

The CityLink

Billings'
HONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

Official News and Information from the City of Billings

Spring 2011

Major City Construction Projects – Summer 2011

24th Street Overlay and 1st Ave N Overlay

The City will be resurfacing 24th Street West from Grand Avenue to Central Avenue, Grand Avenue from 24th Street West to the BBWA Canal, and 1st Avenue North from North 18th Street to North 30th Street. This work is anticipated to start in June and last approximately four weeks.

Most of the work will be done at night between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. There will be temporary singlelane closures during the day to remove and replace manholes in preparation of the resurfacing.



Water Replacement Project

The Public Works Department is planning another season of water improvement projects, so commuters should be aware of several areas around Billings where major construction will be taking place between May and October. The major water main replacement project will occur on 4th Avenue North between North 18th and North 28th Streets. Other water main replacement projects will occur on North 33rd, 34th and 35th Streets between Montana Avenue and Division Street, as well as on 1st and 2nd Avenue North between North 33rd and



Division Streets. Commuters should expect reduced driving speeds, travel lane restrictions, detours and road closures in these project areas.

Rimrock Road

The Rimrock Road reconstruction project will improve Rimrock Road from 17th Street West to Forsythia Boulevard. Improvements generally consist of street widening, installation of curb/gutter, sidewalk, drive approaches, streetlights, and replacement of the water main. Drivers within the project limits (inclusive of garbage, mail, and bus service) will continue to have access to individual homes; however, as the construction project pro-

gresses along the length of Rimrock, drivers may need to alter their typical routes to access their homes. The project will be closed to through traffic, and those drivers will be asked to stay on the main streets of Rehberg, Poly, and 17th. The project is scheduled to begin in late May or early June and last through September.

If you have questions or comments, please contact the City Engineer's Office at (406) 657-8231. For further information regarding these and other City projects, please access the City's website at www.ci.billings.mt.us/index.aspx?nid=556 or on Facebook under the City of Billings – Engineering.

City Auction - Please Note!

The City has discontinued its annual surplus auction, but instead will be disposing of surplus items on an as-needed basis through local auction houses, donations, or otherwise. Please contact Liz Kampa-Weatherwax, Purchasing Agent, for more information at (406) 657-8216 or via email at kampal@ci.billings.mt.us. Thank you!

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News From Billings Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department (PRPL)

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Are you ready to get out and get active after the long cold spell? Check out what Parks and Recreation has to offer!

- Volleyball Adult Coed League
- Audubon Nature Camps
- Belly Dancing
- **Zumba**
- Fly Fishing Everything you need to know about fly fishing, plus hands-on casting practice. Learn how to rig lines, tie knots, what fish feed on and keys to successful fishing.
- **GPS Classes** Classes vary from learning the basics of using your GPS unit, to instruction in proper use of compass with maps, as well as providing hands-on assistance in setting up and operating your receiver.
 - Intro to Recreational GPS
 - GPS with Maps
 - Getting the Most from your GPS
- Pure Pilates

Strong Woman Strong Bones –

A nationally-recognized fitness program, designed for women 55+ that focuses on strength training, improving bone density, increasing flexibility and improving arthritis symptoms.

All information and complete class listings may be found at www.prpl.info. You may register for all classes online or mail in your registration form (this can be downloaded off the Parks and Recreation website) or come by the office located at 390 N. 23rd Street.

Parks Department Receives a New Trash Truck

The Parks Department recently took delivery of a new trash truck. A grant from Exxon Mobil funded 100 percent

of the cost of the truck. The new trash truck will greatly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of trash removal from all City parks.



Recycling Bleachers from Cobb Field

A recycling program is under way in the City of Billings' Park Maintenance shop. Aluminum seating from the former Cobb Field Stadium is now being retrofitted for picnic table seats and tops. Approximately 100 tables have been refurbished so far, at a retail value of \$250 each, while eliminating the need for future wood, paint and labor costs. The tables are being placed throughout the entire City Park System.



Swords Park Phase II Trail Development

PRPL has retained Sanderson Stewart of Billings to do consulting work

for the second phase of trail development at Swords Park. This new section will connect the existing two mile segment along the Rims (beginning at the "roundabout" on 27th Street and ending near the electrical substation) with the tunnel and trail segment that was recently completed as part of the Airport Road Improvement Project at the intersection of Airport Road and Aronson Avenue. Design work has begun in earnest and PRPL is currently reviewing alternative trail alignments. It is anticipated that this project will go out for bid this spring and be constructed this summer. Completion of the project is scheduled for October of this year.

Dog Parks in Billings

This rendering depicts the High Sierra Dog Park near Skyview High School. This will be the first of three Dog Parks

PRPL continued on page 3



PRPL

continued from page 2

built through private donations.

With the great success of the first annual "Dash For Dog Parks" fun run, the Friends of Billings Dog Parks are busy planning the second annual event for Aug. 13, 2011, at High Sierra Park near Skyview High School. So mark your calendars and plan to join in the fun! Sponsorships for the event are currently being accepted.

If you or your business would like to know more about sponsoring this year's race or are a dog lover and interested in making Dog Parks in Billings a reality, you can make a tax deductible contribution by filling out the form below and sending it in along with your donation to the Parks, Recreation and Preservation Foun-

dation, c/o Galusha, Higgins & Galusha P.C., Attention John Fekety, P.O. Box 2532, Billings, MT 59103. Also, there are many other donation oppor-

tunities, including sponsoring furnishings in the Dog Parks such as building materials, shelters, benches and drinking fountains, just to name a

few. Please visit www.billingsdogparks.com. If you or your business would like to know more about sponsorships and naming opportunities, contact

Mark Jarvis directly through PRPL at (406) 657-8367 or at jarvism@ci.billings.mt.us.

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We Want to Hear From You	M
Please provide us with input for our next newsletter.	Mayor To hanelt@c 657-8296
What did you like most about the newsletter?	WARD 1 Peggie G gaghenp 259-2926
	Jim Ronc ronquillo 252-5353
What would you like to see in upcoming newsletters?	WARD 2 Denis Pit pitmande 670-7430
	Angela C - <u>cimmino</u> 698-9763
Mail or e-mail your comments to us at: citylink@ci.billings.mt.us The City Link	WARD 3 Vince Ru ruegame 259-1109
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Planning Continues for New Downtown Library

Over most of last summer, a committee including representatives from throughout the community identified the block on which Parmly Billings Library currently is located as the preferred site for a remodeled or new library building.

The committee's recommendation was validated by a phone and online survey of nearly 400 residents, who matched the demographic makeup of Billings for geographic location within the city, age, education, and other dimensions.

In the fall, the Parmly Billings Library Foundation identified a donor, who currently wishes to remain anonymous, willing to commit \$2 million for the design and construction of a new building of architectural significance.

Also during the fall, the opportunity arose for the City to attempt to acquire, through land exchanges, the former Underriner Motors property that makes up the preferred site; negotiations are in process. As 2010 drew to a close, the Library Board

of Trustees recommended to the City Council that the donor's gift and condition be accepted and a new building be planned to be built on the same block that the current building stands on, and the City Council approved the recommenda-

In January, the donor selected Will Bruder + Partners of Phoenix, AZ, as the design architects for the project and they have subsequently partnered with local firm O2 Architects. On Feb. 1, about 200 people participated in two public input sessions facilitated by Will Bruder with assistance from 11 students from the Community Design Center at Montana State University School of Architecture. Six focus groups provided additional input in person, and hundreds more have completed suggestion forms at the Library or online in the weeks since.

Schematic design plans and renderings are expected to be available this spring, with many opportunities for public feedback to be provided.

The Library Foundation continues with plans to achieve its goal of raising a total of \$5 million privately. The balance of the project would be paid for through general obligation bonds that Billings residents would vote on this November. The \$13.4 million amount of bonds for a library project in the Capital Improvement Plan is the estimated cost of repairing the current building's first through third floors.

The Library Board encourages all residents of the community to stay informed about the planning process for a new downtown building. Current information is maintained on the Library's website at ci.billings. mt.us/newlibraryinfo. You may also contact Library Director Bill Cochran at CochranB@ci.billings.mt.us or (406) 657-8292.



Some of the 200 people who attended two public input meetings conducted on February 1st by architect Will Bruder to gather ideas for the proposed new downtown Library building.



The Sixth Annual "Food for Thought, An Evening of Great Conversation," is a fundraiser sponsored by the Parmly Billings Library Foundation. Held at the Library, the evening begins with a cocktail reception, then moves upstairs for a sumptuous dinner, all catered by Tom Nelson.

During the meal, guests, seated at tables of eight, discuss a topic set in advance for their particular table. Participants will be encouraged to "speak their mind" with a free flowing agenda of discourse and discussion. Due to the popularity

of this event, people are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as the event sells out quickly!

The event will be Thursday, June 9, beginning at 6 p.m. with check-in and social hour on the first floor of the Library. Dinner and conversation will follow on the 2nd floor, with the evening ending sharply at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$70 each. For more information, please contact Leslie Modrow, Development Director of the Parmly Billings Library Foundation, at (406) 237-6149 or via email



at modrowl@ci.billings.mt.us. More information about past events can be found at the Library website at www.billings.lib.mt.us.

The Library Foundation is dedicated to providing supplemental financial support to the Parmly Billings Library. "Food for Thought, an Evening of Great Conversation" embodies the overarching goal of the Library, which is to provide a center of enrichment, knowledge and an exchange of ideas for all people.



Airport Tri-Annual Emergency Drill

On May 18, the City of Billings Logan International Airport will conduct a drill that will simulate an aircraft-related emergency at the Airport.

Certificated airports across the nation are required

by the Federal Aviation Administration to test their Airport Emergency Plan every three years with a live drill, utilizing props and actors, to simulate an airport emergency of some kind.

This type of drill requires numerous hours of planning, setting the stage for an emergency response from the Airport's Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting team, and from participating agencies such as the Billings Fire Department, American Medical Response, local hospitals, Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement, the Department of Emergency

Services, local volunteer and citizens organizations, local schools, and the local refineries.

Upon completion of the drill, feedback is provided to Airport officials and used to enhance the Airport's Emergency Response Plan.

While no community would ever want to experience a large scale emergency, accident, or disaster that these types of drills simulate, the City of Billings Logan International Airport and the local emergency response community is committed to being prepared, just in case.

Nonresident Travelers to Billings in 2010

Montana remains a popular visitor destination. Billings Logan International Airport participates in a program conducted by the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) to survey arriving passengers. The ITRR collects visitor data such as where they reside, how long they plan to stay, whether they have visited Billings before, the size of their travel group and the reason for their trip to Billings.

The ITRR recently released the following survey results for 2010. The Billings Airport serves as one of the main entry points for visitors to Montana. The average length of stay was 5.14 nights.

About 77 percent of the visitors

were repeat visitors to Billings, with the first and fourth quarters having 82 percent repeat visitors. Most of the travelers arrived either solo or in a group of two. Most visitors came here primarily for business reasons, while in 2009, about 30 percent arrived for business or to attend a convention. The fourth quarter had the highest percentage of business travelers at 52 percent. On average, about 18 percent came here primarily for vacation. The third quarter showed the highest percentage of vacation-related travel at 32 percent, just under the 33 percent who came here for business. The chart to the right shows where the largest percentage of surveyed visitors resided.

RESIDENCY	I [±] QTR	2 ^{ml} QTR	3 rd QTR	4 QTR	
Washington	14%	11%	None	13%	
California	19%	16%	14%	12%	
Tessas	6%	7%	6%	9%	
Colorado	10%	6%	8%	4%	
Arraona	<3%	4%	9%	6%	

Canadian Provinces

Alberta, British Columbia

Countries

England, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Fiji, India, Scotland, Switzerland, Australia, China, Denmark, Chile, Columbia, Kazakhstan



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248-1127 www.billingsfcu.org 760 Wicks Lane • 2522 4th Ave. N • 32nd & King Ave. W





June Hazardous Waste Collection Events

On Friday, June 3, the Billings Solid Waste Division will sponsor a hazardous waste collection event for small businesses.

To qualify, businesses must not produce more than 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month, nor have accumulated more than 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste for disposal. Participants must be pre-approved and register for an appointment by calling (406) 247-8633.

On Saturday, June 4, the City of Billings will sponsor its 17th annual Toxic Trash Round-Up, a household hazardous waste collection event for residents of Yellowstone, Treasure, Musselshell, Carbon and Stillwater counties.

Residents may bring their unwanted, unused and leftover household chemicals to the Billings Operation Center, 4848 Midland Road, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Items that will be accepted include medications, ammunition, paint, used oil, fluorescent bulbs, batteries and garden chemicals.

Items not accepted include medical waste, agricultural chemicals, explosives and electronic waste. For more information, call (406) 247-8633.



O&AFrom our Readers

Questions and comments from Trevor Krieger of Billings:

Greetings. I have a question and comments regarding the response in the last CityLink to a question about warrants for turning arrows at intersection traffic lights. The response said that turn arrows are based on the volume of traffic. Who takes the census on each of the busy intersections to warrant the turn signal? I would encourage them to motor up to the Heights and take a look at every major intersection from Lake Elmo and move north. There should be adequate timing for everyone turning at each of those major intersections. The history of automobile crashes (including some deaths) at each (Lake Elmo/Main; Hilltop/Main; etc) should be warrant enough. It is quite ridiculous to wait and then try and turn on a yellow light (or claim the intersection, and just have enough time for one person to turn as the light turns red) ... not safe at all. As an emergency vehicle operator, I have seen it up close and personal. The effects are only going to get worse as the traffic and population volumes of Billings' Heights grows and grows. Please ... take some time to warrant turn lights in the heights. Granted, there are a

couple of exceptions, but all should be reevaluated. Thanks.

Answer:

Main Street is a Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) operated corridor so any warrant studies or signal modifications would be done by MDT. MDT has recently undertaken a warrant study at Hilltop and Main but the results are not finalized yet. Warrant studies are planned along Main Street at other locations but will not be conducted until after the 6th Avenue and Bench Connection project is completed later this year. With the construction of Airport Road, Aronson Avenue, and the Bench bridge, the traffic patterns on Main Street are anticipated to change and in order to capture the most relevant information, the studies will need to be done after that work is completed. As discussed in the article you refer to though, please remember that any additional time given to protected left turns takes away from "green" time on Main Street.

Comments from Beverly Smith of Billings:

I like the "Construction in the City" and the "Holiday and Winter Fire Safety" articles. I've enjoyed the CityLink since its beginning. I would like to see more on the Metra and continued updates on construction.

Answer:

Thank you for the compliments and for being an avid reader. City-Link staff thought this might be a great time to reiterate what may be addressed in this publication. The City is responsible for many departments, but cannot provide answers to questions that pertain to County, State or Federal Agencies. The City also cannot address questions regarding the school district and their policies. As MetraPark is a Yellowstone County facility, CityLink staff will not be providing updates on its progress. However, local media has been periodically updating their audiences about MetraPark construction and the MetraPark website contains a link to view arena progress at http:// metrapark.wordpress.com.

Question from an anonymous Billings reader:

How has the ban on cell phones while driving working? How many warning and tickets have been issued? When the ordinance first went into effect, I noticed a real drop off

in the number of people I saw on cell phones. But recently, I'm seeing more. Just curious.

Answer:

The intent of the cell phone usage ban was to reduce distracted driving accidents. In the past and currently there has been no tracking mechanism on the State Accident form to distinguish between different distracted driving accidents. So, we do not know if accident rates have been reduced since the cell phone usage ban while driving went into effect in Billings. Since the cell phone usage ban, we have had one citation issued for cell phone usage associated with an accident. Officers have seen a decrease in people using cell phones while driving. There have been 95 warnings and 15 citations issued. Education and continuing to keep people aware of the cell phone usage ban is critical. In the initial phase, there was a great deal of media coverage on the cell phone ban. The Billings Police Department plans to continue issuing public service announcements to remind drivers of the ban.

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

Simulations: The Future of Fire Service Training

The Billings Fire Department has found that computer-based simulation training provides a unique opportunity to practice firefighting year-round in a controlled environment

A key component of training in the fire service is the ability to repeat and practice skills until they become second nature. This type of training enhances the decision-making process, as well as every skill needed on all types of emergencies.

The Billings Fire Department, in cooperation with area fire departments, local refineries, Riverstone Health, Yellowstone County and the College of Technology, implemented

a computer-based software "Incident Command" training lab. The simulator allows the training instructor to incorporate up to 200 different fire scenarios in single and multifamily residential properties. Firefighting priorities used on most residential fires can be easily repeated in this virtual 3D environment.

Through the simulation process, the Incident Commander has the responsibility to match specific crews to essential tasks while tracking their progress. The simulator is interactive and supports decision-making, such as which crew should be assigned to put the fire out, who looks for victims, and how the heat and smoke can be

ventilated from the structure.

The repetitive training supports basic and advanced skills and helps firefighters understand the importance of working together to accomplish a common goal. An essential priority of simulation training is that firefighter and citizen safety is incorporated into every practice session.

Simulation training will not replace hands-on training; however, it can better prepare firefighters for the next structure fire. The ability to use simulations to enhance crew skills, improve performance, and develop decision-making abilities has a proven track record. Although simulator training does not take the place of hands-on training, it does enhance the overall goal to practice real-life situations.





VITA Free Tax Preparation Sites Expand in 2011

Tax filers with basic returns who made \$49,000 or less in 2010 can have their taxes prepared and e-filed free by IRS-certified volunteers at seven Billings VITA locations. VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) sites specialize in helping people who make less than \$49,000 get all the tax benefits they qualify for. In addition, taxpayers 60 years of age and older may have their taxes prepared free at the AARP/TCE site located at the Yellowstone County Council on Aging.

Last year, Billings VITA sites helped clients claim approximately \$2 million in tax refunds and save an estimated \$333,000 in preparation and potential loan fees.

This year VITA volunteers will be preparing returns at seven locations. In Billings, HRDC7, Parmly Billings Library, Garfield Community Resource Center, Altana Federal Credit Union, Billings Federal Credit Union, and

Rimrock Credit Union will host VITA sites. In Laurel, SEG Federal Credit Union will host a VITA site.

Complete information on locations, hours, and appointment phone numbers is available by calling (406) 254-9760 or by visiting www.unitedwayyellowstone.org.

Locations and Information on free tax preparation and e-filing:

- District 7 Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) is located at 7 N. 31 St., and open though April 15 on Wednesdays and Fridays from 2 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. Call (406) 247-4710 for more information or to schedule an appointment.
- United Way/Parmly Billings Library is located at 510 N. 28th Street. It will be open through April 9 on a walk-

in basis only and is open Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m.

United Way/Garfield Community Center is located at 3212 1st Ave. S. It will be open through April 11 on a walk-in basis only and is open Mondays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Credit Union VITA sites and AARP are open by appointment only

Altana Federal Credit Union – 3212 Central Ave.

Call (406) 867-3122 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Billings Federal Credit Union – 2522 4th Ave. N.

Call (406) 867-1652 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Rimrock Credit Union – 952 Central Ave.

Call (406) 245-3685 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

SEG Federal Credit Union – 617 SE 4th St., Laurel, MT

Call (406) 628-7711 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

AARP Tax Aide at Yellowstone County Council of Aging – 15065 Ave. D.

Call (406) 794-0083 for more information or to schedule an appointment.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE

Join the VISTA Summer Associates Program in 2011!!!

Here's your chance to make a real difference in the lives of low-income individuals and families living right here in Billings. Summer Associates are now being recruited to serve full-time for 10 weeks beginning June 5, 2011, in direct service programs offered by lo-

cal non-profit organizations.

Summer Associates must be at least 18 years of age and be able to commit and serve on a full-time basis for the 10 week project period. In addition to the opportunity to make a credible effort to help individuals and families

escape poverty, Summer Associates will receive a monthly \$858 living allowance during the project period and, after successful completion of summer service, each will receive a \$1,174 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award or \$125 per month served end-of-service

stipend.

Apply online at www.americorps.gov, selecting "Montana" and your choice of service opportunities in Billings. For additional information, please contact Tammy Johnston at (406) 208-0059.

Police Department 2010 Awards

In December, the Police Department announced its 2010 Annual Award Recipients for Employee of the Year, Officer of the Year, Supervisor of the Year, and Respect for Law Community Award:

Employee of the Year – Mark Balter

Mark accepted the position of the Police Department's Quartermaster in September 2009, moving from Billings Municipal Court where he worked as a bailiff for two years. Mark is responsible for outfitting officers and making sure they have the gear they need

to do their jobs. He truly understands the meaning of customer service and is highly respected both by the officers he serves and the vendors he orders from.

Officer of the Year – Detective Jamie Schillinger

Detective Schillinger works in the City/County Special Investigations Unit (CCSIU) as a Task Force Officer with the FBI's Big Sky Safe Street Task Force. Detective Schillinger has been with the Billings Police Department since 1998. The impact Jamie has made in the Billings community has been profound. Most people will never know what he does behind the scenes

to make streets safer. Detective Schillinger's name has been submitted to the Billings Exchange Club for their Officer of the Year Award.

Supervisor of the Year – Sgt. Brian Korell

Sgt. Korell has been with the Billings Police Department since 1994 and CC-SIU/Safe Streets since July 2008. Sgt. Korell's unit is responsible for keeping drugs and those who deal drugs off the City streets. Along with a considerable amount of drugs and cash that have been seized, Sgt. Korell and his officers have been responsible for 1,009 felony and misdemeanor arrests.

Respect for Law – Officer Jerry Smidt

Officer Jerry Smidt has been nominated to the Billings Optimist Club for their Respect for Law Community Award. Officer Smidt has been with the Billings Police Department since 1999 and currently serves as the School Resources Officer at West High School. Officer Smidt is an active member of West High's Incident Command Team and is actively involved in youth activities both on and off duty.

Congratulations to these Billings Police Department employees for their accomplishments in 2010!

Citizens Police Academy

The next Citizens Police Academy, which is already full, is scheduled to begin on Tuesday, March 15. The Police Department conducts two Academy sessions per year. Seating is limited to 20 participants per session.

This hands-on class meets on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. for eight weeks. Topics of discussion include: Code Enforcement, DUI and Crime Scene Investigations, K-9, Bomb Squad, S.W.A.T., and Firearms use.

For more information or to apply for the next session to be held in the fall, contact Lisa Posada-Griffin by telephone at (406) 657-8451 or via e-mail at griffinl@ci.billings.mt.us or Sgt. Kevin Iffland by telephone at (406) 657-8478 or via e-mail at ifflandk@ci.billings.mt.us.



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