

SILVER STATE POST

This edition is for Janice Lott and the people of Powell County
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City donates \$37,000 to senior center

By Luke Ulatowski

The Deer Lodge City Council voted to gift the Powell County Senior Citizens Center \$37,000 it gained from the state through a land trade at a meeting on March 18.

In December, the Montana Board of Investments (BOI) set its sights on 11 state-owned acres of land south of town in Deer Lodge to use for the development of workforce housing for Montana State Prison employees. This was to comply with House Bill

819, which allocated \$12 million to BOI specifically to provide housing for employees of state-owned facilities.

That land already contained a well owned by the city. Deciding to pursue the development of further wells on the land, the city council opted to trade BOI a seven-acre parcel directly east of Jaycee Park for it. In February, that seven-acre parcel was appraised at approximately \$167,000, while the state's 11 acres were appraised at approximately \$130,000. The land exchange proceeded, leaving the city

with a sudden excess of \$37,000 in funds. The Deer Lodge Finance Committee swiftly recommended donating the funds to the Powell County Senior Citizens Center.

The center reorganized its board and temporarily closed in May last year due to financial and staffing issues. Senior center board president Greg Larkins, who is now a city councilmember as of January, cited a misconception that COVID-era American Rescue Plan Act funds were funding all of the center's Meals on

Wheels meals as a major contributor, as the center does not refuse meals to seniors who do not pay for the service.

"That simply was not true," Larkins said at the March 18 council meeting. "Our revenue went to about 5% on our Meals on Wheels program."

The facility's two-month closure took place when bankruptcy was a possibility. The closure, according to Larkins, led to an executive director at the center being laid off. Larkins took

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1st Security president talks scams

By Luke Ulatowski

First Security Bank of Deer Lodge President Tom Christnacht warned of bank and social media scams as the guest speaker at a Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance (CSI) "Protecting the Big Sky" presentation on Thursday.

Held at the Powell County Community Center, the presentation was only one stop on a CSI tour meant to address rising fraud in Montana and nationwide. CSI Investor Education Coordinator Blair Stapleton reported that scams and fraud cost Americans more than \$12 billion in losses in 2023. Seniors were hit the hardest, with over \$3.4 billion in losses for those over 60 that year.

Christnacht primarily highlighted fake sales on social media, such as on the Facebook Marketplace. The items lifted often have prices that are too good to be true and are listed in several different towns at once. The seller's profiles often indicate they do not live in the town they are advertising in.

Christnacht recalled one of his customers received a message falsely stating her social security number had been compromised and that she had to call a certain number to resolve the issue. The fraudster on the other line led her to the bank on speakerphone. There, she handed Christnacht a note asking him to wire all of her money except for \$500 to a Wells Fargo bank account outside of the country.

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Favorite cookies . . .



Girl Scouts Troop #3708, consisting of Olivia Pierce, Chloe Pritchard, Josie Martin and Charlotte Ridgeway, sells cookies to Roberta Curran outside Valley Foods IGA during the troop's very first time selling cookies on Friday. The new troop formed in January. Photo by Luke Ulatowski

Particle board plant closure impacts sawmill

By Luke Ulatowski

The closure of the Roseburg Forest Products particleboard plant in Missoula will have an impact on all sawmills in Montana, Sun Mountain Lumber owner Sherm Anderson said.

The plant was initially built in 1969 and acquired by Roseburg in 2003. The plant provides sawmills across the state a place to sell leftover sawdust and shavings. At the plant, those are combined with resin and heated to create particleboard, a compos-

ite wood used for shelving, storage and countertops that Roseburg sells.

Roseburg will shut down the plant on May 22 as part of a plan to exit the particleboard business and focus on other products. It will stop accepting shavings and sawdust a month earlier. The plant has 150 employees.

"That [closure] affects all mills that are left in Montana, as well as some from Idaho, too," Anderson said. "If you can't get rid of your byproducts, you can't run, because you can't just

continue to pile them up and do nothing with them."

Roseburg's plant is the only particleboard plant in Montana. Anderson identifies five sawmills currently running in Montana, including Sun Mountain Lumber and R-Y Timber in Livingston, the latter of which was acquired by Sun Mountain Lumber in January. Another sawmill, Pyramid Mountain Lumber in Seeley Lake, announced it was shutting down after 75 years on Thursday.

Sun Mountain Lumber sends 10 to 12 truckloads of

wood byproducts out of Deer Lodge every day. While the shavings and sawdust go to Roseburg's plant, the chips and bark go to a producer in Rexburg, Idaho, which is also in talks to begin taking R-Y Timber's chips and bark. Sun Mountain Lumber is "still looking for a home" for its shavings and sawdust.

"Like everybody right now, we're scrambling to get locations for byproducts, but at the same time, a lot of the reason why these mills are

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SSP, P-Burg papers to consolidate

By Peggy Kerr

Next week, subscribers of the Silver State Post and the Philipsburg Mail will be perusing a much larger paper as the two newspapers will be consolidating, according to Jesse Mullen, co-owner of Mullen Newspaper Company, based in Deer Lodge.

"This will reduce the print costs, expenses which have tripled in the last 10 years," he said. The number of community newspapers

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Veterans home seeks to fill trustee seat

By Luke Ulatowski

The Southwest Montana Veterans Home Foundation is looking to fill a vacant board trustee seat with a veteran from Powell County as it also aims to raise awareness of the Butte veterans nursing home at an informational event on Monday.

In 2009, then-Gov. Brian Schweitzer established a site selection

committee for a planned \$10 million state veterans nursing home for the six-county Southwest Montana region that includes Powell County. The committee contained one representative from each of the six counties along with Deer Lodge veteran Dave Williamson, representing Montana's Veterans Affairs division.

After members of the committee made their cases as to why each

respective county should have been the location of the nursing home, in 2010 they ultimately selected Butte, where rancher and rodeo announcer Don Harrington would donate the necessitated 10 acres of land required by the state.

A long process toward breaking ground followed. Williamson stated it took seven years for the facility to get high enough on the U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs' priority list for construction to begin. A foundation for supporting the project, now chaired by Williamson,

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About scams . . .



Powell County Attorney Kathryn McEnery speaks at the end of CSI's scam prevention presentation beside CSI Investor Education Coordinator Blair Stapleton at Powell County Community Center on Thursday. She pointed out an elderly scam she has noticed in which a fraudster manipulates a victim with failing memory to gaslight the victim into thinking he or she owes something. While Stapleton spoke of Montana's restitution fund meant to at least partially recuperate some scam victims' losses, McEnery noted, "The goal of a criminal prosecution is that conviction, and unfortunately, it's not about getting the person their money back, or you might not be able to." Photo by Luke Ulatowski

State raises awareness in fight against TB

For the SSP

Following World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on Sunday, officials with Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) are raising awareness about tuberculosis prevention tips and treatments that are available for those diagnosed with the disease.

"There's been great progress to reduce tuberculosis disease in the last 20 years; however, more improvements could be made through increased education and awareness," Ryan Weight of the DPHHS Tuberculosis Program said.

TB is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. As a result, two TB-related conditions exist: latent TB infection and TB disease.

Both latent TB infection (LTBI) and TB disease can be treated. If LTBI is untreated, many individuals will progress to active TB disease, become ill and potentially transmit TB to others. TB disease can be fatal if not treated properly.

In the United States, approximately 8,000 cases of active TB disease are reported annually. In Montana, over

the past 10 years, an average of six TB cases are reported each year, down from 13 cases per year experienced in the prior decade. On average, about 530 deaths are attributed annually to TB in the U.S., and the most recent Montana TB death was in 2021.

TB bacteria spread through the air from one person to another. When a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs or speaks, TB bacteria can get into the air. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

In 2023, a total of 288 cases of LTBI were diagnosed in Montana. Some individuals are at greater risk of developing LTBI infections, including individuals who have been exposed to TB, have lived in a TB endemic country for more than a month, are immunocompromised or are on immunocompromising medications.

Individuals with any of these TB risk factors are advised to talk with their health care provider about getting tested. Treatment for LTBI infections is available and can prevent individuals from developing TB disease in the future.

For more information about tuberculosis, available tests, and educational videos, please visit dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/tuberculosis.

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800.868.7818, 406.449.9712, 406.449-4752

What do you love about your hometown paper?

When I pick up my hometown newspaper, the stories are relevant to my family.

My son's birth announcement.

A photo of my last high school football game with my best friends in 2001.

Seeing a new friend sworn onto the city council.

My wedding announcement, or my grandfather's obituary.

It was all in my hometown paper.

Local newspapers tell the stories of our communities through the eyes of the people who live here.

That's what I love about my hometown paper.

- Jesse James McEllis, founder of Mullen Newspaper Company

Business, sports and news stories are featured in the newspaper's history most of the time. There are also many other stories, including community events and local news.

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2024 Keep Kids Reading Program

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Grant Applications for Keep Kids Reading are being accepted between March 1, 2024 & April 15, 2024.

Apply Today:

TownPumpFoundation.com/reading

Questions: charitablefoundation@townpump.com



CSI Staff Attorney Drew Cziok speaks with Scott Perkins and First Security Bank President Tom Christnacht after a CSI presentation on scams at Powell County Community Center on Thursday. Photo by Luke Ulatowski

Scams from page 1

"The crook had insisted she leave her phone on speaker so her phone is on speaker sitting in her purse on the floor, so the crook could hear everything is going on," Christnacht said. "And I say, 'Hang up the phone. Go ahead and hang this up. You're getting ripped off, you're getting scammed.'"

The fraudster had feigned credibility by citing the closest security offices to Deer Lodge, and he told the victim she had to wire the money before telling her family what was going on, and she would receive the money back once her account was verified. The fraudster had initially asked her to wire all of her money, but when she asked how she would pay for things like groceries, the fraudster allowed her to keep \$500.

CSI Staff Attorney Drew Cziok had earlier warned that many scams involving the transfer of money are framed as urgent so the victim does not have time to think. The "grandparent scam" has a fraudster call a senior pretending to be a relative, often a grandchild, who got in trouble while traveling abroad and needs money transferred over the phone.

"They really don't want you to talk to anybody, because if you talk to them, you would instantly find out that the grandkid's not overseas; they're probably just fine," Cziok said. "I've heard of people who make the phone call to the

parent of that kid, and the kid's sitting in the kitchen with him right there. 'Yeah, we're having dinner together right now.'"

Cziok listed the "Four Ps" of scam tactics as pretend, problem, pressure and pay. The problem can be placed on the victim such as a claimed compromised bank account, or it can play into the victim's empathy if the fraudster pretends to be either a stranger or a relative in need. "Pressure" refers to the urgency applied to the problem that prevents the victim from alerting others of the situation.

Because of this, Stapleton noted the importance of avoiding isolation in preventing fraud. Financial institutions allow customers to establish a "trusted contact person," or "somebody who a bank or investment advisor can reach out to if they suspect that something might be amiss with their client." The trusted contact person would receive notice if a hold was placed on a victim's account due to suspected financial exploitation.

Still, Stapleton encouraged education and awareness as the best prevention, asking citizens to be skeptical of unsolicited contacts, research unfamiliar offers and sellers online, and report anything suspicious to the FBI, CSI or local police.

"You are your first and best defense against fraud," Stapleton said.

Seat from page 1

and was founded in 2018, and the facility officially opened at 65 Veterans Circle in Butte in March 2021.

The nursing home is meant to be a five-cottage facility, each cottage holding 12 beds. One cottage is still in construction, putting capacity at 48, with about 26 veterans on the waiting list. There is enough land available for the construction of a sixth cottage, and Montana's 68th legislature initially voted to appropriate \$6 million toward the foundation for that purpose. However, Gov. Greg Gianforte signed a line-item veto in May last year striking this from House Bill 5, which was on appropriations for state facilities, alongside \$17 million in other projects.

"If a Powell County veteran is a resident up [at the home], it's less than an hour drive to get there," Williamson said of the benefit for Powell County. "The other two veterans homes in Montana are in Columbia Falls, which is 200-plus miles away from here, and the third one is in Glendive, which is about 400 miles away, so

the ease of getting to the location itself is one of the big benefits of having the nursing home."

Powell County does not have a nursing home specifically for veterans. Veterans with a 70% Veterans Affairs Disability Rating can live at state veterans homes for free. Otherwise, Veterans Affairs pays \$127 per day for a veteran's stay, cutting down the cost to "about \$6000 a year," not including additional coverage from Medicaid and Medicare.

The foundation will host a meeting at the Powell County Community Center at 7 p.m. on Monday as part of a tour through the six counties. Williamson expressed his surprise in finding prominent veterans in the Powell County community had been unaware of the existence of a veterans home in Butte, and he hopes to spread the word. One purpose of the tour is to find veterans to fill vacant board trustee seats, including one for Powell County. All board trustees must be honorably discharged veterans. "We're looking for somebody that's got a hard working ethic, is

interested in helping other veterans and is interested in helping veterans' families," Williamson said. "We don't only help the veterans, but we assist their families anyway we can, too. We want somebody that's going to be very honest. And veterans know veterans, so all of us that are trustees now can understand what those residents have gone through. I mean, we've been there and done that."

The foundation is seeking volunteers to spend conversation time with residents, as well. Those interested in this or any other information can contact Williamson at dcwill1952@msn.com.

"It's amazing the stories that you will be told if you'd spend an hour in a nursing home," Williamson said. "What's sad in this country, and I've seen it firsthand, is when a loved one goes to a nursing home, family members seem to make good effort to make sure that they go see their loved one for about the first year, and then they're only going to see them about every six months, then pretty quick, they're not even going to see them."

Consolidate from page 1

across the nation is declining due to economic pressures on the industry, according to a report from the University of North Carolina Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Consolidation is the best solution to the decline, since printing and back-office functions, as well as some sales and newsroom functions, significantly reduce the cost of operations, the report states, hence the merger for these sister newspapers.

Not much else is expected to change, though. Both names will stay the same and be listed on the Flag of the front page, and each newspaper will have the same editor — Amelia Wood serves the Phillipsburg Mail and Peggy Kerr, the Silver State Post.

The same amount of stories will be reported from each paper, which includes coverage of both Powell and Granite counties.

"It will be more stories for all the readers," Mullen said.

Legals/Notices

Position Announcement: Public Works Laborer

The City of Deer Lodge seeks qualified candidates for the position of Public Works Laborer. This position performs a variety of general labor assignments as directed by the Public Works Lead Man. These duties include, but are not limited to, maintaining water, sewer, and road infrastructure; operating heavy equipment and city-owned vehicles as qualified; and conducting repairs and other maintenance as required. A prospective employee will be expected to operate effectively as part of a team and have good communication skills with team members, supervisors, and the public. The position requires that you have and maintain a current and valid Montana commercial driver's license or have the ability to obtain a license within one year of hiring. Workdays are typically Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, but the position is subject to overtime, callouts, weekends, and holidays as required. The position is a full-time Teamsters Union Local No. 2 position and is therefore subject to collective bargaining between the City and Teamsters Union Local No. 2. Starting pay is \$20.65/hour and will increase to \$21.86/hour on July 1, 2024. Benefits are excellent and include retirement, pension, medical insurance, and healthcare reimbursement, all paid fully by the City. A City job application and job description can be obtained at City Hall, 300 Main Street, Deer Lodge, MT or online at www.deerlodgecty.com. Please direct any questions to the City's Chief Administrative Officer, Jordan Green, at (406) 846-2238 or jgreen@cityofdeerlodgecty.com. The position is open until filled. The City of Deer Lodge is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR ANNEXATION BY PROPERTY-OWNER PETITION

The Deer Lodge City Council invites all interested parties to attend a public hearing to be held on April 15, 2024 at 6:00 PM at City Hall, 300 Main Street in Deer Lodge. The purpose of this public hearing is to gain public comment regarding the proposed annexation of three tracks of land into the City limits. These annexations were requested by the property owners, as they are currently in the process of requesting subdivision of the parcels. The three parcels are located to the east of JC Park and west of I-90, and are further described as:

- 1) A tract of land located in the East 1/2 Section 33, T.8N., R.9W., P.M.M., Powell County, Montana. Also located in Tract 1 as shown on Amended Plat C-656. Being: All that Portion of Tract 1 as shown on Amended Plat C-656 lying North of the East-West Mid Section Line of Section 33, T.8N., R.9W.
- 2) A tract of land located in the East 1/2 Section 33, T.8N., R.9W., P.M.M., Powell County, Montana. Also located in Larabie Lot 3A as shown on Amended Plat C-656. Being: All that Portion of Larabie Lot 3A as shown on Amended Plat C-656 lying North of the East-West Mid Section Line of Section 33, T.8N., R.9W.
- 3) A tract of land located in the SW1/4NW1/4, in the NW1/4SW1/4 and in the W1/2W1/2NE1/4SW1/4 of Section 34, T.8N., R.9W., P.M.M., Powell County, Montana. Also Located in Tract A as shown on Certificate of Survey 911 RT. Being: All of Tract A as shown on Certificate of Survey 911 RT.

If you wish to comment on the proposed annexation, please attend the public hearing or submit written comment prior to the meeting to City Hall or to the email jgreen@cityofdeerlodgecty.com.

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City of Deer Lodge and Powell County Deer Lodge City-County Airport Invitation to Bid

The Deer Lodge City-County Airport, is formally requesting electronic bids for construction services for the Apron Expansion Project. The Airport will select one contractor based on the lowest, responsive and responsible bid submitted that fits within their budget. Parties interested in submitting a bid for this project should contact Andy Galen with Morrison-Maierle at agalen@m-m.net or by calling (406) 495.3462. Electronic bid request will be accepted until 1:00 pm, local time on April 10, 2024. The full invitation to bid may be seen on Morrison-Maierle's website at www.m-m.net (under the heading of "About" and "Projects Bidding"). Contract documents will be available on Quest(CDN starting March 25, 2024).

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR TWO MAJOR SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLATS

The City of Deer Lodge Planning Board invites all interested parties to attend a public hearing to be held at 10:00 AM on Monday, April 15, 2024 at City Hall in regards to two major subdivision preliminary plat applications.

The Montana Board of Investments submitted a preliminary plat application for the "Pintler Meadows Subdivision." It is an approximately 7-acre parcel located in Larabie Lot 3A of Section 33, Township 8 North, Range 9 West, and is directly to the northeast of Jaycee Park. The applicant intends to establish 8 townhomes with 7 units each for a total of 56 units, which will be owned by the State of Montana and leased to state employees — particularly those employed by the Montana State Prison.

MTX Deer Lodge, LLC submitted a preliminary plat application for the "Beaumont Place Addition." It is an approximately 44-acre parcel located in Section 34, Township 8 North, Range 9 West, and is located on the east side of town, between the City limits and I-90. The applicant intends to create a mixed-use subdivision including single-family homes, town houses, apartments, and commercial property. 221 living units are proposed to be established.

Both applicants are petitioning the City for annexation prior to review of the applications. Copies of all application documents are available for viewing at City Hall, 300 Main Street, Deer Lodge, or by contacting the City's Chief Administrative Officer, Jordan Green, at (406) 594-1896 or jgreen@cityofdeerlodgecty.com.

Any party who wishes to provide public comment on the proposed subdivisions may attend the public hearing or provide comments in writing to Mr. Green prior to the hearing. Should the Planning Board elect to provide a recommendation to the City Council, the Council will review the applications at their regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 PM on May 6, 2024 at City Hall.

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Resolution of Intent to Impose an Increase in Levies (20-9-116, MCA)

As an essential part of its budgeting process, the Powell County High School Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Joint Board of Trustees, is authorized by law to impose levies to support its budget. The Powell County High School Board of Trustees estimates the following increases/decreases in revenues and mills for the funds noted below for the next school fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, using certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year as provided to the district.

Fund Supported	Estimated Change in Revenues*	Estimated Change in Mills	Estimated Impact: Home of \$100,000*	Estimated Impact: Home of \$200,000*
Adult Education	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease
Bus Depreciation	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease
Transportation	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease
Tuition	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease
Building Reserve	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease
Total	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease	0 increase/decrease

*Impacts above based on current certified taxable valuations from the current school fiscal year. Published in the Silver State Post, Deer Lodge, MT on March 27 2024. MNAXLP

PUBLIC NOTICE

Without public notices in the newspaper, this may be all the information you get.

PUBLIC NOTICES IN NEWSPAPERS. Where public information is accessible to the public.