



VOL. 2 ISSUE 2 • APRIL 2021

# MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Official Newsletter

## WE'RE (ALMOST) BACK! PUBLIC WORKS RE- OPENING TO THE PUBLIC JUNE 1!

After seven months of being closed to the public, Missoula County Public Works - Building Division will be re-opening its doors on June 1! Online options will still be available for those that wish to utilize them and remain at home or in their offices. If you wish to drop off plans and/or permits in the 'drop box' outside the front doors, please call ahead. We are going to continue using the 'pick up box' for permits and plans that are issued, to help aid with social distancing within the office.



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## BUENA VISTA COMMUNITY RECEIVES MULTIPLE GRANTS TO ASSIST IN NEEDED WASTEWATER UPGRADE

SENATOR JON TESTER ASSISTS WITH \$645K GRANT SECUREMENT

The Grants and Community Programs Division of CAPS, in collaboration with Missoula County Department of Public Works, has been working with the Buena Vista Community for several years to secure funding for upgrading their wastewater system. Missoula County recently received two grants totaling \$1,095,000 to support the second phase of the Buena Vista Community Wastewater System Improvement Project. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), in the amount of \$450,000, was obtained through a competitive application process from the Montana State Department of Commerce. A Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) grant was secured by Senator Jon Tester in the amount of \$645,000.

The Buena Vista Community is a resident-owned community consisting of 36 modular homes just west of the Missoula International Airport on Highway 10. The second phase of the wastewater project will allow the community to upgrade their sewer main, service lines and individual connections and hopefully allow for adding lots that could support much needed affordable housing in Missoula. These improvements present a sustainable short and long-term solution for the community, reducing health risk and water loss, as well as reducing the overall money spent by Missoula County on rehabilitation projects for the Buena Vista Community.

"No matter where you live in Montana, reliable water and wastewater systems are critical to our communities," said Senator Tester. "This investment will give residents of the Buena Vista Community peace of mind knowing their water is safe to drink while helping the community become more efficient and sustainable in the long term."

At this time, the county is in the process of procuring an engineering firm to design the project and prepare bid documents. The hopes are to bid the project in the fall 2021, if conditions allow.

For additional information about this project, please contact Sindie Kennedy at [skennedy@missoulacounty.us](mailto:skennedy@missoulacounty.us) or 258-3688.



SENATOR JON TESTER

BUENA VISTA COMMUNITY



# DIRECTOR'S HIGHLIGHTS

SHANE STACK, P.E.

Public Infrastructure

Construction

Shane Stack started as Director of Public Works on April 1, 2019, after nearly 23 years with the Montana Department of Transportation, most recently as the Missoula District Preconstruction Engineer. At MDT, he planned, implemented and oversaw several high-profile, multimillion-dollar engineering projects in the Missoula area.



**'This gas tax was estimated to generate \$1,100,000 every year... Any ground we had started to gain on improving our road and bridge network will be lost...'**

The big news for Missoula County Public Works is the effort by the 2021 Legislature to repeal the recently passed local option gas tax in Missoula County. This gas tax was estimated to generate \$1,100,000 every year, and would be split evenly between the city and the county. As it sits today, the house and senate have both passed HB 464 and the bill now sits with the governor to sign. The repeal of the gas tax will cut the road budget by 10%. Any ground we had started to gain on improving our road and bridge network will be lost if this bill is signed.

In better news, just about everyone is eligible to receive a vaccine. Based on that information, Public Works should be operating closer to the way it did pre-COVID-19. We will be following the guidance of the Health Department as the Building Division opens its doors back up to the public on June 1. If masks are required in the office, we will provide online services for those who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask.

It is spring, which means the transition from winter to spring can be tough on our roads. Freeze/thaw cycles seem to happen more frequently during this time of year which slowing tears the roads apart. Feel free to let us know if you see work that needs to be completed. It is always good to hear from our citizens if there are repairs that are needed.

*As always, wishing you the best.*

# 26 YEAR LEGACY COMES TO AN END...

FROM CALIFORNIA TO MONTANA, STEVE HUTCHINGS CREATES SAFETY & OPPORTUNITY, WITH ONLY A TRIP OR TWO - AND A LOTTA LAUGHTER - ALONG THE WAY.



"If you can't laugh and enjoy what you do and who you work with, you need to find another job." This is the premise of every job Steve Hutchings has done, although not getting hurt may also be an important factor!

Steve has always liked to work with his hands, so when he started off as a mechanic and got bored, construction just made sense. But only four years after starting, his career was cut short in 1988 when he fell two floors off of a temporary truss, breaking his neck for a SECOND TIME (first time was in high school where he ended up in traction for six months) the irony being, Steve landed on the ONE spot that kept the fall from being fatal, waking up to his entire crew using him as an example of what NOT to do, a standard which Steve is not unfamiliar with setting when it comes to injury.

Fortunately for Steve, it is not without humor, a positive outlook, and living by the 'Golden Rule' that he chooses to live his life. Steve turned lemons to lemonade and became a building inspector. Huntington Beach hired him, keeping him in California where he was born and raised. He started making well over \$20/hr. but he, his wife, Grace, and two boys, were tired of California life. In 1995, Steve accepted a building inspector position in Missoula, Montana making \$9/hr. The idea of living in Montana was worth the pay cut, and while he looked for a house (it only took him TWO YEARS), his wife and kids stayed in California.

Steve not only did his job well, but worked with the public well. When the job for the head of the City Building Department became available, Steve got it. And within a few years, his strengths in communicating and fairness, not to mention his abundance of knowledge, attracted Missoula County as they hoped to implement a building division for outside of city limits. Never shying from a challenge, Steve started working for the Missoula County Public Works Department in 2005 and the program went 'live' one year later. Starting a new program can cause conflict within the communities you serve, but knowing he is providing services that keep people safe makes him proud. Remaining positive and treating others fairly while building a rapport is what helps the most. That, and "being able to laugh at yourself! You might as well because everyone else will!"

It hasn't all been laughter for Steve, but you would never know by the smile that rarely leaves his face or the contagious laughter that carries through the halls. In 2009, Steve was diagnosed with cancer. If ever there was a time for his humor and optimism to radiate, this was it, and it did. Just prior to his diagnosis, Steve was on the Wheel of Fortune and won a ski trip for two to Jackson Hole! Since he and his wife have knee issues, Steve opted out of skiing but was given a vacation for six instead - the timing could not have been better for a beautiful paid vacation with his wife and grandkids. Continuing to live a "glass is half full" life, with humor and a strong faith in God has given Steve the outlook he has needed to fight cancer. Twelve years later and Steve is doing great!

So, what does a busy, hands-on kind of guy do with retirement? As he waits for his wife of 50 years to retire next year, Steve plans to tinker with wood and metal projects, take care of honey-do's, get more gardening done for his famous salsa and go to Oregon to help his brother with his greenhouse. After that, it's hard to say, because the world is a big one; not as big as the hole that will be left in the Building Division and building community, or of the hearts of so many that have come to love and admire Steve for his mentorship, knowledge, support, and too many tears and laughs to count! However, regardless of Steve's original advice, there is no doubt his leaving has anything to do with a lack of laughter, enjoyment or comradery he has found over the last 16 years at Missoula County. He can be assured that that advice lives on in many of us that remain.

# WELCOME TO THE BUILDING DIVISION

## ONLINE TIPS & TRICKS

### Difficulties Uploading Documents?

Be sure your screen reflects the PDF ONLY file was uploaded before you click "Submit". Even if you see a red "100% Uploaded" be patient and wait for the line above to show "All Files Uploaded".

### Having Difficulty Paying Online?

If at first you don't succeed, DON'T try again, just call 406-258-3701 so that we can confirm if your payment was received by our third party provider.

## COVID BUILDING DIVISION UPDATES

The Missoula County Public Works Building Division office re-closed our doors to the public on November 4, 2020 until further notice, due to the increase of COVID cases in Missoula County.

Inspections will continue following state and local orders pertaining to masks and social distancing. To limit the inspector's time inside the home, discussions between inspectors and homeowners will be held outside or by phone. Public Works strongly encourages on-site homeowners and contractors wear appropriate PPE during inspections and follow social distancing guidelines. If you have any concerns, please call the Building Division in advance at 406-258-3701.

All permitting will be conducted through [www.missoulacounty.build](http://www.missoulacounty.build). Applications can be submitted by clicking the "Apply" tab or arrow. Application forms should not be printed, faxed, emailed or dropped off unless arrangements have been made with the permitting office prior. Please be sure to have all required documents associated with your application, ready for upload. You can view these requirements under the "Prepare" arrow.

Our office will still be answering phones and processing online permits between 7a.m. to 3 p.m. For your convenience and safety, we have 'pick-up' and 'drop-off' boxes outside our office for permits issued and applied for online, available 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).

We are excited to welcome Ron Degraw and Glenn Faser as our new Permit Technicians. They're currently in training and are here to assist you. Please bear with us during this time of transition.

Unfortunately, we are not able to regularly staff the Seeley office at this time. Please contact our Seeley inspector at 406-396-8148 to make an appointment or visit [www.missoulacounty.build](http://www.missoulacounty.build) for assistance.

### PLAN SIZE REQUIREMENT REMINDER

As a reminder the minimum plan size we will be accepting for building permits is 11" x 17" but they must be to scale. We encourage larger sizes as well, but this will be the new minimum size.

### Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Request Requirements

- All inspections, for all permits, must be final prior to C of O release

This includes additional Fire, Floodplain or Blower Door tests

- Please send an email request to [permits@missoulacounty.us](mailto:permits@missoulacounty.us) for a C of O. One is not automatically generated. We must receive a written request via email or fax.

- A C of O is only produced for SFR (single family residence) and new commercial projects. Any other projects would receive a Letter of Completion upon request.