



# CITY OF KALISPELL

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# Kalispell Quarterly

Building a Community that Expects Excellence

## Meridian Road Construction To Begin

### Inside this issue:

Parks & Recreation	2
Boulevard Trees	2
Perils of Gateway Drugs	3
Water Park Grand Opening	3
Skate Park	3
Sparky's Hazard House®	4
Staff Directory	4

### MISSION

To Provide the Services, Resources and Competitive Environment that Enhance the Quality of Life for All Citizens.

### Mayor & City Council

#### Mayor Pam Kennedy

Ward 1:	Kari Gabriel
	Robert Hafferman
Ward 2:	Bob Herron
	Hank Olson
Ward 3:	Jim Atkinson
	Randy Kenyon
Ward 4:	M. Duane Larson
	Jayson Peters

After nearly ten years of effort to design and build a better roadway, the Montana Department of Transportation and the City of Kalispell are poised to begin construction of the long-awaited Meridian Road improvement project. This much needed project will provide two southbound lanes, one northbound lane and a center turn lane between US 2 (at Albertson's) and Three Mile Drive. From Three Mile Drive north to US 93 Meridian Road will be widened to three lanes, including a center turn lane. Intersections will include dedicated right and left turn lanes and traffic signals will be installed at Three Mile Drive and at Liberty Street. In addition, the Three Mile Drive intersection will be reconfigured to a more conventional style that will be safer for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. When all is said and done the new and improved Meridian Road will easily handle the increasing amount of traffic that uses this roadway each day. Its expanded capacity will accommodate growth for many years into the future.

"So," you ask, "what has taken so long?" This is a perfectly reasonable question in light of the time involved, but it is a question that has a multi-part answer. The first part of the answer involves space. Most large road projects involve relocating utilities out away from the roadway to the edges of a wide right of way so they do not interfere with the new construction and are pro-

tected from potential damage. As you know, Meridian Road is flanked by development for virtually its entire length. The homes and businesses along the road meant that there was very little property available for additional road right of way. As a result, the new and improved Meridian Road must occupy only slightly more space than the present roadway. This means that all the utilities will remain very close to the new roadway and will to a great extent be in the way of the new roadway construction. This compact arrangement of utilities and roadway greatly complicated the design and required very careful coordination between utility companies, MDT and the City to ensure the fewest conflicts. It also required some non-traditional solutions to problems that have companies sharing facilities whenever possible.

The second part of the answer involved right of way. As noted, very little property was available for a new roadway. Acquiring all the property that was required took many years and much negotiation and re-design to meet all the conflicting expectations that arise when dealing with over 60 individual property owners. The last parcel was acquired last fall and with that, acquisition plans could be finalized to move forward with real construction on the horizon.

The third part of the reason has to do with that old standby, money. This project is

Continued on Page 2



## Community Garden

Did you know that Kalispell has a community garden in which residents of the area can grow their own vegetables for *free*? It's true! The garden is located at the intersection of Liberty and Hawthorne Streets off of North Meridian. For information on how you can get a plot please call The Montana Conservation Corp at 755-3629 or Kalispell Parks & Recreation, 758-7715.



Urban Forestry crews begin spring planting of 50 boulevard trees

## Meridian Road Construction

Continued From Page 1

part of the Federal Urban Highway system and is funded by an MDT program that allocates funds to the Kalispell area each year for these types of improvements. The funds are part of the Federal highway program, and like most programs, they are not quite enough to do all that needs doing. The bankroll for this project has been growing for nearly ten years and is now about half the amount needed to fund the work. So where is the rest of the money? Another good question and one the City and MDT are working through to an answer right now. The solution appears to lie in a new idea for financing that involves a partnership between MDT and the City. We have agreed in principle to seek debt financing and then to repay that debt with funds to be provided by MDT through their Urban Highway program. This will be done at no cost to Kalispell taxpayers. The details are being developed now and it looks like MDT roadway construction contracts will be let late this fall. In the meantime, utility work is moving forward.

## Spring Is Here!

It certainly feels like spring at the Parks and Recreation department! Park crews are opening bathrooms, thatching and cleaning parks and flower beds, making repairs to facilities and starting up irrigation systems, (just to name a few things) in preparation for the many visitors utilizing our parks systems.



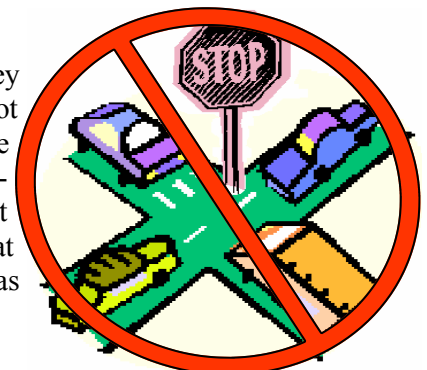
This spring the Recreation Department has been busy with Spring Break Camp, spring soccer, dance lessons, fitness classes, and adult hiking. Organizing and preparing for our summer activities such as Picnic in the Park, camps, kayaking, horseback riding, art camps, cheerleading and hula dance. Specific information on these and other programs can be found in our summer brochure available online or at our office, 35 First Avenue East.

## 50 New Boulevard Trees

Urban Forestry crews have completed the winter pruning and have now identified numerous sites for planting of boulevard trees. These sites are identified through the many requests our office is flooded with during the previous year. They comprise of both new plantings and replacement plantings. We have ordered 50 residential boulevard trees, which will be planted by the end of May.

The first phase of the project is utility construction, which will begin this summer. Local utility companies will begin the process of relocating their utilities to the extreme edges of the road right of way in June. Surveys are underway right now to begin this work and when the entire project is done all the utilities will be underground, something that will really improve the appearance of the street. After the utility relocation work is completed, construction of the roadway and city utilities will be let to bid late this fall.

It has been a long journey to this point, and it is not over yet. But when the work is done and Meridian Road is completed, it will be clear to all that the finished product was worth the wait.



## The Perils of Gateway Drugs

by John G. Weaver

Just what is a “Gateway Drug”? A gateway drug is a substance which makes it more likely that the user will move on to using more serious, harder drugs. A gateway drug opens the door for serious drug abuse. Gateway drugs include cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana.

According to a national study conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Drug Abuse (CASA), children who smoke are 19 times more likely to use cocaine and harder drugs than children who do not smoke. Furthermore, according to the study, children who drink are 50 times more likely to use cocaine and harder drugs like methamphetamine than non-drinking children. Finally, child users of marijuana are 85 times more likely to use cocaine and harder drugs than non-marijuana users.

Ninety percent of people who have ever tried cocaine used all three gateway substances first. More than half followed a progression from cigarettes to alcohol to marijuana and then on to cocaine. The CASA study concludes that children who smoke daily are 13 times more likely to use heroin than children who do not smoke.

Gateway drugs also lead to other serious consequences in addition to a progression to harder drugs. A study completed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration found that the percentage of youth involved in delinquent behaviors rose with increasing frequency of marijuana use. Over 40 percent of those who used marijuana were also involved in serious fighting at school. Over 50 percent of those who used marijuana also sold illegal drugs.

According to the findings of a special task force established by Governor Martz in 2002, Montana has the second highest rate of drug abuse among children of all 50 states. Montana’s children have the fourth highest rate of alcohol abuse and the sixth highest rate of tobacco abuse in the country. What’s more, the American Association of Suicidology has found that Montana has the second highest rate of suicide among all 50 states. Gateway drugs are killing our children.

Many parents view teen drug use as an unavoidable part of the teen years. Many think that they have little power over a teen’s substance abuse and that they are powerless to stop it. A 2003 CASA study found that teens

The Police Advisory Council is a group of volunteers from the community who work with the Kalispell Police Department on important community policing issues. One of the projects our volunteers have been working on is a community education series that includes public service announcements and newspaper articles. The articles include information on gateway drugs. The following article is the latest in this educational series.

whose parents believe that future drug use is “very likely” are more than three times likelier to smoke, drink and use illegal drugs than teens whose parents say future drug use is “not likely at all.” There is a clear message in this for parents. Your conduct and your attitudes have an enormous impact on your children.

The Police Advisory Council will be working in conjunction with Flathead CARE and School District 5 to provide additional education forums intended to provide parents and kids with the tools to successfully combat drug abuse.

*Weaver has a twenty-year career in criminal justice and is a member of the Kalispell Police Advisory Council.*

## Woodland Water Park Grand Opening — June 12

Final construction is wrapping up at the Woodland Water Park in preparation for a very exciting and busy grand opening. Filling and testing of the pools will occur in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of May. The grand opening for the pool and skate park is scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup>.

## New Skate Park Popular!

The new skate park is very popular! Everyone is working hard towards compliance with the helmet regulation – yes they are mandatory for the skate park. Other rules and regulations are clearly signed at the skate park and available through both the Parks and Recreation office and the Kalispell Police Department.

## City of Kalispell

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
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**Kalispell Firefighter/Paramedic Rob Cherot demonstrates *Sparky's Hazard House*® to local children – Gavin and Gracie Pirrie.**

## SPARKY'S HAZARD HOUSE<sup>®</sup> DEBUTS IN KALISPELL

As part of the Flathead County Safe Kids/Safe Communities Coalition, the Kalispell Fire Department has received a training prop to use in risk-reduction education in our community. The prop, known as "*Sparky's Hazard House*®", was purchased through the Montana State Fire Marshal's office and made possible by a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant. Kalispell's training prop is one of only two units that were procured through the state grant.

The training prop is designed to cover a wide range of public education topics and aligns with the National Fire Protection Association's Risk Watch<sup>®</sup> and Learn Not To Burn<sup>®</sup> programs. Many educational scenarios are available which cover a wide range of prevention topics designed for children, families, and older Americans. In addition to fire prevention, the Risk Watch program incorporates other education topics such as poison prevention, motor vehicle safety, fall prevention, bike and pedestrian safety, water safety, and firearm injury prevention.

The interactive prop allows for quick transport and set up, making it very practical to use in school programs, community education workshops, and health and safety fairs. A control panel allows the firefighters to demonstrate smoke travel through the realistic house, reinforcing the need for families to have smoke alarms and evacuation plans. The interactive unit also demonstrates electrical arcing, carbon monoxide dangers, and safe storage of hazardous materials in the home.

*Sparky's Hazard House* is designed to be very interactive with the audience, whether children or adults. Unsafe and hazardous situations can be displayed in the house and followed with a demonstration of correct safety behavior. This allows for greater learning by the audience, especially younger children who may learn better by "seeing" rather than just "hearing".

"One of our prevention goals is to expand our risk-reduction education to all groups in the community," stated Jim Stewart, KFD's Prevention Chief. "This new prop will help us in that endeavor, allowing us to provide quality education in a fun and interactive way," Stewart added.

### City of Kalispell Administrative Staff

*At Your Service*

For concerns or City service information, contact the following departments/divisions:

City Manager:	Chris Kukulski	758-7703	Public Works Director:	Jim Hansz	758-7721
Asst. to the City Manager:	Pati Heath	758-7774	Director of Parks & Recreation:	Mike Baker	758-7716
City Attorney:	Charlie Harball	758-7709	Community Development Director:	Susan Moyer	758-7746
Police Chief:	Frank Garner	758-7786	City Clerk:	Theresa White	758-7756
Fire Chief:	Randy Brodehl	758-7762	Building/Zoning:	Craig Kerzman	758-7733
Finance Director:	Amy Robertson	758-7755	Human Resource Specialist:	Marti Hensley	758-7757

