

Sidney Herald



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City ponders lagoon questions

BY LOUISA BARBER
SIDNEY HERALD

Despite local rumblings that the city of Sidney is under serious state scrutiny because of the ailing lagoon system, a consultant says the city isn't in any trouble yet.

"They're not taking any action against the city," said Patrick Murtagh, senior design engineer with Murtagh Municipal Engineering, the firm hired by the city to examine the system.

But on Monday, during the Sidney City Council meeting, officials were warned that even though the city isn't yet bound by order to fix it, officials may want to consider fixing it. The 50-year-old system does not

meet Montana Department of Environmental Quality's design standards, though Murtagh concluded it doesn't yet pose a threat to public health and safety. During an examination, Murtagh found the wastewater system has too much "organic material" and water to function the way it was designed.

Public works director Jeff Hintz said the lagoon is getting "healthier" but is not at 100 percent. The spring season helps because the natural aeration allows oxygen into the system to allow bacteria to grow.

The city has two lagoons, though only one has been in operation since it was built. One leaked so bad it couldn't be filled with water. It is now being used to leak the water

from the working lagoon to the ground as an "infiltration/percolation" pond.

With future growth on the horizon, the city will need to add subdivisions to its wastewater system. The lagoon is just too full, however, so what is the city to do?

A SOLUTION?

"You've gotten a lot of attention lately. The state is aware of recent issues with the lagoon. They do read the papers and all," Murtagh told the council, "and they've decided that they're no longer going to accept waivers for the subdivisions." The state, he said, needs to be shown there's capacity in the system before it would approve anymore subdivi-

sions. Since it can't take additional outside wastewater sources (the city deemed it "dead" last month), city leaders can enter into what's called an administrative order of consent in which the city commits to bringing it up to design standards.

The city, officially acknowledging its system is out of compliance, would have four years to solve the issues. "During that time, the city can continue to grow, but they have to make that big jump and make that commitment," Murtagh said, a commitment to fixing the lagoon entirely, not patching it.

Whether the city continues to grow or not, it must upgrade the system which has had very little

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Bulletin Board

Commodities for seniors

Commodities distribution for senior citizens will take place from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday at 123 W. Main St. (the Nutter Building). Use the west door where the ramp is located.

Two-wheeled Tuesdays

All motorcyclists are invited to join the local Lower Yellowstone ABATE members Two-Wheeled Tuesday. Sidney-area riders will meet in the Pamida parking lot for a 6 p.m. departure to area eateries. This month's destination will be the Backyard Grill in Beach, N.D. Gledive-area riders will meet at the Albertson's parking lot at 6 p.m. For more information, call chapter coordinator Randy Baldwin at 406-939-3991 or vice coordinator Rob Knotts at 406-774-3778.

Registration

Sidney Public Schools has registration for new students in all grade levels throughout the summer. Register at Central School from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Hamburgers in the Park

The MonDak Relay for Life teams - Sharp Shooters and Love Birds - are joining forces by serving Hamburgers in the Park at Sharbono Park in Fairview.

The event takes place every Friday from June 15 through July 20 from 5-7 p.m. Cost is \$6 for a hamburger, chips, and drinks or \$5 for a hot dog, chips and drink.

Class canceled

The Dawson Photoshop and Digital Photography classes that Elaine Stedman was scheduled to teach this month have been canceled due to a scheduling conflict.

Pinochle

Pinochle and hamburgers at the Moose Lodge at 5:30 p.m. every Monday.

Drilling rig count

Montana 20

year ago 10
N.D. 200
year ago 163

Source: Rocky Mountain Oil Journal
sponsored by



Deaths

Zelma Jo Doran Dige, 81
Harry Donald Hunt, 59
John William (Bill) Lund, 84
Shirley Peterson, 76
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BILL VANDER WEELE | SIDNEY HERALD

Getting in the water

Youngsters dive under water to gather hoops as part of swimming lessons in Sidney Thursday morning.

Sunrise Manor continues success

BY BILL VANDER WEELE
SIDNEY HERALD

In existence since 2004, the Savage Sunrise Manor is meeting the need of a place for elderly to live in their community.

The constant drive for improvements was aided when Sunrise Manor was awarded a \$6,000 check Wednesday from PPL Montana for the installation of handicapped accessible escape routes at the facility as well as a new commercial refrigerator.

Larysa Hurst, manager of Savage Sunrise Manor, notes other recent improvements have included flower pots, benches and a new generator.

Leslie Messer, Savage, who is a community fund advisory board member for PPL Montana, says Sunrise Manor is an important element of the community as longtime residents can keep in contact with their children and grandchildren as well as friends. The building is located across from the school's football field.

"It's special, I just love it," Messer



BILL VANDER WEELE | SIDNEY HERALD

On hand for the check presentation were, from left, Lisa Perry, PPL Montana's community affairs manager, Larysa Hurst, Savage Sunrise Manor manager, Leslie Messer, PPL Montana community fund advisory board member, and Melissa Papka, SAVAGE Inc. board member.

said. She adds children come and sing to resident, and pastors preach at the facility. During a community catfish tournament, residents got their share of catfish and potatoes. "They were the first ones fed," Messer said.

The community supports the facility through several fundraising events. The next one is a barbecue on July 1.

To help keep the facility up to date, SAVAGE Inc. board member Melissa Papka wrote the grant request to PPL Montana. Out of 108 applicants, the one for Sunrise Manor was one of 18 approved.

Lisa Perry, PPL Montana's community affairs manager, made the check presentation Wednesday. PPL Montana created its Community Fund to further strengthen the partnership between PPL Montana and its communities. Under the direction of a statewide advisory board, PPL Montana has awarded \$1.5 million since 2005. That money has helped more than 230 Montana organizations that share PPL Montana's commitment to education, environmental responsibility and economic development.

Messer says organizations can apply for grants at www.pplmontana.com. The deadline for the next round of grants is July 31.

Drug Task Force agent to be added in Richland County

BY BILL VANDER WEELE
SIDNEY HERALD

Because of a grant from the Montana Board of Crime Control, the plan is for the Richland County/Sidney area to soon have a Big Muddy River Drug Task Force agent working in the community.

"It's a joint effort by the city and county and the Big Muddy River Drug Task Force to get a full-time position here," Sidney Police Chief Frank DiFonzo said. "It's a good deal."

According to a press release from the Montana Board of Control, \$79,353 was allocated to the Big Muddy River Drug Task Force that will allow the hiring of an addition-

'It's a joint effort by the city and county and the Big Muddy River Drug Task Force to get a full-time position here.'

Frank DiFonzo
Sidney Chief of Police

al agent. The grant is in response to some of the oil boom's impacts in the area.

"It has a lot to do with the increasing population and the increasing demands on local law enforcement,"

DiFonzo said.

Sidney's chief of police says the most popular drugs in the area currently appear to be meth and marijuana. "But the potential for other drugs is out there."

The Big Muddy River Drug Task Force covers the counties of Richland, Roosevelt, Valley, Daniels and Sheridan. Richland County has been a contributing member since the Task Force's inception in 1996.

The Montana Board of Crime Control has allocated more than \$4 million in federal funding to local and state governmental agencies, law enforcement agencies and community organizations in order to provide resources to address crime, and provide criminal and juvenile

justice services statewide.

The board approved \$4,056,124 for 100 programs operated by counties, tribal governments and state agencies in the areas of juvenile delinquency, assist victims and provide funding for regional drug task forces.

"These grants come at a time when agency budgets are strapped and crime prevention needs have grown," board chairman Mike Anderson said in a press release. "We welcome the innovative programs that these critical resources provide to help keep citizens and their communities safe."

editor@sidneyherald.com

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- Storms

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