

EAST HELENA'S CHRISTMAS STROLL SCHEDULE INSIDE!

Group Sues the State Over Law Used to Bring Water to Rural Subdivisions

Amanda Eggert

Montana Free Press

The plaintiffs argue that the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has favored developers over senior water-right holders and aquatic ecosystems.

This article was originally published by the Montana Free Press and is published here courtesy of the Montana Free Press. https://montanafreepress.org/2025/11/12/coalition-sues-montana-over-exempt-well-egulations/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newspack%20Newsletter%20%28256712%29&utm_source=2

A broad coalition is suing the state over its interpretation of a decades-old law that housing developers have long relied on to supply water to low-density residential subdivisions outside public water supplies.

At the center of the conflict are “exempt wells,” which earned that moniker shortly after Montana legislators passed a law in 1973 allowing just about anyone to drill a well and pump up to 10 acre-feet of groundwater from it without first demonstrating that nearby water users won’t see a decrease in their water supplies.

According to a lawsuit filed Wednesday, approximately 141,000 wells have been drilled using the exempt well law since 1973. More than two-thirds of those wells were drilled to supply homes with drinking water or to water lawns or gardens.

The six nonprofit groups and three individual water users argue that the Montana Department of Natural Resources

and Conservation, which administers water rights, has authorized “unregulated groundwater development.” Reliable water supplies for those with the oldest water rights and “the integrity of Montana’s water resources” are at stake, the plaintiffs contend.

The plaintiffs are asking the Lewis and Clark County District Court to block the state from continuing its “unabated” authorization of exempt wells, which have become developers’ preferred tool to facilitate development on large, rural lots. According to the lawsuit’s analysis of data compiled by Headwaters Economics, more than half of the residential development that happened in Montana between 2000 and 2021 occurred outside of incorporated municipalities.

Efforts to revise the exempt well statute have fueled a series of “knock-down, drag-out” fights at the Montana Capitol, including a heated debate earlier this year on a proposal developed by a working group convened by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation that hit an insurmountable groundswell of opposition before it could clear its first chamber.

Housing developers argue the existing loophole offers builders a faster alternative to the state’s lengthy and uncertain permitting process. Developers and other permitting reform advocates say a smoother regulatory process to access what they deem is a small amount of water increases the pace and scale of construction, thereby easing Montana’s housing supply and affordability strains in a state where housing costs have skyrocketed.

Opponents counter that hundreds of billions of gallons of water have been unconstitutionally appropriated using exempt wells, and the proliferation of new straws into

Montana’s aquifers, paired with the septic systems that frequently accompany them, are drawing down critical water supplies and overloading them with nutrient pollution.

The Montana League of Cities and Towns, which represents municipalities that rely on surface water or underground aquifers to meet the needs of homes and businesses served by public water supplies, is the lead plaintiff in the litigation. Other parties to the lawsuit include the Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, Clark Fork Coalition, Montana Environmental Information Center and Trout Unlimited.

In an emailed statement about the lawsuit, Clark Fork Coalition legal director Andrew Gorder argued that the state needs to change its permitting practices to uphold the 1972 Montana Constitution, which “recognized and confirmed” all of the “existing rights to the use of any waters.”

“From rapid growth to ongoing drought, Montana’s water resources and water users are facing unprecedented challenges,” Gorder wrote. “The cumulative impact of over one hundred thousand exempt groundwater wells can no longer be ignored. We’re asking the court to conserve our limited water resources and ensure that the constitutional protections afforded to senior water rights, including instream flow rights, are preserved.”

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, along with groups like Clark Fork Coalition and Trout Unlimited, hold or lease instream flow rights to sustain sensitive fisheries during periods of drought like the ongoing one dropping many western Montana rivers to record-low levels.

Group **Sues, 7**

~*~ EARLY HOLIDAY EDITION DEADLINE NOTICE FOR MT43 NEWS CONTRIBUTORS ~*~

REMINDER

REMINDER

REMINDER

Ad Date & Time

Article Date & Time

Print Date

• Mon. 11.17.25@ 2PM | Mon. 12.1.25 @ 12PM | Fri. 12.05.25 | Townsend Christmas Stroll Edition

• Fri. 12.12.25 @ 2PM | Tue. 12.16.25 @ 12PM | Fri. 12/19/25 | Christmas Edition

• Fri. 12.19.25 @ 2PM | Mon. 12.22.25 @ 12PM | Fri. 1.2.26 | New Year Edition

MT43 News Wishes Everyone a Wonderful Thanksgiving Weekend!



This Image was inspired by the Norman Rockwell Painting published in the Saturday Evening Post on March 6, 1943
Image Generated by Microsoft CoPilot AI

Exempt Water Well Rights in Question

Nancy Marks

MT43 News Reporter



Lake Vista Subdivision Landowners Meet with Montana Dept. of Natural Resources - Exempt Water Well Rights In Question.

Broadwater County is again the hotspot for the question of exempt water well rights. As the legislature and lawsuits grind on, homeowners don’t know if they’ll have legal water for their homes and yards or not.

On November 6, several Lake Vista lot owners, public officials and interested parties met with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at the Community Room in Townsend to discuss the ongoing problem of whether the landowners had legal water rights for their water wells.

In a November 13 Montana Free Press article by Amanda Eggert, she wrote,” At the center of the exempt water well issue is a 1973 law passed by the Montana legislature which allowed anyone to get a permit to pump 10-acre feet of groundwater without demonstrating that nearby water users would not lose some of their water.” The article continued, 141,000 wells have been drilled using the exempt well law since 1973.

Although the November 6 meeting was not publicized, each landowner received a letter from DNRC noting “a recent court decision may affect your water use...” A copy of the letter was passed to Broadwater County Commissioner Debi Randolph. Randolph and Commissioners Jesse Swenson and Lyndsey Richtmyer attended the meeting, as did County Planner Nichole Brown. No Lake Vista Subdivision landowners agreed to speak about the meeting.

According to Planning Director Nichole Brown, the temperature of the meeting was high. landowners were initially “a little prickly” at the meeting, but meeting leader Anna Pakenham Stewart was gracious in explaining the situation. “Landowners left the meeting with a better understanding of the situation and what their options

would be in obtaining water for their property,” Brown explained.

Briefly, the backstory in the county is that the Bozeman nonprofit Upper Missouri Water Users and Broadwater County landowners who hold senior water rights sued Broadwater County Commissioners and the DNRC in 2022 for allowing exempt water wells to appropriate water belonging to the senior water rights holders.

Horse Creek Hills, a proposed subdivision located on the east side of Canyon Ferry Lake, was the center of the lawsuit. In February 2024, District Judge Mike McMahon sided with the nonprofit and Broadwater County senior water rights landowners. In a November 17 Montana Free Press article, McMahon’s ruling words to DNRC were "tortuously misreading its own rules and ignoring Supreme Court precedent on the cumulative impacts of exempt wells, especially near Canyon Ferry, a trout-laden reservoir already grappling with the kind of water supply and water issues that are exacerbated by wells and septic systems that often accompany them.”

County Planner Brown explained further that when developers apply for preliminary approval for subdivisions, they must follow two parallel processes. "One for local review from the County Planning Board and subsequently the Commissioners; the other is a state review for water from the Department of Environmental Quality and then the DNRC. The county has nothing to do with regulating or approving permits for water rights. We stay in our own lane,” she said.

Jeannie Steele, who admitted she was involved in sales of lots in Lake Vista subdivision, which has water rights for 10-acre feet of water, pointed out landowners were under the impression they would be permitted water rights under the exempt well provision. After they waded their way through the subdivision permitting process, they looked to DNRC for water right approval. She pointed out many of the approved subdivided lots already have houses on them before the landowners are even able to

Exempt **Water Well Rights, 7**



WELCOME TO EAST HELENA'S CHRISTMAS STROLL!

Celebrate this Holiday Season while Supporting Local Businesses!





2025 East Helena Christmas Stroll & Arts & Crafts Show

Thursday, December 4th, 2025 | 5:30 – 8:30 PM

Vendor Locations:
VFW • Boilermakers Union Hall • The Eagles
4040 • Fireman's Hall • East Helena Library
City Hall • Stacks • Galaxy Roasting
Missouri River Brewing Co.

Getting Around:
Free bus transportation between vendor locations

Festivities:
* Kids' Activities Tent on Main Street (Sponsored by J4 Automotive)
* Live performances at Radley Elementary
* Basket & Christmas Tree Raffle
* Santa Claus Visit Main Street businesses (next to High Plains Sheep Skin)

For More Information:
Stephanie – (406) 459-7544
Jolene – (406) 461-6867



Enjoy the Stroll!

CALAMITY ANN'S HAIR DEN

119 East Main St
406-227-5355

Have a great time at the Christmas Stroll!



HIGH PLAINS SHEEPSKIN
5 West Main St, E Helena | 406-227-8965
hpsheepskin.com

Enjoy the Christmas Stroll!



PEAK
PHYSICAL THERAPY & Sports Rehab

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6 W Main St, East Helena

Come visit our booth at the Stroll! See you there!



Get your Ham, Turkey and Prime Rib!







ENJOY THE STROLL!

109 S Lane Ave, East Helena | (406) 227-5304

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3 E MAIN ST, EAST HELENA | 406-227-6060

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Sat & Sun, 7am-1pm

Lunch Served: 11am - Close, all week

Dinner Served: 5pm - close

Plaid Friday: The Colorful Counterpoint to Black Friday

Rachael Elliott-Brug



In recent years, you may have noticed a quieter, cozier movement weaving its way into the holiday shopping season: Plaid Friday. While big-box retailers gear up for doorbuster deals and pre-dawn lines on Black Friday, Plaid Friday offers a different story—one stitched together by local shopkeepers, neighbors, and the unique character of small towns like ours.

Plaid Friday began in Oakland, California, around 2010 as an alternative to the frenzy of Black Friday. The idea was simple but powerful: instead of stampedes and stress, celebrate the “plaid” of your community—the many colors, textures, and patterns that independent businesses bring to a local economy. Plaid itself became the symbol: layered, varied, and stronger together than any single stripe on its own.

On Plaid Friday, shoppers are encouraged to wear plaid and head downtown, not to the nearest megastore. The goal isn’t just to buy something; it’s

to reconnect with the people behind the counters, the owners who remember your kids’ names, the barista who knows your order, the bookseller who sets aside the perfect novel for you.

The economic impact is more than feel-good rhetoric. Studies consistently show that a higher percentage of every dollar spent at a locally owned business stays in the community—supporting local jobs, sponsoring youth sports teams, funding library programs, and helping keep main streets vibrant and safe. When we choose local, we’re not only buying a product; we’re investing in our town’s future.

Plaid Friday also offers something Black Friday rarely does: sanity. Instead of battling traffic and crowds, you can stroll, linger, chat, and discover. You might find a handmade gift, a new favorite author, or simply a warm conversation over coffee.

This year, consider trading the chaos of big-box bargains for the comfort of plaid. Pull on your favorite flannel, wander into the shops that give our town its character, and let your holiday spending reflect the place you call home.



Did you know that shopping local supports more than the business owner?

When you shop local, you are putting funds directly back into your local community! Check off the gift list; support your local community. Everyone wins!

Where do you shop?





Where Good Enough Just Isn't Good Enough!

406-266-3110

7685 US Hwy 287, Townsend MT

topgun3110@gmail.com

topgunautobodytownsend.com



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Full barber with hot shaves and hairstylist available.

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Connecting Local People to Locally Sourced Goods!

125 S Pine St, Townsend MT

Townsend Weighs Future of Fire Protection, Sends Events Ordinance Back for Rewrite

Rachael Brug

Staff Reporter



Townsend residents may soon be asked to decide the future of their fire protection.

At its November meeting, the Townsend City Council reviewed a proposed Townsend City Fire Department Growth Plan that could lead to a May 2026 referendum on whether to keep, dissolve, or significantly expand the city’s fire department.

Council Member JB Howick, speaking for the fire committee, outlined three long-term concerns: a proposed Broadwater Rural Fire District (BRFD) agreement that would give the district more space at the city fire complex in exchange for limited guaranteed support; a statewide decline in volunteer firefighters; and the likelihood that Townsend’s population growth will eventually push it into “second-class city” status, where state law requires firefighters to be paid at least minimum wage.

The draft referendum would offer voters three broad options:

- Keep the current volunteer city department and negotiate an agreement with BRFD.
- Dissolve the city department and join BRFD, with residents paying the district’s fire levy.
- Retain the city department and levy a new tax to build a paid, fully equipped city force over 20 years.

Howick stressed that the choice is too big and too expensive for the council alone. “This has too much money involved with it over a 20-year period,” he said, arguing that the decision belongs with the electorate.

Fire department representative Sean Simon told the council that talk of dissolving the city department “made the room erupt” among volunteers and confirmed that county and ambulance calls are already straining resources.

Earlier in the evening, the council held a public hearing on a new events ordinance, with Jeff Langlinais of the Townsend Rotary Club raising questions about vendor access, neighbor notification, alcohol-related behavior, and pet policies at events like Fall Fest. After a detailed discussion, Mayor Vickie Rauser and the council agreed to send the ordinance back to the events committee for revisions before any vote.

Proposed State Hwy 284 Resurfacing Near Townsend

Natalee Stout

Public Involvement Specialist



Image Provided by Montana DOT

TOWNSEND, Mont. — The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is announcing and inviting the public to comment on a proposal that will resurface about 26.5 miles of Secondary Highway 284 (S 284), east of Canyon Ferry Dam. The project begins at mile marker 16.0 east of Canyon Ferry Dam, and extends south, ending at the intersection with US Highway 12 (US 12), approximately 1.5 miles east of Townsend.

Proposed work includes a scrub seal, crack seal, seal and cover (chip seal), and upgraded pavement markings. The purpose of the project is to resurface the roadway and extend the service life of the roadway.

Construction is tentatively planned for 2027, depending on completion of design and availability of funds. No new right-of-way or utility relocations will be needed.

The public is encouraged to contact Butte District Project Development Engineer Brandon Jones at 406-494-9622 or Project Design Engineer Anita Matthews at 406-494-9636 with questions or comments about the project.

For more information about active MDT projects around the state, please visit our website and MDT’s five-year Tentative Construction Plan.

MDT is a workforce of over 2,000 people across Montana, determined to do all we can so that you arrive at your destination safely. Our mission is to build, operate, and maintain a safe and resilient transportation system. For more information, visit <https://mdt.mt.gov>.

Old Town Road Bridge Replacement Project



BROADWATER
COUNTY

GALLATIN
COUNTY

PROJECT COMPONENTS

1

Old Town West Bridge

New two-span concrete bridge

2

Old Town Overflow Bridge

New single-span concrete bridge

3

Old Town East Bridge

New two-span concrete bridge

4

Road Reconstruction

Reconstructing road with new asphalt pavement

5

Bank Restoration

Reconstructing bank, placing riprap

Construction is scheduled to be complete in June, 2026



AN ENGINEER-DRIVEN COMPANY



Old Town Map

Provided by Broadwater County

Broadwater County Commissioners

The Old Town Road Bridge Replacement Project, located at the southern end of Broadwater County along Old Town Road, continues to advance across three key bridge sites—East, Middle, and West—bringing the region closer to improved infrastructure and safer travel. Funded entirely through grants, this project has imposed no financial burden on local taxpayers.

Some highlights on construction progress include:

- East Bridge: Pile driving began in October, with most of the piles now completed. Riprap has been installed on the north abutment.
- Middle Bridge: Crews finished pile driving and completed the concrete pilecaps. Beams have been set in place and wingwalls have been constructed.

Gene Townsend Speaks at Parks and Recreation Meeting

MT43 Staff Reporter

The idea of a walking trail began to bloom in Three Forks when Gene Townsend and his wife, Pat, walked in and around the gravel ponds outside the town. “Lots of Three Forks folks were already walking around what was only cow paths. I happened to attend a League of Cities and Towns in Billings, where I learned there was grant money to be had for permanent pedestrian trails,” he said.

At a Wednesday meeting hosted by Broadwater Community Development Corporation, Chairman Craig Vietz introduced Townsend, who gave a rundown of his 28 years helping to build the 12 miles of paved walking trails around Three Forks’ ponds and out to Headwaters State Park, some 5 miles away. “To accomplish what our committee did takes lots of partners,” he explained, “We partnered with everyone and every organization who would listen.”

Townsend, who was born in Townsend but lived in Ekalaka, Montana, before moving to Three Forks, said he and others interested in the long-term project received help from construction companies, Luzinac, now Magris, the talc processing plant he worked for, Montana Department of Highways and the Three Forks City Council. He and Pat even put \$500 of their own money toward buying an easement they needed to finish a certain part of the trail.

The committee spent days writing grant applications to the Montana Trails Stewardship Foundation and a Northwestern Energy Fund. The group’s Headwaters Bank Run is their annual fundraiser.

The completed 8-ft-wide trail now includes benches, dog cleanup stations and a bicycle repair station. The trail begins at Three Forks school, winds around the gravel ponds and includes the airport, the rodeo grounds and baseball fields.

The most difficult and expensive portion of the trails was two bridges, one crossing the Madison River and one across the Darlington Ditch. Townsend related a



BCDC Chairman Craig Vietz introduced Gene Townsend who led the Three Forks walking trails. Townsend spoke to members of the Parks and Recreation Board and Trail Committee as well as the public about his 12 years helping build trails around Three Forks. MT43 News Photo

funny story about how a guy called him to say he had heard Townsend was looking for a bridge. Yes, that was true. The guy said he knew Copps Construction was trying to get rid of a bridge. With a “ton of donated labor and equipment,” the bridge was moved and installed across the Darlington Ditch.

The City of Three Forks handled all the funds for the project, and ultimately took over maintenance responsibilities but, Townsend emphasized, many Three Forks volunteers continue to help with maintenance.

The economic value of the trail system has been a plus for Three Forks. Upwards of 500 people a day use the trails in the summer months, Townsend said. Bike riders start at Headwaters Park, ride into Three Forks and have dinner or shop at the grocery store. Some come to see the Railroad Museum. Elementary school teachers use the trail to take students on field trips. People who have had joint replacements use the trail system for rehabilitation.

Carol Hatfield, member of the Parks and Recreation board, gave an update on the group’s progress. Kate Humprey expanded on the Trails committee's work toward building Broadwater County pedestrian trails.



RATES ON PAGE II

STARTING NOVEMBER 1st

New and renewing subscribers will be entered into a drawing on December 5th.

The lucky winner will receive one year subscription free.

The subscription can be used as a gift for someone, or to add another year to your own!

Call or stop by the office Mon - Fri 10am - 2pm : 406-266-0086 | 408 Broadway, Townsend Or subscribe online at MT43NEWS.COM

Townsend School & Sports

NOVEMBER

Thu 27 - Fri 28

- NO SCHOOL - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY BREAK



Sunday 30

- Kitto - BHS Stage Gym

DECEMBER

Mon 1 - Thu 4

- 11:45 am: 1st and 2nd Grade SEL

Monday 1

- 4:00 pm: Middle School Basketball vs Belgrade
- 6:15 pm: Elkhorn Basketball Practice - Elementary Gym

Tuesday 2

- 4:00 pm: Middle School Basketball at Livingston
- 4:15 pm: Little Dog Cheer Camp - Stem Room
- 6:00 pm: Elkhorn Basketball Practice - Elementary Gym
- 7:00 pm: Booster Club Meeting - The Bridge

Wednesday 3

- 6:15 pm: Elkhorn Basketball Practice - Elementary Gym
- 7:00 pm: Old Baldy Open Gyms - Pickleball, Basketball, Laps

Thursday 4

- Q2 Midterm
- 4:15 pm: Little Dog Cheer Camp - Stem Room
- 5:00 pm: Girls Basketball Blue/White Scrimmage - 63 Gym
- 6:00 pm: Boys Basketball Blue/White Scrimmage - 63 Gym
- 6:00 pm: Elkhorn Basketball Practice - Elementary Gym
- 7:00 pm: Old Baldy Library Book Club - Library

Fri 5 - Sat 6

- High School Wrestling at Cascade

Friday 5

- NO SCHOOL
- Middle School Basketball Tournament at Three Forks
- 6:15 pm: Elkhorn Basketball Practice - Elementary Gym

Sat 6 - Sun 7

- EMT Training - Elementary Commons

Saturday 6

- Middle School Basketball Tournament at Three Forks
- Speech and Drama at Red Lodge

Sunday 7

- 3:00 pm: Football Banquet

East Helena Schools & Sports

NOVEMBER

Friday 28

- NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

Monday 1

- 6:00 pm: 5th Grade Band Concert

Thursday 4

- 5:00 pm: East Helena Christmas Stroll
- 6:00 pm: PTO Meeting at EVMS

BROADWATER COUNTY GOVERNMENT CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Tuesday 2

- 10:00 am: Commission/CAO Working Meeting

Wednesday 3

- 10:00 am: Commission Meeting

Plaid Friday! November 28

READING LEAVES Bookstore

- Place an order for a new book in-store or on our website today-Sunday and get 10% off your purchase! readingleaves.net
- Used books are B2GO free.
- Dollar Drink Day @ Mtn Grounds!

Angel Tree will be up Saturday!!



BROADWATER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

Now - Nov 30

- Dollar for Dollar Donations with Town Pump for Broadwater Food Pantry **Ends Sunday, 11/30/25!**

Friday 28

- PLAID FRIDAY All Day **MORE INFO ABOVE AND PAGE 3**
- 12:00 pm: Alcoholics Anonymous at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 301 N Cherry
- 1:00 pm: Townsend Pinochle Club at Broadwater County Sr. Center, 516 2nd St

Saturday 29

- 10:00 am: Ladies Day to Shop Local
- 6:00 pm: Fireside Alcoholics Anonymous at 102 N. Walnut, 406-439-3945

DECEMBER

Monday 1

- 10:00 am: Monthly WIC Clinic on 1st Monday each month at Broadwater County Health, 124 Cedar
- 1:00 pm: American Legion Post 42 Membership Meeting at American Legion Post 42 Club - 1st Monday each month

Tuesday 2

- 5:00 pm: American Legion Post 42 Food and Bingo at American Legion Post 42 Club
- 5:30 pm: Alcoholics Anonymous at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 301 N Cherry
- 6:30 p.m. *City of Townsend's Cooperative Housing Community Meeting* at the Townsend Methodist Church, located at 200 N Cedar **INFO ON THIS PAGE**

Wednesday 3

- 1:00 pm: Townsend Pinochle Club at Broadwater County Sr. Center, 516 2nd St

Thursday 4

- 5:00 pm: **FREE** Homemade Dinner Served at American Legion, 211 Broadway, Townsend **DETAILS ON THIS PAGE**
- 6:00 pm: Celebrate Recovery at Mountain Valley Church, 107 E St, 406-980-1805
- 7:00 pm: Al-Anon at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 301 N Cherry

Friday 5

- 12:00 pm: Alcoholics Anonymous at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 301 N Cherry
- 1:00 pm: Townsend Pinochle Club at Broadwater County Sr. Center, 516 2nd St
- 6:00 pm: **FREE** Dinner and Discussion on Resting in the Busyness of Life, at The Lodge **DETAILS ON PAGES 4 & 8**

Saturday 6

- 4:00 pm 2025 Christmas Stroll Downtown
- 6:00 pm: Fireside Alcoholics Anonymous at 102 N. Walnut, 406-439-3945

Mon 8 & Tue 9

- 5:00 pm: Annual Senior Christmas Dinner and Lights Tour **DETAILS ON THIS PAGE**

Saturday 13

- 6:00 pm: Broadwater Community Theater Interactive Christmas Murder Mystery **TICKET INFO ON PAGE 11**

EAST HELENA LIBRARY HOURS

Andrea Eckerson
Branch Manager



Lewis & Clark Library East Helena Branch, 16 E Main Street in East Helena. Nancy Marks, MT43 News Photographer

HOURS:

Monday - Wednesday:
10 am- 6:00 pm.

Thursday and Friday:
10 am- 5:00 pm

Saturdays: 10 am-1:00 pm

Sundays: Closed

DECEMBER

Mon 1 - Sat 13

- East Helena Food Drive & Free Book

Wed 3 - Thu 4

- 10:30 am: Storytime for preschoolers

Thursday 4

- 5:30 pm: Booth at Christmas Stroll

Saturday 6

- 10:00 am: Open for Food Drive & Free Book

LIBRARY HOURS

Broadwater School and Community Library



201 N Spruce St, Townsend Photo Provided

HOURS:

Monday-Thursday:
4:00 - 7:00pm

Friday-Saturday:
9:00am - 4:00pm

Sunday: 12:00 - 5:00pm

Curbside also available please call: (406)441-3461

Books & Babies Story Hour: Mondays 11-00am.-12:00pm the first 4 Mondays of the month.t

Three Forks Community Library

HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday through Friday - 10:00am to 5:00pm

Tuesdays - 10:00am - 7:00pm

1st Saturday of the Month: 11:00am - 2:00pm

Contact the library for details on clubs and events for a variety of ages at (406) 285-3747, or visit the website: threeforkslibrary.weebly.com

RESTING IN THE BUSYNESS OF LIFE

Anxious? Worried? Overwhelmed? Aren't we all!



Fri. Dec. 5th
6:00-8:00 pm
Diner at 6 pm
The Lodge
131 S. Spruce St.
Free Event
All are welcome!
Free Child Care provided

CITY OF TOWNSEND HOSTS MEETING

Cooperative Housing Community Meeting hosted by the City of Townsend, Planning Board, MBAC, and Cooperative Development Center.
Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at the Townsend Methodist Church, located at 200 N Cedar.
Please join the City Council to learn and collaborate with housing solutions in Townsend.

CLASSIFIEDS

TURN TO PAGE 6 FOR LEGAL NOTICES!

Broadwater Rural Fire Board Meeting

3rd Wednesday each month.
Next meeting: December 17th, 7:00PM
At the Townsend Fire Station - 130 So Cedar St
See Board Meeting Agenda at: <http://www.facebook.com/BroadwaterCountyVolunteerFireDepartment>

FREE THURSDAY DINNERS!

Every Thursday, 5:00 - 6:30PM
American Legion Post 42,
211 Broadway, Townsend.
HOMEMADE & ALWAYS YUMMY!
Join us for a hot, delicious meal - no cost to you.
DONATIONS WELCOME & APPRECIATED to help us continue supporting our community.
QUESTIONS? STOP BY OR
MENU? CALL AFTER 3PM
VOLUNTEER? (406) 266-3611
LET US FEED YOU - AND TOGETHER WE CAN HELP OUR COMMUNITY
Hosted with care by the Sons of the American Legion (SAL).

Senior Dinner & Light Tour

Broadwater County Lions Club and Townsend Rotary Club are excited to once again be sponsoring the annual Senior Dinner and Christmas Lights Tour!



We will have 2 nights to chose from:

Monday December 8th or Tuesday December 9th.

Dinner starts at 5:00 pm and the light tour around 6:00 pm. The dinner will be at the Senior Center and rides will be available to anyone that needs one.
If you are interested in joining us for this great Christmas event and you have not been contacted, please call Angie at 406-980-1607 or Diane at 406-980-0890 for reservation or more information.
We hope to see you there for this fun evening.

WANTED

I want to buy a Home, Lot, Parcel or Acreage in the vicinity of Highway 284 East of Canyon Ferry Reservoir.
Could buy outright, trade for what I have or will consider other options.
Call Dick at 406-581-5635. Please leave message if no answer.

It's your future. Let's protect it.®



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Support

LOCAL

Businesses

RESTAURANTS IN AND AROUND
BROADWATER COUNTY

Dates and times may vary due
to events, seasons or holidays.
Call the restaurant with any
questions. Happy Dining!

American Legion Hall 211 Broadway, Townsend (406) 266-3611 Dining Hours: Tuesday Bingo/ Bowl & a Roll 5:00PM SPECIAL Event with Food: Saturday 11/22/25 @ 1:00PM FREE Thanksgiving Dinner Bar hours may vary	Commercial Bar 101 Broadway, Townsend (406) 266-9956 Dining Hours: 10:00AM - 2:00AM Closed Thanksgiving & Christmas Menu available on Facebook	Mint Cafe 305 Broadway St, Townsend (406) 266-3867 Dining Hours: Mon - Wed 8:00AM - 2:00 PM, Thur - Fri 8:00AM - 8:00PM Sat - Sun 7:00AM - 8:00PM SPECIAL: N/A
The Betsy Sports Zone 217 Broadway, Townsend (406) 266-0001 Dining Hours: Tue-Sun 11:00AM-Close Closed Monday Takeout placed only in person. Menu: www.betsysportszone.com	Copy Cup 303 N Front St, Townsend (406) 980-8400 Please call in business hours. Drinks and Pastry Hours: Mon - Fri 7:00AM - 3:00PM Sat 8:30AM - 2:00PM Closed Sunday	Mountie Moose Bakery 109 Broadway, Townsend (406) 266-5800 Dining Hours: Tue - Sat 7:00AM - 4:00PM Closed Sunday & Monday Online Ordering: Mountie-moose-bakery.square. site
Bread and Butter Cafe 205 Broadway St, Townsend (406) 266-3025 Dining Hours: Tue - Fri 7:00AM- 2:00PM Sat 7:00AM- 12:00PM Closed Sunday & Monday Menu available on Facebook	Deep Creek Pizza Co. 415 Broadway Ste 2, Townsend (406) 266-0002 Dining Hours: 11:00AM - 8:00 PM Closed Sunday Menu: deepcreekpizzaco.com Accepting Orders Online	Mountain Grounds Coffee 401 Broadway, Townsend Dining Hours: Mon - Fri 7:00AM - 4:30PM Sat - Sun 8:00AM - 5:00PM Online Ordering: MTNGROUNDS.com
Bunkhouse Bar & Grill 8846 US-287, Toston (406) 266-5302 SPECIAL: N/A Dining Hours: 10:00AM – Close Grill off at 10:00PM	Fishtale Tavern 209 Broadway St, Townsend (406) 266-5582 Dining Hours: Tuesday 10:00AM - Midnight Wed - Sat 10:00 AM - Close Sunday 10:00 AM - Midnight Closed Monday Daily Specials: Facebook	Peking China 10 N Main St, Three Forks (406) 285-3225 Dining Hours: Mon - Sun 11:30AM - 8:30PM Menu: Google
Canyon Ferry Brewing & Taproom 300 Broadway, Townsend (406) 694-5687 Hours: Wed - Fri. 4:00PM - Close Sat and Sun 2:00PM - Close	Full Belli Deli 209 S Front St, Townsend (406) 266-5459 Dining Hours: Mon - Sun 8:00AM - 7:00PM OPEN 4th of JULY	Rocky Mountain Supply Deli 7847 US Hwy 287, Townsend (406) 266-3456 Hot & Cold To-Go Hours: Mon-Fri6:00AM - 6:00PM Menu: Board Inside Store for Take-and Bake or Ready-to-Eat Pizza Call Ahead or Order Inside
C Hangin” C Mercantile & Creamery 310 S Front St, Townsend (406) 266-9087 Dining Hours: Mon - Fri 7:30AM - 7:00PM Sat 8:00AM - 7:00PM Sun 9:00AM - 5:00PM Menu: Facebook changincmerc.square.site	Kick Start Nutrition 500 N Front St, Townsend (406) 266-0033 Dining Hours: Tue - Fri 7:00AM - 3:00PM Sat 9:00AM - 3:00PM Closed Sunday & Monday Daily Specials: Facebook & Instagram	TB’s Diner 316 N Front St, Townsend, (406) 266-0099 Dining Hours: Mon- Sat 7:00AM - 8:00PM Sunday 7:00AM - 7:00PM Specials: Facebook

Broadwater Area Restaurants

Contact MT 43 News, Monday- Friday 10 - 2,
if you would like to talk about how to add your
dining location and open hours to our paper!
406.266.0086 | 408 Broadway, Townsend, MT

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: **S** equals **F**

VXYCO YS SYDUM PEY
KYAODZJZDH MCOOYXJ
PGMKYIMGI’M OXY SYYJLQDD
JZQA: JEZ VXZZI LQH LQKUZXM.

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KNIGHT MOVES

C	E	S
C		I
V	E	R

Unlock the power of chess to find the eight-letter word of the day. Choose your starting letter carefully, then move around the square in a one by two fashion to get to the next letter.

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Convey

RAMPIT

Scrub

LANCE

Foe

MEENY

Flaxen

BOLDEN

TODAY’S WORD

“ He’s a model husband — unfortunately this model happens to be a _____.”

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Weekly SUDOKU

1	9	5		4	8	6	2	3
8			3		5			
			9	1				
		1		5	6	3	9	
6		3	2	9	1	4	8	
	4		8		3			5
5	6				9			8
9	1	7					3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way
that each row across, each column down and each
small 9-box square contains all of the
numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦♦♦ Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Super Crossword

GROUP OF HERBS

ACROSS

1 Tasks

5 Witty remark

11 Pinnacles

16 Inaccurate

19 Sailing

20 Ablaze

21 Pinnacles

22 Money for the senior yrs.

23 Start of a riddle

26 Guided

27 Redeemers

28 Tally

29 Forest growth

30 Comics cry

31 Omitted, as a syllable

35 Used a scull

37 USN VIP

39 Riddle, part 2

44 Riddle, part 3

47 "Mayday!"

48 Take to the road

49 Neighbor of Georgia

50 Aroma detector

52 Stain-fighting toothpaste, e.g.

54 "Year One" director

55 Gun, in slang

56 Asian "way"

58 "Three's Company" co-star

59 Suzanne

59 Aversion

62 User's guide

64 Celtic language

65 Riddle, part 4

69 Je ne — quoi

73 Incendiary felonies

74 Most frequently

79 Golf legend

81 Picnic pest

82 Lifelong pal, informally

84 Tiny hairlike structures

85 Not crying

87 Currency of Latvia

89 Gives the means

91 "— dabba doo!"

92 Lick like a cat

94 Riddle, part 5

96 End of the riddle

99 Part of ROY G. BIV

100 A stage past embryonic

101 Protested unpeacefully

102 Gp. checking baggage

104 Actresses

105 Jillian and Blyth

105 Joan — (French saint)

108 Elliott of the New England Patriots

112 Permit to

113 Riddle's answer

118 Maui garland

119 Bother a lot

120 Sprinted faster than

121 Prefix with byte or ton

122 Org. on a toothpaste box

123 Pre-Soviet rulers

124 Sneeze catcher

125 "You, over there ..."

DOWN

1 Skull parts

2 Worker welfare org.

3 Rodent-built channel blockers

4 "Vexations" composer

5 Churlish sort

6 Difficult task

7 Gridiron gp.

8 Prefix with term or week

9 Eye, to poets

10 Casual shirt

11 Tiered temples

12 Pale tan

13 "Preach it!"

14 "Sleeper" co-star

15 Old fast jet, for short

16 Worker purifying petroleum

17 Breath-holding reef explorers, e.g.

18 Lose color

24 Bowl-shaped frying pan

25 Brand of PCs and tablets

29 Warship with three banks of rowers

31 Letters after els

32 Hotelier

33 Helmsley

33 Otherwise

34 Huskies, e.g.

36 Expand on

37 Swiss — (beet variety)

38 — Lama

39 Math game with match-sticks

40 "I'm — loss"

41 Resign from

42 Hearth waste

43 Succint

45 Just slightly

46 Rips into

51 Coup d'— (rebellion)

53 Dot of land in the ocean

55 Is given the chance to chime in

57 Darth Vader, as a boy

60 Hue

61 Roadwork goo

62 Eds. mark them up

63 '80s sitcom

66 Took the gold

67 Poker stake

68 Deteriorate

69 Man-goat of myth

70 Where aid is urgently required

71 While not physically attending

72 Ice cream alternatives

75 Pen tips

76 "Phantom Lady"

76 "Phantom co-star

77 Prolonged attack

78 Zapped with a stunning weapon

80 Camel cousin

82 "DMZ" actor

83 Benjamin

83 "— is an Englishman" ("H.M.S. Pinafore" lyric)

86 Kind of 35mm camera

88 High coif

89 Furniture wood option

90 Bridal bio word

93 Avian mimics

95 Rock guitarist

97 Barrett

97 Luau hellos

98 Ward for preemies

102 Decimal base

103 Be too thrifty

104 Spaghetti — bolognese

106 Goat cheese

107 Miles away

108 Jacob's twin, in the Bible

109 Region

110 Nest fillers

111 Exam for an atty.-to-be

113 Vietnamese New Year

114 Deteriorate

115 Anna of fashion

116 Non-earthlings, for short

117 "— longa, vita brevis"

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Justice of the Peace, 6

suspended for six (6) months with good behavior

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Brady Zimpel – Belgrade – Parked at ranch gate. Walked past sign stating land was posted. Carrying rifle and wearing orange. Intending to hunt Black Bear – paid fines - \$285 fines & fees

BROADWATER COUNTY FINES

Justin M. Watson – Stockton CA – Driving Motor vehicle while privilege to do so is suspended or revoked 1st offense – plead guilty - \$185 fines & fees – Six (6) months suspended sentence with good behavior.

Racquel A. Loughnane – Billings – Improper passing. No passing zone – plead guilty - \$85.00 fines and fees

COUNTY CRIMINAL

Jesse D. Bunker – Helena – Violation of a Protective Order 1st Offense – Plead Guilty - \$385.00 Fines & Fees – Six (6) months suspended sentence with good behavior.

William J. Ellis – Townsend – Criminal Mischief Pecuniary Loss Less than \$1,500.00 – Plead Guilty - \$185 fines & fees – one day jail time, three (3) months suspended sentence with good behavior

Kamil Szmyglewski – Sheridan WY – Disorderly Conduct – Plead Guilty - \$185 fines & fees – ten (10) days jail time with execution suspended for a period of 6 months with good behavior

Chelsea B. Shorey – Arcata CA – Aggravated Driving under the influence of alcohol and or drugs – Speeding on non-interstate – exceed night limit of 65mph - Unlawful possession of open alcoholic beverage container in motor vehicle - Plead Guilty - \$1,215.00 fines and fees – sentenced one (1) year jail time with execution of all but two (2) days suspended for one (1) year with good behavior – enrollment in ACT class or California State equivalent program – restrictive probationary license after payment of fines & fees

Zachary D. Hulse – East Helena – Operate non-commercial vehicle with alcohol concentration of .08% BAC or greater 1st offense – Plead Guilty - \$685.00 fines & fees – Sentenced to six (6) months in jail with execution suspended for six (6) months with good behavior – enrollment in ACT class – twenty (20) hours of community service ordered within three (3) months – restrictive probationary license

Kyle E. Olsen – Bozeman – Operate non-commercial vehicle with alcohol concentration of .08% BAC or greater 1st offense – plead guilty - \$685 fines & fees – six (6) months jail time with execution of all six (6) months suspended with good behavior – enrollment in ACT class – individual to refrain from establishments whose primary purpose is to serve alcoholic beverages for six (6) months – restrictive probationary license

INITIAL APPEARANCE - OTHER JURISDICTION

Justin A. Cleveland – Arrested on Warrant issued by Silver Bow County District Court – bond set at \$25,000.00 – Defendant to appear at Silver Bow County District Court within five (5) days of release

Group Sues, 1

Plaintiff Kevin Chandler, a hydrogeologist who ranches outside of Absarokee, juxtaposed the process he and his wife, Katrin, went through to obtain and protect the water they use on their ranch with the process afforded to nearby developers of the 67-lot Crow Chief Meadows subdivision.

“We did everything the law asked of us to protect our water and our neighbors’ water – collecting data, hiring experts, and working hand-in-hand with the state,” Chandler wrote in the statement. “It’s frustrating to see a subdivision using dozens of exempt wells get approved, when the same development proposing a single shared community well would have been denied. Those community systems are more efficient and safer, and their use can be measured and monitored. The current policy promotes poorly planned development and passes the hidden costs to future homeowners, counties and towns.”

A spokesperson for the DNRC declined to comment on the lawsuit.

The lawsuit presents four claims for relief, beginning with recognizing the constitutional protections afforded to senior water users and concluding with a constitutional provision protecting Montanans’ right to know what their government is doing and their right to participate in the operation of its agencies.

The plaintiffs note that an interim legislative committee has been tasked with digging into the exempt well statute once again. But they don’t appear optimistic that the Legislature will reach a different result when it next convenes in 2027. Despite nearly two decades of studies identifying the consequences of exempt well development and repeated efforts to revise state laws, no meaningful change has occurred, according to the lawsuit.

Four of the lawsuit’s plaintiffs — the Montana League of Cities and Towns, Clark Fork Coalition, Montana Farm Bureau Federation and Trout Unlimited — participated in the group that developed Senate Bill 358, which sought to close some of the state’s fastest-growing valleys to additional exempt wells but allow for increased ground-water development across the rest of the state as part of

Broadwater Commissioners

Press MDT on Highway

12/287 Safety, Approve Motor Vehicle Agreement

Rachael Brug

Staff Reporter

At their November meeting, the Broadwater County Commission heard emotional testimony about safety on Highway 12/287 and moved ahead with a key agreement to keep local motor vehicle services in place.


Resident Dwight Thompson urged the commission to push harder for improvements from the Missouri River bridge north to Winston, especially at the Silos interchange, where a recent fatal crash claimed the life of his co-worker. Thompson cited a recent TV report by Marian Davidson and questioned why a state traffic engineer, Gabe Priebe, said he had not heard from county officials.

Commissioner Debbie Randolph responded that the county has been in regular contact with Montana Department of Transportation, including emails, phone calls, and meetings. She said MDT already plans to widen Highway 12 south of the Silos to five lanes and add turn lanes at Beaver Creek near Winston. The county is also applying for a major federal BUILDER grant to accelerate work from Winston north toward Spokane Creek, with a public meeting planned once the latest crash analysis is complete.

Resident Melissa Franks, who lives off White Horse, described nightly near-misses as drivers pass turning vehicles instead of slowing down. She called for increased law enforcement presence until construction changes are made. Commissioners added that headlights and seatbelts remain basic but often ignored safety measures.

In other business, Treasurer Melissa Franks secured approval for an interlocal agreement with the Montana Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division for the state’s new CARS system. The deal shifts equipment and supply costs to the county in exchange for a 10-cent-per-transaction reimbursement, but commissioners agreed the arrangement is necessary to avoid forcing residents to travel to Helena or Bozeman for all motor vehicle services.

The board also took testimony on a road-material deviation request in the Westside Trails subdivision and postponed a decision to review technical data and potential impacts on county standards.



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a compromise package. In April, the Montana Senate overwhelmingly rejected the measure.

Kelly Lynch, executive director of the Montana League of Cities and Towns, said SB 358’s failure spurred her organization’s decision to move forward with the lawsuit.

“We put our hearts and souls into that bill,” she said. “The fact that it failed — it was like, ‘OK, it’s time.’”

Lynch added that other Western states have experienced similar pressures on their groundwater supplies and have responded by narrowing the groundwater withdrawal loophole. In those states, she said, the exempt well law is “extremely limited to those situations in which an exemption is truly necessary — not a development pattern that is subsidized by the exemption.”

The lawsuit comes three years after DNRC faced a similar set of questions in the context of a 42-lot subdivision a developer sought to service with four exempt wells, each of them withdrawing up to 10-acre feet of water.


In that lawsuit, District Court Judge Michael McMahon sided with Upper Missouri Waterkeeper and a handful of landowners opposed to the 442-acre Horse Creek Hills subdivision. In his 2024 ruling, McMahon chastized the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation for “torturously misreading its own rules and ignoring Supreme Court precedent” on the cumulative impacts of exempt wells.

Asked to respond to this round of litigation, Upper Missouri Waterkeeper Executive Director Guy Alsentzer wrote in an email to Montana Free Press that it’s an encouraging development that builds on the Horse Creek Hills litigation.

“The pressure to develop land is unrelenting, and recent history demonstrates the Montana Legislature is plainly incapable of a constitutionally sound approach to adequately regulating Montana’s water resources,” Alsentzer wrote. “Ideally, this case finishes the battle at-stake in Upper Missouri Waterkeeper v. Broadwater County (aka Horse Creek Hills), and before that in Clark Fork Coalition v. Tubbs: there is no free water for sprawl subdivision development in closed Montana river basins.”

Broadwater County Commissioners Agenda

Broadwater County Commissioners



515 Broadway, Townsend

Meetings are held at the Flynn Building on 416 Broadway St.

Current and previously recorded meetings, official agenda, and minutes may be viewed on the website at <https://www.broadwatercountymt.gov>.

Per Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 2-3-202, the agenda must include an item allowing public comment on any public matter that is not on the agenda of the meeting and that is within the jurisdiction of the agency conducting the meeting.

Public comments will be taken either in writing before the meeting or in person at the beginning of the meeting. Mail and items for discussion and/or signature may occur as time allows during the meeting. Issues and times are subject to change. Working meetings will be posted on the agenda and will not be recorded.

OFFICIAL agendas are posted at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting in the Courthouse (1st-floor bulletin board), on our website at www.broadwater-countymt.gov, in the window of the Flynn Building, and in the local MT43 Newspaper when possible to meet the publishing deadline.

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

10:00 AM Working meeting with Bill Jarocki, County Administrative Officer, CAO office, regarding projects and deadlines

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

10:00 AM Public comment on any subject not on the agenda, that the Commission has jurisdiction over

10:00 AM Discussion/Decision, Airport hangar lease for Isar Services LLC

10:05 AM Discussion/Decision, Nichole Brown, Community Development and Planning Director, Speicher Tract B Minor Subdivision request preliminary plat approval; S35, T6N, R2E

10:10 AM Discussion/Decision, Nichole Brown, Community Development and Planning Director, The Meadows 3 subsequent Minor Subdivision, request 1-year extension to preliminary plat approval

10:15 AM Discussion/Decision, Nichole Brown, Community Development and Planning Director, Coblenz Family Transfer Exemption Request; S9, T8N, R1E

10:20 AM Discussion/Decision, Nichole Brown, Community Development and Planning Director, Nunn/Hatfield Boundary Relocation Exemption Request; S2, T7N, R1E

10:25 AM Discussion/Decision, Nichole Brown, Community Development and Planning Director, Broadwater County Subdivision Regulations Amendments

10:30 AM Discussion/Decision, Letters of interest and letter of resignation for county boards

The county strives to make the meeting available virtually but cannot guarantee access due to platform failure, internet interruptions, or other potential technological malfunctions

Items for Discussion / Action / Review / Signature – Consent Agenda

- Certificate of Survey review
- Management – on-going advisory board appointments, by-laws approval, interlocal agreements and non-financial contract renewals
- Claims/Payroll/minutes
- County Audit / Budget
- Mail – ongoing grants
- Correspondence – support letters
- Task Orders

Debi Randolph, Vice Chair

(406) 266-9270 or (406) 980-2050 drandolph@broadwatercountymt.gov

Jesse Swenson

(406) 266-9272 or (406) 980-1213 jswenson@broadwatercountymt.gov

Lindsey Richtmyer, Chair

(406) 266-9271 or (406) 521-0834 lrichtmyer@broadwatercountymt.gov

E-mail: commissioners@broadwatercountymt.gov

Future Meetings will be held at the Flynn Building (416 Broadway)

Please note: These meeting times/dates may change. Please check the county website

- Trust Board Meeting on December 9th at 11:30 AM
- Planning Board Meeting on December 9th at 1:00 PM
- Solid Waste Board Meeting on December 9th at 6:00 PM
- Fair Board Meeting on December 11th at 5:15 PM
- County Parks & Recreation Meeting on December 15th at 6:00 PM
- Noxious Weed Board Meeting on December 16th at 6:00 PM
- Airport Board Meeting on December 17th at 6:00 PM

The Commissioners may be attending these board meetings (except the Planning Board)

OBITUARIES

Peter W. Sullivan

Family of Peter W. Sullivan

One of Helena’s great characters, Peter William Sullivan, passed away on November 14, 2025, surrounded by family. Peter was born in 1935 in the kitchen of the family ranch in the Canton Valley, an area that was later flooded to create Canyon Ferry Lake. The second of five children, Peter and his only brother, Larry, lived primarily in the bunkhouse with no electricity or running water, and learned early on that cows and chickens do not take holidays or recognize weekends.

His Irish father and German mother encouraged Peter to enroll at Carroll College, where he earned a degree in Business and Economics in 1957. Once he traded the ranch life for life in the Capital City, he never looked back. He began his career at the First National Bank with memorable duties like repossessing cars and loaning money to Big Dorothy for her little business up the Gulch. He also joined the Army Reserves, serving 12 years and was discharged as a Captain in 1967.

In 1963, the eternal optimist opened his own business that later became Sullivan Financial Group. He loved his work and cherished his clients. He coined a motto in the 1970’s that delighted his family, though elementary school teachers were unimpressed when the Sullivan kids proudly brought pens to school adorned with the words “No B.S. from P.S.” Peter retired at the youthful age of 80 after qualifying for the Million Dollar Roundtable for more than forty years and being inducted into the ING Financial Partners Hall of Fame.

In early 1959, Peter met a darling Irish Catholic girl from Butte, America by the name of Sheila Sullivan — no relation (as far as we know.) At the time, Sheila was visiting her mother while on a break from Catholic University, where she was pursuing a master’s degree in theater. After only one date, Sheila returned to Washington D.C. and a correspondence courtship began. The second time they met in person, Peter asked for Sheila’s hand in marriage. The third time was at their wedding on November 28, 1959. There must have been magic in those letters as Peter and Sheila enjoyed a deep love affair full of mutual admiration and genuine affection for fifty-one years.

After marriage, they immediately started a family having a half-dozen children in twelve years. Although Peter was busy growing his business, he rarely missed one of his children’s concerts, recitals, plays, or sporting events. Fortunately (or unfortunately) his enthusiastic cheering could slice through the roar of any crowd. He also volunteered for many years as the Hawthorne area Cub Scout Master, as well as a referee, timer and judge for numerous events. He had high expectations for all his children but even when they did not meet the mark, they felt his unconditional love and unwavering support. The children were encouraged to explore the world, and you could count on Sheila heading up a trip to visit with Porter Pete deftly on her heels. She did her part by gamely joining him on frequent ski trips and golf outings.

Peter and Sheila’s great love of Helena was evidenced by the time, talent, and financial contributions they poured into local charities and organizations. Peter was President of the Cathedral of St. Helena Parish Council, Helena Jaycees, the Helena Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) Montana, Helena Ambassadors, Live at the Civic, Metropolitan Dinner Club, and the Helena Navy League. He was a dedicated member of the Helena Kiwanis, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He was a founding member of The St. Peter’s Hospital Foundation Board and the Western Montana Catholic Foundation. In recognition of his dedication to the Helena community, he received many accolades, including the Helena Chamber of



Peter W. Sullivan

Photo Provided by Family of Peter W. Sullivan

Commerce Businessperson of the Year, Helena Community Foundation’s Spirit of Philanthropy, and most recently, flag honoree for the Old Glory Landmark.

As Sheila’s health deteriorated in the last few years of her life, she told everyone who would listen that Peter should not spend his final years alone. Her death in early 2011 left a huge hole in Peter’s big heart.

Fortunately, near the end of that year, he met the irrepressible Barbara Harris, and a wonderful new chapter began. Two fun-loving extroverts, Peter and Barb rarely missed a community event. Among their favorite activities were Carroll College sporting events, concerts, plays, Kiwanis luncheons and Sunday Mass.

And the summer was not complete without Peter conducting the Star-Spangled Banner at the Symphony Under the Stars. They enjoyed traveling, playing cards (except euchre) and dancing cheek to cheek. Peter was warmly welcomed by Barb’s three sons and their families who readily accepted him into the Harris fold. After many valiant proposals from Peter, Barb agreed to marriage. Peter was forever smitten by the endearing love and support of his Barbara Rose.

Peter was preceded in death by his wife, Sheila Sullivan, his parents, Lawrence Daniel Sullivan and Marie Sullivan (nee Meyers), his brother Larry Sullivan, his brothers-in-law Robert Masolo and Marvin Love, and sisters-in-law Louise Sullivan and Joan Farmin, and granddaughter Mary Marsden Sullivan.

Peter is survived by his second wife Barbara Harris, sisters Mary Pat Sullivan, Gay Ann Masolo, and Terry Love, as well as his children Jimmer (Brigid) Sullivan, Margaret “Peggy” Sullivan, ReNell (Jeff) Gradeck, Peter Daniel (Sarah) Sullivan, Shawn (Sunde) Sullivan, and Erin Sullivan. His grandchildren include Connor (Theresa) Sullivan, Logan Sullivan, and Mollie Sullivan. Amanda (Damon) Bateson, Meghan (Wade Harper) Rucka, and Nicole Rucka. Samuel Sullivan, Luke Sullivan, and Kate “The Great” Sullivan. Peter’s great-grandchildren are Charlotte and Madeline Bateson and Danika and Mary Sullivan. Barb’s children are Mark (Kelly Griffin) Harris, Kyle Harris, David (Heather) Harris as well as grandchildren Hannah Elz, Tyler Harris, Otto Harris, and Chick Harris and great-grandchildren Annalise and Robert Elz. Peter enjoyed many wonderful surviving nieces and nephews as well.

The family would like to thank the outstanding CNAs, RNs and doctors at St. Peter’s Hospital for providing Peter with caring support and dignity in his final days.

Known to his family as Mr. Helena, Peter would be humbled if you’d like to select one of your favorite local charities to donate in his honor. If finances are tight, he’d be equally tickled if you picked up some litter on your next walk.

Bertum Williams

Family of Bertum Williams

March 27, 1935 – November 15, 2025

Bertum Williams, age 90, of Townsend, passed away on November 15, 2025, from complications of cancer.

Bertum was born March 27, 1935, in Bays, Kentucky, to Smith and Martha (Holbrook) Williams.

Bertum graduated from high school and served our country honorably, first with US Marines for 3 years, then with the US Navy for 22 years. His primary occupation was a storekeeper. After his honorable discharge, he went to work for the city of Everett, WA for 20 years.

Bertum married Lorene Roark on September 1, 1957, in Bays, Kentucky. They welcomed three children together. He loved fishing and hunting and was a member of the Masons for 50 years, along with being a member of the Shriners.

Bertum is preceded in death by his parents, Smith and Martha Williams, and a daughter, Brenda ‘Gail’ Borninkhof. He is survived by his wife, Lorene Williams; sons, Mike Williams and Harold (Linda) Williams; grandson, Kenny (Kristina) Borninkhof; granddaughter, Richelle Borninkhof; and a great-granddaughter, Gracie



Bertum Williams

Photo Provided by Family of Bertum Williams

Borninkhof.

Cremation has taken place and there will be no services held at this time. Memorials are suggested to the Shriners.

Whispers of the Past

Shelley Douthett



In this latest edition of Whispers of the Past, I thought it was time to put on my big girl pants and write about some of the pioneer families out there. Why was this decision so hard for me? Mostly because I want to do them justice. Then again, I may actually be writing about someone people know of, or the local families know a whole heck of a lot more than I do and I somehow got it all wrong. However, I might get some feedback or information finally. For my first pioneer family person, this is about Florence Emma VanVoast.



Florence Emma VanVoast

Photo Provided: Unknown Credit

Ready?

Flora, as I’ve come to call her, came here when she was quite young with her parents, George and Mary McFadden, from Missouri and Kentucky. They somehow managed to cross the country three times in covered wagons trying to escape the Civil War before settling down to ranch in the Centerville area.

She was born in 1862 and had 3 siblings. She married John G. VanVoast in 1875 and together they had 5 children of which only 2 lived to adulthood. I’ve worked on the children’s headstones which touched my heart and helped me decide to write about Flora. Her surviving children were Adah and Shirley VanVoast.

The VanVoasts lost all their livestock during the blizzard of 1888 and John went to work in the gold mines nearby, but due to health issues from his service during the Civil War and the kind of work it was in the mountains, he was injured and became ill, eventually passing away, leaving Flora with 2 children to raise alone.

Somehow, and this is a mystery to me, she managed to get into a photography school in Illinois. I’m guessing she relied on family to help her with the kids and finances. She opened a studio during 1900, on Broadway in Townsend, taking pictures for families and also going out and taking award-winning photos of the landscapes nearby.

She passed away in 1915 and all accounts in the newspapers and her obituary described her in very favorable terms. I found it interesting that she used her initials for her business name, F.E. VanVoast.

I’ve read about Evelyn Cameron in eastern Montana, another famous photographer who had to guard her identity as a female at times, so I try to understand why women were not supposed to do jobs like being a photographer. It also drives me nuts reading newspaper accounts where the women are referred to as Mrs. Husband’s Name. It makes it difficult to discover anything about them when I don’t know who Mrs. Husband’s Name is. Enough about that. Maybe. What can I say, I’m a renegade.

After Flora died, her son, Shirley, destroyed her photographs and plates. I don’t know why he felt the need to do this but I personally suspect it had something to do with being named ‘Shirley.’ Just a guess. Some of her photos have survived this purge because they were purchased by others during her business days or hidden away so he couldn’t get his hands on them. Fortunately, a suitcase of her photos was found later about 60 miles away from Townsend. How did they escape? Can you tell how mad this makes me?

I think I would have liked Flora. She was one tough woman from the time she was little to the time she passed. She had borne the loss of 3 children, a husband, and probably a lot of other things we don’t know about. She was involved in the community, raised two children on her own and touched a lot of lives, including mine. Maybe I should call her ‘Flo’ now that I’ve written this.

I can be yelled at or reached at rangebabe56@gmail.com

Weed of the Month: *Stinkgrass*

Allison Kosto
MSU Broadwater County Extension
Agent



A rather unique and interesting grass species, stinkgrass, has been increasing in the county in recent years. It is likely increasing due to changing climates and a longer growing season.

Native to Eurasia, stinkgrass was accidentally introduced to the United States in the early 1800s and is now widespread across North America. It does well in a variety of soil types and can be found along roadsides, pastures and lawns. It’s not highly competitive so it tends to be in places that are disturbed or lack healthy vegetation.

Stinkgrass is a warm season annual grass (life cycle of one year). As a result, you more commonly see it during mid-to-late summer. It’s fairly easy to identify due to its grayish-green, triangular shaped seed head. It resembles seedheads of those in the bluegrass family but stinkgrass often has a much larger seedhead. However, the most distinctive characteristic about stinkgrass is its unpleasant odor. It can grow 6 to 24 inches tall but is more often on the shorter side in Montana.

Stinkgrass is poisonous to livestock, especially horses. However, due to the smell they are unlikely to eat it. Additionally, poisoning typically occurs with repeated consumption over an extended period of time. Typically, the quantity found in our area isn’t enough to warrant concern. Further south, where warm season grasses are more common, it is more of a concern.

Management

The key to preventing establishment of stinkgrass is to maintain healthy vegetation. It’s not extremely competitive so it will disappear or be a minimal issue if you have a healthy lawn, pasture or rangeland. In lawns, proper management of fertility, mowing and irrigation



Stinkgrass

Credit: Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org

will eventually crowd it out. Stinkgrass also kills easily with the first frost which gives additional opportunity for cool season grasses to fill in.

Stinkgrass is also sometimes found on the edges of driveways, lawns or areas that are difficult to maintain healthy vegetation. In these areas, control may be warranted. It can be easy to remove by hand pulling or digging. Glyphosate products such as Roundup are the most common herbicides in these areas. Finale is another option. Pre-emergent herbicides can also be used but are rarely needed in Montana. Always read and follow the entire label when applying herbicide. Common chemical names are used for clarity but does not imply endorsement of a product or brand.

If you need help with plant identification, pest management options or lawn care, contact the MSU Extension Office in Broadwater County at 406-266-9242 or allison.kosto@montana.edu.



Dear Editor:

Before he became known as one of our greatest patriots and our second president, John Adams was a renowned Boston lawyer who defended British soldiers in a trial arising from the Boston Massacre. During that trial he said: “Facts are stubborn things, and whatever our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

In responding to my last letter Mr. Garwood defended his earlier statement of facts saying: “It just depends on where people GET their “facts” as to what they are.” NO Mr. Garwood, the term “facts” does not belong in quotation marks. Facts are the truth. They are indelible. They do not depend on their source for their accuracy. There are no “alternative facts” as one of Trump’s acolytes once claimed. Something is either true or it is not and whether you heard it on FOX or CNN or Newsmax or NBC doesn’t change its character as true or false.


Readers can decide for themselves what they choose to believe and distinguish between fact and fiction. I only hope that in doing so they will consider that the source they are relying upon may not be telling the truth.

Thomas Budewitz
Townsend



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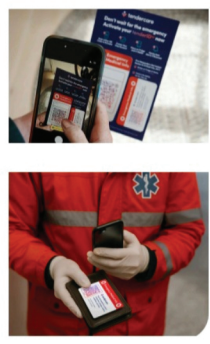

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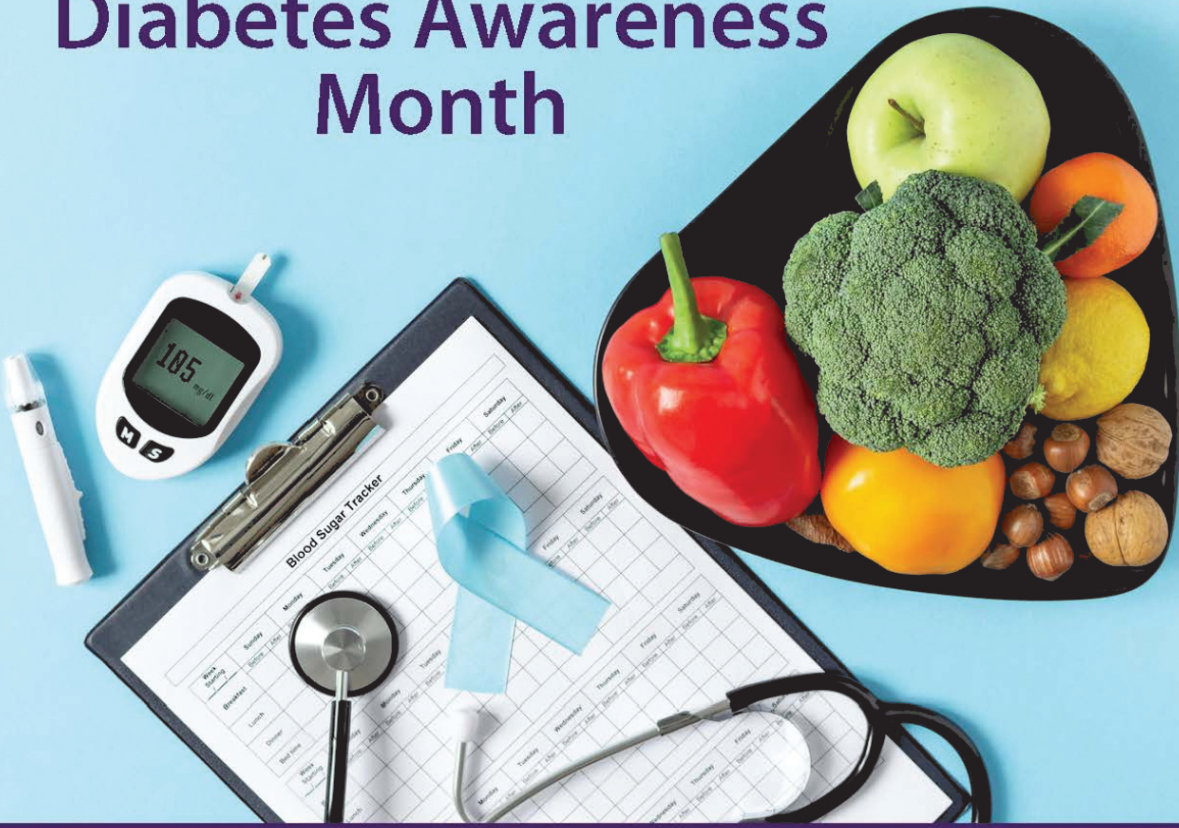
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scouts and prospective scouts are Jack Shields, Bobby Diehl, Peter Barker, Tommy Cotter, and Francis O'Neal.

so sleepy when it came time to get up before 7:00 a.m. to get ready to catch the bus for school.

1958

1975

Radersburg News

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lavinder and son of Townsend have moved to the Riverside Ranch where they will live this winter

Mrs. O.J. Allen is visiting her daughter, Mrs. Art Roberts, at Deep Creek for a few days.

Mary Sue Lampman and children and Mrs. W.A. Miller and daughter, Clara, visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cleon Cass Sunday.

Mrs. Johnny Ragen and children visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Williams, here Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Williams were shopping in Helena Sunday and also visited their son and family, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Williams and JoAnn.

Mrs. W.D. Williams and Mrs. Minnie Doughty attended Womans Club at Mrs. Kate Hunsaker's Thursday.

Mrs. G.W. Grandchamps, who has been visiting friends in Thompson Falls and Missoula for the past month, returned home Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Doughty spent Friday in Helena

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Welch of Townsend visited friends here Thursday.

Celebrated Birthday

Miss Terri Ralls celebrated her 16th birthday Sunday, Nov. 23 by having Miss Kay Thompson and Miss Linda Moudree of Townsend and Miss Merrilee Miller of Radersburg as luncheon guests. The girls were joined by Miss Alberta Thurston at dinner for cake and ice cream, the tradition of all birthday parties. After the afternoon and evening spent at Terri's home, the girls went to the home of Erma Patterson, where they were joined by Miss Jane Huth of Townsend. They had loads of fun at a slumber party, but not much slumber. They were

Five scouts of Troop 98 have had perfect attendance for the last seven meetings. They are James Healy, Pat Ragen, Don Sheilds, Bill Stimpson and Fred Stimpson. Jimmy Myers and Mike Gabisch have had perfect attendance for six of these meetings. The average attendance for these seven meetings is eighteen. Thirty-two boys have memberships or are interested in joining. Of these thirty-two only three have not attended meetings this fall. New



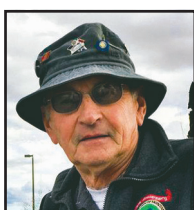
*Christmas Decorations and
Lights 50% Off!*
(Live plants excluded)

(Live plants excluded)



Volunteers Wanted to Help Decorate Broadway Street for Christmas Stroll

MT43 News Staff Reporter



Townsend Area Chamber members firmed up final plans for the Christmas Stroll on December 6. The city-wide event begins at 4:00pm. Broadway Street will be closed from Front Street to the courthouse. Chamber members are slated to decorate Broadway Street light poles Tuesday, December 2, beginning at noon. Rotary members will help Pat Plantenberg light the main street trees beginning Wednesday, November 26, at noon and will continue until all trees have lights. Work will usually begin at noon. To volunteer, please call Pat at (406) 431-4615.

Santa Claus and Mrs. Santa will entertain requests for presents from children at a new location this year. According to Chamber member Doug Sitton, Tom Hay of Rocky Mountain Mini Cabins donated the use of a "Santa's Workshop" cabin. The building, now on location at the corner of Broadway and Front Street, will be decorated by Chamber members. The cabin will be placed strategically in "Phil's Forest" of trees brought in by Rotary member Phil Knaub every year. Historically, Townsend Elementary school students decorate the trees.

Members of the public who would like to volunteer, please check the Townsend Area Chamber of Commerce website or call Doug Sitton at (406) 422-3426.



*Phil's Forest on Front Street with volunteers who erected trees in the rain on Monday.
Photo Credit: Pat Plantenberg*