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Wednesday, February 21, 2024

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AREA AG  
GROWERS!**  
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## Sidney Jaycees Host Montana 2023 Year End Celebration

The Sidney Jaycees (JCI Richland County) hosted the Montana 2023 Year End Celebration at the Richland County Events Center last week. The Jaycees (Junior Chamber International USA) is a nonprofit organization that grows young leaders for community involvement. Nationwide the Jaycees currently have approximately 6,000 members with a worldwide membership of 150,000 in over 100 countries. The last statewide Jaycees event hosted in Sidney was the mid-year election conference in 2022.

Nathan Martin, 2023 JCI USA national president, was in attendance for the event. Martin traveled from his home state of Hawaii to participate in the Montana 2023 Year End Celebration. "The same impact we have in Sidney we are doing all across the globe," Martin said. Every chapter has done things a little differently around the world. "We all have the same mission, our same vision. We just develop our leaders in a little bit different ways. Some of our chapters might be more on the business entrepreneurial side of things. A lot of our chapters, especially in the U.S., are more on the community impact."

A total of five out of the six chapters throughout the state were in attendance at the event. Approximately 30 members from the Central chapter (Lewistown), Billings, Miles City, Havre and Richland County participated. The Dillon chapter was unable to attend due to a conflict with one of the chapter's local events.

Friday's activities included completions for members to showcase their leadership abilities. These competitions included write up and speak up competitions as well as a fun activity called Jaycee Jeopardy. On Saturday, the activities began with a business meeting with the 2024 board of directors and updates from the state and national levels of the organization followed by updates on each chapter's plans for the first half of the year.

The Sidney Jaycees hold several community events throughout the year. In June, they hold their Team Demolition Derby. The club holds their family-friendly Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks at the Richland County Fairgrounds. This year will mark the 47th year of the Jaycees Demolition Derby held in August.

The Sidney Jaycees



**Pictured (L-R) JCI Richland County member Greg Qunell, Sidney Mayor Rick Norby, 2023 JCI USA National President Nathan Martin and 2024 JCI USA National Vice President Harleigh Manley.**

meet every second and fourth Thursday of each month at the Sidney Chamber building at 7 p.m. All meetings are open to the

public. Membership is open to volunteers ages 18-40 who are looking to develop their leadership skills and create positive change

across the community. Additional information can be found on the club's Facebook page named JCI Richland County.

## Local Government Review On Richland County Primary Ballot

By Dianne Swanson

In accordance with the constitution of the State of Montana, local governing bodies in Richland County have voted to place the question of conducting a local government review and establishing a study commission to do so, on the primary ballot June 4, 2024.

Section 9, Article XI of the Constitution of the State of Montana requires that each unit of local government shall conduct an election once every ten years to determine whether the local government will undertake a local government review procedure.

The City of Sidney passed resolution #3928 asking voters to vote for or against the review of the government of Sidney and the establishment and funding not to exceed \$31,000, of a local government study commission consisting of three members to examine the government of the City of Sidney and submit recommendations on the government. The town of Fairview passed a similar resolution with a dollar amount not to exceed \$1500 and Richland County passed resolution #2024-04 with dollars not to exceed \$120,258.

All registered voters will vote for Richland County. Sidney residents will also vote for Sidney; Fairview voters will also vote for Fairview.

Should voters choose a government review of their local entity, a study commission comprised of three members would be elected in the general election to conduct the review. The dollar amounts each entity chose would be paid for with an additional tax.

The review would not be an investigation into any potential wrongdoing by the entities but rather a review of the makeup of each one.

## Gianforte Says Statewide Sales Tax Off The Table As His Property Tax Task Force Gears Up



**Gov. Greg Gianforte addresses members of his property tax task force in the State Capitol building Feb. 14, 2024. Credit: Eric Dietrich / MTFP**

By Eric Dietrich,  
Montana Free Press

Addressing his property tax task force at the group's first formal meeting Wednesday, Gov. Greg Gianforte had two big messages: Figure out how to bring some permanent tax relief to Montana homeowners — and don't do it by recommending a statewide sales tax.

"As we and all Montanans know too well, property taxes are too high. That's why we're here — Montana homeowners need relief," Gianforte said, detailing a list of goals that includes

slowing how fast property taxes are growing and making it easier for the public to understand how they're calculated.

"And we must do all of this without imposing a statewide sales tax. Period," the governor added.

The 23-member group of lawmakers, local government officials and fiscal policy experts was named by the Republican governor last month, a response to widespread concern about rising property taxes following last year's reappraisal cycle, which reflected the dramatic

increase in home prices that Montana saw through the COVID-19 pandemic.

An analysis by Montana Free Press found that property taxes rose on median by 21% on residential properties this year, driven partly by historic home value growth that has transferred tax burden onto residences from other types of properties. That analysis also found that tax bills decreased this year for many industrial properties owned by large businesses.

The governor's formal  
(Continued on page 8A)

## Gala Scheduled For March 2 In Watford City

Submitted by  
Jessie Veeder

The Long X Arts Foundation and Watford City Parks and Recreation invite you to The Gala: For Arts and Parks and Recreation, March 2, at the Rough Rider Center in Watford City.

The Gala is a formal fundraiser featuring supper, a blackjack table, live music, live painting, silent auction, and dancing to benefit the arts and parks and recreation programming in McKenzie County.

"We are looking forward to hosting an evening of

entertainment where guests get a chance to dress up and get treated like the celebrities they are as they support the unique programming our organizations offer," said Jessie Scofield, Director of the Long X Arts Foundation.

Guests can expect a cocktail hour from 5:30-6:30 p.m. sponsored by First International Bank and Trust featuring a signature cocktail and appetizers. During the cocktail hour, browse unique silent auction items and watch as artists Morgan Wagner and Afton Ray-Rossol paint regional

themed pieces that will be available at the live auction later in the evening.

In addition to live painting, the American Legion Club will be hosting a blackjack table throughout the evening, with proceeds benefiting the causes. Guests can also take part in the wine and whiskey pull sponsored by Red Barn Liquors, where, for a fixed price participants will choose from a selection of wrapped wine and whiskey bottles of varying types and quantities, with the chance to score a high-end bottle.

Supper will be served at 6:30 p.m. with a choice between prime rib or chicken parmesan before the featured entertainment, Pop Rock Orchestra, hits the stage at 8:30 p.m. Pop Rock Orchestra is an eight-piece band that plays the hits spanning the 60s, 70s, and 80s from British Invasion to iconic American rock. This is a big band with a big band sound so put on your dancing shoes or just come to enjoy musical entertainment at its finest!

"We believe that the arts and the parks and recreation activities that we

offer makes our community an outstanding place to live, work, and raise kids," said Josh Nollmeyer, Event and Recreation Director at the Rough Rider Center. "We couldn't do what we do without the support of the community and this event gives guests the chance to support a great cause while taking part in a special event."

"A special thank you to our sponsors who are supporting our efforts in creating an event that we hope will become a community tradition," added Scofield.

"We look forward to hosting an unforgettable evening."

Tickets are \$75 each and can be purchased at longxarts.com. Watch social media channels for a chance at prizes for early registration.

Sponsorship tables are also available by contacting Jessie Scofield at longxart@gmail.com or call 701-770-8659.

For more information on the event visit: longxarts.com/the-gala-for-arts-parks-recreation.

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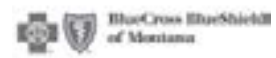
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Senior Center Events

Congregate Meals:

Fairview: Mon. & Wed., 11:30 a.m., 217 5th St. West, 406-742-5050  
Sidney: Tues. & Fri., 11:30 a.m., 813 3rd St. NE, 406-433-8077  
Savage: Thurs., 12 p.m., 178 E Main St., 406-776-9980  
Lambert: Tues., 12 p.m., Fox Lake Sr. Center, 406-774-3439

Activities/Cards

Fairview: Men/Cards, Mon.-Fri. daily at 12:30 p.m.; Women's Cards: Wed. at 12:30 p.m.; 217 5th St. West, 406-742-5050  
Sidney: Cards Thurs., 1 p.m.; 813 3rd St. NE, 406-433-8077  
Lambert: Cards, Tues., 1 p.m.; Fox Lake Sr. Center, 406-774-3439

Senior Commodity Distribution (Change)

2190 W Holly St., 406-433-3701; the last full Thurs., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; & Fri., 9 a.m.-12 p.m. of each month

AREA RECOVERY GROUPS

MONDAYS:

12 p.m. — AA Monday Noon Group, Prairie Hills Fellowship Hall, 623 N. Central, Sidney, MT (enter through back entrance door, SE side.  
1 p.m. - 3 p.m. — Grief Reovery Support group, First Lutheran Church music room, Watford City.  
8 p.m.— AA Group, Northern Pump & Compression, Watford City. Call 770-3603 or 770-2675 for directions or ride. Hotline/Info 701-609-8663.

TUESDAYS:

7 p.m. — AA Welcome Home Group, Prairie Hills Fellowship Hall, 623 N. Central, white building, enter through back entrance door, SE side. (Last Tuesday of the month-Open-Birthday Night)  
7 p.m. — 24-hour Women's AA group meeting, Northern Pump & Compression, Watford City. Hotline/Info 701-609-8663.

THURSDAYS:

7 p.m. — Al-Anon Meeting, Presbyterian Church, 316 4th Ave. NE, Watford City, ND.  
8 p.m.— AA Group, Northern Pump & Compression, Watford City. Call 770-3603 or 770-2675 for directions or ride. Hotline/Info 701-609-8663.

FRIDAYS:

6:30 p.m.- 5 Stones - Faith Based Recovery meeting, Sidney First Church of the Nazarene, 606 9th St. SW, Back door is open.  
7 p.m. — AA Welcome Home Group, Prairie Hills Fellowship Hall, 623 N. Central, white building, enter through back entrance door, SE side.

SATURDAYS:

7 p.m. — AA Welcome Home Group, Prairie Hills Fellowship Hall, 623 N. Central, white building, enter through back entrance door, SE side.  
7 p.m. — AA 24 group meeting, Northern Pump & Compression, Watford City. Hotline/Info 701-609-8663.

SUNDAYS:

7 p.m. — AA Welcome Home Group, Prairie Hills Fellowship Hall, 623 N. Central, white building, enter through back entrance door, SE side.

# OBITUARIES

## Daniela Hartle, 67 Sidney, MT

There will be a gathering to share a meal in Daniela's honor starting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday Feb. 29, 2024 at the Limitless Church, Sidney MT. A Celebration of Life Service will follow with Pastor Dustin Morgan officiating. Fulkerson Stevenson Funeral Home, Sidney, MT, is assisting the family. Remembrances, condolences, and pictures may be shared with the family at [www.fulkersons.com](http://www.fulkersons.com).  
Daniela Hartle, 67 passed away on Saturday Dec. 16, 2023 at the Sidney Health Center, Sidney, MT, with family by her side.

## Violet “Vi” M. Ronningen, 96, Sidney, MT formerly of Savage, MT

Funeral services for Violet “Vi” M. Ronningen, 96, Sidney, MT, formerly of Savage, MT, are at 11 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, at the First Lutheran Church, Savage, MT, with Pastor Tim Tharp officiating. Visitation will be Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Fulkerson Stevenson Memorial Chapel, Sidney, MT, and from 5 to 6 p.m. at the church in Savage, with a family and friends service at 6 p.m. Interment will be in the Riverview Cemetery, Savage, MT. Fulkerson Stevenson Funeral Home, Sidney, MT, is assisting the family. Remembrances, condolences, and pictures may be shared with the family at [www.fulkersons.com](http://www.fulkersons.com).  
During the early evening, on Feb. 16, 2024, Violet “Vi” Marie (Oversen) Ronningen passed on after a long battle with deteriorating health at the Sidney Health Center- Extended Care Facility.



Violet “Vi” M. Ronningen

Violet was born on Sept. 8, 1927, at home on a farm near Sidney, MT, the youngest of seven children to Niels Peter Oversen and Julia Marie (Christensen) Oversen. She would smile and tell stories of when she was very young and babysat the Bosshard girls. Then, while still a young girl attending Ridgelawn School, she would walk home and tackle the chores, caring for livestock and toting firewood to the house, among many other jobs. Not a burden, just something that needed to be done. Later, after the family relocated to a farm in Savage, she told of how she and the Kimball girls would short hoe sugar beets on their knees and then hand top those same beets in the fall and load them by shovel on the wagons as teenagers. She worked many jobs in her lifetime to support her family. She worked the lunch counters at Woolworth, Lalonde Hotel, Ben Franklin, and others. She was a nurse's aide at the Sidney Hospital and Nursing Home. All through life, she was a masterful sewer, from making western shirts for her older brothers when young to clothing and dresses for her children and others. Some very happy years came when she worked as a seamstress for the Dasinger Brothers Cleaners. After finally retiring, she still kept sewing at home. Even while recovering from a broken hip and replacement surgery, she insisted on crocheting many stocking caps for gifts to the SHC newborns.  
Her older brothers and sister were very close, and they often visited and got together. Overheard conversations usually centered around the youthful antics of farm children with vivid imaginations. Eventually they all grew up and got older and wiser.  
After graduating from Savage High School in 1945, she naturally went to work. Eventually in 1946, she met and married Allan Ronningen and to that marriage were six children: Ron (Betty) Ronningen, Billings, MT; Donna (Keith) Nelson, Savage, MT; Herb Ronningen, Colstrip, MT (deceased);, Bob (Janice) Ronningen, St Augustine, FL, Judy Church, Billings, MT; and Gene Ronningen, Savage, MT.  
They farmed north of Sidney and eventually settled in Savage, MT. Later in their lives, Violet and Allan divorced. Violet kept anchored in Savage and lived there most of her life until deteriorating health and mobility led her to the Extended Care Facility in Sidney, MT.  
Mom is survived by all her children, excluding Herb; her dear sister-in-law Lorna Oversen, Laurel, MT; 14 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.  
Violet was preceded in death by her parents; twin 2 month old brothers Herbert and Robert (whooping cough 1918), Brorson, MT; siblings Herb (1943), Savage, MT; Robert (Lorna) (1996), Laurel, MT; Rose Considine, Savage, MT (2001); and Donald (2014), Miles City, MT; her son, Herb in 1993 which devastated her; grandson Daniel Church; granddaughter Robyn; and many brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and cousins. These passings weighed very heavily on her weakened heart.  
Her family is deeply grateful for all those who were there for her, including the home nurses and Adeline Liesener that allowed her to stay at home for so long, and her care doctors and nurses. Special gratitude to the nurses and staff of Sidney Health Center Extended Care. God's angels, with difficult jobs, one and all.

## Benefit For Mike Otterstetter Feb. 24

By Dianne Swanson  
A benefit for Mike Otterstetter, Fairview, will be held Saturday, Feb. 24 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Waterhole #3. Enjoy a pulled pork dinner for a free will offering, then bid on your favorite silent and live auction items.  
Otterstetter, who is employed by Horizon Resources, fell ill on Oct. 26, 2023 and ended up being life flighted to Billings with seizures and a sub-dural hematoma. He underwent a craniotomy to remove a blood clot from his brain on Oct. 30. He is recovering well at home but will need multiple trips for further checkups and medical care. Any financial help would be appreciated as he and his family go through this journey.  
An account for medical expenses has been established at Merchants Bank, Fairview, for those wishing to contribute.



EVENTS

SEND US YOUR EVENTS!

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RICHLAND COUNTY

Events in Sidney unless otherwise listed. MT.

Wed., Feb. 21

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. - **Dramatic Moments: Frederic Remington's Early Engravings** - through March 30 - **The Odyssey of Montana's Thomas Francis Meagher By Stephen Glueckert** - through March 30 - **Rhythm & Whimsy By Richard Swanson** - through April 26 - MonDak Heritage Center, 120 3rd Ave. SE. Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., 1-4 p.m. For more info call 406-433-3500, or visit <https://mondakheritagecenter.org/>.

Wed., Feb. 21, 28

10 a.m. - **Storytime** - Ages 4-5, but all ages welcome. Focuses on kindergarten readiness & includes songs, finger plays, stories & a craft. Sidney-Richland County Library, 121 3rd Ave NW.

Sat., Feb. 23

7 p.m. - **Dance Night At The MonDak** - Dance lessons & dance social, country swing & 2-step more! \$10 members, \$15 not yet members. MonDak Heritage Center, 120 3rd Ave SE, 406-433-3500.

Fri, Feb. 23, March 1, 8, 15

5-7 p.m. - **Knights of Columbus Fish Fry Fridays** - \$13 a plate. Ned Shinnick Hall, St. Matthew's Parish Center, 310 7th St. SE. **March 15:** Right To Life Bake Sale.

Fri., Feb. 23, March 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29

7:30 p.m. - **Volleyball Sports Night** - Come bring your family & have a great time, 1215 5th St. SE. For more info call 701-317-2309.

Sat., Feb. 24, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

7 p.m. - **Basketball Sports Night** - Come bring your family & have a great time, 1215 5th St. SE. For more info call 701-317-2309.

Sat., Feb. 24

5 p.m. - **Mike Otterstetter Benefit, Fairview** - Free will offering pulled pork dinner, silent & live auctions. Waterhole #3, 418 Ellery Ave. If you would like to support Mike an account for his medical expenses has been set up at Merchants Bank, Fairview.

5:30 p.m. - **Sidney Ducks Unlimited Sportsman Dinner** - Richland County Fairgrounds. Buy tickets online at [www.sidneydu.org](http://www.sidneydu.org). For more info contact Melissa Kasson at 406-548-2569.

Mon., Feb. 26

4 p.m. - **Lego Club** - Children in grades Kindergarten-5 can stop by for this activity. Sidney-Richland County Library, 121 3rd Ave. NW.

Tues., Feb. 27

4 p.m. - **Adult Craft** - Water color painting with salt. Sidney-Richland County Library, 121 3rd Ave. NW.

Tues., March 19

12-6 p.m. - **Red Cross Blood Drive** - St. Matthew's Parish Center, 310 7th St. SE. Appointments recommended, but walk-ins are accepted. To schedule an appointment call 406-868-0911 or 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).

McKENZIE COUNTY

Events in Watford City unless otherwise listed. CT.

Fri. Feb 23 & Sat Feb 24

11 a.m. - **Bakken Shootout** - North Dakota's fastest indoor race! Tickets: adults, \$20/person, kids 10 & under, \$10/person, pit passes for spectators, \$35/ person, pit passes for contestants, \$25/person. Legends: \$35 driver entry fee. All other classes: \$30 driver entry fee. For more info call 701-842-EXPO.

Sat., Feb. 24

4:30 p.m. - **Celebration of Community & Commerce Watford City Area Chamber & EDC Annual Meeting** - Social & Hors d'Oeuvres, open bar & celebration program. Rough Rider Center, 2209 Wolves Den Pkwy. Text attendance count by Feb. 22 to Mary 701-570-5084.

7 p.m. - **Divas 3 Concert** - Covering 1960s-1990s hits by Aretha Franklin, Carole King, Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Cher, Dolly Parton, Donna Summer, ABBA, & more! WCHS Performing Arts Center, 2313 Wolves Den Parkway. Concert series memberships or purchase tickets \$30 adults; 18 & under, First Responders, & Military free.

Sat., March 2

5:30 p.m. - **Weston Hunter Benefit Dinner + Auction, Alexander** - Chili dinner, silent & live auctions, cash bar. Alexander Fire Hall, 501 Elk St. For auction donations contact Lance Powell 701-770-1485 or Martin Helminen 701-580-8338. Auction items can be dropped off at Alexander City Hall. A monetary donations account has been set up at First International Bank & Trust. For updated info check the Alexander Fire Department Facebook page.

5:30 p.m. - **The Gala For Arts, Parks & Recreation Fundraiser** - Featuring cocktail social, supper, music & dancing, live painting, silent auction, music & dancing. Cocktail attire, 21+, tickets \$75 per person. Rough Rider Center, 2209 Wolves Den Pkwy. For more info visit <https://longxarts.com>. Sponsorship tables available contact Jessie at 701-770-8659.

Tues., March 5

12 p.m. - **Grazing Logic** - Free event to learn about healthy & diverse grazing systems & benefits of working with Mother Nature. District Shop, 624 ND-1806. To register call 701-842-3628 ext. 3.

WILLIAMS COUNTY

Events in Williston unless otherwise listed. CT.

Sat., Feb. 24

2-8 p.m. - **Bras For A Cause 9th Annual Gumbo Cook-Off & Mask-R-Aid Party** - Silent auction, gumbo tasting 5 p.m., live music by Josey & the Whalers, cash bar. Admission fee at the door. Must be 21+ to attend. For more info call Cheryl 701-770-0045. New Armory, 10 Main St.

7 p.m.-midnight - **Game Night** - Free & open to the public. Bring your favorite games & snacks. James Memorial Art Center, 621 1st Ave. W.

Sun., Feb. 25

2-4 p.m. - **Glaze a Mug** - Choose one or get creative & make your own. Ages: high school-adult. \$15 member, \$20 not yet members. James Memorial Art Center, 621 1st Ave. W. For more info & to register visit [thejamesmemorial.org](http://thejamesmemorial.org).

Thurs., March 7

4-5 p.m. - **Piggy Banks** - Paint your very own ceramic piggy bank, Grades K-8th. James Memorial Art Center, 621 1st Ave. W. \$20 members; \$25 not yet members. For more info & to register visit [thejamesmemorial.org](http://thejamesmemorial.org).

5-7:30 p.m. - **Community Health Fair** - Consult health professionals, sign up for a gym membership & engage in various activities. Williston ARC, 822 18th St. E.

6:30 p.m. - **Pheasants Forever Cabin Fever Gun Grab** - Free admission. Live & silent auctions, fun, games & prizes. Guns & more guns. River's Edge Bar & Grill. 1002 2nd St. W.

DAWSON COUNTY

Events in Glendive unless otherwise listed. MT.

Thurs., Feb. 29

6 p.m. - **Glendive Friends of the Library Brains & Brew Trivia** - 4 people per team, per table, entry fee \$10 or go it alone for \$3 per player. Cross Country Brewing, 320 E Allard St.

Friday, March 1, 4-8 p.m.; Saturday, March 2, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday, March 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Glendive Gun Show** - The EPEC Building, 313 S. Merrill Ave. \$4 a day. Free admission for current WCSM members. For more info call Lowell, 406-941-1222.



# Ranger Bantams – Two Games, Two Shutouts



Bantams receiving instruction from coaches vs. Williston. (Photo submitted)

**By Brenda Filler**  
“The harder you work, the harder it is to lose.” “If you want to play, then practice. If you want to win, then practice harder.” – These are just a couple quotes from Unite Hockey, and these quotes couldn’t ring truer for the Richland Ranger Bantams. The Bantams continue to have success on the ice as they dominated their last two games this past weekend.

On Saturday, Feb. 17, the Ranger Bantams traveled to Williston to face the Williston Flyers. The Rangers were successful with a shutout win of 10-0 over the Flyers giving them their 12th straight win in league play.

Sunday, Feb. 18, the

Rangers competed against Bismarck Red on home ice and were able to secure their second shutout win of the weekend defeating Bismarck Red with a score of 5-0.

As this small, but incredible team goes into this next weekend they will be faced with their hardest competition to date as they face the Crosby Comets, the only other undefeated team thus far in the North Dakota Bantam B West league.

Friday, Feb. 23, they will travel to North Dakota to face off against Crosby. Then, on Saturday, Feb. 24, the Ranger Bantams will return to Sidney for their last home game of the season where they face off against Crosby once again. Finally,

they will travel to Minot on Sunday, Feb. 25, for their last game of the season.

With 13 league games down and just three final league games to go the Bantams 2023-2024 season is winding down. The players are looking forward to their Bantam B Gold state tournament where all their hard work will be put on display. This state tournament will push the Bantams to work their absolute hardest yet to have a chance to bring home the championship. The state tournament will be held in Crosby, ND from March 7-10.

Just one weekend of home games left for your Richland Rangers so come on down to the rink and show your support.

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## THE Gala

For Arts, Parks & Recreation  
March 2, 2024  
Rough Rider Center

5:30PM  
Cocktail Social  
Sponsored by First Fed. Bank

6:30 PM  
Supper

8:30 PM  
Music & Dancing

Live Painting | Silent Auction | Black Jack Tables  
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ANNUAL MEETING

# YOU'RE INVITED!

Fri, Feb 23, 2024  
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Women's Health & Primary Care

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Urologist

JENNIFER BEPPLE, MD  
Urologist

KATHARINE KLOS, MD  
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Pending Play-In Games vs Glendive. Winners of these games will advance to Eastern A Divisional as the NE#4 Seed.

Boys: Glendive at Sidney • Mon, Feb 19 • 7pm



Boys Varsity Roster: Dyson Romo, Seth Beyerle, Aren Larson, Kevin Hutzenbiler, Chace Waters, Gradin Sukut, Cooper McNally, Ryder Hansen, Cayden Heck, Tanner Tiesen, Braylon DiFonzo, Liam Steinbeisser, Carter Heggem, Gavin Reese, Dennis Fine

Girls: Sidney at Glendive • Mon, Feb 19 • 7pm



Girls Varsity Roster: Rhett Rossol, Aiyana Kirn, Lily Tranquill, Avé Norby, Hallie Schantz, Joael Eggum, Ella Norby, Maci Nelson, Isabelle Doty, Savanna Anderson, Audree Deming, Adessa Saitta

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## BASKETBALL DIVISIONAL TOURNEY

**BOYS: FEB 22-24, MALTA • GIRLS: FEB 29 - MAR 2, CONRAD**

**BOYS FIRST GAME: THURS, FEB 22 • 8PM | GIRLS FIRST GAME: THURS, FEB 29 • 8PM**



Kallee Hopes steps fast to block the shot from Wolf Point during districts.  
(Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)



Deacon Gackle gets fouled when coming between two Harlem defenders at the district tournament. (Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)



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Allison Jensen works to stay open against Wolf Point.  
(Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)



Brooklyn Anderson works to keep open against the Harlem Wildcats. (Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)



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"Divas 3", All Female Powerhouse Trio To Perform In Watford City On Feb. 24

**Submitted by  
Jessie Veeder**  
The next performance from the Watford City Area Concert Association will be coming to Watford City on Saturday, Feb. 24. The all female act, Divas 3, will take the stage of Watford City High School Performing Arts

Center at 7 p.m.  
Divas 3 is an amazing group with powerhouse voices who will sing the biggest hits of the greatest divas in music history. This vibrant show spans four decades covering the 1960s through the 1990s with hits by Aretha Franklin, Carole King, Celine

Dion, Whitney Houston, Cher, Dolly Parton, Donna Summer, ABBA, and many more! Individual members of the group have all starred in shows on the Las Vegas Strip. Since its inception in 2013, the group has gone on to perform at performing arts centers across the

United States, and internationally as a headlining entertainer act aboard luxury cruise ships. Their unique three-part arrangements are blended with solid, top-notch vocals honoring the iconic hits of the era of the great divas.  
Join us before the show

for a dessert social in the concourse to celebrate the Watford City Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Annual Meeting. You won't want to miss it!  
The Watford City Area Concert Series is a membership-driven organization, with individual memberships starting at \$50. A 2023-24 membership grants access to the remaining two concerts of the season as well as reciprocity with concert series lineups in Williston, Dickinson, Crosby, and Ha-

zen. There are a variety of membership levels to choose from.  
If you are not interested in a membership, individual tickets are available at \$30 for adults and all youth under 19 are free. Tickets and memberships can be purchased at [www.longxarts.com](http://www.longxarts.com) or at the door.  
To find out more contact Jessie Scofield, Long X Arts Foundation Director at 701-770-8659 or [longxart@gmail.com](mailto:longxart@gmail.com) or visit [longxarts.com](http://longxarts.com).



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MHSA 2024 District 2C Basketball Tournament

MHSA 2024 District 2C Basketball Tournament Results

- Girls Game 1**  
Bainville def. Brockton 61-30
- Girls Game 2**  
Plentywood def. Culbertson 58-20
- Girls Game 3**  
Savage def. Froid/Lake 38-34
- Girls Game 4**  
Richey/Lambert def. Mon-Dak 47-45
- Girls Game 5**  
Bainville def. Savage 44-35
- Girls Game 6**  
Plentywood def. Richey/Lambert 46-40
- Girls Game 7**  
Froid/Lake def. Brockton 59-42
- Girls Game 8**  
Mon-Dak def. Culbertson 45-34
- Girls Game 9**  
Richey/Lambert def. Froid/Lake 35-34
- Girls Game 10**  
Savage def. Mon-Dak 49-29
- Girls Game 11**  
Richey/Lambert def. Savage 45-41
- Girls Game 12**  
Plentywood def. Bainville 43-34
- Boys Game 1**  
Savage def. Richey/Lambert 49-30
- Boys Game 2**  
Plentywood def. Mon-Dak 73-35
- Boys Game 3**  
Culbertson def. Bainville 23-22
- Boys Game 4**  
Froid/Lake def. Brockton 48-38
- Boys Game 5**  
Culbertson def. Savage 36-33
- Boys Game 6**  
Plentywood def. Froid/Lake 63-54
- Boys Game 7**  
Bainville def. Richey/Lambert 57-37
- Boys Game 8**  
Mon-Dak def. Brockton 67-62
- Boys Game 9**  
Froid/Lake def. Bainville 54-49
- Boys Game 10**  
Savage def. Mon-Dak 57-43
- Boys Game 11**  
Froid/Lake def. Savage 42-36
- Boys Game 12**  
Plentywood def. Culbertson 63-29
- Boys Team Places**  
1. Plentywood  
2. Culbertson  
3. Froid/Lake  
4. Savage
- Girls Team Places**  
1. Plentywood  
2. Bainville  
3. Richey/Lambert  
4. Savage



Bainville's Elsie Wilson shoots a jump shot during the championship game against Plentywood on Feb. 17. Bainville fell to Plentywood 43-34 to place 2nd.



Culbertson's Mark Kirkaldie scores against Plentywood in the championship game on Feb. 17. Culbertson lost 63-29 placing 2nd.

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**Lunch Menus!**

**Sidney School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Tomato soup, toasted cheese, pineapple tidbits.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Chicken alfredo over pasta, peaches, steamed broccoli, garlic breadsticks.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Burritos, tossed salad, orange wedges.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Tater tot hot-dish, green beans, pears, hot rolls.

**Savage School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Chili dogs.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Butter chicken.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Pork steaks.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Nachos.

**Rau School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Chili, cinnamon rolls, pineapple tidbits.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Chef salad, breadsticks, oranges.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Country fried steaks, mashed potatoes, gravy, carrots, biscuits.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Cheeseburgers, French fries, bananas, baked beans.

**Froid School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Cooks choice, salad bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Lemon baked cod, rice pilaf, veggies, fruit, salad bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Sloppy joes, baked beans, chips, fruit, salad bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Kaylee's day! Chicken fried steaks, mashed potatoes, gravy, veggies, strawberry cups, apple crisp, salad bar.

**Bainville School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Pizza, Caesar salad, pears, salad bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** Chicken pot pie, biscuits, salad bar.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Samuel Butikofer day! Biscuits & gravy, baby bakers, pineapple, ice cream sandwiches, salad bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Turkey sandwiches, snap peas, oranges, salad bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Beef tacos, peppers, mangoes, salad bar.

**Richey School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Meatloaf, potatoes, gravy, veggies, fruit, salad bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Taco chili soup, cinnamon rolls, veggie, fruit, salad bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Enchilada casserole, corn, rolls, cookies, fruit, salad bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Chicken & waffles, veggie sticks, cookies, fruit, salad bar.

**Culbertson School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Cheese burgers, French fries, applesauce, Early Release  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Chicken drummies, peas, apples.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Lasagna, salad, peaches.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Taco in a bag, refried beans, mandarin oranges.

**Lambert School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Baked potato bar, fruit.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** Hot dogs, macaroni & cheese, fruit.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Buffalo chicken bake, corn, fruit.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Super potato oles, fresh veggies, fruit.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Beef stroganoff, rice, pasta, green beans, fruit.

**Fairview School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Loaded tater tots, black beans, fruit, fresh garden bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Chicken alfredo, broccoli, fruit, fresh garden bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Chicken enchiladas, Spanish rice, veggie, fruit, fresh garden bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Breakfast for lunch, pancakes, eggs, sausage, hash brown patties, fresh garden bar.

**East Fairview School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Chili, cinnamon rolls.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** No school.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Teriyaki chicken & rice.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Hot dogs, chips.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** KFC bowls.

**Alexander School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Pulled pork on buns, wedges, fruit & vegetable bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** Spaghetti or alfredo, broccoli, garlic toast, fruit & vegetable bar.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Orange or teriyaki chicken, fried rice, spring rolls, fortune cookies fruit & vegetable bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Hamburger or chicken stroganoff, green beans, dinner rolls, fruit & vegetable bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Chili, pretzel bites, fruit & vegetable bar.

**Watford City School**  
**Thurs., Feb. 22:** Chicken alfredo, garlic bread, fruit, veggies, salad bar.  
**Fri., Feb. 23:** Bacon cheeseburger, chips, fruit, veggies, salad bar.  
**Mon., Feb. 26:** Foot long hot dog, crinkle fries, baked beans, fruit, veggies, salad bar.  
**Tues., Feb. 27:** Tater tot hot dish, sweet dinner rolls, fruit, veggies, salad bar.  
**Wed., Feb. 28:** Steak fries, potato wedges, fruit, veggies, salad bar.

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### MHSA 2024 District 2C Basketball Tournament

The MHSA 2024 District 2C Basketball Tournament was held in Sidney Feb. 13-17. Pictured above is R&L's Keira Rains brings the ball down the court against Froid/Lake on Feb. 16. R&L won 55-34. Pictured left is Froid/Lake's Mason Dethman scoring on a layup against Bainville on Feb. 16. Froid/Lake won 54-49

### Fairview Girls & Boys Place 3rd At 2B District Basketball Tournament: Advance To Divisionals

Fairview traveled to Wolf Point for the 2B District tournament Feb. 14-17. Both Fairview girls and boys ended up placing 3rd and will move on to the 2-B Divisional Basketball Tournaments. The Fairview boys will play in Malta starting on Thursday, Feb. 22, against Cut Bank at 8 p.m. The Fairview girls will play in Conrad in 2 weeks. Girls: 1st Round: Fairview 38-Harlem 23; 2nd Round: Malta 50-Fairview 42; 3rd Round: Fairview 47-Glasgow 35; 4th Round: Wolf Point 28-Fairview 52 Boys: 1st Round, Fairview 59-Harlem 33; 2nd Round: Malta 67-Fairview 55; 3rd Round: Fairview 60-Wolf Point 53; 4th Round: Glasgow 35-Fairview 46



Carly Buxbaum gets a fast break and makes her layup during the1st round game against the Harlem Wildcats. (Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)

### Property Tax Task Force...

(Continued from page 1)

charge for the task force, spelled out in an executive order, asks the group to compile recommendations that could translate into legislation when the Montana Legislature meets next year. That's the same approach his administration took with a 2022 housing task force, which built bipartisan political support for a suite of bills passed last year to promote long-term housing affordability by reining in local government development restrictions in an effort to make it easier and cheaper to build new homes. Wednesday's property tax task force meeting, the first held in public following training sessions intended to get members on the same page about the intricate workings of the state's tax system, was focused primarily on agreeing on a list of challenges the group would like to address. Once the governor bowed out of the meeting following his initial remarks, that brainstorming effort produced a wide-ranging discussion, touching on everything from the tax implications of large industrial taxpayers shutting down operations to the difficulty non-tax-expert homeowners often have trying to understand how their property tax bills square with local government budgets. Several task force members also expressed an interest in exploring ways to ensure the tax system differentiates between residential properties used as full-time homes, as opposed to those used as second homes or Airbnb-style short-term rentals. "We traditionally think of residential as those things we wish to encourage, which is home ownership and long-term rental affordability," said Rep. Llew Jones, R-Conrad. "How do we sort through the residential mix so we target the actual relief to those folks we hope to target?" Also among their key considerations, several members said, was what Department of Revenue Director Brendan Beatty termed "squeezing the balloon" — that is, the reality that cutting taxes for homeowners will push taxes onto other payers like farms, stores or industrial properties if that reduction isn't offset by new revenue from someplace else. Gianforte and legislative Republicans have argued in recent years that higher property taxes are fundamentally driven by rising local government spending — an assertion that typically draws vigorous pushback from city and county officials. Several task force members suggested Wednesday that they're interested in revisiting the existing state law that in theory caps how fast local government tax collections can grow to half the average rate of inflation. That cap, task

force members noted, puts city and county governments in a bind when the cost of buying equipment and paying wages rises at the full rate of inflation. In some cases, they said, local governments have resorted to circumventing the cap by funding programs with technically-non-tax property assessments — a state of affairs that further muddies what's happening with public collections. Despite the governor's pronouncement that a sales tax is off the table, the initial task force conversation did veer into sales tax territory. Member Sandra Vasecka, who also serves on the Missoula City Council, wondered aloud at one point in the meeting whether it would be possible for the state to replace property taxes with sales taxes. A sales tax could lighten the tax load on permanent residents by collecting more taxes from tourists. It also would theoretically diversify the state's tax base so it's less likely that an unexpected turn of events — say, a sudden economic downturn that devastates income tax collections — could blow a hole in public budgets. Montana is also one of only five states nationally that doesn't have a statewide sales tax. As such, the sales tax option is routinely discussed as a reasonable possibility by budget-minded analysts and lawmakers. The conventional wisdom in the State Capitol, however, is that the idea is unpopular enough with the Montana public to make it a political non-starter. Additionally, as Jones noted in response to Vasecka, the Montana Constitution was amended in the 1990s to cap any future statewide sales tax adopted by the Legislature at 4%. Jones said models run by the Legislature have indicated that cap limits how much a Montana-wide sales tax could collect to the point that the Legislature couldn't replace all the money currently raised by property taxes. The property tax task force plans to meet monthly, in addition to dividing some of its work into subcommittees focused on education funding, local government finance and tax equity. It has a deadline of Aug. 15 to submit a report to the governor. More information about the task force, including a meeting calendar and briefing materials, is available at [propertytaxreform.mt.gov](http://propertytaxreform.mt.gov). This story is published by Montana Free Press as part of the Long Streets Project, which explores Montana's economy with in-depth reporting. This work is supported in part by a grant from the Greater Montana Foundation, which encourages communication on issues, trends, and values of importance to Montanans. Discuss MTFP's Long Streets work with Lead Reporter Eric Dietrich at [edietrich@montanafreepress.org](mailto:edietrich@montanafreepress.org).



Keegan Skogas moves the ball around in the 1st Round game for Fairview against the Harlem Wildcats. (Photo by Keri McPherson Photography)

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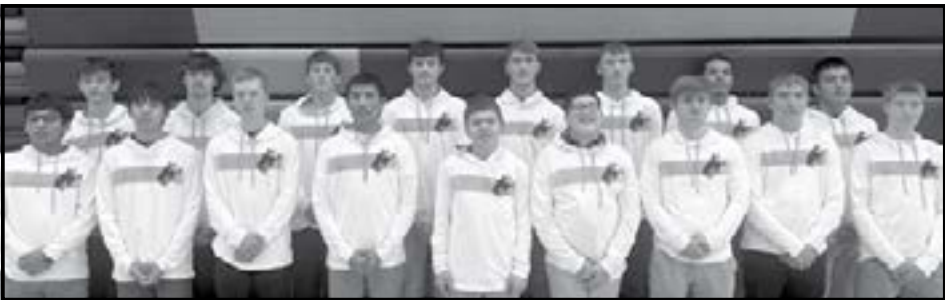
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Game 2, Wed ..... Froid/Lake vs Scobey/Opheim, 4:30pm  
Game 3, Wed ..... Culbertson vs Circle, 6pm  
Game 4, Wed ..... Savage vs Lustre Christian, 7:30pm

**SAVAGE**



(L-R): Back: Plenny Williams, Mathew Wadsworth, Gavin Deen, Mark Kirkaldie, Bridger Salvevold, Ian Snyder, Nyreece Halvorson, Micah Eagleboy. Front: Josue Mena, Mauricio Mena, Dawson Bergum, Donte Eagleboy, Colin Purvis, Owen Annett, Carson Solem, Kaden Featherston, Cal Stepler

**CULBERTSON**




Roster: Adrian Smelser, Adden Erickson, Zane Pilgeram, Kyler Jonsson, Jaegar Tombre, Brandon Vonderheide, Sayer Erickson, Jack Dabill, Jaxcen Sanders, Cade Tombre, Maverick Hunter, Hunter Sanders, Connor Lyons, Braxton Shaw

**FROID/LAKE**



(L-R): Back: Rylan Young, Nate Stentoft, Teegan Fossum, Coach Brady Berntson, Coach Chase White, Coach Don "Bear" Delorme, Joseph Robertson, Mason Dethman, Eddie Orozco, Roberto Orozco. Front: Daniel Forizs, Landen Kelm, Carsen Kelm, Cody Olson, Jacob Nordlund. Managers: Zoey Ator & Ryah Petty.

**PLENTYWOOD**



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**Game 4, Thurs ..... Savage vs North Country, 7:30pm**

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Butikofer, Elsie Wilson,  
Miah Pippenger, Tally  
Berwick, Hailey Berwick,  
Addison Hansen, Emmalyn  
Anderson, Tenley Berwick.  
Sitting: Sophie Portra,  
Jaylynn Bjorge, Johnna  
Ryder, Kaelyn Romo,  
Brecklyn Pippenger, Kendra  
Romo, Kalli Harmon,  
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## PAGES 11-15



### Bell Earns Top Honors With Golden Harvest



(Pictured L-R) Paige Bell being held by her father, soybean grower Devin Bell, who is also holding his eldest son, Rhett. Proud wife, Kaitlin, holds their youngest, Tyler. (Photo submitted)

**By Dianne Swanson**


Sidney farmer Devin Bell earned a spot with the top soybean growers in the country in the Go for the Gold Soybean Yield Contest sponsored by Golden Harvest Soybeans. His test plot of 20 acres of Golden Harvest soybean GH 0502XF yielded 69.51 bushels per acre, about two bushels more than his other varieties. "It was the highest yields I've ever had," Bell said. He farms about 250 acres of soybeans on irrigated land.

Farmers Choice, which is new to the area and sells Golden Harvest seed, approached Bell about trying their soybean seed. He is pleased that he did, as the results were better than expected. The win also brings a trip to Americas largest farmer-led, farmer-focused agricultural show in the country, the 2024 Commodity Classic, in Houston the end of February. Bell is looking forward to visiting with the vendors and attending seminars to extend his educational knowledge in commodity crops.

Bell says he was born into a farming family, went to college in Iowa for an Ag degree, then returned to join his parents Raymond and Trish Bell in the farming business. He has been farming in partnership with his father for 10 years and hopes to allow his kids an opportunity to farm as well. Alongside soybeans Bell grows alfalfa, corn, and wheat and has a small cow calf operation. Devin is married to Kaitlin Bell and they have three children: Rhett (5), Paige (3), and Tyler (1).

Golden Harvest says it is celebrating 50 years as a seeds partner with farmers to deliver custom solutions for each unique agronomic challenge. It is proud to recognize farmers who achieved top honors in the 2023 "Go for the Gold" yield contest with soybeans.

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## Congratulations to Devin Bell of Sidney on winning Gold in the Go for the Gold Challenge 2023!



# Biebers Awarded 2nd Prize at National Wheat Yield Contest

**By Dianne Swanson**  
Local farmers, Justin Bieber, and his dad, Jeff, have been looking to increase profitability on their 1700 acres of irrigated farmland since the closure of the Sidney Sugars plant ended decades of sugar beet growing. The three primary crops they now raise are corn, wheat, and soybeans. Looking to increase yields, Justin delved into various varieties of wheat. The duo settled on WestBred Wheat 9719 due to its proven high yield and good standability. That variety, with increased nitrogen, and trying some new farming practices, yielded 109.33 bushels per acre, which was an excellent bump in yields. It also earned the Biebers second place at the National Wheat Contest and a trip to the 2024 Commodity Classic in late February in Houston, TX, where they will be honored along with other winners

at the National Wheat Show banquet. Jeff said that theirs was the first entry from this area in the contest, but many farmers have grown over 100 bushels per acre over the years. The contest field seed was pre-treated with a fungicide/insecticide treatment and the field was fall fertilized prior to planting on the previous year's soybean field. Typically, their fertilizer rates for nitrogen are 150-160 units broadcast in the fall. The trial field had 160 units of nitrogen on it. Then, after tillering, during jointing, they used a sprayer with stream bars on it to apply 20 gallons per acre of 28%, which is the equivalent of 60 more units of nitrogen. This was applied on about half the field so that half had a total of 220 units of applied nitrogen. Justin said that one benefit of waiting to apply in season is that the wheat plant will not tiller as much as

if the nitrogen was applied before planting. By waiting until tillering was completed, the plant focuses on making grain instead of making a bigger plant. The difference in the two halves of the field was remarkable with the half receiving the extra nitrogen taking on a fuller, darker, healthier look. The real test came when the combine entered the field. The first half with the 160 units of nitrogen yielded 90 bushels per acre, so it was running better than Bieber's average yields just from switching to a WestBred variety. When they entered the test half of the field with 220 units of nitrogen, the yield monitor in the combine showed a definite increase in bushels per acre. Documentation is required to enter the National Wheat Yield Contest, so Leslie Tveit was recruited to certify that the acres were measured correctly, and the combine

and truck were empty before starting the trial. The truck was then weighed at the elevator to verify the production. Thank you, Leslie for the help. The final yield was 109 bushels per acre, which was a 20-bushel bump. Test weight was in the 60-lb. range, with protein around 14. After penciling out all the costs the extra nitrogen provided an additional return of \$76 per acre in a cash rent scenario! The Biebers said they entered the National Wheat Yield Contest to prove that WestBred wheat seed could generate a yield of 100 bushels or more since it's critical that farmers receive as high of a return as possible, enabling them to keep wheat in the rotation on their farm as a profitable option. The second was to prove the value of stream barring the nitrogen on in-season. The goal is to increase prof-

itability by having the farm produce 100 plus bushels of wheat per acre every year. Biebers are sharing their information since all the former beet growers are under the same conditions. "We are all trying to find cropping options and new-to-the-area farming practices to maximize returns to the farm," Jeff said. Sharing

information and trial data is a proven way to shorten the learning curve. Justin is entering his second year as a dealer for West Bred. Anyone interested in seeing these and other irrigated and dryland strip trial results is welcome to call him at 406-489-2188.

## Initial Private Applicator Training March 5-6

MSU Extension will be offering an Initial Private Applicator Training on Tuesday, March 5, in Culbertson and Wednesday, March 6 in Glendive. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. with the program starting at 8 a.m. and adjourning at 5:15 p.m. The program will be held at the Dry Prairie Rural Water Building, 5808 MT-16, Culbertson and the Yellowstone River Inn, 1903 N. Merrill Ave., Glendive.

Initial Private Applicator Trainings are for individuals who want to obtain a Montana Private Applicator License, which is required for anyone who is applying restricted-use pesticides to land that they own or lease. In addition, those who currently hold a Private Applicators license can attend to receive up to 6 recertification credits. If applicators have questions regarding their points or their license, please contact the Richland County MSU Extension Office at 406-433-1206; the Roosevelt County Extension Office at 406-787-5312 or Gabby Sexton at 406-377-4277 or Gabrielle.sexton@montana.edu.

The training will cover topics including the private applicator license, tribal license, reading and understanding product labels, record keeping requirements, pesticide law and regulations, integrated pest management, spray equipment calibration, pesticide safety and pesticides' fate in the environment. Speakers will include MSU Extension Agents from Valley, Daniels, Richland, McCone, Phillips, and Roosevelt counties. Additionally, Cecil Tharp, MSU Extension Pesticide Education Specialist and Diana DeYoung, Montana Department of Agriculture, will be presenting.

Lunch will be provided, please register by March 1 to provide an accurate meal count. For more information or to register, please contact the Roosevelt County Extension Office at 406-787-5312. Cost is \$20 for those attending for a license and \$10 for others.

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# USDA Releases 2022 Census Of Agriculture Data

Agricultural statistics provided down to the county level

**Submitted by Logan Kruse, Montana Department of Agriculture Communications Officer**

Helena – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, spanning more than 6 million data points about America’s farms and ranches and the people who operate them down to the county level. The information collected directly from producers shows a decrease in the total number of Montana farms. The data shows an increase in the number of new and beginning (operating 10 or fewer years on any farm) as well as young (under the age of 35) producers in Montana. The full Census of Agriculture report as well as publication dates for additional ag census data products can be found at [nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](https://nass.usda.gov/AgCensus). Ag census data can also be found in NASS’s searchable online database, Quick Stats.

“We are pleased to provide updated Census of Agriculture data to all those who serve U.S. agriculture, especially the producers who gave their time to complete the questionnaire. Census of Agriculture data tell a story. This comprehensive snapshot every five years helps data users to see trends, shifts in the industry over time, and helps producers

do business,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “Overall, though there are always changes across U.S. agriculture, the data remain largely consistent with the previous ag census. Data users will also notice some new data on the topics of hemp, precision agriculture, and internet access.”

Ag census data provides a valuable insight into demographics, economics, land use, and activities on Montana farms and ranches such as:

- There were 24,266 farms and ranches in Montana, down 10.3% from 2017 on 57.6 million acres a decrease of 1%.
- Family-owned and operated farms accounted for 92.8% of all Montana farms and operated 80% of land in farms.
- Montana farms and ranches produced \$4.54 billion in agricultural products, up from \$3.52 billion in 2017. The majority (55%) of the sales were from crop sales. The grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas category led with 43.0% of all sales, followed by cattle (38.6%). With farm production expenses of \$4.36 billion, Montana farms had net cash income of \$1.14 billion. Average farm income rose to \$46,889.
- 83.6% of Montana farms had internet access in 2022, a slight increase from 81.4% in 2017. However, 78.7% of farms and ranches

across the United States had internet access.

- A total of 2,544 Montana farms and ranches used renewable energy producing systems compared to 2,555 farms in 2017. Nearly all the Montana farms (85%) with renewable energy systems reported using solar panels.
- In 2022, 931 Montana farms sold directly to consumers, with sales of \$15.7 million. Value of sales increased .3% from 2017.
- The 1,080 farms with sales of \$1 million or more were 4.5% of Montana farms and represented 98.7% of sales and government payments. The 13,723 Montana farms (57%) with sales of \$50,000 or less accounted for 2.6% of sales and government payments in Montana.
- The average age of all Montana producers was 59.3. The average age in 2017 was 58.2 years.
- There were 11,724 Montana farmers with 10 or fewer years of experience, an increase in the number of beginning farmers from 2017 of 7%. Beginning farmers in Montana are younger than all farmers, with an average age of 46.9.
- The number of Montana producers under age 35 was 3,689, comprising 8% of all Montana producers.
- In 2022, 17,830 female producers accounted for 40% of all Montana producers, compared to

36% of all U.S. producers. Sixty-seven percent of all Montana farms had at least one female decision maker.

“The 2022 Census of Agriculture can be used to help communicate the story surrounding Montana agriculture as it stands today and its pace of rapid change,” said Montana Department of Agriculture Director Christy Clark. “This data helps farmers and ranchers make vital decisions on their operations as well as helping direct us as a department towards providing top tier support to our producers through our programs and services.”

The national response rate for the 2022 Census of Agriculture was 61%; more than 40% of responses were submitted online. Montana’s response rate for the 2022 Census of Agriculture was 59.3%; more than 40% of responses were submitted online. Ag census data highlight publications are available at [nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights](https://nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights).

First conducted in 1840 in conjunction with the decennial Census and conducted since 1997 by USDA NASS, the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture, the Census of Agriculture remains the most comprehensive agricultural data for every state and county in the nation.

# MSU To Host Inaugural Montana Agritourism Conference May 3

**Submitted by MSU News**

Bozeman – The Montana State University College of Agriculture and Montana Agritourism Fellows Program will host a new conference focused on the confluence of agriculture and tourism on Friday, May 3, on the MSU campus. The event will include speakers, educational sessions, and networking opportunities for attendees.

The conference, titled “Building Agritourism from the Ground Up: Inviting You to the Table,” will run from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in the Strand Union Building. It is the culmination of a year of collaboration and learning by the first-ever cohort of the Montana Agritourism Fellows Program, which was established in 2022 to engage Montana producers in developing an environment of agritourism in the state. The event is also supported by the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, for which MSU has served as the host institution since 2018.

Registration for the conference costs \$50 per person and the deadline to register is April 19. A full agenda and registration can be found at [www.montanaagritourism.com/events-2-1](https://www.montanaagritourism.com/events-2-1).

The 14 members of the Montana Agritourism Fellows Program came from nine Montana communities. Over a year, they visited sustainable agritourism operations across the state and learned about management, business, media relations, and other relevant topics.

Topics covered at the event will include starting an agritourism business; marketing and communication; funding opportunities and initiatives focused on agritourism; public engagement; and more. Speakers will include Cole Mannix, Old Salt Co-op founder, Helmsville; Nick DeCastro, LandTrust founder of recreation access network, Bozeman; and Glenna Brown and Elena Bigart, University of Montana’s Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research.

“Our conference is designed to bring together industry leaders and professionals from various backgrounds in tourism, agriculture, education, community development, and more,” said Shannon Arnold, MSU’s Department of Agricultural and Technology Education professor and a member of the leadership team for the Montana Agritourism Fellows Program. “We are looking forward to a day of insightful discussions, learning from experts, and networking with peers from around the industry.”

Along with Arnold, the program is led by Dustin Perry, of the Department of Agricultural and Technology Education head; Kim Woodring, Toole County Extension agent; and Beth Shirley, MSU’s Department of English technical communication assistant professor.

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# Help Keep Montana Free Of Wild Pigs

Submitted by Brent C. Smith, Central & Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team program manager

Wild pigs/feral swine are swine that have either escaped or were released intentionally, creating free-ranging swine populations. Wild pigs/feral swine can be found in 38 states with an estimated population of over six million animals. Wild pigs/feral pigs are also found in Canadian provinces bordering Montana. Prolific breeders, they can produce four to eight babies per litter. Wild pigs/feral pigs are highly adaptable, but prefer habitats with an abundant supply of water and dense cover. They are aggressive and pose serious ecologi-

cal, economic, and health threats.

Currently, there are no known wild pig populations in Montana.

Wild pigs/feral swine harbor diseases (swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, tuberculosis, and others) and parasites, which can impact the livestock industry. Wild pigs/feral swine most commonly carry brucella suis and can cause false positive test in cattle for brucellosis and require temporary quarantine and operation interruption. They also carry zoonotic diseases and parasites that pose a risk to humans. Wild pigs/feral swine can and will cause extensive damage by fouling water sources for native wildlife, livestock, and humans. They will consume and jeopardize native wildlife and plants and compete for food and habitat resources with native animals. Rooting by wild pigs/feral swine causes erosion and can compromise sensitive ecosystems as well as render some areas im-

passable for farm machinery. Wild pigs/feral swine will prey on the young of livestock and wildlife such as kids, lambs, deer fawns, and ground-nesting birds.

Due to their reproductive efficiency, and movement behavior, wild pigs/feral swine cannot be eradicated by simple hunting practices. Hunting pressure that fails to eliminate all animals in a group (sounder) can result in further dispersion of animals. Wild pigs/feral swine that have experienced hunting pressure become more difficult to hunt and are harder to eradicate.

In the state Montana, feral swine/wild pigs are regulated by the Department of Livestock. Montana's definition of feral swine includes animals living in an untamed or wild state, as well as swine that appear to be contained for commercial hunting or trapping. Introducing/transporting/releasing feral swine or wild pigs in Montana is illegal. Private land owners and public land users must notify the Department of Live-

stock immediately following a sighting of feral swine or wild pigs. Penalties for violation of Montana law includes fines of at least \$2,000 but not more than \$10,000 for each violation.

The Montana Department of Livestock has partnered with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; USDA Wildlife Services; Montana State University Extension; Central & Eastern Montana Invasive Species Team; and the Montana Invasive Species Council on outreach efforts and response to reports of feral swine.

Wild pig/feral swine sightings must be reported within 24 hours. Reports should be made to the De-



Photo submitted

partment of Livestock emergency reporting number 406-444-2976.

Resources:  
• Montana Invasive Species Council: Squeal on Pigs | Montana Invasive Species (mt.gov)

• USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: USDA APHIS | Feral Swine-Managing an Invasive Species  
• Montana Department of Livestock: liv.mt.gov/Animal-Health/Feral-Swine



## MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show March 7-8

Submitted by Marley Manoukian Voll, MSU Richland County Extension Agent

MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show is scheduled for March 7-8 at the Richland County Event Center Sidney.

The trade show will open Thursday at 8 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. and again on Friday from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. There will be vendors onsite with their information, products, and services. Breakfast will be served both days with the Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce hosting on Thursday and Richland County Farm Bureau hosting on Friday. Lunch will be

available at the Event Center both days, as well. In lieu of the traditional banquet, the MonDak Ag Days Committee invites the vendors and the ag community to join us in a pitchfork fondue! The Pitchfork Fondue will be onsite at the Richland County Event Center. In addition to a great meal, the Pitchfork Fondue will have a cash bar hosted by the Ranger Lounge and Casino and live music.

The educational sessions will start Thursday at 10 a.m. and you can expect topics including an update from Greenwood Renewable Ventures, Grain Storage & Drying, a Seed Crushing

Plant Update, the Basics of Estate Planning, Carbon Credits, Livestock Risk Protection, and an Agriculture and Government panel featuring elected officials.

The educational program on Friday will also begin at noon and topics include Feral Hogs, Warm Season Grass Ecology and Management (1 pesticide credit available), What's Next? 2024 Crop Market Outlook, and Mapping and Reporting Yields.

Please join Richland County Extension at the Richland County Event Center March 7-8 to take in MonDak Ag Days & Trade Show.

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McKenzie County Ag Expo, Feb. 10

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Pole Bending Fast Times: Y-Joley Johnson; Jr-Kylee Shelton

Keyhole Fast Times: C-Noah Erickson; Y-Joley Johnson

Goat Fast Times: C-Gracelyn Loshe; Y-Joley Johnson; Jr-Zoey Mitchell

Roping Fast Time: Jr-Zoey Mitchell

Children All Around: 1-Noah Erickson; 2-Grace-

lyn Lohse; 3-Banks Leiseth  
Youth All Around: 1-Joley Johnson; 2-Evelina Jacobson; 3-Harper Bradford  
Junior All Around:

1-Zoey Mitchell; 2-Kylee Shelton; 3-Joleah Hickel  
Hard Luck Award: Lucille Sokolofsky



Junior All Around winners 1-Zoey Mitchell; 2-Kylee Shelton; 3-Joleah Hickel. (Photo submitted)



Youth All Around winners 1-Joley Johnson; 2-Evelina Jacobson; 3-Harper Bradford. (Photo submitted)



Children All Around: 1-Noah Erickson; 2-Gracelyn Lohse; 3-Banks Leiseth. (Photo submitted)



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# McKenzie Co. 4-Hers Tour Sidney Meat Processing Facilities



The McKenzie County 4-H Junior Leaders traveled to Sidney on Feb. 18 for educational tours of M3 Meats and Reynolds Market to learn how livestock is processed and sold to customers. Pictured above is Colton Moran (far right) and Joe Thompson, M3 Meats, explain how animals are processed.



M3 Meats employee Joe Thompson tours the meat aging room with McKenzie Co. 4-Hers.

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## AGRONOMY BOOKKEEPER/RECEPTIONIST

*(Fairview, MT)*

We are seeking a detail-oriented and organized individual to join our team as a Bookkeeper/Receptionist. In this role, you will be responsible for a variety of financial tasks, including accounts payable and receivable, invoicing, bank deposits, purchase orders, and report generation. You will also be the first point of contact for our visitors and phone inquiries, providing excellent customer service and administrative support. Responsibilities: Accounts Receivable: Manage customer accounts, track outstanding invoices, and process customer payments. Accounts Payable: Process vendor invoices, ensure timely payments, and maintain accurate records. Banking: Make money deposits, reconcile bank statements, and monitor cash flow. Invoicing: Create and send invoices to customers accurately and efficiently. Purchase Orders: Create and process purchase orders for supplies and equipment. Reception: Greet visitors, answer phone calls, and direct inquiries to the appropriate staff member.

Other Administrative Duties: Perform other administrative tasks as assigned, such as filing. Requirements Minimum of 2 years of experience in bookkeeping or a related field. Strong understanding of accounting principles and practices. Excellent organizational and time management skills. Strong communication and interpersonal skills. Ability to work independently and as part of a team Professional and courteous demeanor.

To Apply: Call Bruce Prevost at 701-844-5775 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [bprevost@horizonresources.coop](mailto:bprevost@horizonresources.coop)

## AGRONOMY APPLICATOR

*(Williston, ND) Full-time, or Seasonal*

Responsibilities: Run a Case IH floater/Sprayer with air box spreading fertilizer on fields either pre-plant, or top-dressing agriculture crops on farmers' fields. Perform daily maintenance and calibration on application equipment. Fill out proper paperwork for application jobs complete. Wearing proper PPE gear. Requirements: Work overtime and weekends, if need be, during the busy season. Reliable and dependable during busy season. Must have a Valid Driver's license and be able to pass a drug test. CDL not required but is a benefit. Follow directions dictated by location management. Experience is preferred but not necessary. High School Diploma or GED Must be 18 years of age or older. Agriculture background is preferred. Clean driving record. Ability to understand safety protocols. Mechanically inclined.

To Apply: Call Austin Semenko at 701-572-8354 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [asemenko@horizonresources.coop](mailto:asemenko@horizonresources.coop)

## AGRONOMIST/SALES POSITION

Horizon Resources is always looking for qualified Agronomists/Salespeople to join our team. Our goal is to help our customers maximize their farming operations by increasing yields, maintaining soil health, helping with resistance management of pesticides, along with record keeping and farm planning. Our qualified staff uses the latest technology including satellite imagery along with variable rate application technology for soil fertility and seed. If you want to make a difference in our grower's farming operations, we might have a spot for you. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package along with working in a team environment with a staff that has worked with all irrigated and dryland crops in Western North Dakota and Eastern Montana.

If you want to join our team, contact John Salvevold at 701-572-8354 or submit your resume and application today [jsalvevold@horizonresources.coop](mailto:jsalvevold@horizonresources.coop)! Multiple positions available in multiple locations.



## WAREHOUSE ATTENDANT

*(All Around Feed, Watford City, ND) Essential to our supply chain.*

We are looking for a Warehouse Attendant. Responsibilities: Prepare and complete orders for delivery or pickup according to schedule (load, pack, wrap, label, ship) Receive and process warehouse stock products (pick, unload, label, store), Perform inventory controls, and keep quality standards high for audits. Keep a clean and safe working environment and optimize space utilization, Complete diary logs into inventory and report any discrepancies. Communicate and cooperate with supervisor and coworkers. Operate and maintain warehouse vehicles and equipment. Follow quality service standards and comply with procedures, rules, and regulations. Good organizational and time management skills, Ability to lift heavy objects. Ability to operate a forklift.

To Apply: Call Tim Fjeldahl at 701-444-2222 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [tfjeldahl@horizonresources.coop](mailto:tfjeldahl@horizonresources.coop)



## ELEVATOR OPERATORS

*(Watford, ND • Williston, ND) Full-time*

Keep our grain division moving by Joining our team at the Horizon Resources Cooperative. RESPONSIBILITIES: Operating Elevator Equipment, Loading and Dumping Trucks, General Maintenance, and Housekeeping. Requirements: Valid driver's license and transportation, Heaving lifting, Working in all weather conditions and confined spaces, Working at all heights, Extended hours during harvest and spring work Candidate must also demonstrate a commitment to help create a safe work environment.

To Apply: Watford City Elevator Call Alan Bilyeu at 701-842-2309 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [abilyeu@horizonresources.coop](mailto:abilyeu@horizonresources.coop) Zahl Elevator Call Rick Foss at 701-694-4111 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [rfoss@horizonresources.coop](mailto:rfoss@horizonresources.coop) Williston Elevator Call Ethan Klundt at 701-774-0228 or Submit your Resume and Application Today! [eklundt@horizonresources.coop](mailto:eklundt@horizonresources.coop)



## RETAIL STORE SALES ASSOCIATES

*(Williston, ND • Ray, ND • Fairview, MT) Be the face of our stores.*

We are looking for motivated and outgoing individuals to join our team at Horizon Resources Convenience Stores. As a clerk, you will be the face of our locations, delivering exceptional service to our valued customers. Responsibilities Include: • Processing payments (cash, checks, credit cards, or debit cards). • Stocking, pricing, rotating, and displaying merchandise. • Maintaining clean facilities and store areas, including restrooms and deli/fountain areas. • Monitoring loss prevention and ensuring store safety and security. Requirements: • Exceptional customer service skills. • Ability to handle cash transactions accurately. • Attention to detail and cleanliness. • Strong communication and teamwork skills.

We are looking for motivated and outgoing individuals to join our team at Horizon Resources Convenience Stores.

To Apply: Call Chad Ellis at 701-572-2171 (option 2) or email your Resume and Application today! [cellis@horizonresources.coop](mailto:cellis@horizonresources.coop)

## RETAIL CONVENIENCE STORE PROPANE PUMPER, HARDWARE SUPERVISOR, AND FUEL ISLAND MAINTENANCE

*(Williston, ND)*

As a Propane Pumper, you will ensure a steady and reliable propane supply for our valued customers. Handle propane filling operations, conduct tank inspections, and deliver exceptional customer service. Safety and attention to detail are paramount in this crucial role. Hardware Supervisor: Take charge of our hardware section and ensure it is well-stocked, organized, and ready to meet our customers' needs. Provide guidance and assistance to customers in their hardware selections, offer product recommendations, and deliver exceptional customer service. Your expertise and leadership will contribute to our success. Fuel Island Maintenance: Maintain our fuel islands to provide a clean and safe environment for our customers. Conduct routine inspections, perform preventive maintenance tasks, and promptly address any issues that may arise. Your dedication to maintaining a top-notch facility will ensure a positive customer experience.

To Apply: Call Melissa Williams at 701-572-2171 (option 2) or email your Resume and Application to [mwilliams@horizonresources.coop](mailto:mwilliams@horizonresources.coop)



## BENEFITS FOR ALL FULL-TIME POSITIONS

- Competitive Wages With An Attractive Sign-On Bonus • PTO, Holiday Pay • Disability And Life Insurance
- Health Savings Account • AFLAC • Health Insurance Including Vision And Dental
- 401K Retirement Plan With Company Match • Defined Benefits Pension Plan

Apply Today and Grow with Us! Visit [horizonresources.coop](http://horizonresources.coop) for more information.