

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY INSIDER

DECEMBER 2023

ISSUE 420

MONTANA



Bitterroot

Montana State Flower

Board of County Commissioners

John Ostlund
Chair

Mark Morse
Member

Donald W. Jones
Member

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Commissioner Corner



December is here and the official first day of winter starts Thursday, December 21st. So far no winter storms are in the forecast.

At our December 5th board meeting, Jim Soumas, with the Teamster's Union presented the Commissioners with a thank you from detention facility staff for wage increases received after the budget was approved. The discussion of increasing detention facility wages began in December of 2022 and ended with the budget being approved with a larger than negotiated increase. With public safety being an important topic in our community, we recognize the difficult nature of this job and appreciate all the hard work from our detention facility staff. Keep up the great work.



Planning For Our Future

Many of you have inquired about our newly created parking just east of the courthouse. Some have also asked about plans for the Miller Building, that the County acquired in September 2021. These two items are indeed directly related.

As you know, portions of our operations were relocated to the Stillwater Building several years ago in order that we could accommodate two new district court judges funded by the Montana legislature.

Soon after that, it became clear that we needed a longer-term view as to court and court related needs in Yellowstone County. This follows what was done for the Sheriff's headquarters and with our most recent detention expansion, approved by our voters in 2016. The answer to all three was the same – we need more space for many of you going forward, especially the offices of county attorney, district court, clerk of court, and justice court. While much of the rest of county operations outside of law enforcement and court related activities has seen very little growth over the past several years, growth in these areas will be necessary for the foreseeable future.

With that in mind, Finance began a review in an attempt to come up with a long-term option for our needs. In January of 2021, the Board was presented with a lengthy report which recommended that the Miller Building (two blocks west of the courthouse) at 2825 3rd Avenue North would be the County's best available option – meeting our criteria of price, proximity and parking.

Continued on page 2...



Our goal, currently being developed with our architect, is to remodel five of the six floors in that building to house almost all non-court related operations currently at the courthouse and the Stillwater Building. At this point, that move would look to be in early 2026. Before that happens, we will redesign courthouse space to address the needs of those departments listed above. With discussions of our judicial district potentially receiving more judges, after approval and funding by the 2025 legislative session, freeing up space and remodeling in the courthouse can't come too soon.



The County has worked hard to save money in our CIP fund to make sure we are able to cover all of this, without restricting anyone's operating budget or incur a need to borrow. We believe that these upcoming building projects will address our needs in these areas for quite some time to come.

Along with this, we recognize that a move two blocks to the west for administrative offices could require too much of a walk for those employees if they are currently parking east of the bus transfer facility. The main goal of our newly completed lot where the round building had been is to provide parking in the future for these employees. In addition to this space, there will be some parking available at the Miller Building.



But for now, we are replacing the parking spaces lot with the round building (12 spots) for electeds and department heads. All other new spaces will be metered as an extension of our agreement with the City on the current metered spots next to the courthouse. We look to leave them as metered for the next two years, at which point we will reclaim those spots for employee use.

We are working and will continue to work to minimize disruptions to our existing operations over the next few years. The Board, and our OMB Director Kevan Bryan, are always available to take your input and answer questions as we proceed.

Thank you for the hard work you do for Yellowstone County and have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Sincerely,
John Ostlund, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners



“There are three ways to ultimate success: The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind.”

—Mister Rogers



New Employees



Chance Smith
Thomas Farless
Detention Facility

Tracy Hazelett
MetraPark

Yaritza Aguilar
County Attorney

Jacqueline Gallagher
Youth Services

MaryDiane Griggs
Eumeka Wade
Dylan Council
Sheriff's Office

Randi Blake
Public Works

Jerrold Montelongo
IT

Recognition of Service



10 Years of Service

Lacy Levens
Youth Services
12/08/2013

Marilyn Morning Gun
County Attorney
12/16/2013



December Recipe

EASY recipe

Leftover Turkey Caesar Wraps

- 2 cups cooked turkey, chopped
- 4 cups Romaine lettuce, torn to bite-sized pieces
- 1 large tomato, diced
- ¼ cup croutons, coarsely chopped
- 3 tbsps Parmesan cheese
- 3 tbsps creamy Caesar dressing
- 4 large whole-wheat tortillas



In a mixing bowl, add turkey, lettuce, tomato, croutons and Parmesan cheese. Coat with Caesar dressing and mix well. Add a quarter of the salad mixture to each of the four tortillas. Roll tightly and enjoy.

Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 382 calories | 41g protein | 10g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 4g mono fat | 3g poly fat | 31g carb | 4g sugar (0 added sugar) | 5g fiber | 543mg sodium

SUNSHINE NEWS



Fa la la from The Sunshine Committee. A busy month for our lil group in December. The week of the 18th we will

have a cookie and cocoa social. Thank you to all who decorated for Halloween. What fun to see all the creative doors. Let's do it again for Christmas.

The winning door will get a couple of trays of homemade cookies. Also, look for our parking raffle toward the end of the month.

31st ANNUAL COURTHOUSE CRAFT and BAKE SALE



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN. THE CRAFT SALE THIS YEAR IS DEC. 7TH & 8TH, 2023 7:00 AM-4:00 PM

Check out the baked goodies and crafts.

Bring your Christmas list.

We accept cash or checks.



The Yellowstone County Courthouse will be closed on December 25, 2023



in observance of Christmas, and January 1, 2024 in observance of New Year's Day.



W-2's and 1095's

W-2's will be mailed to your home address on file with payroll by January 31, 2024.

Proof of insurance coverage (1095's) will be mailed to your home address by January 31, 2024. These will be mailed out by Trusiac, the company contracted by Yellowstone County for ACA reporting requirements. Letters will be mailed from California.



The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus

Build a Wonderful Workshop

- Remember we serve the citizens of Yellowstone County
- Focus on people, as well as your purpose
- Let values be your guide

Make a List and Check it Twice

- Plan your work, prioritize
- Work your plan
- Make the most of what you have

Listen

- Open your ears to the issues at hand
- Pay attention to the customer
- Walk a while in their shoes

Get Beyond the Red Wagons

- Step out of your comfort zone and learn new things
- Take advantage of training opportunities
- Remember to always do your best

Share the Milk and Cookies

- Do right by those who do right
- Treat people like you want to be treated
- Smile 😊

Be Good for Goodness Sake

- Set the example
- Be prompt, courteous and helpful
- Remember that everything counts



Follow these “secrets” for great success.

Success follows when people come first.

We wish you all success and a good new year!

Happy Holidays,

Yellowstone County Human Resources

Dwight, LynnDee, Charri, Amy, Kasey & Mariea

Excerpt from: The Leadership Secrets of Santa Claus
Eric Harvey, David Cottrell, and Al Lucia at the Walk the Talk Company



Work Comp Claim FREE - Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following departments for **November**:

Clerk & Recorder/Auditor, Commissioners, County Attorney, District Court, Disaster & Emergency Services, Elections, Extension, Facilities, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology/GIS, Junk Vehicle, Justice Court, MetraPark, Motor Vehicle, Public Works, Road & Bridge, Treasurer, Weed, & Youth Services.

In November there was 3 claim filed: 2-Sheriff's Office, 1-Detention Facility



Holiday Gifts and Disaster Preparedness

All disasters have one thing in common: they remind us of the importance of pre-disaster preparedness. There is no time like the holidays to start, by *resolving to be ready* before disaster strikes.



Gifts that can save lives are a wonderful way of saying “I want you to be safe!” Some emergency and preparedness items that might make great gifts this holiday season include:

- Portable, battery powered radio with NOAA Weather Radio channels, and extra batteries
- Fire blankets
- Flashlights
- Battery powered lantern
- Enrollment in a CPR or first-aid class
- GPS units for vehicles
- Emergency generators
- Emergency cell phones
- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke detectors
- Appropriate fire extinguishers (kitchen, garage, car)
- Disaster kits or disaster kit items for homes, offices and autos (first aid kits, food, water and prescription medications for 72 hours, eyeglasses, extra clothing, blankets, fire blanket, flashlights, spare batteries, heavy-duty work gloves, and sturdy pair of shoes)
- Emergency escape ladders for second-story exit in a fire
- Car kits (emergency flares, shovels, ice scrapers, flashlights and fluorescent distress flags)
- Pet Disaster kits (food, water, leashes, dishes and carrying case or crate)
- A camp stove with extra fuel
- The gift of a gardener to cut back combustible vegetation from wildfire-vulnerable homes
- National Flood Insurance



What’s New at the Sheriff’s Office?

After 6 rounds of chemotherapy, we are excited to have LT Valdez back to work. LT Valdez has been with Yellowstone County for almost 25 years. Welcome back!



GRADUATION ALERT!!!!

Congratulations to Deputy Conner and Deputy Lee on their graduation from the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. They will now begin the 14-week field training program.

Welcome home!

’Tis the season to get in the slow lane.

Warning: Hurrying is dangerous to your health and safety. It’s time to get out of life’s fast lane and consciously slow down. Rushing to meetings and constantly multi-tasking can be life-threatening. Distracted driving and speeding cause deadly car accidents and hurrying is a primary cause of serious injuries from falls, according to the National Safety Council. And rushing spikes stress hormones, raising your blood pressure.



BEST bits

❗ **Starve a cold, feed a fever?** You need to eat, regardless of what ails you. A daily well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet can help keep your immune system strong, lowering your risk for illness. Essential nutrients that can support immune health include vitamins C and E, as well as beta carotene. Some of the best sources of these nutrients are asparagus, beets, broccoli, cantaloupe, carrots, corn, guava, kale, mangoes, mustard and collard greens, nectarines, pink grapefruit, squash, sweet potato, tangerines, tomatoes and watermelon.

❗ **Flu and COVID-19 vaccine reminder for the 2023-2024 season:** The annual influenza (flu) vaccination is recommended for everyone age six months and older in the U.S. Because flu viruses are constantly changing, the composition of vaccines is reviewed annually by the FDA and updated as needed to best match viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. For COVID, specific schedules are based on age, health status and vaccine product. Check with your health care provider for advice about your or your children’s individual needs for the COVID-19 vaccination.

❗ **Ready to shovel some snow?** While many people can handle the effort, *shoveling snow can put others at risk for heart attack.* Sudden exertion, such as moving hundreds of pounds of snow, especially after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury. And, there’s the cold factor. If you are managing a health concern, check with your health care provider before tackling the snow.

STAR AWARD’S

Congratulations to Deputy Tyler Osborne for being recognized by his peers with “Sheriffs Star Award” for going above & beyond.

Congratulations to Officer Miller on receiving the 3rd Quarter Sheriff’s STAR Award for the Yellowstone County Detention Facility.



Congratulations to Officer Lennick on his graduation from CDOB #179 at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy.



December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month.

Annual Safety Gift Guide

'Tis the season for giving with safety in mind. There may be something for everyone on your list with these innovative gift ideas:

For the traveler: There are many options, such as portable door locks, door stop alarms, portable safes, RFID wallets or purses and travel money belts.

For the fashionista: Wearable safety jewelry is all the rage. Check out necklaces, fitness bands, bracelets and even hair scrunchies that have safety features with buttons and apps designed to send alerts.

For the adventure seeker: GPS satellite messengers are great for when people are off the grid (out of cell phone reach). And you can also tuck a hybrid flashlight into their stocking.

For the DIYer: Protective gear, such as gloves or goggles, are thoughtful and practical.

For the runner or biker: LED flashlight gloves can come in handy when running or biking at dusk. Portable keychain alarms are also a great gift for the athlete on your list.



December Fun Facts

December 7 marks the beginning of Hanukkah this year, the eight-day Jewish festival of lights.

December 7 is also National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

December 11 is International Mountain Day.

December 13 is National Violin Day and National Day of the Horse.

December 15 is Bill of Rights Day.

December 16 is Underdog Day.

December 17 is Wright Brothers Day.

December 21 is the Winter Solstice—the astronomical day when the Earth is farthest away from the Sun. Starting in ancient times, people celebrated the rebirth of the Sun event through Yule.

December 25 is Christmas Day, a Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

December 26 is Boxing Day (Canada, UK) and the first day of Kwanzaa and National Candy Cane Day.





Take charge of your health today! 2023 Wellness Screening Yellowstone County October 2 – December 31, 2023

Dates: Dates have been extended through December 31, 2023
Call: (406) 247-6200 between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm to schedule your appointment
Email: You may also email appointment requests to OccHealthScheduling@billingsclinic.org
Please include full name, contact number, and preferred day/time with your request
Location: Billings Clinic Occupational Health, 1020 N. 27th Street, Suite 301

Call today to reserve your time!

All employees & retirees insured on the Yellowstone County Health plan are eligible to participate. Those family members and retirees not on the plan will self-pay at the time of the appointment. The men's wellness is \$60 & includes a PSA; the women's wellness is \$70 & includes a Vitamin D test.

Your lab work will include the following tests.

- CBC -Complete Blood Count
- Comprehensive Metabolic Panel-23 chemistry/electrolyte/mineral levels
- TSH-Thyroid Stimulating Hormone screens for proper thyroid function
- Lipid Panel -Total Cholesterol level, HDL, LDL and Triglycerides
- PSA -Prostate health screening for men
- Vitamin D- Bone and teeth health (included in female lab work. \$25 out of pocket fee for males)
- Hemoglobin A1c- Diabetes screen(\$25.00 out of pocket fee)
- 2023 Flu shots will also be available!

Please present to your appointment fasting for at least 10 hours (no food or drink, except for water)
Drink plenty of water prior to your appointment to ensure that you are well hydrated

Be proactive in your health and wellness. Make your appointment today!
Appointments available through December 31, 2023.





12 SCAMS OF THE *Holidays!*

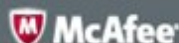


Source: McAfee Labs™

Keep the Cheer in Your Holidays!

Mobile devices make it easier than ever to shop for gifts, send season's greetings, and plan holiday travel. But smartphones and tablets also open the door for online scams that can turn holiday joy into holiday pain. Keep yourself safe and aware when you browse, click, and buy online, so you can stay clear of these 12 holiday scams.

- 1. Not-So-Merry Mobile Apps**
To avoid malicious apps that could steal your information, stick to the official app stores for downloads and purchases.
- 2. Holiday Mobile SMS Scams**
Stay away from links in text messages that offer to update or install an app.
- 3. Hot Holiday Gift Scams**
Be wary of deals on popular gadgets that are too good to be true, and double-check prices directly with the retailer.
- 4. Seasonal Travel Scams**
Websites offering great airfare or hotel deals could be luring you into a trap, double-check before you click.
- 5. Dangerous E-Seasons Greetings**
Before you open an e-card, verify it's from someone you know, and it's from a trustworthy site.
- 6. Deceptive Online Games**
Avoid unknown websites serving up popular online games. Check reviews and stick to known sites.
- 7. Shipping Notifications Shams**
Think twice before clicking links in shipping notification emails, and always verify the company before giving out your information.
- 8. Bogus Gift Cards**
Only buy gift cards from official retailers—not third-party websites.
- 9. Holiday SMiShing**
Be wary of text messages asking for account verifications, and never provide passwords in text messages.
- 10. Fake Charities**
Before donating, check the web address carefully and look for fake logos or text with altered charity names.
- 11. Romance Scams**
Only join dating sites with strong reputations or referrals, and never click links from anyone you don't already know.
- 12. Phony E-Tailers**
Check web addresses for subtle clues that you're on a fake website, and stick to known, trusted e-tailers.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Word Search

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

- ADVENT CALENDAR
- ANGEL
- BALLS
- CANDLE
- CHRISTMAS TREE
- FAKE SNOW
- FIGURINES
- GARLAND
- HOLIDAY LINENS
- LIGHTS
- MINI TREE
- MISTLETOE
- NATIVITY SCENE
- NUTCRACKER
- ORNAMENT
- PINECONE
- POINSETTIA
- RED BOW
- REINDEER
- SNOWFLAKE
- STAR
- STOCKINGS
- TINSEL
- TREE SKIRT
- TREE STAND
- WREATH



8 Common Injuries during the Holidays



The holiday season is supposed to be full of joy, celebration and time spent with loved ones. But with all the hustle and bustle of the season, things are bound to occasionally go awry.

Here are eight common holiday-related injuries and accidents, along with real-life examples from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which [collects annual data](#) on emergency room visits and smart advice on how to stay safe.

1. Tripping on toys, cords, wrapping paper or other hazards

Safety tips: Wear shoes with traction, limit your alcohol intake and watch your step as you walk. Be especially careful when you're carrying something that makes it hard to see where you're going, such as a box of Christmas decorations.

2. Falling from a ladder, step stool or roof while decorating

Safety tips: If you use a ladder, make sure it's on level and firm ground, have a helper hold the ladder, don't lean too far to one side and avoid stepping on the top three rungs. If you want lights on the roof, consider delegating that task to a younger family member or a professional.

3. Heart attack

Safety tips: Celebrate in moderation, watch your salt intake and make time to care for yourself during this busy time of year. Also, know the [symptoms of a heart attack](#), and don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 if you or a family member experiences any of them.

4. Getting cut while opening a gift, trimming a tree or slicing a roast/turkey/ham

Safety tips: Use a sharp blade because it will be easier to control. Take your time, keep your other hand away from the area where you are cutting, and cut with the blade facing away from your body.

5. Getting hit by a champagne cork

Safety tips: To open a bottle of champagne safely, point the bottle away from others. Then place a napkin or towel over the top, and firmly hold the cork while gently twisting the base of the bottle.

6. Christmas tree, candle or cooking fires

Safety tips: If you have a real tree, water it every day because dry needles and wood catch fire more easily. Inspect light strands for worn or frayed cords before you place them on your tree, and make sure you're not overloading electrical outlets. As for candles, keep them in sight and away from flammable items. When you leave your home, blow out candles and turn off your holiday lights. Also, make sure your smoke detectors are working.

7. Food poisoning

Safety tips: Cook food thoroughly (use a food thermometer), and refrigerate perishable foods within two hours. Use pasteurized eggs for foods containing raw eggs. For more food safety tips, check out these [ways to safely store and use holiday leftovers](#).

8. Kids or adults ingesting things they shouldn't

Safety tips: Put away toys with button batteries, magnets and small parts. Store medications in childproof containers out of the reach of children. If you think a child may have ingested something dangerous, call poison control at 800-222-1222.

