

# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY INSIDER

OCTOBER 2023

ISSUE 418

MONTANA



Bitterroot  
Montana State Flower

## Board of County Commissioners

John Ostlund  
Chair

Mark Morse  
Member

Donald W. Jones  
Member

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

October Recipe	2
New Hires & Recognition	2
Spot Health Misinformation	3
Best Bits	3
Surprise Fire Starters	4
What is Anemia	4
Walking Montana	5
Tip of the Month	5
Mammogram Coach	6
Election Period	7
Wellness Screening	8
Flu Season	9
SSI & Medicare Meetings	10

## Commissioner Corner



Fall is officially here, and the weather has finally begun to cool off. I hope everyone had a chance to take some time off this summer and enjoy the weather before winter begins.

### Employee Spotlight

Stoney Field is our new General Manager at MetraPark and has been with us for about 2 months now. Stoney comes from Colorado and previously worked as the Fairgrounds and Events Center Director in Montrose County. He has an extensive background in rodeo, livestock and ag related events and programs.

MetraPark has many construction projects in the works. The paving of the parking lot & ADA parking expansion have been completed. Next, they will replace water and sewer lines and begin paving the road from the backside of the Arena to the backlot parking & RV areas. They have also begun adding new waterlines, parking lot lighting, data lines and electrical equipment upgrades to the front side of 1<sup>st</sup> Interstate Arena. This project includes an expanded Ride Share Lane on Bench Blvd., New ADA parking and, improvement of traffic flow for entrance and exits onto Bench Blvd.

MetraPark has another exciting month of events coming up;

NILE Stock Show & Rodeo	October 13 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup>
Circus Monster Mash	October 27 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup>
406 Consignary	October 28 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup>
Purgatory	October 28 <sup>th</sup>



I hope everyone enjoys Halloween. Thank you for your hard work serving the citizens of Yellowstone County.

Sincerely,  
John Ostlund, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners



## TRICK OR TREAT SAFETY TIPS

### TRICK OR TREATERS

- Wear a mask, even if costume doesn't call for one
- Stay six feet away from those not in your household
- Bring hand sanitizer & use frequently
- Keep interactions brief & outside of anyone's home
- Avoid going out in large groups

### TREAT GIVERS

- Put out a candy bowl or grab & go baggies
- If you answer the door to hand out treats, wear a mask
- Sanitize & wash hands regularly
- Keep interactions brief and outside your home
- Disinfect doorbell and door knob throughout the evening

New Employees



- Daniel Carnes
- Jaxson Martin
- Timothy Ortmann  
Detention Facility
- Garrett Kadleck
- Mark Burkhartsmeier  
Road & Bridge
- Alexis Cooper  
Justice Court
- Robert Romito  
MetraPark

\*\*\*\*\*

Recognition of Service



30 Years of Service

Jackie Belden  
Treasurer's Office  
10/04/1993

25 Years of Service

Tara Jensen  
Road & Bridge  
10/23/1998

20 Years of Service

Bethany Bender  
County Attorney  
10/01/2003

Kelly Hogg  
Detention Facility  
10/21/2003

10 Years of Service

Gary Burke  
Sheriff's Office  
10/16/2013

Aaron Harris  
Sheriff's Office  
10/16/2013

# October Recipe

EASY recipe

## Butternut Squash and White Bean Soup

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil                | 4 cups low-sodium broth  |
| 1 onion, diced                               | 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice   |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced                      | 1 can (15 oz) white kidney or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed |
| 4 cups butternut squash, peeled and diced    | 2 cups chopped baby kale   |
| ¼ tsp each dried rosemary, thyme and oregano | ¼ tsp salt   |



In a large stock pot, heat oil over medium heat. **Add** onion and garlic and cook 3-4 minutes while stirring. **Add** the butternut squash, herbs, broth and lemon juice. **Cover** and simmer 15-20 minutes until squash is fork-tender. **Add** beans, kale and salt. **Simmer** another 3-4 minutes, then serve warm.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 249 calories | 11g protein | 4g total fat | 0g saturated fat | 2g mono fat | 1g poly fat | 46g carb | 10g sugar (0 added sugar) | 4g fiber | 346mg sodium

### SUNSHINE NEWS



The Sunshine Committee is looking for new ideas.

Do you have a fun type of event or something you would like to see the Sunshine Committee set up? We would love to hear it.

Send Bernie an email or share with any Sunshine Member.

We look forward to hearing your Ideas!

The Yellowstone County Courthouse will be closed on November 10, 2023 in observance of Veteran's Day.



### 31st ANNUAL COURTHOUSE CRAFT and BAKE SALE



**IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN. THE CRAFT SALE THIS YEAR 8 7TH, 2023 (7 AM-4:00 PM).**

**IF YOU HAVE CRAFTS OR BAKED GOODS TO SELL, WE WANT YOU. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A TABLE, PLEASE CONTACT JILL GIBBS AT:**

**[jgibbs@yellowstonecountymt.gov](mailto:jgibbs@yellowstonecountymt.gov)**

## MINDSET IS EVERYTHING



# How to Spot Health Misinformation

The internet provides a fast, convenient way to research reliable health and medical data. Unfortunately, it is also packed with misleading and false claims. A majority of Americans use the internet and social media to find health and medical information — raising concerns about the quality of these sources.



The U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy defines misinformation as any “information that is false, inaccurate or misleading, according to the best available evidence at the time.” Many websites and social media have increased their scope of health content, too often posting data that only resemble trustworthy, legitimate sources. And following misleading or incorrect information about health and medical conditions can harm your health.

Dr. Murthy has said that health misinformation is a serious threat to public health. It leads to confusion, results in increased health problems and health care expense and slows patients’ recovery to good health. Search for **health misinformation** at [hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov).

### Use these tips whenever you read health and medical content:

1. Check the **CDC** ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)) or your local public health department website to confirm the value of the claims made.
2. Reputable non-profits, such as the **American Heart Association** ([heart.org](https://www.heart.org)), the **American Cancer Society** ([cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)) and **American Diabetes Association** ([diabetes.org](https://www.diabetes.org)), provide current, science-based information for specific diseases.
3. Ask your primary health care provider, nurse practitioner or nurse for confirmation or additional guidance.
4. Search the claim at the **National Library of Medicine** ([pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)) to learn if it is verified by credible health care sources.
5. Review the **About Us** page on each website for assurance it is a trustworthy source. Look for credentialed professionals, such as medical doctors and dietitians, who review the content.

These steps can help you to better understand, identify and curb misinformation, and help others do the same.

## BEST bits

### Have you heard of melatonin sleep gummies?

These chewable sleep products contain the sleep aid melatonin hormone, which can help treat delayed sleep phase and circadian rhythm sleep disorders, providing some insomnia relief. **Caution:** Studies have found that some gummies can contain more melatonin than what’s printed on their package labels. Researchers concluded 22 of 25 gummy supplements tested were inaccurately labeled and often contained more melatonin than advertised. Only use melatonin as you would any sleeping drug — under your health care provider’s advice. Ask your pharmacist to recommend a product.

### Physical therapy is used to treat injuries and improve strength and flexibility.

Pre-surgery physical therapy, also known as prehabilitation, can be applied before an operation when you have a tear in a ligament or a bone injury. Prehabilitation prepares you physically for the surgery to help reduce complications afterward. Patients prone to complications post-surgery or who are at a high probability for transfer to an acute care rehabilitation facility may shorten their stay with prehabilitation.

**Did you know?** Surgery can put your body through a physically intense activity similar to running a few miles. And here’s another great reason for daily physical activity: Studies show patients who exercise regularly tend to have fewer complications, a faster recovery and shorter hospital stay compared to patients who don’t exercise regularly before surgery. Plus, post-surgery exercise is vital for your recovery and regaining physical strength. The more physically active you are, the faster you can boost your endurance, energy and mobility — and return to good health.

## Work Comp Claim FREE - Congratulations!



Congratulations to the following departments for **September**: 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, & Youth Services.

**In September there were 3 claims filed: 1-Sheriff Office, 1-Weed, and 1-Detention Facility**

**EXPERT** advice — Elizabeth Smoots, MD

## Q: What is anemia?

**A:** Anemia is a condition that results in an insufficient number of red blood cells. The red blood cells contain hemoglobin, a protein that transports oxygen to all of your organs and tissues. Anemia leads to a deficiency in oxygen delivery to every part of the body.

**Anemia symptoms:** Common symptoms of anemia include fatigue, weakness and shortness of breath. Pale skin or cold hands and feet may result. Headache, dizziness, an irregular heartbeat or chest pain can also occur with anemia.

**When to seek medical care:** Contact your health care provider if you have any of the symptoms. Low blood hemoglobin levels or decreased red blood cell counts need to be evaluated by your health care provider. If a problem is confirmed, further testing can distinguish the type of anemia. Iron deficiency, low vitamin B<sub>12</sub> or folate levels, inflammation, sickle cell disease and thalassemia are common causes. The treatment varies depending on the specific kind of anemia identified.



National Fire Prevention Week is October 8 to 14.



## Surprising Fire Starters

Did you know that dust bunnies (those annoying balls of dust that gather in the corners of rooms) can start a fire? That's right, they can ignite if they catch a spark from an electrical socket or floor heaters. Here are some other surprising fire starters:

**Dryer lint:** Make sure you clean out lint every time you unload the dryer. And clean the dryer exhaust vent regularly.

**Laptops:** Laptops can overheat, especially when left on a bed, sofa or other soft flammable surface. Use a desk instead (it's better for you ergonomically, too).

**Flour and powdered foods:** The dust from these foods can ignite if exposed to an open flame.

**Loose fitting electrical plugs:** Replace your electrical outlet if plugs keep falling out; the missed connection can ignite a spark that could start a fire.

**Nine-volt batteries:** Don't store these in your junk drawer, especially near other metal objects, such as paper clips. The battery terminals can short out and cause a fire.



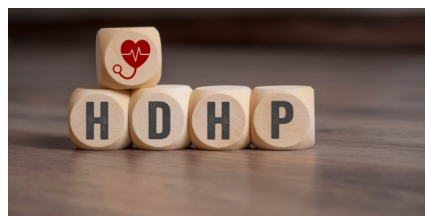
**October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.** One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime, according to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. That's why it's crucial for women to learn about early breast cancer detection, access to care and improved treatments. It's also a great time to learn about breast cancer risks you can't change — such as family history and being female — and those you can potentially modify with regular exercise and healthy diet. If you or someone you care about is overdue for a mammogram, be proactive and get it scheduled.

## IRS Announces Spike in 2024 Limits for High-Deductible Health Plans

Effective January 1, 2024, there will be a change in the single and family deductible rates.

**For single, the limit is rising from \$3,000 to \$3,200 and for family, the limit is rising from \$6,000 to \$6,400, effective January 1, 2024.**

Please be aware of this change when selecting your benefits in October for the upcoming 2024 year.



Let's talk about your financial future!

Corinne Moncada, your 457 plan representative, has added some additional appointments.

When: October 13, 2023

Where: Room 212

10:30 am – 2:30 pm

**Book your appointment online!**

[Book Appointment \(empowermytime.com\)](https://empowermytime.com)

## Walking Montana

Another successful Walking Montana program is in the books for 2023. A huge thank you goes out to our sponsors:

- ◆ The Board of County Commissioners
- ◆ MarshMcLennan Agency (formerly PayneWest)
- ◆ Intermountain Health (formerly St. Vincent Healthcare)
- ◆ Blue Cross Blue Shield
- ◆ Leavitt Group
- ◆ MetraPark

These sponsors help to make this program possible.

### Some final statistics:

- \* All participants walked a total of 27,036 miles! The circumference of the earth is 24,901 miles, so everyone literally walked around the world.
- \* 63 of the participants finished the program which is equivalent to 55%.
- \* Montana is 630 miles wide, so everyone walked 43 times across the state.

Get ready for next year...Walking Montana will start again next year. Mark your calendars for June 1, 2024!



## TIP of the MONTH

### October Sugar Surge

Sugar intake often increases in October with the availability of Halloween candy, and a few treats are fine as part of a balanced diet. The main source of sugar in the diet isn't candy; it's sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks. A new study published in the *British Medical Journal* recommends limiting sugar-sweetened beverages to less than one serving per week (or about six to 12 ounces a week). This level helps reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

## COVID-19 Vaccines Update

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana plans to cover the latest COVID-19 vaccines as part of our Affordable Care Act (ACA) Preventive Services policy.

This coverage aligns with recent announcements by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Use your insurance card at any of the vaccine providers to receive the no cost vaccination. This also includes the annual flu shot.

## Happy Retirement!

Jackie Belden

30 years!

Treasurer's Office

10/4/1993 - 10/16/2023

Enjoy your retirement!



## NeoGov Update

The next phase in NeoGov...

**"eForms" will go "live" in October!**

All employees will have access to their own portal at the completion of the "eForms" phase of implementation. Human Resources will be working with your departments to set up a "live" schedule date for each department in October. Employees will receive an email from NeoGov to set up a password and activate their portal. Once the portal is active, employees can access it at any time from their work computer, phone, iPad, laptop or even their home computer! View your job description, the newsletter and more...As we move into "eForms" employees will view their benefit plan policies, view county policies and can submit changes such as your direct deposit, and update addresses right from their own secure portal.

New employees are doing their orientation online through the portal. They will sign up for benefits and receive general knowledge about Yellowstone County and our policies. The portal will have only information that pertains to the employee. All employees should receive their the activation information by October 13th!



# Get On Board

*Awareness. Detection. Survival*



Yellowstone County Employees

**September 21, 2023**

7am-3pm at YC Courthouse

**September 29, 2023**

6:30am-10am at YC Detention Facility

**October 17, 2023**

7am-3pm at YC Courthouse

Please have your insurance information available at your appointment.



Now Intermountain Healthcare

**Say goodbye to excuses and hello to good breast health with the St. Vincent Healthcare Mobile Mammography Coach.**

On the Mobile Mammography Coach, a mammogram takes just 15 minutes, is covered by most insurance plans and is completed by a team focused on helping you feel at ease.

We use the same 3D Mammography imaging equipment used in our on-campus site, and your confidential results are mailed directly to you and your healthcare provider. Mammograms can also be performed at Yellowstone Breast Center, 2900 12th Ave. N. Suite 276W, Billings, MT 59101.

**To schedule your appointment call 406-237-4373.**



# Health and Voluntary Benefits Election Period for 2023

## Health Plan Election Period & Open Enrollment

Open October 23 – November 3, 2023  
For January 1, 2024 effective date

### ALL EMPLOYEES MUST MAKE AN ELECTION



All medical, vision, and FLEX/HSA plan election forms are online at

<https://intranet/HumanResources/HealthInsurance/>

The Yellowstone County Health Plan Election Period & Open Enrollment will be from October 23 through 5:00 pm on November 3, 2023 for coverage beginning on January 1, 2024. You will be electing your benefits for the 2024

year. Yellowstone County will have an ad hoc Open Enrollment for the 2024 year. You are able to add family members at this time. If you do not enroll family members during this open enrollment period, you will then have to incur a family status change to be eligible for a “Special Enrollment Period” to add dependents. You have 31-days from the date of the event to enroll new members on the Yellowstone County Health Plan.

**The Yellowstone County Health Insurance Plan offers employees two (2) health insurance options with claim administration conducted by BCBS:**

- 1) The Traditional Plan with a \$500 individual / \$1,500 family deductible  
80/20 coinsurance & \$2,000 individual MML / \$6,000 family MML

OR

- 2) High Deductible Health Plan (HSA) with a \$3,200 individual / \$6,400 family deductible  
100/0 coinsurance & \$3,200 individual MML / \$6,400 family MML

Note the change in the deductible for the HDHP Plan.

The HDHP plan has limited eligibility. Please check with HR if you have questions.

**ALL employees must make an election.**

A Kiosk is set up in HR for your use. When using the kiosk, you will need bring your “Duo fob”.

**If you do not have a “Duo fob”, you must contact the IT Help Desk at 256-2713 to get the following: 1) a user ID, 2) a password and, 3) a “Duo Code”. This code is only good for the day it is issued.**

If your election is not received by 5:00 pm on November 3, 2023 you will default and will remain in your current health insurance plan for 2024, *BUT* all voluntary deductions such as Vision, FLEX and HSA will be turned off on January 1, 2024.

HR will assist you if you need help with the online election forms.

Please call 256-2737 for assistance. |



## Take charge of your health today! 2023 Wellness Screening

### Yellowstone County

Dates: October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 through November 24<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:OccHealthScheduling@billingsclinic.org)  
Please include full name, contact number, and preferred day/time with your request  
Location: Billings Clinic Occupational Health, 1020 N. 27<sup>th</sup> 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!







## Flu Season Begins



Sniff sniff! Achoo! Burr! The familiar sounds of the flu are ringing in the season, and it's time for health precautions. [Sonya Norman, MD](#), at [Platte Valley Medical Group - Brighton](#), knows these sounds well and answered some questions.

### When is the flu season?

Flu season is between October to March, but it does fluctuate. Most people associate influenza with the colder fall and winter weather. Influenza is present year-round but peaks in this period.

### Who is at risk for getting the flu?

This answer is simple: everybody. "Anybody can get the flu, but there are people who are more at risk," said Dr. Norman. "This includes people with compromised immune systems and groups like babies, kids, and the elderly." Regardless of your immune system status, Dr. Norman stressed that you can't assume you won't get the flu. Getting the flu shot and mastering health precautions is your best line of defense.

### What can I do to prevent the flu?

Wash your hands. Stay home if you're sick. Wear a mask if you're at high risk. And, most importantly, get the flu shot! Even if you do all these things, there is a chance you will get the flu. The flu shot either prevents influenza or makes your symptoms less severe if you do get it. "The flu shot is always worth getting because influenza is miserable," Dr. Norman explained. "Even if you're not somebody at risk for getting severely sick, having the flu generally is miserable."

### When should I get the flu shot?

Dr. Norman suggested getting the flu shot in October at the earliest. "The effectiveness of the flu shot wanes over time," she said. "If you got your flu shot in August, it might not be as effective by the end of flu season." It's important to emphasize that the flu shot will not make you sick, but you may have side effects. These include fatigue, arm pain, or even a low-grade fever after the vaccine. This means your immune system is responding to the shot, and everything is working!

### Where can I get my flu shot?

The flu shot is accessible and can be found in doctor's offices, pharmacies, and more. Need a flu shot? Find a local SCL Health Primary Care Clinic to get vaccinated here: [SCLHealth.org/GoodHealth](http://SCLHealth.org/GoodHealth)



[www.sclhealth.org/GoodHealth](http://www.sclhealth.org/GoodHealth)



# Social Security 101

October 12 @ 10 am  
Room 212-Courthouse

Are you getting ready to retire or at that age to start taking Social Security benefits? Or do you just want to learn more about Social Security...  
**Then this class is for you!**  
**Class size is limited to 20**

Contact Human Resources to register for these training opportunities.

## UNDERSTANDING

# Medicare



## Medicare 101 Class October 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm

Are you getting close to Medicare age or are already 65? Do you have older parents that need help with Medicare? Then this class is for you! Learn the A,B,C's of Medicare and be able to navigate the alphabet soup of plans.

- ◆ When should I sign up for Medicare?
- ◆ My parents are eligible for Medicare, what do I need to know?
- ◆ I have the high deductible health plan and an HSA...how is that affected by Medicare?

Learn the answers to these questions and more.....

**When:** October 12, 2023

**Time:** 1:30 pm

**Where:** Room 212, County Courthouse (by the skybridge)