



The CityLink

Official News and Information
from the City of Billings

Billings®



Spring 2017

Mayor & City Council — City of Billings

Mayor Tom Hanel: hanelt@ci.billings.mt.us - (406) 657-8296

WARD 1

Brent Cromley:
cromleyb@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 252-3512

Mike Yakawich:
yakawichm@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 254-2445

WARD 2

Larry Brewster:
brewsterl@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 670-0929

Angela Cimmino:
cimminoa@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 698-9763

WARD 3

Chris Friedel:
friedelc@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 272-2245

Rich McFadden:
mcfaddenr@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 545-9481

WARD 4

Ryan Sullivan:
sullivanr@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 850-5788

Al Swanson:
swansona@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 671-5917

WARD 5

Richard (Dick) Clark:
clarkr@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 656-1086

Shaun Brown:
browns@ci.billings.mt.us
(406) 698-2328

Mailing Address:
City of Billings
P.O. Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103

Street Address:
City Hall
210 North 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101
Fax: (406) 657-8390

ORDINANCE ALLOWS LICENSED AND LEASHED

Dogs & Cats in Most City Parks



The goal of many pet owners was realized when leashed and licensed dogs and cats were allowed in most areas of Billings' city parks as of Wednesday, Feb. 1.

Pet owners are required to have necessary clean-up equipment in their possession and to remove any fecal matter if they choose to use park facilities with their animals.

Pets are still banned in the following specific park areas, due to health and safety concerns:

- Playgrounds with play equipment;
- Spray grounds or swimming pools;
- Athletic fields;
- Tennis courts;
- Basketball courts;
- Community gardens or formal garden areas;
- City-owned golf courses;
- All park buildings; and
- Organized events including outdoor concerts, markets, shows, programs, exhibits, assemblies, festivals, carnivals and fairs.

Leashed and licensed dogs and cats are allowed only on roads in City-owned cemeteries. Organized dog events may be held with Park, Recreation and Public Lands permits in designated areas of City parks at

specific times.

High Sierra Dog Park is the only city park where dogs are allowed off-leash.

Any owner convicted of having a dangerous or potentially dangerous animal is not allowed to bring that animal into a city park.

Owners whose pets are not wearing current licenses when in parks are subject to a Municipal Code civil violation.

The City Council approved pets in parks by adopting amendments to the City's animal control ordinance on August 8, 2016, but delayed implementation of the amendments until the first day of the month following a report that the City had 10,000 dogs and cats licensed. Council members were told during a pre-budget and work plan meeting on Saturday, Jan. 21, that the City had reached its goal of having issued more than 10,000 licenses.

Pet owners seeking more information on licensing requirements can visit the City's web site at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/2450/DogCat-Licensing-Fees>. For the location of parks where they may take their pets, pet owners should visit www.billingsparks.org/park-finder.

► Inside this issue:

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Long-Term Employees Recognized..... | 2 | Join A Neighborhood Taskforce..... | 4 | New Airport Animal Relief Area | 6 |
| BPD - Evidence Facility | 2 | Petition for Reduced Arterial Fees..... | 4 | New Fire Equipment..... | 7 |
| Finance Receives Budget Award..... | 2 | Beat the Heat 5K | 4 | New Fire Recruits Start Training | 7 |
| New Faces in City Leadership Positions.... | 2 | From Our Readers | 5 | Did You Know | 7 |
| News From Public Works | 3 | Home Repair Programs | 5 | Billings Bikeway & Trails Update..... | 8 |
| | | Saving Water Makes Cents | 5 | | |

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

City Recognizes Long-Term Employees

Each year, City staff members who have reached service milestones of five or more years are recognized. The City would like to thank all of the long-time employees of Billings and especially honor those who, as of 2016, have spent three or more decades with the City serving their community. Listed below are the eight people who have served the City of Billings for 30-plus years:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Lisa Ouzts | 911 | 30 years |
| James Mertz | 911 | 30 years |
| Michelle Aman | 911 | 30 years |
| Vernon Mashek | 911 | 30 years |
| Charly Grimes | Information Technology | 30 years |
| Mark Evangeline | Aviation and Transit | 35 years |
| Melody Munter | Information Technology | 35 years |
| Rich St. John | Police | 35 years |

Billings Police Department – Evidence Facility

As the City of Billings continues to grow, the Billings Police Department's Evidence Facility and its team are doing their best to keep up, but have outgrown their current home.

In 2004 when the current evidence building was built, the staff took in approximately 10,000 items per year. In 2016, they took in 16,601 items.

This increase creates many concerns regarding storage space and safety.

The building is at capacity with about 60,000 items of evidence in secure storage. An article published by the Billings Gazette on Jan. 21, discussed the pressing need for expansion of the Evidence Facility with Chief St. John referring to the Evidence Facility as "the Achilles heel of the Police Department" (Ferguson, 2017).

In order to address this growing concern, staff are thrilled that work has begun on a development plan.

Schutz Foss Architects has partnered with Roth Sheppard Architects to come up with a plan to either add on to the existing layout of the facility or start development on what would be the new evidence facility. Roth Sheppard brings extensive experience in the designing and building of evidence facilities that will prove invaluable. The plans for the proposed development will be presented to members of the City Council in the coming months.

City Finance Department Receives Budget Award

The City of Billings was recently awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government's Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the submission of its 2017 budget.

This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting and represents a significant achievement by the City of

Billings.

It reflects the commitment of the Council and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the budget award, the City had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation.

These guidelines assess how well an entity's budget

serves as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device.

The budget document must be rated "proficient" in all four categories, and the 14 mandatory criteria within those categories, to receive the award. This is the 24th consecutive year that the City has received this award.

New Faces in City Department Leadership Positions



Library

The Billings Public Library is excited to welcome Gavin Woltjer as the new Library Director and Tori Koch as the new Assistant Library Director.

Gavin is a South Dakota native. He was raised in Sioux Falls, and received advanced degrees from the University of South Dakota and the University of Oklahoma.

He is currently completing advanced studies in Public Policy at Harvard through their Leadership Institute.

Gavin has served as the Public Outreach Director at the Sturgis Public Library, a Technology and Education Consultant for a firm in Rapid City and, prior to accepting his current position, the Dean of Library Services at Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

He and wife, Rena, have three children.

Gavin places a great deal of emphasis on being proactive and intentional in his leadership role, and some of his priorities, or areas of focus, for the future revolve around openness, collaboration and fiscal stewardship.

Tori Koch, the new Assistant Library Director, grew up in Forsyth, graduated from MSU-Billings, and attended library school at Catholic University in Washington, DC. Tori and her husband, Brent, have four children.

Previously, Tori was the Billings Clinic medical librarian, and also a librarian in California. Her 20 years of experience brings to the Billings Public Library a wealth of experience in professional development, management, and leadership.

The two new library executives bring non-traditional library backgrounds to the Billings Public Library: Academic and Medical. They are excited to put their skills to use by increasing the library's community involvement and outreach opportunities, improving the library's customer service, and leading the library's staff to embrace the challenges put forth in the library's strategic plan.

They are determined to help make the library one of the best in the nation and to "think outside the box" to improve services, programming, and resources.

Aviation and Transit

Although not a new face to the City, Kevin Ploehn was named the new Director of Aviation and Transit just over a year ago.

Kevin began his career with the City in 1990 as an Accountant in the Finance Department at City Hall. In January 1994, he moved to the Airport into the newly-created Business Manager position and was then promoted to Assistant Director of Aviation and Transit in 2006.

With his background in finance and construction, Kevin has the ability to see the big picture of Airport and Transit operations, which served him well as the Assistant Director for a decade. That, along with his ideas for the future and his dedication to making the Airport and Transit experiences better for everyone, will continue to serve him well in his new position.

Kevin and his wife, Carolee, have three grown boys who are helping their Dad build a small cabin in the mountains – a 6-year project, jokes Kevin.

Planning

Wyeth Friday is not new to Planning or the City, but was named the new Planning and Community Services Director just 3 short months ago after serving as the Acting Director 3 months. He has spent that time getting settled in and more acquainted with the 4 Divisions he now leads – Planning, Building, Community Development and Code Enforcement.

He started his career at the City 13 years ago as a Planner I, and moved up the ranks through Planner II and, until his recent promotion, served as the City/County Planning Division Manager.

Wyeth's priorities for the near future include wrapping up the update to the Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Master Plan, the preliminary steps for a zoning code update, outreach and communications efforts with customers and residents, and creating more on-line capability for permits, complaints and inquiries. He and his wife, Donna, have one daughter and spend their free time on her swimming and soccer endeavors.

NEWS FROM PUBLIC WORKS

Grand Avenue: 52nd Street West to 58th Street West

The City is working on a project to widen Grand Avenue from 52nd Street West to 58th Street West to a three-lane section.

This will include two driving lanes and a center two-way turn lane. The project will also include the construction of a multi-use path along the south side of Grand Avenue from 52nd Street West to 58th Street West and along the west side of 54th Street West from Grand Avenue to Rimrock Road.

Sections of sidewalk will be completed along the north side of Grand Avenue and east side of 54th Street West.

Also included in the project is the construction of a traffic signal at the intersection of 54th Street West and Grand Avenue and a pedestrian crossing signal (HAWK signal) in front of the Ben Steeler Middle School. Construction is anticipated to start in May and be completed by mid-August.

Instead of closing the entire road, short sections of the road will be closed during the project to minimize the effect of the closure. Detour routes will be developed for each section, so watch carefully for detour signs as they will change often. Weekly updates will be posted on the City website at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/557/Current-Projects>.



PAVER

PAVER is an annual street preventative maintenance program in place since 1985.

Annually, staff identifies streets proposed for preventative maintenance based on the condition of the street. The key element behind the program is to do preventative maintenance on the streets before the condition falls too far and the street requires full replacement.

The work is done in two ways: chip seal resurfacing for local and collector streets, and overlay resurfacing for arterials.

This year, the City will be milling and paving approximately 2.3 miles of Central Avenue between Montana Avenue and 24th Street West, beginning late spring or early summer. While under construction Central will be open but will be restricted to two lanes with one lane in each direction. Work will likely be done during normal business daylight hours.

All homes, businesses, and side streets will still have access during construction. The chip seal program will be done in several neighborhoods throughout the City which can be found on the City's website at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/557/Current-Projects>.



Wastewater Reclamation Facility Upgrade



The City of Billings is the largest community on the Yellowstone River. The river is an important resource, providing drinking water, irrigation and recreational activities for people from Wyoming to North Dakota.

In 2016, an average of 3,300 million gallons of Yellowstone River water flowed past Billings every day according to the United States Geological Survey. Flow in the river varies seasonally, peaking in Billings at almost five times the historical average in June and falling to a low of about half the historical average in January, according to the USGS.

On average, the City of Billings Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) treats between 14 and 17 million gallons of wastewater produced every day by the City's residents and businesses and is discharged to the Yellowstone River.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has determined that excess "nutrients" such as nitrogen, phosphorous and ammonia -- present in sources ranging from municipal wastewater to agricultural runoff -- are generally detrimental to the health of fresh water resources, including rivers. One way the MDEQ is limiting the amount nutrients getting into rivers is to control their concentration in discharges from municipal domestic wastewater treatment plants in Montana, including the Billings WRF.

As required by MDEQ, the City is upgrading its WRF to meet more stringent discharge requirements for nitrogen, phosphorous and ammonia. These facility upgrades will not only enable the plant to discharge cleaner water to the Yellowstone River, but also expand plant capacity for the future.

The Billings City Council recently awarded a contract worth \$61.7 million to Sletten Construction to upgrade the WRF. Existing biological processes at the plant will be converted to new processes able to sustain different biological systems capable of removing extra nitrogen and phosphorous. Existing processes must be modified and new facilities built while the existing plant continues in normal operation. The project is complex, involving carefully sequenced construction methods.

Work on the project is expected to begin this spring and be completed in the fall of 2019.



Join a City of Billings Neighborhood Task Force

Are you interested in being part of an organization that can make a difference in your neighborhood?

The Billings Neighborhood Task Forces are community-run organizations that were created to give neighborhood residents a chance to make a difference right where they live. The groups regularly participate in decisions that have the potential to affect the various areas of town where we all live, work and visit.

Some Billings Area Neighborhood Task Forces have been in existence since the 1970s as a way for the residents of Billings to provide input to city government agencies on issues concerning their areas of town.

The Neighborhood Task Forces started with three original task forces created in Billings: South Side, North Park and Central-Terry Task Forces. From the beginning, the task forces have expanded and diversified their interests while pursuing their true main focus which is to maintain, preserve, and improve the neighborhoods of Billings.

There is a continuous, open invitation to these meetings for anyone and everyone residing in, operating a business or service organization in, or just concerned with the general betterment of these neighborhoods.

Activities task forces have participated in or championed include an annual Easter egg hunt in South Park, discussions of safety improvements on the transportation network in Billings Heights, and neighborhood clean ups. Regular meeting attendees include police officers to provide activity reports, while code enforcement officers and city and state or agency government representatives attend occasionally to speak on specific topics of interest to the neighborhoods.

- The Heights Task Force meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7p.m. Meetings are held at the Oasis Conference Room, 543 Ar-

onson Avenue. Contact Jason Lillie, Chairperson, at (406) 670-7314 or Jason.lillie@remax-billings.com, for more information.

- The Pioneer Park Task Force meets every other month on the 3rd Thursday at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at McKinley School - 820 N 31st Street. Contact Perry Moler, Jr, Chairperson, at (406) 256-0210 or pioneerparktf@gmail.com, for more information.
- The Rimrock Neighborhood Task Force meets the 3rd Wednesday of January, April, July and October. Meetings are held at St. John's Lutheran Ministries' Lillis Chapel, 2429 Mission Way. Contact Lyle Gabrian, Chairperson, at (406) 259-1823 or lgabrian@bresnan.net, for more information.
- The Southside Task Force meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are held at Friendship House, 3123 8th Avenue South. Contact Matt Lundgren, Chairperson, at (406) 259-5569 or mattl@friendshipmt.org, for more information.
- The Southwest Corridor Task Force meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 7p.m. Meetings are held at Moose Lodge, 121 Calhoun Lane. Contact Tom Ruschkewicz, Chairperson, at (406) 670-4395 or downtownwrecker@bresnan.net, for more information.
- The Westend Task Force meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at Faith Evangelical Church, 3145 Sweetwater Drive, Room 128 (use main south entrance). Contact Nick Bemer, Chairman, bemer5@aol.com, for more information.
- The North Park Task Force meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at the North Park Community Center, 6th Avenue North and North 19th Street. Contact Aubree Cunningham, Chair, at aubreecunningham@gmail.com, for more information.

Beat the Heat 5k

August 26 will mark the third year that the Billings Police Department puts on their annual Beat the Heat 5k.

The race is a run/walk in which participants attempt to cross the finish line before one of the officers.

The race starts at Zoo-Montana where Red, White and Blue Day is also held. Red, White, and Blue Day combines Police, Fire, AMR and other responders who showcase their emergency vehicles and specialty demon-

strations.

Last year, Laurel Fire demonstrated how they extract a victim from a serious car crash, and Billings Police Officer Nyquist and his K-9 partner used audience participants to showcase how K-9s respond in an incident.

In addition to these demonstrations, there were CPR demonstrations, a chance to wear and experience police gear, and the opportunity to speak with first responders.

The Police Department aims to make 2017 the best year yet!

If you are interested in participating or donating to this event, please call Kallie at the Crime Prevention Center at (406) 247-8590.

Any proceeds from this event help build the event and expand Crime Prevention resources.

For more information, or to sign up, visit www.runsignup.com.



Petition for Reduction of Arterial Construction Fee

Owners of specific properties in Billings can petition for a reduction in the arterial construction fee assessments.

The reductions are available for properties that are zoned either commercial or residential manufactured home and are currently owner-occupied solely as a single family residence.

Arterial construction fees are assessed on the annual tax notices that are sent out each November. Petitions need to be filled out and

turned into the Public Works Department by August 31 of each year to provide a reduction of the arterial construction fee.

Forms can be obtained at the Public Works office located at 2224 Montana Avenue or online at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/227/Plans-Assessments>.

If property owners have questions about eligibility of the arterial fee reduction or the form, they can call Public Works at (406) 657-8230.

Don't forget to fill out your petition!



From Our Readers

Comments from Jim Sites:

There should be a pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Rimrock and Rehberg. Pedestrians are put at risk trying to cross the street at that intersection without a crosswalk and signage advising oncoming traffic.

Answer:

State law states that motor vehicle operators must still yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection. There are no national guidelines or standards that offer specific direction as to when marked crosswalks should or should not be installed. Although a pedestrian might "feel more safe" crossing an intersection that has a marked crosswalk, there are multiple studies that suggest marked crosswalks give the pedestrian a false sense of security, which leads to a lack of awareness by the user.

The City needs to be very conscientious about how resources are allocated and because ongoing maintenance of crosswalks is important to keep markings legible, marked crosswalks are limited to locations with concentrated pedestrian crossings (schools, trails, etc.). The City is reevaluating school safe routes because of school boundary changes that will take effect next year, and Rehberg Lane may be identified as a possible location for a school crossing.

The City has also recently completed a signal priority study to determine and prioritize which intersections warranted signals. The Rimrock Road and Rehberg Lane intersection did not warrant a full traffic signal to be installed at this time. However, it will continue to be monitored as a potential location for a signal, which would then also include marked pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian push buttons.

City staff will continue to monitor this intersection as part of the signal priority study as well as the school safe routes evaluation, and may mark the crosswalk in the future.

Comments & Questions from Helen Oberg:

I enjoyed all the articles, your replies and comments. Now, what can be done about excessive brush and trees in the alleys? Our alley has a big tree, mostly dead, plus lots of green trees and brush growing in the way of vehicles. Help!

Answer:

City Code Enforcement responds to complaints about overgrown shrubs and trees in alleys. Please call (406) 237-6146 or complete the on-line complaint form at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/401/Complaint-Form> and an officer will be sent to inspect the alley way and determine the responsible party(ies) and send notice.

Please know that adjacent property owners are responsible for trimming back shrubs or cutting back the tree limbs in alleys behind their residences. If tree limbs are interfering with power lines, the power supply company (Northwestern Energy) will trim back these branches.

Thanks for reading the CityLink and for sending in your great questions, suggestions and comments!

Programs Preserve and Improve Existing Housing

The City's Community Development Division manages home repair programs designed to preserve and improve existing housing and eliminate health and safety issues.

Many previous home repair clients have been elderly, disabled, from single-headed households, and/or living on fixed incomes and unable to make repairs without assistance.

Typical repairs or improvements include roofs, electrical updates, new systems (furnaces, water heaters, etc.), windows/doors, structural corrections, and accessibility features. Home repair programs allow eligible low-income homeowners to make repairs/improvements through one of the following:

Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program* provides up to a \$25,000 loan to homeowners in homes 25+ years old, located within the Billings city limits, and who meet other eligibility requirements.



Before Rehab Project

Manufactured Home Repair Loan Program* provides up to a \$10,000 loan for owners of mobile/manufactured homes built after 1976, located within the Billings city limits, and who meet other eligibility requirements.

No payments are due during the deferment period and no interest is assessed at any time. The loan is due in full if the property is sold or there is a title transfer, under certain refinancing conditions, if the property is rented, or the property is no longer owner-occupied.

Program information and applications available from:

Community Development Division
2825 3rd Ave North, 6th Floor
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 657-8284

www.CityofBillings.net/homerepair



After Rehab Project: Installation of new, energy efficient windows, siding, front and rear entrance and storm doors, etc.

** Funding is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Funding has been made available by the federal Community Development Block Grant program. The City's home repair programs are open to all eligible persons, regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, familial status, sex, religion, creed, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity.*

Saving Water Makes Cents!

Unseen or ignored leaks can drip hundreds, even thousands of gallons of water wastefully down the drain. Often, toilets are left running which causes unused water to run through the water meter and down the city sewer which will run the bill up quickly. A slow drip can waste more than 10 gallons of water per day. Performing a leak check includes the following procedures:

Turn off all the water inside and outside the home. Do not use any water (including toilet flushing) for the next 20 minutes.

Record the reading of the water meter and wait 20 minutes. Be certain no one uses any water during this time.

Record the reading of the meter again. If the meter has recorded water use during the test, you likely have a leak. Verify that the water use is not due to small appliances such as water filters or whole house humidifiers.

If you have a leak, further investigation is needed to detect and locate the

leak. The most common culprits are leaking toilets or dripping faucets.

If your toilet runs after you flush it, you should get it repaired immediately. Toilets can also have silent leaks. To test for a silent leak, put dye or food coloring in the tank at the back of the toilet. Wait 15 minutes and if the color shows up in the bowl without you flushing, it means that the water is leaking around the bottom flap in the tank. If your toilets are not the problem, you should check around your home for dripping faucets, pipes and leaks around your hot water tank.

Repair leaks quickly instead of flushing money down the toilet!



Airport Completes New Service Animal Relief Area

Billings Logan International Airport recently completed its first post-security Service Animal Relief Area, or SARA.

What this means to travelers assisted by a service animal or passengers traveling with a pet in a carry-on carrier, is that the Airport now has a dedicated area for the animals to re-

lieve themselves after the passenger and animal have gone through the security checkpoint and prior to boarding a flight.

Previously, a passenger and their animal would have had to exit the concourse to go outside to one of the outdoor pet relief areas, then return to the screening area to be re-screened by TSA.

Watch for the signs in the Terminal Building for direction to the new SARA.

The Airport utilized guidance from the federal Department of Transportation in designing the ADA-accessible SARA. The Airport also has two pre-security, outdoor pet relief areas, located at either end of the Terminal Building.



Summer 2017 Temporary/Short-Term Employment

The City of Billings is gearing up to fill seasonal positions and expects to employ approximately 200 people for the summer season.

Some positions begin as early as March, and most will end

in late summer or early fall.

Positions will be available in the following divisions/departments: Airport, Cemetery, Engineering, Library, MET Transit, Parks, Recreation, Urban Forestry, Solid

Waste, Streets, Distribution and Collection, Water, and Wastewater.

These employment opportunities should be posted by the end of February on the City of Billings website,

www.ci.billings.mt.us/411/employment. The HR website is updated each Friday at 5 p.m. with any new job opportunities.

Applications can be submitted through the online ap-

plication process, which is the preferred method, or in-person at the Human Resources Office located at City Hall, 210 N. 27th Street.

Please note: If you are applying for more than one po-

sition, a separate application is required for each seasonal position. If you have any questions, feel free to email Human Resources at hr@ci.billings.mt.us or call (406) 237-6210.

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New Equipment for the Billings Fire Department

The Billings Fire Department has been the recipient of a number of grants that have been used to purchase equipment to enhance firefighters' safety and improve the public's fire safety education program.

These grants were provided by Phillips-66, Town Pump, Exxon/Mobile Refinery and the Yellowstone County Lodging Association.

A fire safety inflatable house was purchased that includes three rooms with fire safety tips in each room. It can be used indoors or outside for public events.

This will be a significant enhancement to the overall fire prevention week activities as well as year-round use for special events. Although the inflatable house (not a bouncy house) is designed for children, it can also provide a valuable, educational opportunity for citizens of all ages.

A "Digital Fire Attach System" combines digital flames with smoke and sounds to replicate an actual fire. This

digital system responds to direct hose line applications and can be used in any number of structures to replicate the heat of a fire without having to actually produce a live fire. This type of equipment increases the opportunity to replicate fire attack drills quickly and in a safe environment.

Two jet skis were donated by Exxon/Mobile to enhance the fire department's water rescue team. The use of this equipment

will have a direct impact on the ability to respond to water-related emergencies, including rescues and hazardous material spill mitigation on the Yellowstone River.

Safety equipment that can be deployed on the scene of a variety of emergency incidents, to assist in the rehabilitation of first responders, is a welcome addition to the incident command responsibility.

This equipment will be used to

monitor firefighter vital signs and provide a controlled environment for firefighters exposed to intense physical conditions as well as any number of environmental situations.

As the Billings Police and Fire Departments enhance their training and preparation for an active shooter event, lifesaving safety equipment in the form of vests, helmets, and medical equipment were ordered as part of a grant from Phillips-66. This critical safety equipment adds a significant level of protection for all first responders in the unfortunate event of an active shooter situation.

Continued financial support for the smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector program has had a direct impact on placing these life saving devices in residential properties. Primarily for low income citizens, the installation of these early warning detectors can be scheduled by calling the Fire Department general office at (406) 657-8442.



DID YOU KNOW

- The first "airport" flight was in 1913 by Dr. Frank Bell, flying from Billings to Park City. This first flight was captured by artist J.K. Ralston in his painting entitled "First Flight," which is on display in the screening lobby in the Terminal Building.
- In the past year, Library patrons checked out 912,287 items and downloaded 115,912 eBooks, audiobooks or music. An average of 1,100 people visited the Library each day and 28,103 participated in the Library programs. 709 organizations held meetings at the Library, and 1,478 people used the study rooms.
- In 2016, the Fire Department responded to 13,362 dispatched calls and conducted 1,355 inspections.
- The 911 Center staff handled 59,282 emergency and 253,641 non-emergency calls in 2016.
- The City and Yellowstone County received \$13,328,993 from 1992 thru 2016 in CTEP funds, which funded 72 projects including sidewalks, multi-use paths, trails, bike lanes, pedestrian bridges, and school crossing improvements.
- The City has about 497 miles of Storm Sewer lines and 476 miles of Water mains.
- There are 4,392 fire hydrants in the City limits.
- More than 75,000 people participated in one of the 500+ City Recreation programs last year.
- The Billings Municipal Court is one of the busiest courts in the state, administering over 16,000 cases in 2016.
- Rimrock Road, from Normal Avenue to Shiloh Road, is about 4.5 miles long. In December 2016 alone, City crews hauled over 800 loads of snow from just this section.

New Firefighter Recruits Start Their Training

The Billings Fire Department started off the New Year with the hiring of six new recruit firefighters. Over the next 12 weeks, these recruits will participate in a rigorous training program that will lay the foundation for their entire fire service career.

The overall firefighter hiring process is a competitive challenge that actually starts many years before the actual candidate application process. Those competing for a firefighter position usually bring advanced education, includ-

ing a fire science degree, actual experience including career or volunteer service, and a national registry Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification to the interview process.

Although certifications and experience get your foot in the door, the oral interview is an essential part of the hiring process. The fire service places a high priority on candidate attitude as this will determine a recruit's dedication and commitment to public service for the next 30+ years.

The Billings Fire Department participates in an annual firefighter testing "Consortium" with other career fire departments across Montana. This testing process consists of a written examination as well as a nationally recognized physical fitness standard. All of these steps, including education, work experience, and the interview process, are an essential part of working toward the goal of being offered a position in the fire service.

Because the vast majority of firefighters stay with the

same department for their entire career, it is essential that the overall hiring process focus on a candidates training, discipline, loyalty, and attitude. Hiring the best of the best is the goal of the Billings Fire Department.

Interested individuals wanting to explore the fire service as a career can access the Montana Firefighter Testing Consortium website at <https://www.mtfiretesting.org/> for additional details.

Billings Bikeway and Trails Master Plan Update

The draft update to the Billings Bikeway and Trails Master Plan is ready for review!

Over the last year, Alta Planning + Design has been working towards an update to the 2011 Billings Area Bikeway and Trail Plan.

You can review the draft and leave comments at <http://www.billingstrails.com/documents--graphics.html>.

