

Billings City Administrator Weekly Report

November 11, 2022

1. **Election 2022 Summary from Crowley Fleck** – The 2023 Legislature will convene January 2nd and with supermajorities being focused on assisting the Governor with one time spending of its surplus dollars, while being focused that the next biennium may be tight with inflation and a potential recession. (Please see the attached report)
2. **Thorn Run TRP Special Report: 2022 Election Recap & Policy Outlook** – (Please see the attached report from Thorn Run)
3. **Thorn Run Report on Federal Advocacy Activities** – (Please see the attached Thorn Run Report)
4. **Council Legislative Committee** – Wednesday, the committee held its first meeting, established rules, selected leadership, set their next agenda, and calendared their next few meetings (11/23, 11/30, and 12/7). With the 2023 MT session starting soon they needed to hit the ground running. First up is to review the six (6) pieces of draft legislation coming out of the Criminal Justice Oversight Council. <https://leg.mt.gov/committees/interim/cjoc/>.
5. **Senator Tester Meeting** – We (Shaw, Gulick and I) had breakfast with Senator Tester this morning. We discussed our next application for \$10M in assistance for the reservoir/water plant project, crime, and other infrastructure priorities.
6. **From the PIO Desk:**

Meet the USS Billings Gold Crew!

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2404>

City Council Work Session recap 11/7/22

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2403>

From SAC – Substance Abuse Connect appoints new executive director

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2402>

City of Billings in the news

How Billings addresses First Responder mental health

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/billings-and-first-responder-mental-health/>

Billings violent crime rate still vexes city leaders

https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/billings-violent-crime-rate-still-vexes-city-leaders/article_2ceb15d4-5ee7-11ed-9c2e-977aa1314469.html

Harry Potter event happening at the Billings Public Library

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/harry-potter-event-happeing-at-the-billings-public-library/>

Join a board or commission; 37 vacancies now at City of Billings

<https://catcountry1029.com/ixp/628/p/join-a-board-or-commission-37-vacancies-now-at-city-of-billings/>

City of Billings studies traffic problems on Lake Elmo Drive

<https://www.yellowstonecountynews.com/202210281055/city-of-billings-studies-traffic-problems-on-elmo-drive/>

New library express locker coming to Billings Heights

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/new-library-express-locker-coming-to-billings-heights>

Billings police give mental health training; 2017 Big Bear standoff illustrates stress

<https://www.ktvq.com/news/local-news/billings-police-give-mental-health-training-2017-big-bear-standoff-illustrates-stress>

First responders' mental health workshop in the Magic City

https://www.kulr8.com/news/first-responders-mental-health-workshop-in-the-magic-city/article_bc1d67ac-5c99-11ed-b029-07300323f448.html

Getting through the Grind law enforcement stress leadership

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/billings-beat/getting-through-the-grind-law-enforcement-stress-leadership/>

Public comments needed for Billings LRTP

<https://www.yourbigsky.com/local-news-2/public-comments-needed-for-billings-lrtp/>

The 2023 Legislature will convene January 2nd and with supermajorities be focused on assisting the Governor with one time spending of its surplus dollars, while being focused that the next biennium may be tight with inflation and a potential recession. There are 762,291 registered voters in Montana. The big races were the two Congressional seats- both Republicans won (Zinke and Rosendale) and the Montana Supreme Court race that Governor Gianforte supported Jim Brown (PSC Chairman) ended with the Incumbent winning – Ingrid Gustafson. As of 10:30am MST 69% precincts have fully reported. 425,637 Montanans have voted.

Pre-Election Balance of Power:

Governor: Greg Gianforte (R)

State Senate: 31 Republicans- 19 Democrats

State House: 68 Republicans- 32 Democrats

Post-Election Balance of Power:

Governor: Greg Gianforte (R) up for last re-election in 2024

State Senate: 33 Republicans- 17 Democrats

State House: 66 Republicans- 30 Democrats

The House has 4 number of races undecided or within 100 votes.

HD 15 (R ahead by 10 votes), HD 48 (R ahead by 33 votes) , HD 50 (R ahead by 73 votes) and HD77 (R ahead by 44 votes).

The Senate has 0 number of races undecided.

Both houses will like have a supermajority of Republicans (Senate has 33 and House needs 67) and veto override margins with Republicans if they choose to caucus on issues.

The Public Service Commission races results are as follows:

Seat Number 5: Ann Bukacek (R) 55% v. John Repke (D)45% = Winner Ann Bukacek

Seat Number 1: Randy Pinocci (R) = Winner Randy Pinocci (R)

The Public Service Commission remains with all five seats controlled by Republicans. The current Chair of the PSC, Jim Brown, lost in his Supreme Court race so he will likely remain the chair of the PSC.

Congressional Seat results are as follows:

Monica Tranel (D) 46% v. Ryan Zinke(R) 50% v. John Lamb 4% (Libertarian):

Winner Ryan Zinke

Gary Buchanan (I) 22% v. Penny Ronning (D) 20% v. Matt Rosendale (R) 57% and Sam Rankin 1%(Libertarian):

Winner Congressman Matt Rosendale (second place was Independent Buchanan)

Montana Supreme Court nonpartisan results are as follows:

Jim Rice 78% v. Bill D’Alton 22%: Winner Incumbent Jim Rice

Ingrid Gustafson 54% v. Jim Brown 46% : Winner Incumbent Ingrid Gustafson

Ballot Initiatives:

Constitutional Amendment No. 48 passed with 82% support

An act submitting to the qualified electors of Montana an amendment to Article II, Section 11, of the Montana Constitution to explicitly include electronic data and communications in search and seizure protections.

Legislative Referendum No. 131 failed with 48% support

An act adopting the Born-Alive Infant Protection Act; providing that infant born alive, including infants born alive after an abortion, are legal persons; requiring health care providers to take necessary actions to preserve the life of a born-alive infant; providing a penalty; providing that the proposed act be submitted to the qualified electors of Montana; and providing an effective date.

TRP Special Report: 2022 Election Recap & Policy Outlook

- *Republicans are positioned to win a narrow House majority.*
- *Senate remains too close to call as vote counts continue in AZ, NV, & GA.*
- *A final call for control of both chambers of Congress is not immediately expected.*

[View Special Report](#)

The 2022 midterm election cycle is drawing to a dramatic conclusion as votes are still being tallied in several outstanding House and Senate races. While the race to control Congress is still too close to officially call, election analysts expect the GOP to win control of the House with a narrow majority of anywhere from two to 13 seats, due in part to redistricting. Meanwhile, swing-state Senate races in Nevada and Arizona are still too close to call and will ultimately help determine which party controls the chamber in the 118th Congress. With Democrats flipping Pennsylvania, the GOP will need to win the both of these aforementioned seats — as well as the December 6 runoff election between Georgia Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) and Herschel Walker (R-GA) — to win control of the Senate.

TRP's newest [special report](#) provides an overview of where things stand in the 2022 midterm elections, a preview of some of the upcoming party and committee leadership races, as well as policy issues to watch out for in the "lame duck" and beyond. This deck will continue to be updated over the course of the coming days and weeks as results get finalized. To receive these slides in PowerPoint format, please email Daniel Gleason (dgleason@thornrun.com).



Memorandum

November 7, 2022

To: City of Billings City Council
Chris Kukulski, City Administrator

From: Thorn Run Partners

Subject: Report on Federal Advocacy Activities

Since being hired by the City in July, we have been hard at work learning about the City and helping Departments initially engage in Washington on key issues. Before we can help the City develop a comprehensive Federal Legislative Agenda, we have had to engage with City staff to learn more about priority issues. This led to setting up individual calls with City administration and department heads, including from the following departments:

- Police
- Fire
- Airport and Transit
- Public Works/Transportation
- Parks and Recreation

From these and other conversations, we will develop a Federal agenda for your consideration. The Federal agenda will comprehensively summarize issues and funding opportunities essential to the City. The document will thoroughly outline areas of interest, their potential impacts on Billings, and recommend policy positions or actions. We are beginning to put together a first draft of the City's agenda.

Equally as important, we have already made your staff aware of key funding opportunities and helped the City directly engage with Federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (for fire-related grants).

For example, after speaking with Public Works about the West End Reservoir project, we identified a funding opportunity of which the City was otherwise not aware. Congress established the Small Storage Program of the Bureau of Reclamation when they passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law last year. Eligible projects must have a storage capacity of between 2,000 and 30,000 acre-feet. Reclamation can provide up to 25% Federal funding for projects that will increase water supply reliability, improve operational flexibility, and enhance climate resiliency of water infrastructure, thereby making the West End Reservoir project eligible.

The City has worked with its engineering consultants to develop a feasibility study that has been submitted to the Bureau for approval – a requirement to apply for funding – and should hear soon as

to whether the feasibility study is approved, making the project eligible to apply for the first (of five) round of grant funding. While the project faces other challenges, it is our hope the City will apply by early December and may hear as soon as this Spring as to whether the project is selected for funding.

We look forward to visiting the City soon and also appearing before Council to present you an overview of what is happening in Washington and how that intersects with your goals to create opportunity.