

BIG SKY

CITY DESK: 587-4491 | CITYDESK@DAILYCHRONICLE.COM

LATE FOR CLASS

A wandering dog showed up at Sacajawea Middle School. POLICE REPORTS | PAGE A7



PARKS AND REC

Bozeman considers seeking grant to build playground in one day

By KATHERYN HOUGHTON
Chronicle Staff Writer

Those familiar with the mockumentary show "Parks and Recreation" may remember the "Kaboom" episode. City staff of the fictional Indiana town get psyched about a nonprofit that helps communities build a playground in 24 hours.

Without giving too much of the episode away, turns out KaBOOM! is a real thing. On Monday, the city of Bozeman will decide whether to apply for a grant from the nonprofit to build a playground for the city's future Bozeman Sports Park. The national nonprofit works to provide community-

If the grant is awarded, the project would involve mobilizing 200 volunteers to construct a 2,500-square-foot accessible playground in one day in August, according to city documents.

designed play spaces for children, especially those in poverty.

According to KaBOOM!, an anonymous donor contributed roughly \$90,000 for a potential Bozeman project. If the grant is awarded, the project will involve mobilizing 200 volunteers to construct a 2,500-square-foot accessible playground in one day in August, according to city documents.

Bozeman Parks and Recreation Director Mitch Overton (who said he doesn't tend to

watch the NBC show) said the grant and contributions like it could help the project go beyond "a few fields to a full-on park."

"Our goal is to remove all the barriers that we can so the park's accessible to all children," Overton said about the possible grant. "We'd have design days where you loop in local youth and parents."

Bozeman bought the 80 acres on the corner of Baxter Lane and Flanders Mill Road in 2014

that's now set to become the city's tenth sports field. The first phase of the park's fields are scheduled to wrap up this fall. More than \$8.4 million of city Trails, Open Space and Parks bond money is slotted for the effort.

The grant would require a match of \$8,500, which the Bozeman Sports Park Foundation agreed to provide. No new city funds are being requested for the playground.

"We have always viewed play equipment as a critical component," wrote Foundation Board Chair Tony Rich in the nonprofit's letter of support for the grant.

If the city doesn't get the grant, a Bozeman Sports Park

playground will be built when roughly \$45,000 is available down the road for things like bleachers and shade structures in the park.

Continuing on what's happening in Bozeman Parks and Recreation, the City Commission will decide whether the division can simplify how groups reserve public parks by putting fee and policy information into one document instead of six.

That change could include rate adjustments in park pavilion rentals based on size and hourly rates for the athletic fields, courts and non-programmed park space to help cover park maintenance.

More PARK | A7

MSU student researchers apply lessons to real-world problems



RACHEL LEATHE/CHRONICLE

Montana State senior Hitomi Okada, 30, is an undergraduate student from Japan studying Fish and Wildlife Management. Okada was one of about 200 research students from Montana State participating in the Student Research Celebration on Friday.

By GAIL SCHONTZLER
Chronicle Staff Writer

McKay Reed may be a young college student, but already he's putting lessons from his environmental health classes to use in the real world, doing scientific research on contaminated water wells on the Crow Reservation.

Reed, a 20-year-old sophomore at Montana State University, is part of a team that has been testing rural wells, working with Little Big Horn College and the Crow Environmental Health Steering Committee.

They've figured out that the contamination probably didn't come from cattle, which was their original hypothesis. Now they suspect sewage

"We think undergraduate research is really essential, central to our mission. It gives them a chance to put classroom knowledge to work on real-world problems."

— Colin Shaw, MSU's Undergraduate Scholars Program director

contamination. One way to tell the difference is finding evidence of caffeine. "Cows don't drink coffee," he said.

Reed was one of more than 130 undergraduates and graduate students who presented their results Friday at MSU's annual Student Research

Celebration, held in the Strand Union Building.

Research is definitely worthwhile, Reed said.

"A lot of classes are kind of abstract, it's hard to grab onto and take them to heart," he said. Doing research "helps me feel like I'm actually getting stuff done."

MSU's Undergraduate Scholars Program awards students \$200,000 a year in research grants, up to \$1,800 for a yearlong project, said Colin Shaw, program director.

"We think undergraduate research is really essential, central to our mission," Shaw said. "It gives them a chance to put classroom knowledge to work on real world problems."

More MSU | A7

Police officers honored for DUI arrests

By WHITNEY BERMES
Chronicle Staff Writer

Shannon Foley can still remember getting the calls, calls that she ignored at first while out for a run.

It was July 5, 2013, and when she finally returned those calls she found out that her friend, Annie Rooney, had been hit and killed by a drunk driver in Ohio.

Foley, a deputy county attorney for Carbon County who previously worked in the Gallatin County Attorney's Office, said that the woman who killed 36-year-old Rooney had "fallen through the cracks."

She had a prior DUI conviction, as well as some that were pleaded to lesser offenses. And the night she killed Rooney, a former Bozeman prosecutor, she had fallen off the barstool where she was drinking, an off-duty officer reported seeing her leave the bar drunk, and she ran three red lights before hitting Rooney's vehicle head-on.

More ARRESTS | A7

County to consider hiring election clerk

By FREDDY MONARES
Chronicle Staff Writer

Gallatin County will consider raising its election department budget by a little more than \$11,000 to hire a temporary, full-time election clerk for this year, with the possibility of that person becoming a permanent employee.

Gallatin County Election Administrator Charlotte Mills said two people in her department are running for her office, which prohibits her from asking for their help during the primary elections. Mills is retiring after her current term.

Eric Semerad is the recording supervisor in the Clerk and Recorder's office and usually helps Mills with election duties as well. Semerad is running as a Democrat for the clerk and recorder/election administrator's position in this upcoming election.

Laura Werley is the election supervisor with the county and is also running for the office as a Republican. Greg Metzger, a Republican who doesn't work for the office, is also seeking the job. Mills said it would be unfair if the two other candidates were involved in the election process.

"That leaves me with nobody to help me with the election," Mills said.

Mills, who is also the county Clerk and Recorder, said there is also a high probability one of the three clerks in the office may be leaving soon. The new employee would help out with the elections and also fill a vacancy in case one of the election clerks decides to leave, she said.

More CLERK | A7

Fergus County woman alleges talc caused cancer

By LEWIS KENDALL
Chronicle Staff Writer

A Fergus County woman has filed a lawsuit against Three Forks talcum producer Imerys Talc, claiming the company, along with consumer goods giant Johnson & Johnson, failed to warn her about the dangers of the mineral, which allegedly played a role in the woman developing ovarian cancer.

The suit, filed last week in Gallatin County District Court, alleges that industry members have known about the carcinogenic nature of talc for more than 40 years and have neglected to inform consumers.

According to the suit: Imerys Talc, a French



RACHEL LEATHE/CHRONICLE

The sun sets on the Imerys Talc plant on Jan. 17 in the outskirts of Three Forks.

company that owns and operates two plants in the Three Forks area, produces talc used in Johnson & Johnson baby powder.

Fergus County resident Holly Jensen, 62, was first

exposed to the powder as a child, and continued using it for feminine hygiene purposes for much of her adult life.

The suit cites "multiple epidemiologic studies" that it says demonstrate the

association between talc and ovarian cancer, including a 1993 United States National Toxicology Program study that found talc to be carcinogenic whether or not it contained asbestos.

In general, research on the relationship between talc and cancer has been inconclusive. According to the American Cancer Society, "Findings have been mixed, with some studies reporting a slightly increased risk and some reporting no increase."

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, an arm of the World Health Organization, classifies the genital use of talc powder as "possibly carcinogenic to humans."

More TALC | A7

Students presented posters showing a wide range of interests, from pharmaceuticals to physical therapy, to grandparents raising grandkids. One student wrote an original musical suite inspired by Rocky Mountain elk.

Kaylian Welsh, 22, a microbiology student from Minnesota, worked on a project that found Bozeman Creek is contaminated with *E. coli* at roughly twice the acceptable level. Researchers suspect the source is aging septic systems along the creek, from Kagy Boulevard to Main Street. They have shared their findings with the City-County Health Department. Bozeman may benefit from a septic system "re-inspection" program like one in Lewis and Clark County, she said.

"We're like the headwaters of the Missouri, our water should be clean," Welsh said. "It's still impaired. Most people don't realize it."

Anna Martinson, 19, a biological engineering freshman from Washington state, tested the idea of making concrete stronger by mixing in microbes.

"Every once in a while I get asked why I'm a girl who likes concrete," she said, smiling. One reason she picked MSU is because it has more young women in engineering than other schools she visited.

"Being a woman in engineering now is pretty easy," Martinson said, adding she feels "welcomed"

and "socially accepted."

Hitomi Okada, 30, came from Japan to study fish and wildlife at MSU. She spent weeks indoors analyzing data collected by others from bears in Yellowstone National Park.

Bears love to rub their backs on pine and fir trees — either to scratch an itch or mark territory. Either way, the bears can look almost suggestive wriggling against trees. She showed a video of the behavior titled "Bear Pole Dancing."

Now she has an Undergraduate Scholars grant to get outdoors and work in the field this summer.

"I'm very excited," she said. Asked about bear spray, she said, "I have two!"

Steve Rolland, 49, a computer science major, is doing research on using computer apps to make reading more engaging for children.

"Reading is a passion of mine," he said, "and I wanted to instill that in my children."

Sarah Rubin, 23, got to work eight weeks as an intern at the American Natural History Museum in New York City. She put specimens of invertebrates and nautilus, some up to 300 million years old, into an electronic database so that anyone can access them online. She hopes to make a career working in museums.

"I would encourage anyone to do anything that interests them," she said. "Try to do something you love."

Gail Schontzler can be reached at 406-582-2633 or gails@dailychronicle.com.