blessed over these twenty-five years of existence with quality, knowledgeable employees. In this newsletter I have the good fortune to acknowledge employees that made significant contributions to the success of our city.

This year is the 20th year of having a Police Department. The department was formed 20 years after we made the transition from an interlocal agreement with Rosebud County for law enforcement within our city boundaries. Police Officers and Dispatchers I would like to recognize for twenty years of service include Dispatcher Noreen Landwehr, Dispatcher Lisa Demaniow, Officer Don Purdon, Assistant Police Chief Kris Egan and Police Chief Cory Hert. Thank you dispatchers and police officers for keeping our city safe and for the quality of law enforcement you provide to our city's residents.

Shortly after Colstrip incorporated we began the search for a Clerk/Treasurer. In the words of Dr. Ken Weaver "The success of any city is very largely dependent upon locating an experienced Clerk/Treasurer." As most are aware, the funding mechanisms that need to be put into place are very necessary for our success as a city. When we put out the call for an experienced Clerk/Treasurer we were very excited to be contacted by Michelle Richards, who was serving as the Clerk/Treasurer in Broadus. Michelle came to work for the city twenty-five years ago bringing with her a wealth of information on city financing and operations. Michelle is currently our longest serving employee and we are very fortunate to still have her in our employ. Thank you to these employees for your continuing service to our city.

This past election has been very interesting and exciting for our city and its future. I would like to express appreciation to the three successful study commissioners that have been elected to review our current form of government and make recommendations back to our voters for approval or rejection. They are Todd Olmstead, Joe Novasio and Dan Batie, Sr. These commissioners will start the review process with training that will occur in the month of December facilitated by the Local Government Center at MSU Bozeman. City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards has been appointed as the ex-officio non-voting member of the commission. With her knowledge and experience of city operations she will be a valuable resource for the commission. All of the commission meetings will be posted and made public. The commission will hold meetings for the next year and a half and prepare a recommendation to the voters. This recommendation will be presented to the voters in November of 2026.

(continued on page 2)

Mayor's Message Continued

These continue to be exciting times for our city and the men, women and families that live and work here. We look forward to the upcoming legislative session with the exciting news that Colstrip Legislator Gary Parry won his seat as a member of the House of Representatives and was recently assigned as the Chair of the Energy, Technology and Federal Relations Committee. The City of Colstrip has entered into an agreement with Former Senator Duane Ankney to work with the city as our lobbyist. Colstrip will continue to play an important role into the future of energy development for our state and nation.

Our newly re-elected Governor Gianforte was recently in Colstrip with the Department of Commerce Director with the announcement that the US Department of Energy had awarded the State of Montana up to 700 million dollars to enhance the power grid reliability in Montana and North Dakota. This electric transmission line begins in Colstrip and will strengthen the opportunities of a steady supply of affordable and reliable energy that is critical for all communities across Montana and the United States. We very much appreciate Governor Gianforte's continued service as our governor and a strong supporter of Colstrip.

With this being the Thanksgiving season and approaching Christmas I would like to share with you the importance of working together with our entities and the value that is to our residents. We recently completed the North End Water Loop project. This connection on the northern portion of our water system improves the integrity and safety of our water transmission line. The cost of this project was \$845,910, a major cost impact to our water fund. To fund this project we utilized a number of resources that include our ARPA Minimum Allocation Fund and a Coal Board Grant of \$224,484. This project also required a lot of folks working together, including our staff, SEMDC, KLJ Engineering and the contractor COP Construction. The line went across several properties requiring CPRD, Burlington Northern Railroad, Colstrip School District, Montana Highway Department, Talen Energy and the city all working together. A great example of everyone working together for the benefit of our city and its residents. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone on this great cooperative example of people working together for the benefit of all. That is one of many examples that are very rewarding as I continue to serve you as your mayor and look forward to the new and exciting challenges in the New Year. On behalf of myself and the City Council, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and God's blessing to everyone in the New Year!

REMINDER!!!

1 Year Cat & Dog Licenses issued in 2024 expire January 31, 2025

& 2 Year Licenses issued in 2023 expire January 31, 2025

Chicken Permits must be renewed annually by February 1, 2025



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.

Schoolhouse History and Art Center

Kayla de la Ossa, Executive Director



Albert Camus wrote “Autumn is a second Spring when every leaf is a flower” and we could not agree more. During this festive time of year, there is nothing better than visiting a museum or library.

At SHAC there are many opportunities in the Fall, including classes for homeschooled children, preschoolers, senior citizens, and people of almost any other age. Open Mic is on the 3rd Tuesday of each month and has grown into a great event.

In September, we were awarded a generous grant from the Dennis and Phylis Washington Foundation. This funding will be used for SHAC’s youth programming through September 2025 and we could not be happier. Creating robust programs and outreach services to enrich the lives of everyone through the power of arts education has always been part of SHAC’s mission and the organization is proud of what we have accomplished.

On December 7th, SHAC will host the Annual Christmas Market at Frank Brattin Middle School from 9 am to 4 pm. There will be many vendors and food offerings. We invite you to stop by and see what the creative community has been up to.

It is almost time to renew your SHAC Membership. Membership forms will be mailed out in January, however, you are welcome to renew ahead of time. SHAC memberships are an important part of what keeps the organization going. Members enjoy free and reduced-cost classes, they receive email updates, and most importantly, memberships help keep SHAC admission free!

SHAC is open Monday through Friday; 11 am to 5 pm.

Colstrip Beautification Project



The flower pots at participating businesses were a hit again this year. With the beautiful fall weather we had, the flowers kept blooming much longer than usual.

Fall clean-up week was very successful. We had great volunteers each day to help out. A special shout out to the CHS student body who did trash pick up around the school neighborhood. Many thanks to CPRD and the City for the junk pick up day in October. That is a great help to residents who aren’t able to haul large items to the dump on their own. The free dump day was also utilized by residents in October and much appreciated.

Knapweed was sprayed this summer and fall in many areas of town. In 2025 the sprayers will target the Castle Rock Lake area as well as property west of Highway 39. 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. Knapweed is difficult to eradicate but there have been big strides made the past couple of years toward that goal.

Thank-you to everyone who takes good care of their property and neighborhoods. You help to make our town a great place to live.

Public Works Department

Pat Zent, Public Works Director



The City of Colstrip has started to implement the Paser Study we did for street repairs. We went out for bids to get some crack sealing done before the weather turned too cold. Hardrive Asphalt from Billings won the bid and were able to do 80,000 LF of repairs this fall.

We finished our SCADA upgrade and Clarifier building improvement projects this summer. CEI was selected to do these two projects.

The City of Colstrip went out for bid to install the North End Water Loop water main. Cop Construction was awarded the job. This project will tie in the water main from Highway 39 to Pinebutte Drive by the High School. This will prevent the north end of town from being without water like what happened about 4 years ago. Cop Construction is about 2/3 done with the project.

The city is also going out for bids to replace the water main that runs by the lagoons. This main has broke numerous times over the years.

The Public Works Crew has been busy dealing with water breaks every month this past summer. We were very busy doing locates for the boring crews here in town, doing the fiber optic line installations for Range Telephone.

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.

Police Department

Cory Hert, Police Chief



We recently filled our two open officer positions; we welcome Kallie Scott and Jeremy Tod. Kallie was already a city employee, serving as a 911 Dispatcher and Jeremy is coming to us from Arizona. They will both begin their field training in December and we look forward to being fully staffed again.

With losing our part-time 911 Dispatcher after being hired for an officer position, we will be seeking applications for her replacement. Interested individuals can pick up an application at the PD, City Hall or request one by emailing policechief@cityofcolstrip.com. This position will be open until filled.

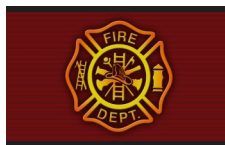
With the winter months approaching, our employees will be conducting annual trainings on firearms, taser and other necessary re-certifications that are required to maintain state and local mandates for their respective positions.

As a reminder, the city would appreciate everyone's cooperation with our parking ordinances over the winter months. This greatly improves snow removal efforts and also reduces traffic accidents on the slick streets, thank you in advance for your continued cooperation with this!

We hope you all have a safe enjoyable winter and holiday season with family and friends in whatever activities you partake in and we look forward to another great year in 2025!

Fire Department

Tony Reda, Fire Chief



Its fall y'all! Time to toss out your pumpkins and get those Christmas trees and lights out! Too soon you say? Maybe. For those of you who look forward to your pumpkin spice, hoodies and Uggs the time is now! Enjoy those fall colors and frosty mornings before winter sets in. Fall also means fire prevention and this year's theme is "Smoke Alarms: Make them work for you." There are a few simple tips to keep them working in top shape, keeping you and your family safe. The first is to test them once a month. This can easily be done by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds. The second maintenance item is to change your batteries every six months. Please resist the urge to have your kids test those batteries to see if they are still good. While entertaining, they will not appreciate your laughter at their expense. Lastly, smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years. There are a wide variety of detectors on the market now, many offer "smart" features that enable you to monitor your home when you're not present.

Another item on the fall to-do list is to provide your home's heat source(s) with all necessary annual maintenance before we head into winter. Of special note are woodstoves. If you heat your home with a wood stove, take the time to inspect and clean your chimney before lighting the first fire of the season. A physical sweep with a brush ensures the pipe is clean and free from creosote and any other obstructions you may have incurred in the off season. A product that can keep your stove burning and drafting properly are creosote reducing products like CSL Logs. They release minerals that dry out the creosote making it less likely to burn. These products are available at any hardware or home improvement store.

Finally, as the winter months arrive, be prepared for the sketchy driving conditions we experience in our area. Although our department is trained to respond to motor vehicle accidents, we would rather not! Make sure your vehicle's routine maintenance is up to date, replenish your winter emergency kits, always give snowplows the space they need, and most of all, slow down when road conditions are poor!

We wish you and your loved ones a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

Planning, Building, Zoning & Code Enforcement

Kami Egan

With this time of year comes snow. We need to be aware, stay concerned, and help out by shoveling the sidewalk in front of our homes. Not only is it the neighborly thing to do, it is the property owner's responsibility. Clear sidewalks make it easier and safer to get around. Snow or ice-covered sidewalks force people to walk in the street and that is unsafe.

Also, a friendly reminder; it is unlawful for the property owner, operator, tenant, or other person in charge or control of any private property to blade, dump, or shovel, or to allow the blading, dumping, or shoveling of snow from the property into any public street, alley, or right-of-way.

When snow storms are in the 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.

I want to extend our appreciation for your cooperation regarding these matters.

Thank you and be considerate!



Bicentennial Library

Mary Kay Bullard, Director



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

The Bicentennial Library lounge boasts a very nice selection of magazines including Better Homes and Gardens, Consumer Reporters, National Geographic, and People. These magazines are available for checkout once they are a month old.

Please remember we have a couple of nice study places in the library, including a tutor's desk, a meeting area, and a small office space. Bicentennial Library is open concept, so even though we have these open spaces, the library may or may not be quiet.

There are activities in the children's area that are considered at will. Everyone is welcome to coloring pages, craft supplies, and toys. Amy does request that if a drawer is locked, or has the sign that says staff only, the public please stay out of those drawers and cupboards. Other than that, please have fun, and remember to pick up after yourself.

Hot Spot holds went down for a couple months but they are on the rise again. Please follow the hotspot policy and procedures that you agreed to when you checked out a hotspot. As a hotspot user, you are responsible for following the usage policy and procedure. The library staff is responsible for enforcing the policy. We help many people with these hotspots, and we want to continue to be able to do that.

Some possible programs that are in the planning stages: Jill is thinking about doing a program called Duck-cember. This would be a completely new program for Bicentennial Library. Amy may possibly do a sticker-palooza that is geared towards all ages, not just children.

Bicentennial Library had a really good year. Our patrons play a really key role in that and we are lucky to have some of the best patrons out there. It sure seems like 2024 went by quickly, in my mind it should be the end of summer not the beginning of winter. If you are not a library user, and are interested in our services, please make it a point to come check out the library. Along with books and DVDs, Bicentennial Library checks out magazines, hotspots, audiobooks, and we have a patron laptop you are welcome to checkout and take home with you.

The librarians help with a multitude of issues, including technology concerns, faxing, and some research. Most of the library staff hosts programming either occasionally or regularly. Regular programs are "Story Time" hosted by Amy Egge, and "Lego Club" hosted by Camille Robinson. "Lego Club" is Monday afternoons at 4:15pm, and is geared towards elementary age children. Amy hosts two "Story Times", the first one is Tuesday afternoon at 4:15pm. This "Story Time" is for elementary age children, the second is at 11:15 am, and is geared towards pre-school age children.



Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC)

Jim Atchison, Executive Director

For the past 23 + 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 about the future of Colstrip and Rosebud County than I am today. Here's a few brief Updates:

A) Grant Awards & Financing Continue to be Invested:

- Fiber Optics Installation continues with Range \$10 million investment. Will be operational spring 2025. Added broadband capacity was the #1 Need identified in the SEMDC Colstrip Diversification Strategy.
- Awarded another federal grant of \$1.3 million for Business Innovation Center. Total at \$4.3 million.
- SEMDC received a \$500,000 grant for Low-Interest Loans to qualified Small Businesses in the area.
- MT Coal Board awarded 7 grants to countywide projects this year, valued at nearly \$1.3 million.
- SEMDC worked with the State and Rosebud County on a multi-million federal TSED Grant Award for Transmission Line Impacts in Rosebud, Custer & Fallon Counties. More details coming in 2025.
- SEMDC also received a \$50,000 US DOE grant for Energy Outreach activities in Rosebud County.

B) 21st Annual Energy Open Conference & Golf Tournament held in August:

- "Showcasing the Economic Benefits of Responsible Energy Development."
- Record Number of Attendees and Golfers. Maxed out golf course and brought in additional golf carts.
- "Voices of MT" live statewide radio interview with four of the Main Speakers
- Speakers included **1) Brian Bird** – CEO, NorthWestern Energy; **2) Brant Johnson** – Grid United; **3) Dr. Rita Baranwal** – Westinghouse; **4) Emily Nichols & Levi Larsen** – Idaho National Labs (nuclear)
- Banquet Keynote Speaker: Paul Green - Director Montana Department of Commerce

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

- Invited to speak on a Coal Community Impact Panel at the recent Pacific Basin Nuclear Conference.
- SEMDC visited West Virginia on their Coal Downsizing Impacts and how Colstrip could benefit / share assistance. Part of the national BRECC Leadership Peer Exchange with other coal communities.

D) Value-Added Energy Studies:

- All four (4) 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 late 2024.
- Grid United continues to move forward with their 400-mile Transmission Project from Colstrip into ND. This "North Plains Connector Transmission Line" has recently started the permitting process in MT.
- SEMDC continues to evaluate and promote other Value-Added Energy opportunities & projects (6-8)

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!**

CITY OF COLSTRIP
12 Cherry Street
PO Box 1902
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

Upcoming Events/Reminders

<i>December 10 & 23, 2024</i>	<i>City Council Meeting</i>
<i>December 24 & 25, 2024</i>	<i>City Hall Closed</i>
<i>January 1, 2025</i>	<i>City Hall Closed</i>
<i>January 6, 2025</i>	<i>Montana Legislative Session Begins</i>
<i>January 14 & 28, 2025</i>	<i>City Council Meeting</i>
<i>January 20, 2025</i>	<i>City Hall Closed</i>
<i>January 31, 2025</i>	<i>Dog & Cat Licenses Expire Chicken Permits Expire</i>
<i>February 11 & 25, 2025</i>	<i>City Council Meeting</i>
<i>February 17, 2025</i>	<i>City Hall Closed</i>
<i>March 11 & 25, 2025</i>	<i>City Council Meeting</i>