



Fort Belknap Indian Community NEWSLETTER

Aaniih - Nakoda

VOLUME: 1 ISSUE: 2 FEBRUARY 2026



Randall Werk, Sr., President
(Photo by: Thae Main)

"This is a shared effort. By strengthening our systems today, we are building a more stable, self-determined future for Aaniih and Nakoda People for generations to come."

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT WERK TO THE AANIIH-NAKODA PEOPLE, WORKFORCE, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Wáom̤oyáó kécih! I wanted to take this opportunity to offer a brief update to both the Fort Belknap Indian Community workforce and the broader community regarding our financial position, policy compliance, and the steps being taken to strengthen our systems and services. Next, I would like to commend the newly seated council for their leadership and commitment to our people. Not only did they sit through seven weeks of training with governing documents and financial status updates line by line, they simultaneously moved with certainty and clear direction on establishing meaningful and lasting changes needed in our governmental structure. Here are just a few of the important initiatives they have pushed so far. As a group, they oversee the Vice President and I, along with our excellent and talented executive team. Together they are moving their initiatives forward along with ensuring that the day-to-day operation of our \$129-million-dollar government is conducted with efficiency and with service of our people in mind. We have also been addressing audit findings, reviewing

unresolved personnel issues, and similar outstanding issues in an effort to further streamline costs and follow existing policies. These costs reduce funds that could otherwise be used to support programs, services, and employee benefits. They also underscore why policy compliance is not optional! It protects the Tribes, the workforce, and the Community as a whole. As previously shared, former practices such as uncontrolled and unregulated spending of discretionary funds and excessive administrative leave have contributed to the inflation of deferred revenue by as much as \$13 million dollars. In 2025 alone, the estimated cost of administrative leave reached \$1.3 million dollars, reflecting payments made when services were not rendered to the communities we serve. These systemic issues must be corrected to ensure long-term stability. At the same time, it is important for the community to know that the current Administration, at the direction of the FBIC Council, has acted swiftly and proactively to improve Fort Belknap's financial position. A recent \$6.5 million tax windfall, pursued – *continued on page 2*

at the direction of the previous Council, has now been placed into a trust-backed investment portfolio. This investment is projected to yield an initial 3.5% annual return, creating a new recurring revenue stream of approximately \$265,000 per year. Equally important, the placement of this principal has immediately reduced the Tribes' deferred revenue liability from approximately \$13.5 million to \$3.5 million, significantly strengthening our balance sheet, with an additional \$3.5 million already earmarked for investment under the previous administration. If the Council chooses to reinvest these earnings rather than expend them, the potential exists to double the principal in less than seven years, depending on how conservatively future Councils choose to invest. This represents a meaningful step toward long-term financial independence and sustainability and planning for our future generations. In addition to these financial measures, the Tribes are advancing housing initiatives focused on sweat equity, workforce development, and homeownership through Mutual Help homebuilding. Seed funding for this effort will be generated through the sale of existing new homes, using a proposed 70/30 revenue split: 70% of proceeds directed toward material costs and professional contracts (plumbers, electricians, and other licensed trades), 30% allocated to the Fort Belknap Tribal Housing Authority (FBTHA) repair and maintenance budget, supporting upkeep of the current HUD housing inventory. Mutual Help

housing remains a key strategy. It reduces construction costs, creates pathways to homeownership, strengthens community buy-in, and builds a stronger, better-trained local workforce of carpenters and skilled tradespeople. The IMDG Board has also committed to the placement of three new homes in the Lodge Pole community and two new homes in Hays in the coming Spring. In the following Spring, four additional homes will be placed at a to-be-determined location, with a fifth unit to be repurposed as a dialysis center at the Fort Belknap Agency, addressing a critical healthcare need. Additionally, construction of the Anaakyaaniin (Buffalo Bull Lodge) Wellness Center in Hays is scheduled to resume, with projected start dates in April or May 2026, weather permitting. The FBIC Council is also currently in negotiations to purchase the St. Paul's Mission properties. St. Labre is the primary debt holder on the Mission School building, while the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, under the direction of Bishop Flemming, holds the deed to approximately 319 acres between the Mission housing area and Little Peoples Canyon. These discussions represent an important opportunity for land recovery and long-term community planning. Two other areas of infrastructure improvement include replacing the Food Distribution (Commodity) building to provide a safer and healthier environment and replacing the John Capture Building which was constantly being repaired to provide a safe environment and reduce building

costs. For our workforce, we want to be clear: employee morale and support remains a priority. As compliance is strengthened, the Administration continues to develop initiatives focused on: Employee Wellness, Childcare Expansion Workforce development, including exclusive scholarships and student loan repayment options for Tribal Employees. For our community, these efforts are part of a broader strategy. Fort Belknap is in a unique position, operating most Bureau of Indian Affairs programs under P.L. 93-638 self-determination contracts. With continued fiscal discipline and clean audits, the Tribes can pursue self-governance compact status, which would provide greater flexibility and access to larger funding opportunities. These efforts will allow us to enhance services and better meet community needs. We know our challenges. They are not hidden, and they are not new. Leadership has been present in communities across Fort Belknap, listening to our elders, our youth, and our families. This work is about responding to those voices with accountability, structure, and long-term solutions. This is a shared effort. By strengthening our systems today, we are building a more stable, self-determined future for Aaniih and Nakoda People for generations to come. Thank you for your continued engagement, dedication, and commitment to moving forward together. We hope to provide quarterly status reports and welcome recommendations on ways to improve our governance.

*Tóuciki Wənshíuθ'o
-Randall "Butch" Werk, Sr. President*

IMDG and Fort Belknap Tribal Leadership Align on Governance, Growth, and Community-Centered Economic Development

BILLINGS, MT - Leadership from Island Mountain Development Group (IMDG) and elected officials of the Fort Belknap Indian Community (FBIC) recently convened for a comprehensive Board of Directors and Council Orientation meeting. The session focused on governance, business operations, and long-term economic strategy, served as a vital onboarding for newly elected officials while reaffirming a shared mission to strengthen tribal sovereignty and expand economic opportunity. The orientation opened with a deep dive into the organizational structure of IMDG and its Planning and Development Corporation (PDC). Taylor McCabe, CEO guided officials through the foundational governing documents, including articles of incorporation and tribal resolutions, that define the relationship between the business entities and the Tribal Council. Legal experts Michelle Fox and Sunshine Gottfriedson of Cedar Tree Native Law provided critical insights into the intersection of corporate operations and tribal sovereignty. The discussions emphasized the strategic importance of regulatory environments and the necessity of regular legal collaboration to manage risk and protect tribal assets. A primary focus of the meeting was the strategic transition toward a more diversified economic portfolio. While installment lending continues to be a primary revenue driver, IMDG leadership outlined several initiatives designed to ensure long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on a single industry. Key projects discussed include: *Whitehorse Canyon Contracting*



Photo by: IMDG

– a new venture into IMDG's call center expansion; offerings of leased employees and consulting services. *Energy and Agriculture* - Evaluation of a potential propane company to serve the Fort Belknap community and renewed planning for The Gilbert Ranch. *Healthcare Infrastructure* - Potential investments in essential services, such as a localized dialysis center. "The businesses and infrastructure we develop today are intended to serve the Fort Belknap Indian Community for generations to come." Noted by IMDG leadership. Cindy Lamb, CFO reported another year of clean annual audits, highlighting IMDG's commitment to transparency and rigorous internal controls. These financial successes directly fuel the IMDG mission of community reinvestment. Current revenues are being channeled into: *Housing* - Development of the Eagle Valley and Buffalo Crossing subdivisions. *Infrastructure* - Improving water systems and exploring a new call center on the northern end of the reservation. *Community Support* - Direct contributions to elder assistance, youth sports, wellness centers, and cultural events. As IMDG scales, technology remains a cornerstone of its operational resilience. Corey Fox, CTO detailed a robust cybersecurity framework designed to protect tribal and consumer data. Looking forward, the organization is exploring "cybersecurity-as-a-service" as a potential new business line, leveraging its internal expertise to provide value to external partners. The orientation concluded with a review of IMDG's long-term commercial relationships. The leadership reaffirmed its 15-year partnership with our 3rd Party technology provider and engaged with representatives from our debt facility provider regarding future financing strategies, aimed at optimizing the tribal entity's financial position for future expansion. Moving forward, IMDG and the Tribal Council are equally committed to increased transparency through regular informational briefings, one on one leadership meetings, and synchronized legal strategy sessions to ensure continued alignment on the path to economic self-sufficiency. *–Paula Hawley, Communications & Marketing Manager (IMDG)*



Photo by: Senator Daines/FB

Legislative Hearing with Indian Affairs Committee on Justice and Safety for Native Children: Examining Title II of the Draft Native Children's Implementation Act

Tribal Councilwoman Joan Johnson, representing the Gros Ventre-At-Large seat, along with Ramona Horn, Director/Family Advocacy Coordinator for TIWAHE, and Charity Boushie, Soaring Eagle Case Manager all traveled to Washington, DC, to provide testimony on the Fort Belknap Indian Community's TIWAHE program. This testimony also highlighted the Soaring Eagle Program; emphasizing its success and impact in supporting families and youth across Indian Country.

Several important meetings were attended with federal and congressional leaders, including Senators Steve Daines and Tim Sheehy, staff from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and Representative Troy Downing's office, as well as the Speaker of the House staff. FBIC Council Member, Joan Johnson also participated in discussions regarding the Water Settlement. Ramona and Charity, along with Co-Attorney Concetta Tsosie De Haro all met with Representative Leger Fernandez's Office.

This marked Joan's first visit to Washington DC as a council member, where she represented the interests and voices of the Fort Belknap youth, families, and the entire community. By engaging directly with government agencies, the Fort Belknap Tribal Council ensures that the community's needs and interests are clearly communicated and prioritized. This involvement strengthens the community in national discussions between Tribes and federal authorities. This collaboration and commitment helps promote better understanding and securing resources that support the Fort Belknap community's growth and well-being.

A legislative hearing was held with the Indian Affairs Committee on "Justice and Safety for Native Children: Examining Title II of the Draft Native Children's Implementation Act." Senator Steve Daines appreciated the opportunity to discuss public safety in native communities, particularly the native youth. Daines stated, "The TIWAHE Program is another way we can help keep tribal youth safe and ensure they have access to the resources they need to succeed." Councilwoman Johnson shared with Senator Daines the biggest impacts that were made since implementing the TIWAHE Framework. The Fort Belknap Indian Community were amongst the first tribes in the country to participate in the TIWAHE Initiative. Through this pilot program, the tribe received funding to strengthen innovate services to better serve young people on the reservation and to also help parents break generational trauma.



Council Member Joan Johnson, Photo by: Senator Daines/FB



Senator Daines, Charity Boushie, Joan Johnson, Ramona Horn and Tim Sheehy, Photo by: Senator Daines/FB

Tribal Leaders Meet with AIG Policy Committee and American Indian Caucus

Council Members, Tina Bierle and Donald "Duck" Horn attended a meeting with the American Indian Governance and Policy Committee. This meeting took place in Missoula, MT. The trip was covered by the Headwaters Foundation and the AIG Policy Committee. Also in attendance: American Indian Caucus Senate and House of Representatives. *Senate*: Jacinda Morigeau (Arlee, MT) SD46, Shane Morigeau (Helena, MT) SD50, Susan Webber (Browning, MT) SD8, Jonathan Windy Boy (Box Elder, MT) SD16. *Representative*: Thedis Crowe (Browning, MT) HD15, Shelly Fyant (Arlee, MT) HD91, Donavon Hawk (Butte, MT) HD72, Tyson Running Wolf (Browning, MT) HD16. This meeting collectively identified policy areas, shared challenges, and strategized opportunities to strengthen Tribal sovereignty and government-to-government principles. Top issues and priorities were discussed and relatable from substance abuse, mental health, tribal consultation, lack of housing and housing infrastructure. -Health and wellness must apply to Indigenous people in broader areas. Physical, mental, emotional, and cultural health are huge factors that impact reservations. Jurisdictional barriers compound our issues. Meaningful treatment must extend beyond 30-day models and include stable housing and long-term community recovery support. Tribal Leaders and elected State Officials arranged for consultation processes that are defined by each Tribe due to lack of funding which produces harmful outcomes and erodes trust. Lack of housing is a barrier on our reservations. Many of our people face compound barriers on and off-reservation. When funding is available, Tribes may not have the capacity or systems in place to build much needed infrastructure. Housing was framed as a



Photo by: American Indian Governance and Policy Institute



Photo by: American Indian Governance and Policy Institute

foundation for community continuity and future generations. -Tribes are in need of adequate resources. Prioritizing these efforts means recognizing the unique strengths and needs of each tribe while working together to create lasting, positive change. This meeting marks the start of an important and ongoing effort. Another meeting is scheduled to take place in the coming months to further strategize alignment and work toward more inclusive and effective policies.



Photos by: A. Bigby

Council Meet with Rocky Boy's Health/Detention Centers

The Fort Belknap Indian Community Council traveled to Rocky Boy to meet with leadership from the Health Center and Detention Center.

The visit included meaningful discussion on the benefits of self-governance, as well as tours of the Rocky Boy Health Center's administration, clinic, and youth wellness center. Council members also toured the Rocky Boy Detention Center.

The visit provided valuable information, strengthened inter-tribal relationships, and supported ongoing efforts to improve health, wellness, and public safety for our communities.



U.S. Attorney, Kurt Alme (Photo by: Breanne Main)

Fort Belknap Tribal Council Meet with U.S. Attorney Kurt Alme

The Fort Belknap Tribal Council hosted U.S. Attorney Kurt Alme and his team for an important discussion on key issues impacting the community. The meeting covered a range of topics, including the Department of Justice's priorities, recent prosecutions by the United States Attorney's Office, and critical substance abuse challenges facing the Tribe. In addition, the council and U.S. Attorney Alme addressed concerns related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons, collaboration with the Montana Human Trafficking Task Force, and explored available training and grant opportunities to support tribal efforts. The Fort Belknap Tribal Council expresses their sincere gratitude to U.S. Attorney Kurt Alme and his team for their commitment and partnership in addressing these important issues.

Government-to-Government Discussions with Federal Agencies

The Fort Belknap Indian Community Council recently participated in Government-to-Government discussions with federal agencies, including the Assistant United States Attorney, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Indian Affairs Drug Enforcement Division, Office of Justice Services, and Homeland Security. Topics included resuming Fort Belknap authority under a 638 contract for our detention center, as well as multiple criminal indictments for major crimes committed on Fort Belknap in 2025. Homeland Security also discussed the potential for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that could recognize enhanced authority for Tribal law enforcement. Under such an agreement, Fort Belknap officers would continue protecting our communities without the involvement of agencies such as ICE, while maintaining vigilance toward individuals who may be connected to drug trafficking, human trafficking, or other illegal activities. No MOU was signed, and no votes were taken during these discussions. As elected officials, one of the Council's primary responsibilities is to engage in these conversations to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of our communities.



David Flute and Keith Pearson, Homeland Security (Photo by: Breanne Main)

David Flute, Senior Tribal Advisory for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is a lifelong resident of northeast South Dakota and an enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, a Dakota tribal nation based on the Lake Traverse Reservation. He previously served as Tribal Chairman for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate prior to his role in state government. Keith Pearson, was a former Sheriff in St. Lucie County (Florida), who served a year as the county's top law enforcement officer before stepping down in January to join the Department of Homeland Security as Senior Counselor to state and local law enforcement.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community is the first tribe in Indian Country to formally invite the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for a collaborative meeting. This groundbreaking step highlights the tribes commitment to strengthening partnerships that enhance safety and security on tribal lands.

Local & Federal Agencies work together to enhance Public Safety

JANUARY 23 - Fort Belknap Law Enforcement carried out a coordinated operation alongside the U.S. Marshals Service, FBI, and Phillips County Sheriff's Office. This operation was to apprehend federal absconders and individuals with outstanding federal arrest warrants. This multi-agency effort involved numerous uniformed officers, patrol vehicles, and aerial support via helicopter to increase effectiveness and coverage across targeted areas.

The collaboration highlights the commitment of local and federal agencies working together to enhance public safety. By combining resources and expertise, the operation optimizes response capabilities, demonstrating how teamwork is vital in law enforcement efforts.

Such operations not only improve community security but also send a clear message that federal absconders will be actively pursued.



Izzak Wing and Lorenzo Chavez-Camarillo (Photo submitted by: Audena Wing)

Fort Belknap Police Officers Graduate from Artesia, NM

JANUARY 13, 2026 - Fort Belknap Police Officers Izzak Wing and Lorenzo Chavez-Camarillo successfully completed and graduated from the Indian Country Police Officer Training Program in Artesia, NM -2601 Class #193. This comprehensive training program began on October 5, 2025. Officer Wing and Officer Chavez-Camarillo are now in the field training process with Fort Belknap Law Enforcement. This process is approximately 12 weeks long. At the completion of 'field training,' both officers will be assigned a patrol vehicle and will begin to perform their duties as Police Officers.

The Fort Belknap Tribal Council warmly congratulate Officer Wing and Officer Chavez-Camarillo as they begin this vital role in making our community a safer place for everyone.



January 9, 2026 was National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. The Fort Belknap Tribal Council extends its sincere gratitude to our local law enforcement officers. Your hard work, dedication, and commitment to keeping our community safe do not go unnoticed. Thank you for all you do!

*Joshua Roberge, Chief of Police
Curtis Fox, C.I.
Terrence Snell, Police Officer
Chase Corcoran, Police Officer
Gerold Hastheeagle, Police Officer
Zarek Jones, Police Officer
Jace Johnson, Police Officer
Lorenzo Camarillo-Chavez, Police Officer*

*Trenton Kirkaldie, Lieutenant
Thomas Lamebull, C.I.
Quintin Snow, K-9 Officer
Paul Warren, Police Officer
Deb Taly, Police Officer
Cole Azure, Police Officer
Izzak Wing, Police Officer*

Heroic Act by MHP State Trooper Saves Child's Life

"Last October, Trooper Brett Westford was patrolling in Blaine County when he arrived on the aftermath of a serious two vehicle crash. He requested additional resources and checked on two females located in one vehicle who were disabled in the middle of the roadway. The second vehicle was located off the highway, where a woman was standing over a lifeless small child. Trooper Westford was unable to find a pulse, so he repositioned the child's airway, and the child began breathing again. He stayed with the child to monitor the airway until EMS arrived on scene while also comforting the distraught mother.

Thanks to Trooper Westford's quick actions and life saving measures, the child survived the injuries he sustained during the crash. Trooper Westford recently met with the child's mother, who presented him with a star quilt in gratitude for his professionalism and heroic efforts. Trooper Westford joined MHP in 2024 and is stationed in Malta. We are grateful to have such amazing troopers working for our agency." —Montana Highway Patrol, serve with honor and be the difference.



State Trooper, Brett Westford, (Photo Submitted by: MHP)



Star Quilt gifted to State Trooper, Brett Westford, (Photo by: MHP)

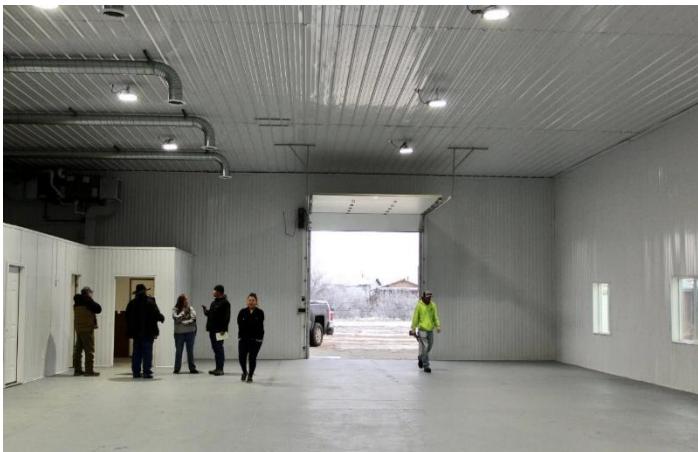


Kanan Horn (Photo submitted by: Lisa Horn, Grandmother)

The child mentioned in this heartwarming story is Kanan Horn, an enrolled tribal member of Fort Belknap and the son of Rikki Horn. Kanan (4-years-old) attends the Gilbert Horn Head Start Center (GHHSC), named in honor of his great-grandfather. Kanan is a true cowboy at heart who loves spending time outdoors with his favorite toys and family. He enjoys playing with his collection of semi-trucks, tractors, and trailers. One of his closest companions is Daisy, his aunt Kailee's German Shepherd, whom he proudly claims as his own. Kanan also loves hanging out with his grandpa Walter, helping to feed the horses, and riding through the valley to check on Grandpa Duck's cows. This past summer, he even learned to ride sheep, showing his adventurous spirit and connection to country life. Whether he's exploring the outdoors or spending time with his dog and grandpa, Kanan's days are filled with joy and adventure. During a special gathering, Kanan's family expressed their heartfelt gratitude not only for his recent birthday celebration but also for the heroic efforts of local EMTs, first responders, and Trooper Westford. Their bravery and dedication made a lasting impact on the family, who remain deeply thankful for their support and courage. Events like these remind us of everyday heroes who are among us....or as Rikki states, *"He was a guardian angel who appeared out of nowhere."*

Final Inspection for Commodity Warehouse & Distribution Center

We are happy to announce that the Fort Belknap Indian Community's new Commodity Warehouse and Distribution Center had a final building inspection on January 30, 2026. The Tribal Council and Administrative Staff were present. The official Tribal and State FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) building clearance is confirmed! The Fort Belknap Commodity Program will officially open its doors at the new building in the next couple of weeks. The Grand Opening will be announced when a date has been determined. The Commodity Program was previously located at the 'Old Agency Shopping Mall' up until August 2023. The building was originally built in the 1970s. After 50+ years, the building became deteriorated, with costly roof and interior repairs. Water infrastructure damages were reoccurring and the presence of mold posed a huge health and safety risk. It was deemed unsafe for employees and food products. The Commodity Building was then located to the Agency Community Center (temporarily) until a solution was resolved. With the accomplishment and rebuilding of the new Commodity Warehouse, the Agency Community Center will return to the public sometime in February; a notice will be issued soon! (The Community Center is used for public community use and a place where activities are held. It also serves as a designated warming shelter to prevent death and injury from cold exposure by providing a safe, warm place for individuals during extremely cold temperatures. Especially for those experiencing homelessness or who lack adequate heat). This is a great success for FBIC, to have repurposed the old Planning/ONAP building, located at 260 Newtown Drive, Fort Belknap Agency. The Planning Department took lead in this significant project. The FBIC contracted Martin Construction to construct this 5,251 square-foot facility creating an adequate Commodity Warehouse for critical food distribution services on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. Martin Construction worked fast and efficiently complying with commercial building standards and weekly inspections. They demonstrated commendable efficiency and professionalism throughout the build. The dedication and hard work of everyone involved in this project are greatly appreciated!



Interior/Exterior of Commodity Building (Photos by: Martin Construction)

Anaakyaaniin Wellness Center Reaches Key Construction Milestones, Prepares for Spring Restart

HAYS, MT - The Anaakyaaniin Wellness Center project continues to move forward, reaching significant early construction milestones and positioning the project for a return to active on-site work in spring 2026. **Project Progress and Construction Readiness:** Project leaders confirm that all major contracts have been finalized and that project management, cost controls, and reporting systems are fully in place. Early work has focused on planning, coordination, and preparation to ensure a smooth transition into full construction activity. **A major milestone has been achieved with the ordering of the building's structural steel package:** Securing this critical material early helps protect the construction schedule and supports a timely transition into vertical construction once site conditions allow. Design coordination for the current phase of work is complete across civil, architectural, structural, and building systems, ensuring foundational elements, utilities, and building components are aligned and reducing the risk of delays. Trade partners are being finalized, and long-lead materials continue to be actively managed to minimize potential supply chain impacts. At this time, the project schedule remains on track, with no critical path delays identified. Construction activities are expected to resume during the first week of April 2026, dependent on weather and site conditions. Initial work will focus on site preparation and foundation construction, followed by structural work as materials arrive. **Compliance and Community Commitment:** The Anaakyaaniin Wellness Center project is being carried out in compliance with Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) requirements. Community members with TERO-related questions may contact Nancy Boushie at (406) 353-8454. Once completed, the Anaakyaaniin Wellness Center will serve as a vital resource for health and wellness services, supporting the long-term well-being of the Fort Belknap Community. *-Paula Hawley, Communications & Marketing Manager (IMDG)*

Construction Team Leadership

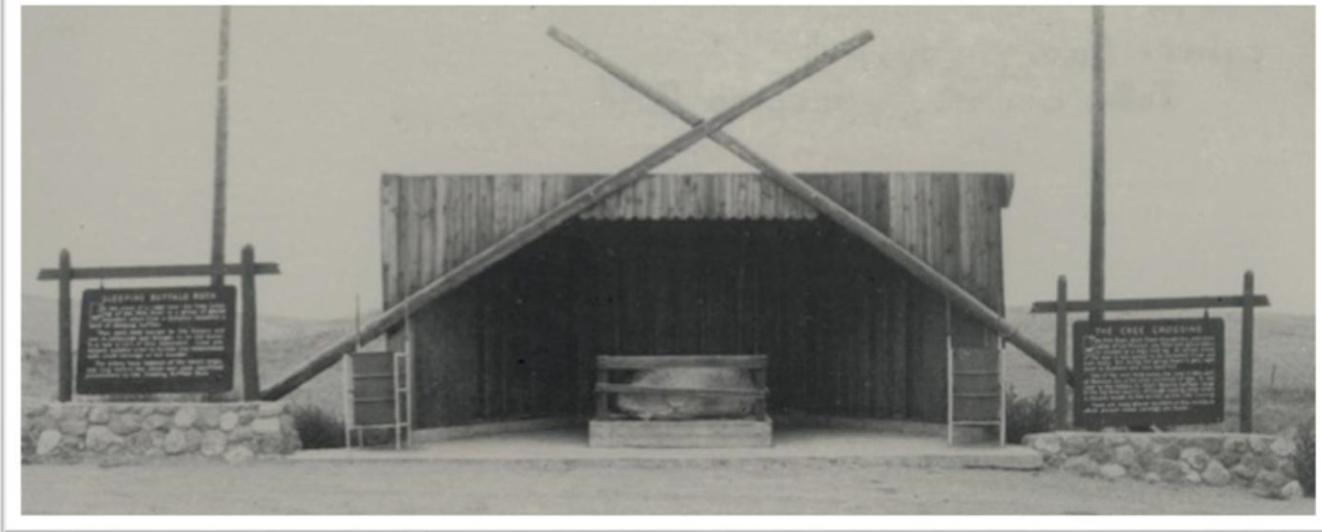
The project is being delivered by Woodstone Inc., with experienced on-site leadership throughout construction. Adam Songetay, Project Superintendent, a member of the St. Croix Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, brings more than a decade of experience managing community-focused construction projects across Indian Country and oversees daily on-site operations, subcontractor coordination, and site safety. Andrew Silbernagle, Project Engineer, serves as the full-time on-site point of coordination. A descendant of the Standing Rock Sioux and the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes, he supports daily construction operations, document tracking, inspections, and communication among project teams. Together, the on-site leadership team brings strong professional experience and deep connections to tribal communities, reinforcing the project's commitment to responsible development and long-term community benefit.



Adam Songetay

Andrew Silbernagle





Sleeping Buffalo Rock – Photo (Google)

Sleeping Buffalo History

Die ya wa chem nog! (Good to see you). I, John A. Allen, am writing this article on the Sleeping Buffalo Rock Shrine located at the highway #2 turnoff going to the Sleeping Buffalo hot springs Resort. The Sleeping Buffalo Rock has always been a big part of both the Nakoda - Aaniih Tribes as a legendary holy place of worship throughout our history. The Sleeping Buffalo Rock is one of most used Indian holy shrines in these northwest areas of Montana and Canada. Each day as our native people travel down highway #2 in both the east and western directions, they all stop at the Sleeping Buffalo to pray and leave offers of tobacco, smug,

money, food items, beads, cloth, and other gifts to their spiritual ancestors'. Those prayers and payments of gifts are for safe travels, protection, and thankfulness for their life as they Travel the Circle of Life. The following short story talks the relationship between the Sleeping Buffalo Rock and the Aaniih (Gros Ventre) people. This story is from their oral tradition as was told to a man named Spear by his grandmother. Spear told this story and it was reported in the Great Falls Tribune dated September 16, 1937. According to its teller it "dates to a time when the people had become greedy for buffalo robes."

The story: It was a time of plenty, when living was too easy for the people. Now they knew that the buffalo had been placed on earth for the purpose of providing food, shelter, and all other necessities and that for those things he must be honored, but they were obsessed with a lust for killing and slaughtered the buffalo by the thousands....then there came a dream to a maiden of the Tribe. In this dream the girl was told unless the slaughter of the buffalo was stopped, the Tribe and all others would hunger for many years for the taste of fat buffalo meat. The young woman went to the chief and told him of her dream. He laughed at her and continued with plans for a greater hunt than ever. When the morning of the hunt dawned, the young men appointed as scouts located the herds and returned with word that there were no buffalo within a day's reach. The search widened and continued over a great distance for days and weeks and months. Supplies of dried meat became low, robes wore thin and tepees no longer kept out the wind, but still no

buffalo were sighted. Never before had there been such a time for hunger and fear. Then one evening a scout came to the village with word that a small herd of buffalo had been seen near the council hill at the crossing on Milk River, where the river turns to form the big bend. The most cunning hunter approached the place and saw quite plainly the herd of buffalo grazing on the slope of the hill. They waited until the animals had lain down and then crept closer for an attack. When the hunters were within arrow shot of the herd, they sprang up with a shout, meaning to startle the buffalo to their feet so they could more surely be killed. But before their eyes a strange happening took place. The buffalo began to look less and less like living creatures and more like boulders scattered on the hill side. The frightened hunters went closer until they touch what had been flesh but was now stone. Awestricken, the hunters returned to the village and related the strange happening. A council was called, and it was remembered that a maiden of the

Tribes, has dreamed a strange dream of the buffalo. She was brought before the chief medicine man and instructed to go to the place of the stone buffalo and fast there until her dream was made clear. After three days and three nights of fasting and prayer, the girl returned and told the people they had been punished for their cruelty and greediness and that henceforth, unless they killed only for the necessities of life, the buffalo and all other game would return no more to the hunting grounds. This was many generations ago and thereafter the buffalo returned and became plentiful but the people remembered the time of hunger and killed only for meat and for skins to make their lodges and robes. Note: This story and other information was taken from the Book "DISTURBING THE SLEEPING BUFFALO" The author is Ms. Sally Thompson. The Nakoda (Assiniboine) people have stories about the Buffalo Rock as told by, Donald 'Duck' Horn. In the BUFFALO COUNTRY IS A ROCK which resembles a

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buffalo lying down. It was held sacred by the Tribe and whenever a band passed by, they always camped at some suitable camping place near the rock. Then the people placed offerings around it; some were in thanksgiving for things received or for good health enjoyed by their families, others asked for successful hunts, captured horses and other war achievements. The medicine men, who had the Spirit Buffalo for their helper, made their sacrifices for the welfare and prosperity of the people. "The story of the Buffalo Rock was handed down through the generations of our people," said Duck. This is how it is told: A war party saw a small herd of buffaloes lying down on a knoll. The men quickly got out of sight, being all foot. Two of the group are selected to kill a buffalo to replenish their meat supply. As the men crept near the herd, the animals remained motionless. They were grouped around an unusually large bull which the men knew was the leader of the herd. The men wanted to kill a young heifer and they made their way slowly and quietly toward the herd. As they drew closer, the buffalo appeared to be the same size as when they first saw them. They again crept closer, then finally, so near that the herd was easily within range of their arrows. But there was something mysterious about the group. The hunters looked at one another as they lay flat on the ground, each one waiting for the other to break the silence and make a suggestion. A spell seemed to hang over them. The small herd laid as motionless as before. Not one of them as so much as moved its head. Without a word one of the men arose and the other quickly got to his feet. Both remained standing, not knowing just what else to do, for the herd remained stock still, none took flight. The men waved to the rest of the party, and by signs, told them to hurry over. When they came, the two pointed to the herd still lying down. A council was held quickly and the party walked toward the herd. When they reached the spot, there was only a group of boulders where the buffalo were first seen. But the large one in the center attracted the attention of the party. They saw that it did resemble a bull lying down. The war

leader said, "It is on war journeys, away from the smell of habitation, noise, bad talks and unclean persons when strange things are seen. This place is sacred. Let us sit down. I will fill and offer the medicine pipe to the buffalo and his group that they may look kindly upon us and when we get back to our people, this story will be told to them." That is the story. And in my time, I have seen many sacrifices made to the Buffalo Rock. Duck tells another story about the Rock, which happened before his time. Once there were no buffaloes in the Assiniboine country. There was want in every band. All other game was small and it took much to feed a band. So finally, many families had to leave their bands and brave the attack of enemy war parties in order to seek food alone. One of these groups passed by the sacred Buffalo Rock and laid offerings there, asking for food. In the group was a young married couple, newly married. They were in the rear of the movers, the last to arrive at the Rock, because the man was ill and weak. His feet were sore from hunting afoot and also for the lack of food, so he walked with aid of his wife. While the rest of the people moved on, the couple stopped some distance from the Rock. The man said, "I will make an offering to the Rock but you must not come with me as no women are allowed near it." So, he crawled to the Rock and laid his offering with the others. He sat there in prayer, after which they continued the journey. Because they traveled slowly, they were left far behind. And so, they were alone when they made camp near a small creek which was wooded with large willows patches. The woman cut and brought willows while the man crawled about helping her. Between them, they made a shelter of willows and leafy branches. A fire was built and the woman brought some water but there was no food to eat, so they just sat there in silence. The man sat with his eyes fixed on the fire, which was built just outside of the willow hut and close to the entrance. Without changing his gaze, he began to speak, but words came with much effort. "Seven moons ago, we were very happy. It was the first time that you and I were permitted to sit side by side. The buffalo

were plentiful then and my kills satisfied your father. It was planned that when one winter had passed you would set up our own lodge, make from hides I had taken. But that is not to be. Much want has visited our people and they have scattered in many directions. Many families are even divided, but things are not made better by it. We are still together, but alone. Our people have gone on. We still wish much to always sit beside each other, although seven moon have passed since you became my sit beside-me woman. This willow lodge is going to be the one we planned that you would pitch. It was to be erected with much ceremony, according to the custom of our people. But now that part will be left out. In this lodge I will remain as I can go no further. You are still strong and must follow our people to save yourself. This is my wish." She had sat at his right but farther to the side, near the entrance. She, too had stared into the fire while he was speaking. Now she turned and came at once to his side. Together we will remain here, she said, why should I go on? To whom? Seven moons ago you left the lodge of your mother and father and came to me to stay forever, and now, must I leave you? You

_____ 'But whatever she was going to say was never finished. A peal of thunder, so loud, so hard that it seemed to rend something apart, came as out of nowhere. It shook the small framework which sheltered them and the ground where they sat. She threw herself against him and he covered her with a part of his robe. There they sat in silence, while the Thunder Birds made their presence known with lightning and thunder accompanied by wind and much rain. The storm did not last long. It was the kind of storm, the old men say, carried on by young and restless Thunder Birds who delight in coming suddenly upon a prey to destroy it; and also, to cast fear into people who have not made sacrifices to the Thunder Birds. Sometimes they came on a good mission and not always to destroy. After the fury of the storm, the rain settled down to a drizzle but the wind was still blowing so hard that it blew the fine rain into sheets. The fire was almost out. The woman went out to gather

-continued on page 13

more dead willows to start it up again. In a short time, she came running back, without fuel, and threw her arms around him. She clung to him breathless and speechless. The man was alarmed but gave her time to compose herself. "After a time, with much excitement, she told of seeing three buffaloes standing close together in the shelter of the wooded creek. He said to her, "It only grieves me and makes my heart heavy to know that there is meat so near and I sit here helpless." Suddenly, but calmly, she said, "You are still strong in your arms and can draw the bow, I will carry you on my back and you can make the kill; the kill will save our lives and keep us together as before. He seemed strong and happy as he got on her back. He whispered some words in her ear which brought a smile on her face. It was now nearly dusk but wind and fine rain was still the same. With her burden she slowly made her way toward where she had seen the buffaloes. Softly she moved toward the spot and soon he saw them. They were huddled together, faced down with wind, unconscious of a strangely mounted hunter who was behind them. The strength of past hunting days returned to the man. His left hand easily pushed the center of the bow away from the sinew-cord in his right hand and in a flash the arrow was gone. The Three buffalo jumped in different directions and ran. But one of them went in a circling fashion, with its head down, then fell. A kill was made. The woman carried her husband over to it and, together they butchered it. When they were done, she carried him back to their rude lodge and went back after choice parts for their immediate use. Once more they sat before the fire, but now, with smiles on their faces as of times past. Before they ate, he raised the broiled meat before him and called aloud the names of some of his departed relatives. He said, "Come, sit with us and eat this meat which is given to us by the Sacred Buffalo, whose image lies close by." He has even asked the help of the Thunder Birds to drive the buffaloes close to our camp. We have much to give thanks for. Early the next morning the woman followed the trail of the people. When she arrived at their camp

she told them of what had happened. Several hunters hurried back and killed the other two buffaloes which were found nearby. There was much rejoicing among the people and many pipes were filled and offered to the Buffalo Rock. Note: Those last two stories about the Sleeping Buffalo come the book called the *LAND OF NAKODA*, Author: James L. Long. Those written stories about the Sleeping Buffalo Monument have shown the ancient past history and relationship of the importance traditional, cultural practices and beliefs of the Nakoda (Assiniboine) and Aaniih (Gros Ventre) people. At this present time the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council is responsible for protecting Nakoda and Aaniih people sacred hallowed sites throughout their ancestral territories and homelands. Those holy sites are being disrespected by individuals, and the Sleeping Buffalo Monument is one of them. The Montana Highway Department and the Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs are not responsible for the upkeep and administration of the Sleeping Buffalo Rock at this time. The

current condition of the monument is in a state of disrepair and maintenance as the traffic in the area cannot be monitored hourly. Some of the people that stop at the Monument leave trash and human waste, even though there are traditional and cultural offerings being left at the site. The Fort Belknap Indian Community has passed a resolution requesting that the Sleeping Buffalo be relocated to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The Tribal Council will protect our sacred sites and with the relocation of the Sleeping Buffalo Rock it will gain back the reverence and worship for the traditional and cultural practices and beliefs of the Aaniih and Nakoda people. The plan is to relocate the Sleeping Buffalo Rock to Three Buttes area near the buffalo pasture on Highway 66 with access made available to travelers. We will have to work with the Montana Department of Transportation, Tribal Leaders, and the Montana Historical Society in order to complete this important project.

BY JOHN A. ALLEN



"IN THE BUFFALO COUNTRY IS A ROCK WHICH RESEMBLES A BUFFALO LYING DOWN."

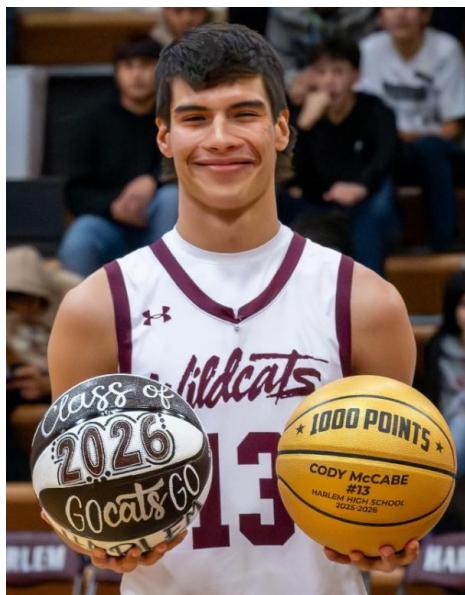
Dodson's Art Comes Alive Through the Talent of Kailee Ramone

At Dodson Public School, art is more than decoration—it is a reflection of pride, identity, and community. Much of that visual spirit can be credited to Kailee Ramone, Dodson's K–12 art teacher, whose creativity and dedication have transformed the school campus into a vibrant gallery of inspiration. Ramone is an exceptionally talented artist whose work can be seen throughout the school. Among her most striking contributions is a large mural featuring the Dodson Coyote, a powerful symbol of school pride that welcomes students, staff, and visitors alike. Another favorite is her mural in the cafeteria, boldly displaying the message, "Healthy bodies, healthy minds," reminding students daily of the connection between wellness and learning. This year marked an exciting transition for Dodson as the Class C school district moved into the 9C sports conference. With the change came a unique challenge: updating the gymnasium to reflect the new conference opponents. Ramone was tasked with hand-painting each mascot in the Dodson Gym—a project that required not only artistic skill but also countless hours of careful detail. The result is nothing short of impressive. Her work brings energy, color, and character to the gym, creating an atmosphere that celebrates



Kailee Ramone (Photo by: Dodson Public School)

competition and community. Fans and visitors are encouraged to attend a Dodson basketball game, cheer on the Coyotes, and experience Ramone's inspiring artwork firsthand. Her murals are not only visually stunning but also a testament to the pride and creativity that define Dodson. The artistic talent at Dodson extends beyond the walls of the school. Ramone's students will showcase their own artwork at the upcoming Winter Fair, to be held on February 12 at the bingo hall in Fort Belknap. The display will highlight the creativity and skill of Dodson's young artists, offering the community an opportunity to celebrate student expression and achievement. Through her murals, mentorship, and passion for the arts, Kailee Ramone has left an enduring mark on Dodson Public School—one brushstroke at a time. —Angela Richards, Superintendent



Cody McCabe, Jr. (Photo by: Randy Perez)

Harlem Wildcat Cody McCabe, Jr., Reaches 1,000 Career Points

Cody McCabe, Jr., a senior athlete for the Harlem Wildcats basketball team, has achieved a major milestone by scoring 1,000 points in his high school basketball career. This impressive accomplishment highlights his dedication, skill, and consistent performance on the court. Reaching 1,000 points is a significant achievement for high school basketball players, reflecting both talent and hard work over multiple seasons. Cody's achievement not only marks personal success but also serves as an inspiration to his teammates and the Harlem community. Congratulations to Cody McCabe, Jr., on this fantastic career high! Cody is the son of Megan Walls and Cody McCabe, Sr. Grandparents are Tina Walls, Curtis Moats, Arlene Gardipee, and Mike McCabe.



Brandon Healy Jr. and family, (Photo Submitted by: Erica Johnson)

Healy Makes Commitment to Play Football for Dickinson State

Congratulations to Brandon Healy, Jr., a senior at Havre Blue Ponies High School, who has signed to play college football with Dickinson State University. Brandon is a tribal enrolled member of Fort Belknap and is set to graduate this May, marking an exciting new chapter in his athletic and academic journey.

Brandon is the son of Monte and Brandon Healy, Sr., and the grandson of Kathy Wing, Ted Bell, Chan and Terry Healy, and Gary "Jug" and Kathleen "Sissy" McGuire.

Harlem Wildcats Cross Country Team Receives Recognition

The Harlem Boys Cross Country Team received Pendleton Jackets for their achievement as the 'Class B State Champions.' The girls team were also recognized and gifted ribbon skirts and shirts for their 7th place finish at State.

Vice-President, Alan Bigby was present during the team's recognition and took the opportunity to share a few encouraging words.

"On behalf of the Fort Belknap Tribal Council and the entire community, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Harlem Wildcat Cross Country team for winning State. Our community is proud of not only the athletes, but also the coaches, managers, and parents whose guidance, encouragement, and support made this success possible. Most importantly, thank you to the team for being strong role models for our youth. Your hard work, sportsmanship, and commitment inspire others." - Alan Bigby, Vice-President

Earning the title of Class B State Champions marks a great achievement, showcasing remarkable teamwork, endurance, and skill on the course.



© Randy Perez



Harlem Boys & Girls Cross Country Team, Coaches, Managers, and Bus Driver (Photos by: Randy Perez)

Boys Team: Ethan Walker, Donovan Posey, Orion Cuts The Rope, Isaac Cuts The Rope, Treyton Mount, Jayvon Bigknife, Lathan Blackwolf, Romeo Main, Xander Young, Adrian Main, Lucas Blackcrow, Carter Lawrence, Chaysen Walker, Daythen Johnson.
Girls Team: Trinity Walker, Tahlia Walker, J'Lynn Morgan, RaMarrah Camel, Jaspen Camel, Kaci Boushie, Emma Klingaman, Jalana Gone, Madison Mount. **Coaches:** Hope Doney, Melinda Young, Clayton Talks Different **Managers:** Zeke Jackson, Caylon Lawrence **Bus Driver:** Ira Talks Different



Vice-President, Alan Bigby (Photo by: Breanne Main)



Basketball Scoreboard for Local Schools

<u>Hays/LP T-Birds Boys Varsity</u>	<u>Harlem Wildcats Boys Varsity</u>	<u>Dodson Coyotes Boys Varsity</u>
01/02 – vs. Turner (W 58-38)	01/02 – vs. Malta (L 80-72)	01/02 – vs. Nashua (W 54-52)
01/09 – vs. Frazer (L 64-44)	01/03 – vs. Glasgow (W 59-56)	01/03 – vs. Big Sandy (L 81-48)
01/10 – vs. Big Sandy (L 74-52)	01/08 – vs. Box Elder (W 68-53)	01/06 – vs. Frazer (W 76-59)
01/16 – vs. Dodson (W 75-33)	01/09 – vs. Wolf Point (W 70-53)	01/08 – vs. Saco/Hinsdale/Whitewater (L 59-45)
01/17 – vs. Northstar (L 51-40)	01/16 – vs. Fairview (W 79-41)	01/10 – vs. Northstar (L 61-50)
01/21 – vs. Frazer (W 81-53)	01/23 – vs. Poplar (W 82-71)	01/16 – vs. Hays/Lp (L 75-33)
01/24 – vs. Box Elder (L 76-49)	01/24 – vs. Plentywood (W 62-61)	01/17 – vs. Box Elder (L 79-46)
01/29 – vs. Harlem (N/A)	01/29 – vs. Hays/LP (N/A)	01/23 – vs. Turner (W 75-63)
	01/31 – vs. Malta (L 77-66)	01/24 – vs. Frazer (L 96-77)
		01/31 – vs. Big Sandy (L 41-78)
<u>Hays/LP T-Birds Girls Varsity</u>	<u>Harlem Lady Cats Girls Varsity</u>	<u>Dodson Coyotes Girls Varsity</u>
01/02 – vs. Turner (L 40-38)	01/02 – vs. Malta (L 45-33)	01/02 – vs. Nashua (W 48-27)
01/09 – vs. Frazer (W 60-38)	01/03 – vs. Glasgow (L 72-31)	01/03 – vs. Big Sandy (L 51-26)
01/10 – vs. Big Sandy (W 56-34)	01/08 – vs. Box Elder (L 68-59)	01/06 – vs. Frazer (L 67-37)
01/16 – vs. Dodson (W 67-27)	01/09 – vs. Wolf Point (W 40-32)	01/08 – vs. Saco/Hinsdale/Whitewater (L 56-5)
01/17 – vs. Northstar (L 59-28)	01/16 – vs. Fairview (W 44-36)	01/10 – vs. Northstar (L 56-32)
01/21 – vs. Frazer (W 57-43)	01/23 – vs. Poplar (N/A)	01/16 – vs. Hays/Lp (L 67-27)
01/24 – vs. Box Elder (L 45-34)	01/24 – vs. Plentywood (W 61-43)	01/17 – vs. Box Elder (L 58-35)
01/29 – vs. Harlem (L 52-37)	01/29 – vs. Hays/LP (W 52-37)	01/23 – vs. Turner (L 55-25)
01/30 – vs. Turner (N/A)	01/31 – vs. Malta (N/A)	01/24 – vs. Frazer (L 61-48)
		01/31 – vs. Big Sandy (N/A)

The Fort Belknap Tribal Council extends its best wishes to all athletes competing in the upcoming Basketball and Wrestling Tournaments in February for Class B & C Schools. Whether on the court or the mat, this is an exciting time for our young athletes to showcase their skills, hard work, and sportsmanship. The Tribal Council encourages everyone to support our teams and celebrate their achievements, regardless of the outcome. Good luck to all participants—play strong, stay focused, and enjoy every moment of these tournaments! Your efforts make us proud!



February is American Heart Month

A time for raising awareness for heart disease:
the #1 killer in the U.S. for men and women.
Heart disease does not discriminate; we are all at risk.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, people experience 800,000 heart attacks every year, attributing to about 1 in every 5 deaths.

High blood pressure is a major risk factor. Other risk factors include: unhealthy diet, inactivity, high cholesterol, smoking, vaping, diabetes and stress.

The American Heart Association promotes heart-healthy habits, like exercise (aim for 30 minutes/day of moderate activity), eat healthy, lose weight (if overweight), manage blood sugar/pressure, complete CPR training and get regular checkups.

Stress impacts nearly every body system, from your brain and heart to your gut and immune system. You can manage it, so it doesn't manage you.

To help manage the stress in your life, try healthier activities: journaling, walking, singing, reading, breathing, yoga, or any activity that will help calm your heart and mind.

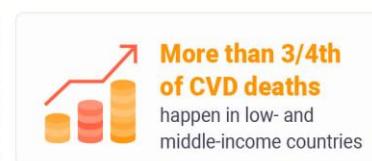
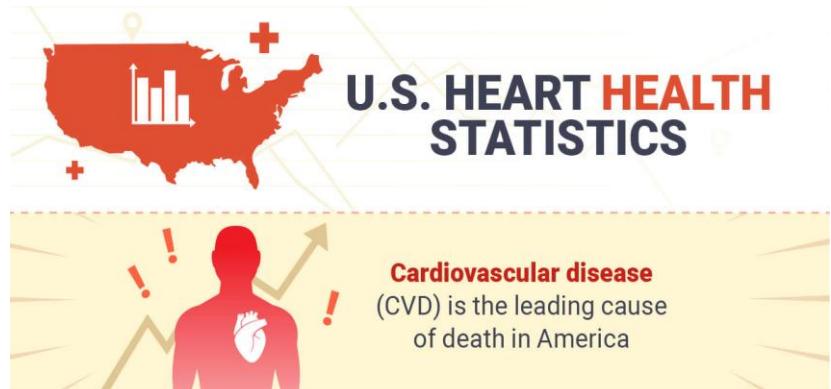
Please contact your healthcare provider if you have any questions about your health and to gain a better understanding on how to take care of your body.

There is always HELP. There is always HOPE.

-Katrese Hammond, Health Educator (Tribal Health)

Why is Heart Health Important For Everyone to Keep in Mind?

At the center of good health is a strong heart. Luckily, no matter your age, embracing a healthy lifestyle can prevent heart disease and lower the risk for a heart attack or stroke. For those who have multiple risk factors, the chances of having a serious heart-related health episode are greater.



6 WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK:



Tightness in the chest



Nausea, indigestion, and heartburn



Shortness of breath



Cold sweat



Fatigue



Sudden dizziness



For more information, check out DNAWeekly.com

What Are the Risks of Heart Disease?

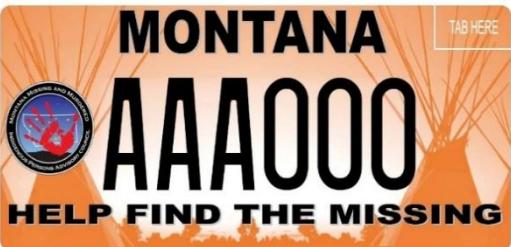
What Are the Risks of Heart Disease?

Certain lifestyle choices have a huge impact on your heart health. Below are some of the high-risk factors that may increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

- Smoking
- Inactivity
- High blood pressure
- Obesity/overweight
- Family history of heart disease

Ways to Protect Your Heart

- Don't Smoke
- Exercise Daily
- Eat Healthily
- Cut down on drinking
- Reduce Stress
- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Stay On Top of Doc Visits
- Check Your Blood Pressure Often
- Know the Signs of a Heart Attack



MMIPAC Launches Sponsored License Plate

The Montana Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Advisory Council (MMIPAC) recently launched a sponsored license plate. The MMIPAC is tasked with identifying strategies to improve interagency communication, cooperation, and to remove jurisdictional barriers. The MMIPAC also works to identify causes of missing and murdered indigenous persons. Funding donated to this license plate will be utilized by the authorization of the Advisory Council to support those missions. Attorney General Austin Knudsen advocated for legislation during the 2023 legislative session to reauthorize the statewide Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force for ten years, extending its authority from the previous two-year sunset dates and providing the needed continuity to more effectively fulfill its long-term mission of addressing the crisis. Members include representatives from each of the state's eight federally recognized tribes, a representative from the Attorney General's Office, a representative from the Montana Department of Justice who has expertise in the subject of missing persons, the Montana Highway Patrol and the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The U.S. Attorney General's Office (Montana District), Indian Health Services, Ohkomi Forensics and the U.S. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Coordinator for Montana are also represented on the task force. For more information on how to purchase this license plate, visit the online website at <https://mvdmmt.gov> or contact your local DMV office.

FORT BELKNAP TRIBAL HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD MEMBERS

Ramona Messerly, Gros Ventre

Myron Hoops, Assiniboine

Jay W. Mount, Gros Ventre

(Vacant Seat) Assiniboine

Joey Kill Eagle, Gros Ventre

Charlie Bear, Assiniboine

PSA: Stray Dogs Agency Area - January 28, 2026

Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumor (TVT) has been identified in dog located in the Low Rent/Agency area. What is TVT? Canine transmissible venereal tumor (TVT) is a contagious transmissible cancer (ie, spread through direct transfer of cancer cells) affecting canids. **Etiology and Epidemiology of Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumor (TVT):** The tumor cell is itself the infective agent. The tumor is transplanted from site to site and from dog to dog by direct contact with the tumor mass. Cells may be transplanted to adjacent skin and oral, nasal, or conjunctival mucosae. TVTs are commonly transmitted between dogs during coitus. The tumor may also spread through common social behavior such as sniffing, licking, scratching, or biting. Mom dog-to-pup transmission may also occur through grooming. **Dogs of any breed, age, or sex are susceptible, but it is most commonly observed in mixed-breed dogs, dogs that are sexually 'intact' (not spayed or neutered), and stray and free-roaming dogs** (Ganguly et.al., 2016). **Clinical Characteristics of Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumor:** Canine TVTs are cauliflower-like, pedunculated, nodular, papillary, or multilobulated in appearance. The signs of this type of tumor in your dog are entirely dependent on the location of the tumor. If the tumors are located in mouth or tongue, cauliflower like nodules will grow and eventually ulcerate and bleed (Ganguly et.al., 2016). **Treatment of Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumor:** TVT is treated with complete surgical excision, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy are effective treatments. Due to high cost, in most cases the dog will have to be put down (Ganguly et.al., 2016).

Work Cited: Ganguly B, Das U, Das AK. Canine transmissible venereal tumor: a review. Vet Comp Oncol, 2016;14(1):1-12. doi:10.1111/vco.12060

Agency Water Storage Tank Repaired - We are pleased to inform residents of the Agency area that the 'boil water order' has been lifted as of January 16, 2026. Recent water samples were tested and came back safe, meeting all health and safety standards. The Fort Belknap Tribal Council extends their sincere gratitude to Prairie Mountain Utilities for their dedicated work repairing the Agency water tank system. Their expertise and effort have played a crucial role in restoring reliable water service to the community. The Council also appreciates DES for their support in delivering water during this critical time. Thank you to all the volunteers who contributed their time and effort in various ways. Together, these combined efforts demonstrate the strength and resilience of the Fort Belknap community in overcoming challenges and ensuring access to clean, safe water for all residents. Thank you for your patience and cooperation during this precautionary measure.

NOTICE FROM PMU – This is a reminder to the public not to pour grease down the sinks/drains. There was a clogged sewer line in the Mission area that was mistaken for a water break. PMU unclogged the line and found chunks of grease and debris which was causing the sewer lines to back-up. Please help keep our public sewer lines clear. Do not throw disposable wipes, towels, etc. down the drains. This is an ongoing issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Prairie Mountain Utilities at (406) 399-2301 or (406) 353-8313.



Newsletter Created and Published by:
Breanne Main, Public Relations Officer
Fort Belknap Indian Community
Central Administration
E-mail: breanne.main@fbbelknap.org

NOTICE TO THE FORT BELKNAP COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Fort Belknap Indian Community has established a Burial Assistance Fund to help families in their greatest time of need. It is also a way for us to honor a community member who had shared their life with us. Developing this fund has been in the process from Councils long ago and we are happy to be able to make their dream for our people come true.

The Fund was established to be effective August 1, 2012. In that regard, assistance funds cannot be used for deaths occurring before that date. While we cannot afford to pay for total funeral expenses, the Burial Assistance Fund will contribute up to \$4,800.00 towards funeral and burial costs as follows:

- **\$4,000.00 – Funeral home (to be paid directly to the funeral home once an invoice and Death Certificate are received).**
- **\$500.00 – Family representative for wake/funeral costs.**
- **\$300.00 – Grave preparation. This is normally paid to Tribal Construction for local Burials.**

Infants up to the age of one (1) who were enrolled or would have been eligible for enrollment, are granted up to \$1,500.00 for funeral costs. Eligibility for enrollment will be determined by the Tribal Enrollment Office.

The Fort Belknap Insurance Company oversees processing all payments from the fund. This assistance may not cover all family expenses, but it will certainly help. In order to initiate the process, a completed application must be on file and a Family Representative must be designated. Disbursements will be made only AFTER the application is approved.

Please contact the Burial Fund Administrator at (406) 353-4181 Ext. 3, (406) 353-4934 (Fax) or fbinsur4@itstriangle.com to start the application process.



353 OLD HAYS ROAD | P.O. BOX 470 | HAYS, MT 59527
TEL: 406.673.3031 | FAX: 406.673.3023 | WWW.ISLANDMTN.COM

Request for Proposals

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: The Fort Belknap Indian Community (hereinafter referred to as ("FBIC"), in partnership with Island Mountain Development Group (hereinafter referred to as ("IMDG") are soliciting proposals from qualified firms to perform a Class III Surface Reconnaissance Archaeological Inventory Survey of the future residential development in Lodgepole, MT.

The goal of performing a Class III surface reconnaissance archaeological inventory survey is to recommend a determination of either "No Historic Properties Affected" or "Potential Effect" for a proposed homesite and/or project, via the non-presence or presence of an identifiable archaeological resource inside the proposed Area of Potential Effects ("APE") boundaries.

Proposals should highlight relevant past projects, technical capabilities, and the expertise of key personnel, particularly in working within tribal jurisdictions and adhering to federal, state, and tribal regulations, and must never have been listed on the US government's debarment list.

Proposal documents, plans, and specifications for the project may be obtained from the IMDG office.

For a complete proposal packet, please email the IMDG Procurement at procurement@islandmtn.com.



353 OLD HAYS ROAD | P.O. BOX 470 | HAYS, MT 59527
TEL: 406.673.3031 | FAX: 406.673.3023 | WWW.ISLANDMTN.COM

Request for Proposals

Proposals may be submitted electronically, mailed, or hand-delivered.

All submissions must be received or postmarked on or before February 25th, 2026, prior to 4:00 PM.

Please email electronic versions to IMDG Procurement at procurement@islandmtn.com.

Proposals sent by mail must be postmarked by the deadline and addressed to: Attention: Tay Ramirez, P.O. Box 470, Hays, MT 59527.

Hand-delivered proposals can be delivered to IMDG Headquarters located at 353 Old Hays Rd. Hays, MT 59527.

Both mailed and hand-delivered submissions must be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly labeled "Class III Cultural Survey for Leggins Flat".

Please ensure all proposals are complete and properly labeled to avoid disqualification.

This request for proposals (RFP) does not oblige the FBIC to award a contract nor pay any costs incurred by proposers in the preparation of their proposal (s).

FBIC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, re-advertise the RFP, and waive any irregularities and informalities in the proposal process.

Fort Belknap 55th Annual MID WINTER FAIR

(subject to change)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday, February 2

8 AM: Booth set up
Art show entries,
Quilt entries, Silent Auction setup
Headstart Poster Contest
CLOSE AT 7 PM

Tuesday, February 3

8 AM: Booth set up -
Art / Quilt entries
11 AM to 1 PM: Bread and Pie
Noon to 1 PM: Baby Parade
1 PM: Chopped competition
6 PM: Mourner's Feed
DOORS/ENTRIES CLOSE 7 PM

Wednesday, February 4

9 AM: Art, Quilt and Booth Judging
10 AM: Opening Welcome
10 AM to Noon: Headstart Fun Day
11 AM: Open to the Public
1 to 2 PM: Jerky Making
6 PM: Banquet and Fashion Show

Thursday, February 5

8 AM: Booths open to public
10 AM to Noon: Chili Contest
11 AM to 4 PM: Elder Day
DOORS CLOSE AT 7 PM

Friday, February 6

10 AM to 3 PM: Hover Board Rodeo
CDC Go Carts
6 PM: Fiddle, Jig, Waltz Contest

Saturday, February 7

1 PM: Powwow
3 PM: Stick Game

Got Questions or
need more info?
Call Hannah
406-301-4494

ALL EVENTS AT FT BELKNAP BINGO HALL

*Committee not responsible for thefts or accidents

*All children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult

55th Annual
MID WINTER FAIR

February 2 - 7, 2026

at the Bingo Hall, Fort Belknap Agency, MT

THEME: Remembering the Past, Moving Forward

COLORS: Red, White, Black

Honoring Our Elders Day

2026 Mid-Winter Fair
 Thursday,
 February 5, 2026
 Bingo Hall

Activities

11:00 - 2:00 pm - Elder Feed
 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Bingo!
 3:00 - 4:00 pm - Elder Circle

"Remembering the Past, Moving Forward"

For More Info Contact
 Yvonne Stanley (406) 353-8492
 Teri Harper (406) 353-2607

MID WINTER FAIR 2026

HONORABLE MENTION

John R. Strike

90 years old
 Fort Belknap Assiniboine
 Parents: Newton & Mildred Strike
 7 Siblings: 2 brothers, 5 sisters
 Married to Margaret Strike
 for 32 years
 6 Children: 2 sons, 4 daughters

Air Force Veteran (Korean War)
 ANC Maintenance worker for
 31 years, retired in 2017
 Retired bull rider
 Firefighter for numerous years

Hobbies: running, keeping in shape;
 dancing at local powwows; visiting friends and
 family; working and riding horses;
 Harlem Wildcat basketball fan; pipe carrier;
 believes in his cultural ways.

2026

Miss Mid-Winter Fair PRINCESS

Mya Spencer

My name is Mya Spencer, I also was given a name that means big heart, AA-BI-GEE-THA® Big Woman®. Named after a grandmother on my Stiffarm side. My parents are Brandon and Jaci Spencer. My grandparents are Dan and Avis Spencer and Ed & Ruth Hawley. I was born and raised in Billings, MT but travel to Fort Belknap as often as I can. In 2024, I graduated from Skyview High School. From there I went on to college at MSU-Northern in Havre, MT to pursue the art of metal fabrication. In the spring of 2025 I graduated from Northern with my certificate in welding. Since then, I transferred to MSU-Billings to further my education, earning my associate's degree.

I love going to powwows, riding horses, and camping. My favorite memory was being in the Cheyenne Frontier Days parade with other princesses! I am thankful I got the chance to represent and I enjoyed every part of it. Thank you everyone for coming to enjoy the Mid Winter Fair!



CASE MANAGEMENT OFFICE HOURS FOR FORT BELKNAP

Monday: Noon - 5 pm

Wednesday: Noon - 5 pm

Friday: By Appointment

Call ahead to schedule: 406-519-0401

Case management will be in office only.

Appointments will take priority so please call ahead to schedule.



5:00 pm-7:30 pm

*Ham & Turkey Bingo (1 per household) & prizes,
different Craft Stations, Cookie Decorating, Soup*

Sponsored by: Title VII, Tiwahe, PHN, & Tribal Programs

NOTICE

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, one (1) gas card will be provided for local appointments.

GAS CARDS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CASH EXCHANGE

To ensure continued support, all recipients must return appointment verification forms. Assistance may be discontinued if verification is not received.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Hays Screening Day

Hays Senior Center

8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Every Thursday

If you have any questions

Please contact:



Hays CHRs at:

406-673-3808

Hays CHRs: Lacey & Staci

CHR Services Offered

Medication Delivery

Transportation to Local IHS

Health Screenings (Vital Checks).

Homes visit/Wellness check

Outreach/Screenings in Community

Agency CHR Staff

Dianna Blue-Gamble- (406)353-8470

Joshalyn Morales – (406)353-3236

Lee Gray – (406)353-3242

Vacant (406)353-3236

Hays CHR Staff

Staci Bradley – (406)673-3808

Lacey Addy – (406)673-3808

Lodge Pole Staff

Cindy Cliff – (406)673-3962

Michael Stiffarm – (406)673-3962

Driver's License Classes

**Tuesday, Feb 17, 2026 -
Wednesday, March 12, 2026**

10:00am - 11:30am

Tuesdays - Hags @ Kills At Night Center

Wednesdays - Agency @ Tiwahe

Thursdays - LodgePole @ Chief Nosey Center

Will cover materials from manual
Will provide appointments to both written & driving tests

Clients will receive incentives upon completion,
can only miss one class & proof of license

For questions contact
Ft. Belknap Child Support Program @
406.353.4230 Ft. Belknap Tiwahe @ 406.353.8345
Ft. Belknap 477 E&T @ 406.353.8376

Transportation available upon request

Positive Indian Parenting Virtual Classes

Zoom Link Will Be Provided

Starting February 4, 2026
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Classes will be every Wednesday & Friday

For More Information
Contact Journi Johnson
(406) 353-8397
journidoney@fbelknap.org

FREE TAX HELP-VITA PROGRAM



Fort Belknap ED Tribal Credit
163 Food Farm Ave
Fort Belknap Agency

Get Your Taxes Done for FREE! The Credit Staff are all IRS-Certified Volunteers

Monday—Friday
10:00 am—5:00 pm

What We Offer

- Federal & State tax returns
- Electronic filing
- Direct deposit
- Prior-year returns (limited)



What to Bring

- Photo ID
- Social Security cards / ITINs for everyone on the return
- Last year's tax return (if available)
- W-2s, 1099s, and other income documents
- Bank routing & account number
- Health insurance forms (if applicable)

To make an appointment contact the Credit Office

Phone: 406-353-8409
Email: bethany.lawrence@fbelknap.org
Walk-ins welcome | Appointments recommended

Grief Support Group Everyone Welcome

Water & Snacks will be provided

An open group that will provide a safe space for all community members

A safe welcoming place for anyone on our reservation experiencing the loss of a loved one. Share your story. Listen to others, relate. Find support and resources. Grief is unpredictable, you maybe dealing with a loss from days, weeks, and even years ago, we want you to know we are here for you. You do not have to do it alone.



Location: Language Preservation Building

When: Every Thursday
Time: 4:00-6:00 PM

If you need information contact Buster Moore (406) 353-5990 or show up to the meetings.

OPEN AA/NA MEETING EVERYONE WELCOME BRING A FRIEND

Location: Language Preservation Building

Date: Every Monday
Time: NA 6:00-7:00 pm
AA 7:00-8:00 pm



Drinks and snacks will be provided

For more information call or text
Bridgette Shields 406-353-5986
Buster Moore 406-353-5990
Trayce Sunchild 406-399-3666

In collaboration with Day Eagle Hope Project, Tiwahe, and ANIBH/CDC





Valentine's Word Search

E	O	Z	M	W	A	Y	E	Z	Z	J	D	J	N	U	C	P	L	P	D
Y	I	A	P	S	S	Q	C	P	V	M	Y	U	S	J	U	J	L	N	F
T	O	A	F	R	V	H	A	B	E	R	Z	D	D	M	D	M	E	L	U
Y	E	R	I	S	E	D	R	N	C	C	A	R	N	A	T	I	O	N	H
Q	E	A	P	O	E	M	B	P	N	L	R	P	Y	H	R	W	B	V	O
D	I	P	U	C	A	Y	M	L	A	C	C	L	E	F	E	E	A	N	R
B	J	R	G	N	H	D	E	M	M	N	K	A	C	R	M	L	H	Q	J
H	S	O	N	A	T	E	T	V	O	O	R	N	S	H	E	V	H	G	H
S	W	S	I	B	F	V	A	V	R	T	A	K	L	N	A	O	W	U	T
I	E	E	L	H	C	O	N	R	O	X	L	P	T	V	N	R	G	U	E
R	E	N	R	E	K	T	Q	N	T	I	Z	I	W	E	E	S	M	D	W
E	T	L	A	G	B	I	F	D	K	T	N	A	Y	G	L	Z	G	E	U
H	H	K	D	Q	J	O	X	E	P	E	H	Q	F	G	Q	H	V	Q	D
C	E	Q	C	H	C	N	V	X	T	U	I	R	H	F	F	O	N	G	A
P	A	U	F	B	Y	O	Q	U	Y	M	W	G	O	X	R	L	A	U	X
S	R	J	H	F	L	A	M	E	P	R	M	C	L	B	E	I	I	Q	O
Q	T	X	W	C	O	U	R	T	S	H	I	P	P	O	G	D	W	R	M
O	W	Q	K	F	H	S	U	R	C	T	F	I	Y	O	V	A	J	W	T
V	Q	G	I	R	L	F	R	I	E	N	D	I	Y	P	Q	Y	J	H	I
K	Q	S	N	W	H	C	K	I	S	S	Z	G	N	I	T	R	U	O	C

CARNATION

CHARMED

CHERISH

COURTING

COURTSHIP

CRAZY

CRUSH

CUPID

DARLING

DESIRE

DEVOTION

EMBRACE

FLAME

FLIRT

FLOWERS

FRIEND

GIRLFRIEND

HEART

HEARTTHROB

HOLIDAY

HONEY

HUG

KISS

LIKE

LOVE

POEM

ROMANCE

ROSE

SWEETHEART

VALENTINE



FEBRUARY 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2 Regular Council Meeting	3 FSPA Meeting 11:30AM-1PM via Zoom DSGW & Woodstone 1-3PM Tribal Chambers	4 Diocese Visit	5 Finance Committee Meeting	6 Code Revision Review via Zoom Kostan Lathouris 9AM	7 Pay Period 4
8	9	10 Health Committee Meeting	11 <i>Land/IMDG Strategic Planning</i>	12 <i>Land/IMDG Strategic Planning</i>	13 <i>Land/IMDG Strategic Planning</i>	14 ♥HAPPY Valentine's DAY♥
15	16 President's Day HOLIDAY	17 Land Committee Meeting	18 Tribal Partner's Meeting	19	20	21 Pay Period 5
22	23 Executive Committee Meeting	24 Insurance Board Meeting	25 Director's Meeting	26	27	28
						

"Subject to change at anytime"