



The City Link

Official News and Information
from the City of Billings

Billings Pride
City-wide

Fall 2009

Citizen Survey & Community Conversations

Just as a business regularly hears from their customers in order to improve their products and customer service, so, too, can local government.

Last year, a committee of both Councilmembers and staff was formed and a Request for Proposals process was completed to conduct a survey of Billings' citizens. The committee chose the National Research Center (NCS) to conduct a Citizen

Survey of a random sample of Billings' residents, which was completed by mail in January and February of this year. Of the 1,200 surveys mailed to local households, 539 were returned - an astounding 47% response rate! Those responses were compared to similar communities nationally and in the western region, and then the NCS presented the City with their final survey results in April. The results of this type of survey are typically used to: monitor trends in resident opinion, measure government performance, benchmark service ratings and assist Council and staff in budget, land use, and strategic planning decision-making efforts.

After reviewing the final results, the committee decided that they'd like to hear more from the community! Therefore, in

September, the City of Billings held eight "Community Conversations" throughout the City in response to and to receive feedback about the results of the recently-completed Citizen Survey.

Those meetings were held:

- Sept. 9th, from 9-11 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. at Faith Chapel - 517 Shiloh Road
- Sept. 10th, from 9-11 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. at Western Security Bank - 1546 Main Street
- Sept. 16th, from 9-11 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. at Garfield Center - 3212 1st Avenue South
- Sept. 17th, from 9-11 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. at the Community Center - 360 North 23rd

Among the topics discussed at each of these meetings were: Community Quality

and Opportunity; Public Safety and Health; City Services and Financial Sustainability; Civic Engagement and Trust; and, Policy questions pertaining to the City's Parks and Recreation Department. The City is currently gathering all of the feedback received at these meetings and via email for Council and staff use for Goal Planning in October. A final report will also be shared in the CityLink and on the City's website.

For more information about the City of Billings' Citizen Survey or the Community Conversations, please visit the City's website at www.ci.billings.mt.us. You may also contact Councilmember Jani McCall at janimccall@msn.com or (406) 670-3084 or Bruce McCandless, Assistant City Administrator, at mccandlessb@ci.billings.mt.us or (406) 657-8222.

News from Mountview Cemetery

Walkers and Joggers Using Mountview Cemetery

Many residents have already found that Mountview Cemetery, at 1704 Cen-

tral Avenue, is a great place to walk for exercise.

A walker or jogger generally does not have to be concerned with motorists or worry about jay-walking. It is a peaceful place to exercise filled with beautiful views, active birdlife, and a few critters like jackrabbits. Walkers may hear chickadees and finches and often can see a red-tailed or sharp shin hawk overhead. During the workweek, walkers may have to dodge irrigation sprinklers and an occasional funeral service, but it is a great place to walk.

Some of the walkers pick their own

path and walk for a certain period of time, such as a lunch hour. Others walk for distance and the Cemetery provides approximately three miles of roads and trails. The outer perimeter chip seal road is about 1.1 miles and the inner "S" around the different sections adds about another .9 mile, which adds up to two paved miles. If you add the two "crazy 8's" through the old Billings Cemetery (the oldest part of the Cemetery), you will walk another .9 mile on hilly, gravel and grass roads to increase your workout.

Fall Flower Clean-Up

Ground level flowers are allowed in Mountview Cemetery only from May 15 to Oct. 15 and for holidays and special anniversary dates. Ground level decorations are removed in anticipation of snow and the removal of snow for burial services. With that in mind, it is time to remove all ground level flowers off graves in the Mountview Cemetery. Any ground level flowers still in the Cemetery as of Friday, Oct. 16, will be removed by the Cemetery Staff and disposed of. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping the Cemetery beautiful and safe.

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Visit the City's Website: <http://www.ci.billings.mt.us>

Budget-in-Brief: Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2010

The purpose of this “Budget-in-Brief” is to provide a concise, easy to use document that provides a brief overview of the City’s budget process, describes the fund structure used in the budget and summarizes the fiscal year (FY) 2010 approved budget by highlighting key budget features and basic facts. Questions regarding the budget can be answered by calling the Finance Division at (406) 657-8209. The budget document is available for viewing at the Parmlly Billings Library, the City Clerk’s office or on-line at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=5003>.

facilities (streets, buildings, etc.) greater than \$25,000. The Equipment Replacement Plan (ERP) is for all rolling stock with a value greater than \$5,000. Technology equipment with a value greater than \$5,000 is included in the Technology Replacement Plan (TRP).

The Budget is not prepared using the same basis of accounting as the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, and therefore cannot, in all cases, be compared to information reported in the annual report.

Financial Structure Overview

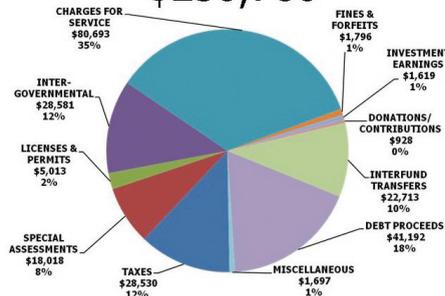
The City’s accounting system is organized on a fund basis in which each fund is a distinct accounting entity used to record all financial transactions related to a specific purpose for which that fund was created. These fund categories are the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, Capital Project Funds, Enterprise Funds, Internal Service Funds and Permanent Funds. The City has over 100 distinct funds. This is comparable to a group of 100+ people. Each person probably has a different way of making their income (revenue) and they all have their own set of rules on how they spend their money (expenditures).

Interfund Transfers

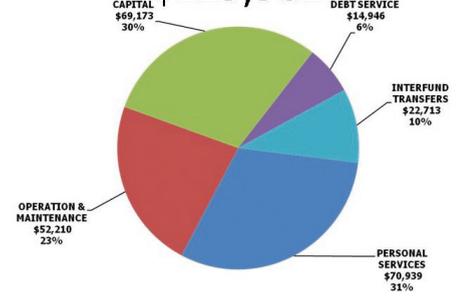
Interfund transfers are a movement of cash or property between funds without a repayment requirement. Transfers tend to overstate or inflate the total budget figures.

FY 10 Budgeted Total Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues – All Funds 000’s
\$230,780

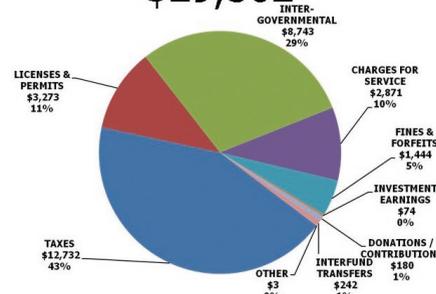


Expenditures – All Funds 000’s
\$229,981

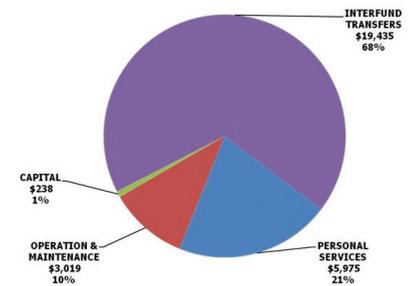


FY 10 Budgeted General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues – General Fund 000’s
\$29,562



Expenditures – General Fund 000’s
\$28,668



The General Fund budget decreased from \$31.5 million in 2009 to \$28.7 million in FY 2010. The decrease was due to Public Works Engineering moving from the General Fund to an Internal Service

Fund. The General Fund budgets for the Mayor and Council, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands, Municipal Court, Legal, Human Resources, Finance, Administration and PW Engineering.

The single largest General Fund expense is a transfer to the Public Safety Fund, which pays for police, fire and emergency communications operations.

Function of a Budget

- For the Citizens, the budget presents a picture of the City’s operations and intentions for the coming fiscal year.
- For the City Council, the budget serves as a policy tool and as an expression of goals and objectives.
- For City Management, the budget is the annual operating guide and spending plan.

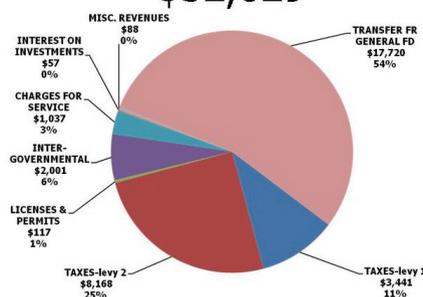
City Approach to Budgeting

A Balanced Budget is defined as when cash-on-hand combined with current revenues and other funding sources is greater than or equal to the approved expenditures for the year.

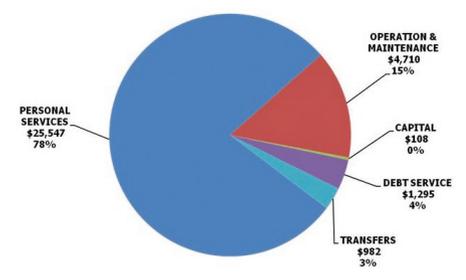
The Capital Budget for three distinct capital plans is adopted by the City Council at the beginning of the budget cycle. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is for public

FY 10 Budgeted Public Safety Fund Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues – Public Safety 000’s
\$32,629



Expenditures – Public Safety 000’s
\$32,642



The Public Safety Fund includes the 5th and final year levy increase that was approved by voters in November 2004. The levy will remain

at \$8.2 million every year. This levy built a new fire station and was used to hire more firefighters and police officers. The new fire sta-

tion was opened in December 2007. The largest Public Safety revenue source is a \$17.2 million interfund transfer from the General Fund.

Billings Fire Department: The Right Vehicle for the Emergency

The Billings Fire Department often is asked why a full-size fire engine responds to a medical call along with an ambulance. The answer is that the fire department works in conjunction with American Medical Response (AMR) to provide emergency medical care.

A significant medical emergency is very labor intensive and requires four to five EMS personnel to handle. A heart attack requires at least two people to perform CPR; one to place an airway in the patient, and another to administer life saving medications.

By combining the firefighter crew with the two person ambulance crew, quality and professional care is given to the patients. For this reason the department in the past has responded with a fire engine to meet the labor demands of these types of emergencies.

This practice will be revised in the near future as the fire department purchases two Quick Response Vehicles (QRV). The QRV concept uses a much smaller vehicle that is specifically designed to respond to medical calls, grass fires, vehicle accidents, and

some minor hazardous material spills, where a full-size fire engine is not required. The QRV is designed with a crew cab and allows the firefighters to carry all their protective clothing.

The benefit of this type of vehicle is that the operational costs, including fuel, is significantly lower, the cost of maintenance is less, and the safety factors associated with stopping distance and the vehicle turning radius is significantly less.

Matching a right-sized vehicle to meet the majority of the



department's alarm load, including the majority of medical calls, has a lot of validity. This concept

still allows for the provision of the same level of coverage for the occasional structure fire.

News from Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department

Fall Recreation Classes Offered Through The City of Billings Park, Recreation and Public Lands

Registration for all upcoming Parks and Rec programs can be made at the Billings Parks and Recreation Office at 390 North 23rd Street, or on-line at www.prpl.info. Registrations cannot be made over the telephone.

ZUMBA CLASSES

Zumba Combines high energy and motivating Latin and International music with unique moves and combinations that allow you to dance away your worries and calories.

It is based on the principle that a workout should be "fun and easy to do." The routines feature aerobic/fitness interval training with a combination of fast and slow rhythms that tone and sculpt the body. It is so much fun – you will love it!

Classes meet on Thursday evenings from 6 to 7 p.m. at the North Park Center Gym, 6th Ave. North and North 19th Street, except for the first Thursday of each month,

when the class will be held at the Billings Community Center, 360 N. 23rd Street. Registration fee is \$25 per person for City residents and \$35 per person for non-City residents.

MARTIAL ARTS

This class teaches a martial arts discipline called Kyuki-Do. This mixed martial art incorporates Tae Kwon Do, Hapkido and Judo. Tae Kwon Do is a Korean variation of Karate and will include foot and hand techniques, forms and sparring. Hapkido is a set of non-aggressive techniques using joint locks and twists ideal for self defense. Judo is a Japanese discipline that involves the entire body and mind including many throws and holds in order to control an opponent as well as learn the art of break-falling.

Kid classes for ages 5 to 15 meet on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 4 to 5:15 p.m. beginning Nov. 2 and go thru Dec. 9. Adult classes for ages 16 and older will meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 6:40 p.m.. beginning Nov. 3 and go through Dec. 10. Registrations fee is \$105 per participant for City

residents and \$115 per participant for non-residents. Classes will be held at Parks Martial Arts Studio located at 1442 Main Street. The deadline to register for classes is one week prior to the start of the session.

PURE PILATES

This class will teach the fundamentals of Pilates matwork. The exercises will increase in intensity as each person progresses. All levels are welcome. Come and learn why so many people are raving about all the fitness benefits to Pilates. Please bring a mat and a towel. There are several sessions to choose from, so please contact the Parks and Recreation Office at (406) 657-8371 for dates and times of classes. You may also visit the website for this information. Registration fee is \$72 per person for City residents and \$82 per person for non-residents.

BELLY DANCE CLASSES

The class includes basic belly dance moves and transition from one move to another. It's fun, plus it helps strengthen abdominal and lower back muscles as well as increasing flexibility. Great for

all ages! Wear comfortable pants and close fitting shirt. Students will need finger cymbals by week three. There are several sessions to choose from, so please contact the Parks and Recreation Office at (406) 657-8371 for dates and times of classes. You may also visit the website for this information. Registration fee is \$45 per person for residents and \$55 per person for non-residents.

UPCOMING WINTER PROGRAMS

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CITY LEAGUE BASKETBALL

The registration deadline for teams is Dec. 14. Team Entry Fees is \$250. Player entry fees of \$45 are due when games start in January. Information will be available on the Parks and Recreation website starting on Oct. 26.

BOY'S 4TH, 5TH & 6TH GRADE BASKETBALL

Practice begins on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2010, at Arrowhead, Eagle Cliffs, and Highland Elementary Schools (6 p.m. for 4th-5th grade and 7 p.m. for 5th and 6th grades)

and Thursday, Jan. 21, at Newman Elementary School (6 p.m. for 4th and 5th grades and 7 p.m. for 5th and 6th grades). Registration begins on Nov. 2. Registrations will also be accepted at the first practices listed above. The registration fee is \$50. Games will be played on Saturdays beginning on Feb. 6.

GIRL'S 5TH & 6TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL

Practice begins on Thursday, Mar. 11, 2010, at Big Sky, Poly Drive, and Sandstone Elementary Schools. Starting times are 6 p.m. for 5th grade and 7 p.m. for 6th grade. Registration begins on Feb. 3, 2010. Registrations will also be accepted at the first practices listed above. The registration fee is \$50. Games will be played on Saturdays beginning on Mar. 27.

BILLINGS COMMUNITY & SENIOR CENTER NEWS

The Fall issue of the Billings Community and Senior Center's "Generation Link" flyer is now available for those interested in senior and Plus 55+ programs.

See PRPL on page 6

Questions & Answers From Our Readers

Questions from two anonymous readers via email:

1) When is the City going to crack down on the panhandlers on the street corners, at bus stops and throughout the city? 2) It seems lately that the panhandling, especially on the on and off ramps for the highways, is getting worse. Aren't there laws against this? If not, why not? Who enforces this? I am sick and tired of looking at people holding cardboard signs begging for money.

Answer:

This summer there has been a noticeable increase in panhandlers, not only in the downtown area, but other areas of town. While there are many underlying reasons, suffice to say that the Billings Police Department (BPD) and other social agencies are working very hard to mitigate the problem. However, citizens need to know that there are limitations on how these people are handled. First and foremost, there are state statutes that say it is not illegal to be homeless or publicly intoxicated. Furthermore, it is not illegal to stand on a corner with a sign, passively begging. As long as the person is not violating other laws, they are entitled to stand there. What is

illegal is aggressive solicitation or panhandling. If that occurs, enforcement action can be taken. Other laws that are frequently used to mitigate the problem are trespassing, loitering or prowling, in a park after hours, alcohol in park, open container, and public urination. A large part of the problem is that people continue to give money which exacerbates the problem. The BPD supports a project called "A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out." This program recommends that people do not give money, but direct solicitors to one of the many social agencies in the Billings area.

Questions and Comments from James Garvey via email:

Why doesn't the City have a mandatory recycling program for most waste? Paper, glass, plastic, metal, etc. I have seen microwave ovens put out on the curb and picked up and they end up in landfills. In the long run it would be financially solvent for the City to embark on such a program or at least give tax breaks to those in the private sector who would like to establish a full time recycling center.

How much money was spent on "clean up" from the last ice storm? If there had been a law in effect that limits the height

of trees on one's property, I'm quite sure the cost would have been substantially reduced and the amount of insurance claims filed by citizens from damage done to their property by falling limbs would have been reduced by thousands of dollars. When people have numerous trees on their property that reach a height of over 70 feet and pose a direct danger to other structures, the City should be able to tell that homeowner to trim those trees or the City will do it at a substantial cost to them.

If we are to keep the "Magic" in Billings, then the City needs to act in a common sense manner for all its citizens.

Answer: Recycling:

Providing efficient, affordable solid waste and recycling services is a challenge. Recycling is a service that does not pay for itself. A citywide curbside collection program would have an estimated start up cost of \$1.7 million and an annual operating budget of approximately \$780,000. Such expense would require a substantial rate increase to all customers. Consequently, the City of Billings encourages residents to reduce, reuse and recycle by utilizing municipal recycling programs AND private sector businesses.

Municipal recycling programs

available to residents include Trash for Trees drop-off bins for aluminum and newspapers, used oil and antifreeze drop-off centers, an annual hazardous waste collection event for households and small businesses, curbside collection and composting of yard waste, Christmas tree recycling and metal recycling at the landfill. These services are provided to customers at no extra cost.

In addition, the City assists private sector recycling businesses and non-profits in their efforts. In collaboration with Earth First Aid, a local business providing curbside collection of recyclables, the City donated recycling bins to area schools for paper recycling. The City also partners with Tatoonie Electronic Systems for an electronics collection event at reduced rates, and supports Bright and Beautiful by providing bins and pick-up service during the Great America Clean-Up.

Taking advantage of both municipal and private sector recycling opportunities and services is an affordable alternative the City strongly supports.

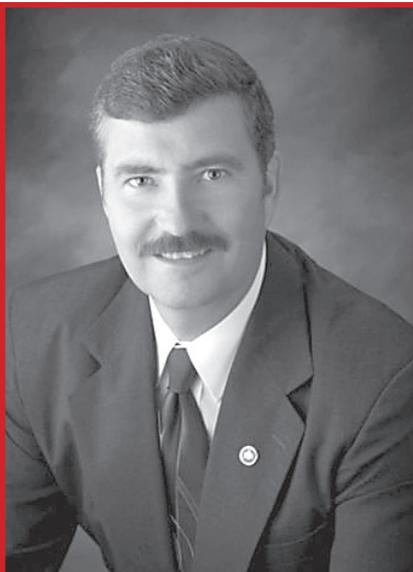
Storm/Trees:

An early winter snowstorm hit the City of Billings last October. Because the leaves from many of the City's deciduous trees had not yet fallen, the heavy, wet snow proved too much for many

tree limbs to support and they came crashing down all over town. The City's Street-Traffic Division crews cleaned up branches from City streets and parks. Residents hauled branches felled on private property to Castle Rock Park, Optimist Park, Rose Park and Poly Vista Park, which were the designated drop off points. The Street-Traffic Division alone expended over 2,100 overtime hours cleaning up branches. Workers from the Solid Waste and Distribution & Collection Divisions pitched in to help out by putting in an additional 200+ regular and overtime hours. By the time the branches were all picked up, chipped, and hauled to the landfill, the Public Works Department had expended \$69,829. This included hard costs of \$9,454 for chain saws, fuel, tires, gas, gloves, eye protection, etc. and \$60,375 to Yochum Contracting for grinding and hauling the chips to the landfill.

Public Works Department staff is not aware of any requirements within the Billings Montana City Code that specify tree height restrictions on private property.

Thanks for reading the City-Link and for sending in your great suggestions and comments!



Tom

★ ★ ★
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Paid for by Friends of Tom Hanel - PO Box 23344, Billings, MT 59104 - Dan Farmer, Treasurer.

Mountain Pine Bark Beetle in Billings

Mountain pine bark beetles are the most devastating insect pest of Montana's pine forests, and have now moved into landscape pine trees in Billings.

The Mountain Pine Bark Beetle is the insect that is killing large numbers of native pine trees in Montana's forested lands annually.

City staff identified the first infested pine trees in Walsh and Edgerton parks during the later part of August. Shortly after that, reports of attacks in other parks and of private yard trees throughout the City were confirmed by local experts. In addition to Walsh and Edgerton parks, City staff has identified infested trees in Rose, Sacajawea and at Mountview Cemetery.

The potential threat that the beetle represents to Billings' urban pine trees is significant. The beetle is currently attacking mostly non-native Scotch and Austrian pine trees but will attack all species of pine, including ponderosa, lodgepole, white and mugho. In Bozeman and Great Falls, it has been reported to attack a few spruce trees. Trees that are not growing vigorously due to old age, crowding, poor growing conditions, drought, fire or mechani-

cal damage, root disease and other causes are most susceptible.

The beetle has a one-year life cycle. In late summer, adults leave the dead trees, which have by then

lery) under the bark and produces about 75 eggs. Following egg hatch, larvae (grubs) tunnel away from the egg gallery, producing a characteristic feeding pattern.

nodules of sap, called "pitch tubes," in an effort to repel the insects. Small piles of wood dust collect near the base of the tree. Infested trees may remain green dur-

produce enough beetles to attack 2 to 10 more pine trees.

City staff is in the process of developing a comprehensive control and prevention program geared towards protecting this valuable resource.

The program would locate, identify, remove and destroy infested pine trees located in City parks. The goal would be to have those trees destroyed prior to beetle emergence in June 2010. Healthy, high-value trees can be protected by spraying them next spring with any one of several commercial brands of insecticide. Thoroughly covering the tree trunk is key to success.

Another successful tool for preventing attacks is the chemical Verbenone, which mimics the "no vacancy" message that beetles send out after an infested tree has become too crowded to support any newcomers. The synthetic hormone is sealed in a permeable plastic pouch which is stapled to the tree.

Preserving and protecting our valuable and irreplaceable large pine trees in Billings' parks is important to the quality of life in our City.



Mountain Pine Beetle About 1/4" long



Pitch Tube



Pitch Tube on trunk of tree

developed yellow to red needles. In general, females seek out large diameter, living, green trees that they attack by tunneling under the bark. However, under epidemic or outbreak conditions, small diameter trees may also be infested.

Coordinated mass attacks by many beetles are common. If successful, each beetle pair mates, forms a vertical tunnel (egg gal-

Beetle larvae spend the winter under the bark. They continue to feed in the spring and transform into pupae in June and July. Emergence of new adults can begin in mid-June and continue through September.

Identifying trees under attack by mountain pine beetles isn't difficult. As they bore into the trunk, the tree produces popcorn-shaped

ing the fall and have green crowns, but if pitch tubes and wood dust are visible, the tree will die and no treatment is going to save it. The feeding activity of the larvae will disrupt the tree's circulatory system. Once attacked, infested trees must be removed and destroyed no later than May the following spring. If not removed and destroyed, each infested tree can

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NCUA



The flyer includes information on:

- Wellness and Health Programs, such as flu shot clinics, shingles vaccinations, blood pressure and other health screenings, hearing testing, etc.)
- Fitness Room use and Fitness Classes (Slice of Life exercise -- seated and aerobic, balance training, senior Tai Chi, slow and gentle yoga, strong women-strong bones).
- Trips and Outings
- Enrichment/Educational Programs, such as computer classes, watercolor and oil classes, fly fishing, pinochle and bridge lessons, etc)
- Special Interest groups such as the Book Club, Investment Club, quilting and interdenominational ladies Bible studies
- Plus other fun things such as dances on the first Friday monthly at 7 p.m.; bingo and holiday related events.

We have a wide array of programs and services available and you are invited to get a copy of this flyer to get acquainted!

PIONEER PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Pioneer Park is the most beloved and used park in the City's inventory. The land for this park was purchased in 1918. In 1921, Dorothy M. Grey, a landscape architect, developed the first master plan. Shortly after, construction began on the new West Side park and in 1932, to honor the pioneers who settled Billings, Pioneer Park was dedicated.

In 1972, a second master plan was undertaken by the firm, Ted Wirth and Associates. Over the years, as Billings has grown, the uses at Pioneer Park have changed and increased which has prompted another comprehensive study of how best to utilize the park in a sustainable manor to preserve

this community treasure.

The City has recently retained the services of The Land Group, Inc., a landscape architectural firm out of Coeur d'Alene, ID, to undertake a comprehensive master plan update and take a critical look at park uses, programming, events, maintenance, etc. and develop a sustainable plan to guide development for the next 20 years. Inventories, studies, and public meetings will be ongoing throughout the fall and winter with a new plan anticipated the first of April.

A project web site will be set up so interested people can track the developments of the master plan update and provide their comments. Look for this information coming soon at www.prpl.info.

DOG PARKS IN BILLINGS

Have you ever wanted a place where you could take your dog to romp and play off leash? Well, this opportunity is getting closer to a reality. Two sites have been identified and approved by Council to build dog parks.

They are High Sierra Park and Riverfront Park. A third location is in negotiations for the West End of Billings and will hopefully be announced soon. The Friends of Billings Dog Park Committee, a group of interested citizens and dog lovers, has been working to develop dog parks in Billings. The committee is helping with the planning efforts and hopes to begin a fundraising campaign in October. Their goal is to raise all of the money through donations.

If you are a dog lover and interested in helping out, you can contact Mark Jarvis at the Parks, Recreation and Public Lands (PRPL) department at (406) 657-8367 or at jarvism@ci.billings.mt.us. Also, if you would like to make a tax deductible financial contribution, you can contact the Parks, Recreation and Preservation Foundation c/o Galusha, Higgins & Galusha P.C., Attn.

John Fekety, P.O. Box 2532, Billings, MT 59103. The Parks, Recreation and Preservation Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public foundation and is not directly affiliated with the Billings PRPL Department, although in the past nine years, the Foundation has provided over \$420,000 to acquire, enhance or restore public parks, recreation and historic preservation projects.

CITY-WIDE PARKS AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Late this spring, PRPL contracted with Management Learning Laboratories to conduct a comprehensive city wide parks and recreation needs assessment. The objective of this study was to find out from the citizens of Billings what their opinion is of the parks and recreation services currently offered by the department and what future facilities, programs and opportunities residents would like to see in their parks. The survey went out to 6,000 randomly selected residents in Billings. The responses have been collected and Management Learning Laboratories has compiled the data, and on Aug. 3, it submitted a preliminary report to the City Council at a Work Session on their findings.

A few of the many key findings are as follows:

- There is generally a very positive perception about parks in Billings.
- There was a significant need for new facilities.
- Respondents felt that there was a need for more funding for the PRPL Department and that they would support a dedicated mill levy for improved park maintenance and increased recreational opportunities.
- Passive recreation appears at the top of the ranking.
- Recreation programs that cater to the entire family were deemed very important.

- There is relatively high interest in many different kinds of trails (i.e. nature, biking, jogging, etc.).
- Fitness in general was a top-ranked recreational interest.

Also in September, 500 youth surveys were sent out to all middle and high Schools to find out what parks and recreational activities were important to them. This information is being compiled and the final report will reflect their opinions and ideas.

BILLINGS MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM

Billings multi-use recreational trail system, known as Heritage Trail, has grown this summer, providing even greater opportunities for bike riders, walkers and hikers to recreate or commute to work. Several new projects were completed which, when linked to existing trails, connected areas of the City that were previously difficult to bike or hike to. Also, safety improvements were made at several locations where trails crossed busy streets.

One of the new trails added to the system was constructed through Lampman Strip Park. This trail connects to an existing trail on the north side of Monad and runs south through the park to King Avenue. This new section of trail parallels the BBWA canal for much of its length. A new crossing was installed at King Avenue which includes a refuge island in the middle of King Avenue and user-activated flashing lights. The flashing light system is powered by solar panels.

Another new section of trail was constructed south of King Avenue and also parallels the BBWA canal. This trail connects to the Lampman Strip Park trail via the signalized crossing on King Avenue and connects the business area south of King to the Heritage Trail. Also, a new crossing was installed at Broadwater Avenue, improving the

safety when crossing that busy street. It is now possible to bike or walk from south of King Avenue through Lampman Strip Park, Stewart Park, Descro Park and Lillis Park all the way to Grand Avenue on a multi-use trail system away from cars and traffic.

Future plans call for constructing a new section of multi-use trail through Swords Park on the Rims. This section of trail will begin at Boot Hill next to Main Street and follow the Black Otter Trail up to and through Swords Park. Additionally, a crossing is planned to go over Main Street which will eventually connect to the Heritage Trail that runs from Coulsen Park, through Two Moon Park and north through the Heights.

The PRPL Department maintains the Heritage Trail system for all Billings residents to enjoy. As the Heritage Trail System continues to grow, Billings residents will have an even greater opportunity to bike, walk or hike throughout our community.

PARMLY BILLINGS LIBRARY STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

DeeAnn Redman has been named the new Assistant Library Director for Parmlly Billings Library.

DeeAnn has been with the Library in a number of capacities for 18 years, most recently serving as the Systems Administrator.

She replaces Jim Peters, who has retired after 31 years with the Library.

VISTA Volunteers Join Homeless Project

Seven AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) from around the country will spend the next year in Billings, working toward reducing chronic homelessness in Billings.

They will work as members of the Billings Metro VISTA Project (MVP).

The VISTA volunteers serve with non-profit organizations that focus on poverty. Three VISTA volunteers work with the City of Billings and the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness

to implement its 10-year plan. They work with partnering organizations to build capacity to work on homelessness issues.

Joanna Culver, of Portland, OR, works with the Mayor's committee and the Billings Area Resource Network (BARN). She is the event coordinator for Project Homeless Connect 2010. Jessica Mowry, of Pittsburgh, PA, is working to increase public awareness through an "Illuminate Poverty" campaign at <http://illuminate-poverty.blogspot.com/>. She is

also gaining support for community intervention initiatives. Michael Dummeyer, of Long Island, NY, is developing a plan of "Social Enterprise and Elevate the Workplace." His plan is to "find businesses that have a purpose beyond their shareholders' profit."

Passion for service is what brings these recent college graduates to Billings. "For me, a meaningful and purpose-driven life must, by definition, be a service-driven life," says Joanna.



In the photo (starting from the bottom right hand corner and going clockwise) Clare Kain, William Dickman, Liz Jung, Joanna Culver, Jessica Mowry, Katie Woloszyk and Mike Dummeyer. The photo was taken in Helena right after members were sworn in as AmeriCorps VISTAs.

News
from

Parmly Billings
your library

Annual Booksale Starts Oct. 15

The Friends of the Library's annual book sale is coming up Oct. 15-17. There will be thousands of books for both children and adults, audiobooks and many collectibles and special interest items on sale on the third floor of the Library.

On Thursday, Oct. 15, there is a special Preview Sale reserved for members of the Friends of the Library. If you're not already a member, you may join at the door. The annual meeting of the Friends begins at 6 p.m. and the sale begins at 6:30. The sale is open to the public on Friday, Oct. 16 and Saturday, Oct. 17.

The sale will be open both days from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All proceeds from the sale go to support the collections, services and programs of Parmly Billings Library. For more information, call the Library at (406) 657-8258.

Hitchcock Thriller Film Series Coming to the Library

Parmly Billings Library's Thursday night film series features classic films from director Alfred Hitchcock. It all starts the week of Halloween with a screening of the ultimate horror film *Psycho* on Oct. 29.

The other films in the series are: *Rear Window*, Nov. 5; *Notorious* on Nov. 19;

Rebecca on Dec. 3; *Strangers On a Train* on Dec. 17., *Vertigo* on Jan. 7. and *North by Northwest* on Jan. 21.

All of these films have made the list of the American Film Institute's Top 100 Thrillers. All showings begin at 7 p.m. in the Library's 3rd floor meeting room and are free of charge. Bring some snacks and brace yourself for chills and thrills from one the greatest film directors.

Download Audiobooks



The next time you want to enjoy an audiobook—download it! Library cardholders now have access to audiobooks that can be downloaded from any internet connection, saved to your computer, and even transferred to your MP3 player. This new program, called *OverDrive*, is part of the MontanaLibrary2Go statewide library collaboration. You will have access to more than 2,000 titles for adults, children and teens, in a variety of genres. Just go to the Library's website at www.billings.lib.mt.us and select "Download Audiobooks" from the "Services" menu to browse the catalog of titles, download the free *OverDrive* soft-

ware to your PC or Mac, and then you're ready to download a book. You will be able to check out a maximum of five titles at a time for 14 days. Titles will automatically "return" when the title is due, so there will never be any overdue fines. So, the next time you're going on a trip, working out, or doing chores around the house – listen to a book!

Learn a Language Online – Free!



Parmly Billings Library recently added the *Mango Languages* online language-learning system to our available resources. *Mango* is free of charge to borrowers, and offers a fun, fast and convenient way to meet language learning needs. It's the easiest way to learn to speak a foreign language!

Mango's online language learning system focuses on teaching actual conversation skills for a wide variety of languages. Each lesson combines real-life situations and audio from native speakers with an easy-to-follow interface and simple, clear instructions. Because it's completely web based, library borrowers can learn anywhere they have an internet connection — at the library, a coffee shop, or even at home in bed. It's so effective and easy to use, you'll start speaking a new language after just one lesson!

Mango Languages currently offers 9 language courses — Spanish, Japanese,

French, German, Italian, Greek, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese—and three versions of "English as a Second Language". Find it on the Library's website at www.billings.lib.mt.us under the "Research" link.

The Big Read: Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine

The YMCA Writer's Voice and the Parmly Billings Library are partners once again for this year's The Big Read. The book selected for the reading program in Billings is *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich. The Big Read is designed to engage new audiences, and foster conversations about how literature addresses the challenges, rewards and many unique aspects of Native American life. Join in the series of book discussions and programs around the community. Find out more at: <http://www.neabigread.org/communities.php>. The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The Big Read brings together partners such as libraries, civic organizations, schools and cultural institutions across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment.



MET Transit Offers Employer/Employee Pass Program

The Billings MET Transit has established a new Employer/Employee Pass Program to offer reduced prices while increasing riders.

How The Program Works:

MET Transit sells regular passes to an employer at a reduced price and the employer can sell or give the passes to employees.

Regular cost of unlimited ride monthly adult pass.....\$22.00

MET discounts the pass\$7.00

Employer cost per pass\$15.00

Passes may be purchased at the MET Office at 1705 Monad Road, or by calling (406) 657-8218.

Benefits of Riding the MET:

- Saving riders money
- Helping the environment by reducing pollution



- Less congestion on the roads
- Reducing energy dependence
- Helping to provide a healthier place to live
- Providing a stress-free ride
- Arriving to work on time
- Meeting new people
- The buses are reliable and clean
- No more hassles in finding a parking space
- Conveniently located Downtown Transfer Center that is only a few blocks from most downtown businesses
- This Leed/Green Facility provides a safe, user friendly environment
- All buses have bike racks and are handicap accessible
- Bike Lockers are also located at the Downtown Transfer Center

Added Value:

- Employee Transportation Coordinator
- Trip Planning
- Poster/Decal Recognition
- Free interior bus advertising for your business

We Want to Hear From You

Please provide us with input for our next newsletter.

What did you like most about the newsletter?

What would you like to see in upcoming newsletters?

Mail or e-mail your comments to us at:

citylink@ci.billings.mt.us

The City Link

P.O. Box 1178

Billings, MT 59103

Fireworks Violators Receive Education

Billings residents always enjoy celebrating Independence Day with a bang. Fun in the sun, backyard parties and barbecues are just a part of the fun of the Fourth of July.

As you might expect, many folks also purchase and light fireworks on the sidewalk or in their backyard, ranging from firecrackers and fountains to bottle rockets and roman candles.

Because the discharge of fireworks is illegal in the Magic City, Billings Police were called to respond to a number of complaints. As a result, Billings Municipal Court was full on July 23, with people charged with fireworks-related offenses. Billings Fire Chief Paul Dextras and Fire Marshal Mike Spini opened the court session with an educational message for the adults and children.

According to Billings Municipal Court Judge Mary Jane Knisely,

Dextras and Spini presented real-life examples of damage caused by fireworks, including mailboxes damaged by explosion and inflicted injuries. They also discussed fire dangers and answered questions posed by those ticketed for fireworks violations.

"It was a pleasure to welcome Chief Dextras and Marshal Spini to our courtroom," said Judge Knisely. "They were able to explain, from the perspective of firefighting and protection professionals, the real risks associated with fireworks in high populated residential areas ..."

Knisely indicated that many of those charged with these types of violations are often unaware that City Code bans all types of fireworks, not just aerials. This is particularly true for those who are new to Billings, who may even have purchased fireworks at retailers lo-



Marshall Spini (left) and Chief Dextras.

cated near or within City limits.

"Their presentation was full of excellent information," Knisely said, "and I believe it gave all of us there a better understanding of why the City Council voted to ban fireworks in the City years ago."

Mayor and City Council of Billings

Mayor Ron Tussing

tussingr@ci.billings.mt.us

657-8296

WARD 1

Peggie Gaghen

gaghenp@ci.billings.mt.us

259-2926

Jim Ronquillo

jimronquillo@aol.com

252-5353

WARD 2

Denis Pitman

PitmanWard2@aol.com

670-7430

Larry Brewster

brewsterl@ci.billings.mt.us

248-3044

WARD 3

Vince Ruegamer

vr@bresnan.net

259-1109

Chris "Shoots" Veis

veiss@ci.billings.mt.us

655-8942

WARD 4

Jani McCall

janimccall@msn.com

670-3084

Ed Ulledalen

edulledalen@yahoo.com

248-1478

WARD 5

Richard (Dick) Clark

twode@bresnan.net

656-1086

Mark Astle

astlem@ci.billings.mt.us

245-5576

Fax: 657-8390

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1178

Billings, MT 59103

Street Address:

210 North 27th St.

Billings, MT 59101