

# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY INSIDER

MAY 2024

ISSUE 425

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



May is here and brought a little spring rain with it. Mother's Day is quickly approaching on May 12<sup>th</sup>, I hope everyone is able to spend the day with their special mothers and family.

### Employee Spotlight;

There has been quite a bit of restructuring around the county recently, I would like to take some time to spotlight a few employees this month.

MetraPark has undergone a restructuring with a few new positions added. Two of these new positions are Facilities Director & Production Director. Both of our current Event Coordinators at MetraPark have been selected to fill these new positions. Congratulations to Craig Peterson our new Production Director & Kole Kuntz our new Facilities Director. With Robert Lester being selected as the new Undersheriff, Lieutenant Brandon Smart has been selected as the new Detention Facility Commander. Congratulation Commander Smart on your new role.

This month I would also like to recognize three employees from the Detention Center who all just celebrated 20 years of service, one employee from Road & Bridge, and two from the Sheriff's Office that just celebrated 30 years of service with Yellowstone County. Thank you, Yvonne Mueller, Shawn Munter, Brooke Miller, Chuck Pietz, Kevin Cunningham & George Fritz for all of your hard work and dedication over the years.



The County Burial will be held on Thursday June 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am at Riverside Cemetery. This is an important service we offer in Yellowstone County, and we are committed to honoring and respecting the final disposition of residents who pass away without any family or financial resources.

Budget hearings are scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. Budget requests needed to be submitted to our Finance Department by May 16<sup>th</sup>.

MetraPark has another busy month of events happening.

Camping World RV Show	May 9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>
Mothers of Multiples Garage Sale	May 10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup>
Fusion Fight League	May 11 <sup>th</sup>
Special Olympics Montana	May 15 <sup>th</sup>
Billings Outlaws	May 18 <sup>th</sup>
Sesame Street Live!	May 21 <sup>st</sup>
Graduation	May 26 <sup>th</sup>

I hope everyone has a great Memorial Day on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for all you do for the citizens of Yellowstone County.

Sincerely,  
John Ostlund, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners



New Employees



Isabelle Potter  
Jessica Zypf  
Chris Holmes  
Detention Facility

Marcus Gipson  
Mekenzie  
Frederickson  
County Attorney

Justin Blackman  
Sheriff Office

Jonathon Statler  
District Court

Alicia Lipke  
Road & Bridge

\*\*\*\*\*  
Recognition of Service



30 Years of Service

Kevin Cunningham  
Sheriff Office  
5/171994

George Fritz  
Sheriff Office  
5/171994

20 Years of Service

Brooke Miller  
Detention Facility  
5/5/2004



# May Recipe

## Tuscan Tuna and Bean Salad

**EASY** recipe

- 1 can (15 oz.) no-salt-added white kidney, navy or cannellini beans, drained
- 2 cans (5 oz. each) albacore or skipjack tuna, drained
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
- 2 tbsp capers
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 6 cups mixed greens
- ½ cup fresh chopped basil or flat leaf parsley
- Pinch each salt and pepper



In a large bowl, combine beans, tuna, tomatoes, capers and onion. Drizzle with oil and lemon juice, and toss to combine. Scatter mixed greens on a platter and add the tuna mixture on top. Garnish with herbs, salt and pepper, and serve.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 290 calories | 21g protein | 12g total fat | 2g saturated fat | 8g mono fat | 2g poly fat | 26g carbohydrate | 2g sugar (0g added sugar) | 8g fiber | 356mg sodium

### SUNSHINE NEWS



Come join the Sunshine Committee and help spread joy and sunshine for county employees.

We are looking to add employees to our team!



Send an email to Bernie Wahl or hit up any of our Sunshine Committee to find out more.

The Yellowstone County Courthouse will be closed on May 27, 2024 in observance of Memorial Day.



**BALANCE** Is there a sudden loss of balance?



**EYESIGHT** Is there a change in vision in one or both eyes?



**FACE** Does their face look uneven?



**ARM** Does one arm drift down?



**SPEECH** Does their speech sound strange?



**TIME** Time is BRAIN! Call 9-1-1!



## National Correctional Officer's Week is May 5 - 11, 2024



Since 1984, the first full week of May has been recognized as National Correctional Officer's Week.

This is an important opportunity to give thanks and acknowledge the courage and heroism it takes to work as a Correctional/Detention Officer.

Thank you for all you do for Yellowstone County!

*May the flowers remind us why the rain was necessary.*



### ***Work Comp Claim FREE - Congratulations!***

Congratulations to the following departments for **April**: 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, Weed, and Youth Services.

In April there were 4 claims filed: 1-YCDF, 1-Sheriff Office, 1-Treasurer and 1-Road & Bridge





## Suicide Awareness Education - QPR

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 – 11:00 am

**OR**

Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 – 3:30 pm

**WHERE:** Room 3108 Commissioners Room

**Pre-registration required for this 90-minute class!**

### **Suicide Awareness - QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer!**

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

### **Become QPR trained – Be a Gatekeeper**

According to the Surgeon General's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, a gatekeeper is someone in a position to recognize a crisis and the warning signs that someone may be contemplating suicide.

As a QPR-trained Gatekeeper, you will learn to:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Know how to offer hope
- Know how to get help and save a life



This program will give you tools to recognize signs of someone struggling and suggestions on getting them help.

### **Pre-registration required:**

To sign up for either class please contact Human Resources at 256-2705 or by email to [lschmidt@yellowstonecountymt.gov](mailto:lschmidt@yellowstonecountymt.gov)

### **Deadlines to register:**

**May 9, 2024: Must be registered by 5:00 pm on May 9, 2024**

# Bone-Building Exercises

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD

The saying “use it or lose it” applies not only to your muscles, but also to your bones. Low bone density, or osteoporosis, afflicts 54 million people in the U.S. To maintain bone mass and prevent osteoporosis, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases recommends the following physical activities for adults.

**Weight-bearing exercises:** The stress placed on bones during weight-bearing exercises stimulates bone formation and repair. Jogging, brisk walking with or without weights, stair climbing, step aerobics, racquet sports, and dancing are excellent activities for promoting stronger bones. Aim to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise every week.

**Resistance training:** The pull of muscle against bone signals your bones to get stronger and denser. Weight-lifting machines, free weights, calisthenics and resistance bands are popular options. Include two to three sessions each week of at least moderate-intensity strengthening exercises of all major muscle groups.

**Balance activities:** They are especially important for older adults and can improve your balance and prevent falls. Walking on an unstable surface, such as a wobble board or foam mat, can help. So can shifting your body weight backward and forward while standing with both feet together or on one foot. Step-ups, lunges and walking backward are other ways to improve your balance. The martial arts practice of tai chi can help, too.

**Older people and those with low bone density are at increased risk** from activities that compress the spine, such as jumping, deep forward bending and heavy lifting. Consult your health care provider before increasing your level of exercise; ask if any physical activities are unsafe for you. Then get moving for healthier bones.



## BEST bits



### May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.

Asthma and allergies have much in common. Although different ailments, they often occur together and allergy triggers are frequently linked to asthma symptoms. An allergic response occurs when your immune system detects a harmless substance, such as pollen, as an invader and releases chemicals, resulting in a stuffy nose, sneezing, watery eyes and other symptoms. For those with asthma, this reaction affects the airways and lungs, causing wheezing. **Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month** is an opportunity to learn about reducing exposure to pollen and other triggers for both ailments. Talk to your health care provider about medications, including new treatments, that can help asthma and/or allergy symptoms.



### May is Skin Cancer and Prevention Awareness Month.

Skin cancer is the most common malignancy in the U.S. Every day, about 9,500 Americans are diagnosed with the disease. Most types of skin cancer, if found early, can be treated successfully, even potentially deadly melanomas.

**Important:** Check your skin regularly. Report any skin changes, especially changes in the shape or color of moles, to your health care provider. To help prevent skin cancer, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends seeking shade instead of sun bathing, wearing sun-protective clothing, and using a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Avoid tanning beds. Tanning is a sign of skin damage, not good health.

Life has no remote.  
There is no magical pill.  
Nobody is coming to save us.  
If we want a change, we have to  
get up, do the work and take  
responsibility for ourselves.

*Leticia Rae*

**EXPERT** advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

## Q: What is dyspepsia?

**A:** **Dyspepsia is the official term for an upset stomach or indigestion.** The symptoms include discomfort or a burning sensation in the upper abdomen. Feelings of fullness early in a meal or long after the meal can occur. Other symptoms include upper abdominal bloating or a feeling of nausea. Belching, vomiting or heartburn happen less often.

**Causes of indigestion:** Eating too much or too quickly can cause dyspepsia. Common culprits include gastroesophageal reflux disease, spicy or fatty foods, caffeine, alcohol, obesity, eating close to bedtime, and smoking. Other possible causes include irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers, celiac disease, gallstones, pancreatitis, stomach cancer, diabetes and pregnancy.

**When to seek medical care:** Get a medical evaluation if your symptoms last longer than two weeks. Contact your health care provider right away if the pain is severe or you have weight loss, recurrent vomiting, black stools, vomiting blood, trouble swallowing, weakness or fatigue. Call 911 immediately if you have chest pain lasting more than a couple minutes, shortness of breath, sweating or pain radiating to the arm, neck or jaw.

# 5 Outdoor Lightning Precautions

**Did you know?** About 40 million lightning strikes happen each year in the U.S., according to the CDC. Outdoor work or recreational activities can put you at higher risk of being hit by lightning, although the odds in any year are less than one in a million. Another surprising fact from the CDC: About one-third of lightning injuries happen indoors.

**Nevertheless, in a lightning storm, the best way to stay safe is to stay inside.** However, if you are caught outdoors, follow these safety rules:

**Find a safe enclosed shelter as soon as you hear thunder.** Safe places can be homes, offices, buildings or hardtop cars with the windows rolled up. Avoid open spaces, picnic pavilions, porches, gazebos and baseball dugouts. Stay in a safe shelter for 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.

**Never lie flat on the ground in a storm.** Instead, crouch down with your head between your knees.

**Avoid tall structures,** hilltops, lone trees, bodies of water, power lines, fences and concrete floors or walls. Lightning can travel through any metal wires or bars in concrete walls or flooring.

**Separate from a group** to reduce the number of injuries if lightning strikes.

**Avoid touching anything metal,** including farm equipment, motorcycles, bicycles and golf carts.

**Stay indoors** until weather forecasts announce the storm has ended.

**Most deaths from lightning happen in the summer, especially in July.** If you are with someone who is struck by lightning, call 911 immediately and follow instructions for helping the person until EMTs arrive. Learn first aid and CPR.

**Good to know:** Nearly 90% of people struck by lightning survive, according to the CDC.



**May is High Blood Pressure Education Month.** Knowing your blood pressure levels could save your life. High blood pressure (hypertension) affects one in three Americans and is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. It's often called the silent killer because hypertension may not cause any obvious symptoms until a heart attack or stroke occurs. Make sure you get your blood pressure checked regularly by your provider. Although hypertension is dangerous, it's highly treatable with lifestyle changes, such as regular exercise and cutting back on salt, as well as medication. **Note:** It's important to take your blood pressure medications every day and don't stop them unless your health care provider says it's okay to do so.

**Don't be safety  
blinded,  
be safety minded.**

## MAY TO-DO LIST

Check every item on daily to-do list

Get your space organized

Reconnect with an old friend

Explore a new place or city

Make time for your passion

Smile more, worry less

OurMindfulLife.com



## Next Stop...Retirement



Valarie Weber is retiring on May 15, 2024 after serving as the Director of Ted Lechner Youth Services Center for 28 years. In her time at Youth Services, Valarie has been involved with several community agencies, parents, families, and staff to work with the youth of Yellowstone County as well as surrounding communities. Val plans to do lots of camping, fishing and travel with her mom and family as well as enjoy her hobby of stained glass. She is sent out on these journeys with great admiration, pride and gratitude from the many lives she has touched during her career.

Congratulations and best wishes on your retirement, Valarie.

Roger Bodine is retiring on May 17, 2024. Roger is a 22+ year member of the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office. He began his career as a Detention Officer at the Yellowstone County Detention Facility in 1999. In 2001 he began work as a Patrol Deputy. In his time with the Patrol Division, he has been a Field Training Officer and Deputy Coroner. In January 2011, Roger was promoted to a Patrol Sergeant. In July 2013, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant where he oversaw the Training Division, and the Professional Standards Division. In 2018, Roger was promoted to Detention Commander & in 2021 Roger transferred to the Sheriff's Office Detective Division, where he was assigned to our local High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Task Force.



Congratulation Roger on your retirement and thank you for your service.



## Upcoming Training Opportunities

### Public Employee Retirement

**May 29, 2024**

**12:00 pm - Rm 212**

**Getting Ready to Retire?**

Available for walk-ins 9am-4pm

**AND**

**May 30, 2024 - Rm 212**

**12:00 pm - Rm 212**

**New Employee PERS Election**

Available for walk-ins 9am-1pm

**Are you a new employee with Yellowstone County, or are you thinking of retirement?**

**This is a great opportunity to learn and visit with Joel Thompson, MPERA Education Specialist.**

**He will be able to assist you with all your questions and help to guide you through the choices available for your PERS or SRS retirement plans.**

**Attend a class or just stop in to visit with Joel. Don't miss out on this opportunity.**



## Ease anxiety and calm your mind with the 333 rule



### How to use the 333 rule to ease anxiety and calm your mind

The 333 rule offers a straightforward yet highly effective tool to navigate anxiety, grounding you in the present moment and restoring your calm.

The idea is to identify three things you can see, touch and hear

- **Identify 3 things you can see**

First, look around you and name three objects you can see nearby. This helps you to connect with your immediate environment, redirecting your attention from any internal chaos to the external world so you're more rooted in the present moment.

- **Identify 3 things you can touch**

Next, notice three things you can feel or that you're touching — the air on your skin, a cup of tea in your hands, or your clothing. Feel their texture, temperature, and shape. This helps ground your sense of touch, bringing your awareness into the present moment.

- **Identify 3 things you can hear**

Finally, close your eyes and tune into the sounds around you. It could be the hum of the air conditioner, the ticking of the clock, or perhaps distant traffic noises. Engage your auditory senses to align your focus with the present.

The simplicity of the 333 rule brings immediate comfort. It can redirect the focus away from overwhelming feelings and thoughts so you can center yourself in the now. This immediate grounding can provide [relief from anxiety attacks](#) and help you regain control over your emotions and thoughts.

### Other coping mechanisms to help reduce anxiety

Everyone's journey with anxiety is unique, and exploring various coping strategies can help you discover what soothes you the most effectively.

- **Meditation:** [Meditation](#) offers a way to disconnect from the external chaos and connect with your inner peace. Our [Overcome Stress and Anxiety](#) meditation can guide you through this journey, helping you find calm.
- **Deep breathing:** Deep and/or [mindful breathing](#) calms anxiety and stress. Try our [Breathe Bubble](#) to help you find your breath's rhythm, syncing you with the present moment.
- **5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique:** The [5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique](#) is a sensory way to ground your mind, helping you explore and connect with the now.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation:** This simple exercise can release stored tension, melting away stress and anxiety to allow relaxation to flow through you.
- **Regular exercise:** Engaging in [physical activity](#) can release chemicals that enhance your mood and wellbeing.
- **Aromatherapy:** Immerse your senses in the world of aromatic tranquility, where each scent can bring you peace and relaxation.
- **Mindfulness:** [Mindfulness](#) is the art of being. It's a way to live in the moment, observe, and experience without judgment. Mindfulness helps you cultivate your awareness to create presence and connection.





## Walking Montana - Focus on Fitness It's in Billings!



### Details:

1. Open to all regular full-time & regular part-time County employees and their spouses. Registration fee is FREE which includes a mileage log.
2. May count steps in the course of the workday and those walked during breaks.
3. May use a treadmill or an elliptical. (Any other exercise machines do not count).
4. Must walk, jog/run – miles count 1 for 1. (Other activities do not count unless approved prior to start of program.)
5. May bike – every 2 miles biked will be equivalent to 1 mile walked.
6. May swim – every 1 mile swam will be equivalent to 2 miles walked.
7. Participants must use the mileage log provided to record their mileage. Participants must make a copy their mileage log and turn it in to HR for incremental prizes. Final mileage logs are due September 10, 2024. Incremental prizes will be awarded when participants reach the miles required.
8. Participants are responsible for providing their own means of calculating miles walked, jogged/run or biked (using pedometer, walking marked mileage trails, or driving the route to determine actual miles, etc.).
9. Registration includes a mileage chart.
10. Pedometers may be used as a measuring tool. Participants are encouraged to map out walking routes or use marked trails in their area neighborhoods.

### Important Dates:

- Registrations are due to Human Resources no later than June 14, 2024. **Don't delay – Get your registrations in as quickly as possible.**
- Program begins June 1, 2024 and ends August 31, 2024.
- Final mileage logs are due to Human Resources no later than Sept. 10, 2024
- Winners will be announced, and final prizes awarded at a Commissioner's meeting in September/October.

### Mileage and Incremental Achievements:

- 100 miles – Incremental prize – St. Vincent Healthcare
- 150 miles, by July 12 (return log by 7/19/24) – Eligible for Midway-Give-Away prizes - MetraPark
- 200 miles – Incremental prize – Blue Cross Blue Shield
- 300 miles – Incremental prize – You Did It! Marsh McLennan Agency Award  
Eligible for Grand Prize Drawing & receive final incremental prize.

### Points of Interest in Billings:

- Outdoor Activities
  - Riverfront Park
  - Lake Elmo Park
  - Zoo Montana
  - Black Otter Trail & Rimrocks
  - Walking Trails
  - Bike Net Trails
- Museums and Historic Points
  - Moss Mansion
  - Museum of Women's History
  - Pictograph Caves
  - Pompey's Pillar

**NOTE:** All miles walked, jogged, or run will be counted as actual miles (1 mile for 1 mile). Participants may use a pedometer, walk marked mileage trails or drive the route to determine actual miles. Biked miles count as follows: **2 miles on a bike count as 1 actual mile**; Swimming miles count as **1 mile swam counts as 2 actual miles**. It is recommended to consult a health care provider prior to starting any fitness program. Remember to turn in a copy of your mileage logs to HR for incremental prizes. **Everyone who participates is asked to submit a final log by September 10, 2024.**

The registration form is on the back page of the newsletter.  
Upon registration, a mileage log will be emailed to you next



## Yellowstone County Walking Montana

Focus on Fitness  
It's in Billings  
June 1, 2024– August 31, 2024

Walking Montana is designed to help employees focus on fitness by promoting an active lifestyle by walking 300 miles from June 1, 2024– August 31, 2024.

In addition to incremental prizes for walking 100 miles, 200 miles and 300 miles, there will be random prize drawings and final grand prize drawings! Mileage logs are due September 10, 2024.  
The Grand Prize winners will be announced in September/October at a BOCC meeting.

### Incremental Achievement Levels:

- 100 miles = Mileage Award
- 150 miles = Midway Give-a-Way by July 12, 2024 (logs due July 19, 2024)
- 200 miles = Mileage Award
- 300 miles = You did it! –

Marsh McLennan Award  
Participants that complete the 300 miles are eligible for grand prize drawing if mileage log turned into HR by September 10, 2024.

This year Walking Montana will focus on walking trails and bike paths within the Billings community... so Go Play! It's in Billings.

Go Play! supports building sidewalks, trails, bike lanes and greenways...

Go Play! helps increase the perceived benefits of walking and bicycling...

Go Play! seeks to increase motivation and intention to walk and bicycle...  
... because more people walking and biking in the city of Billings will create a community that is healthier, safer and more vibrant for all to live, work, and play.



## Walking Montana Registration Form

- Employee \$ FREE
  - Spouse \$ FREE
- Total: \$ FREE

Employee Name  Male  Female

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name  Male  Female

Registrations returned to Human Resources by June 14, 2024. Remember it is recommended you consult a health care provider prior to starting any fitness program. Each participant will receive full program details and mileage log.



## Walking Montana Focus on Fitness