



20 under 40



RECOGNIZING 20 OUTSTANDING
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
UNDER AGE 40



Independent Record



HELENA
AREA CHAMBER OF
Commerce

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Presenting the 2025
class of 20 Under 40

The Independent Record and Helena Chamber are proud to present 20 stalwarts in our community. These are people nominated by their peers – several times over in some cases – for demonstrating and exemplifying outstanding leadership in business, philanthropy and community.

Whether they are business owners, program directors, health careworkers or educators – just to name a few– their day doesn’t end after clocking out from their day jobs.

This group of Montanans understands which component of the community is most critical: people.

Whatever the cause may be, these honorees have not only gone above and beyond the call in assisting those in need, but also connecting with people on a personal level.

Narrowing the field down to just 20 was difficult.

If you nominated someone who wasn’t chosen this year, please reach out to us again next year if their age allows.

And without further ado, here are this year’s 20 community powerhouses under the age of 40.

Please join the IR and Helena Chamber in congratulating them.

GARY WAGNER



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 38

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I was born and raised in Havre, MT. I came to Helena in 2005 to play football for the Carroll College Fighting Saints—What a ride that was! Carroll College brought me to Helena – it was a smaller school which fit well with my wants: It was a Catholic school – which was perfect, and I was able to continue to play football at the next level. It was the perfect place for me.

OCCUPATION

I work for Valley Bank as a Commercial Loan Officer. I have been in the Commercial Banking world for just shy of 4 years and with Valley Bank for about 8 months. Valley Bank has been such a great place for me and my family. I enjoy the family feel of Valley Bank and the upbeat culture they have continued to build. This recognition is

certainly a team award for me as the Valley Bank team has played a monumental role in this.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I currently serve on the YWCA Building Committee, the Carroll College Saints Athletic Association, Coached little tyke soccer through the YMCA, and work with the Helena Public Schools as part of their Lunch Buddy Program. I love playing music all over Helena with the bank I am part of – Intermission (members—Travis Grotbo and Billy Wagner). I enjoy the outdoors, golfing, and family time with my wife, Morgan and 2 kids, my daughter Harper (5) and son Hayden (2). These 3 are my world.

More Wagner, **PAGE 23**

Carroll College

Congratulations to our

20 UNDER 40 SAINTS

Nicole Anderson '24

Abigail Dolan '20

Gary Wagner '11

You continue to make us proud as our motto says,
“Not for School, but for Life.”



CORIE BOWDITCH

Age: 31

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I am originally from Minnesota but moved to Bozeman in 2012 to study biology at Montana State University. During my time there, I met my husband who was born and raised in Missoula. After college he landed an engineering job in Helena, which brought us here in 2018. It didn't take long for us to fall in love with the community, access to outdoor recreation and overall feel of the town. We knew almost right away that Helena was where we wanted to put down roots!

OCCUPATION

I am the program manager for Montana WILD, which is Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' education center here in Helena. I help to develop and curate conservation education programs for the public, deliver those programs to visiting school groups, and help to maintain the center as an engaging place for families to come and learn together! We also work with partnership groups to put on community events such as the World Migratory Bird Day Festival, trainings for local teachers, family fishing nights and more.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I am the coordinator of a group in town called Helena Community of Resource Educators (C.O.R.E). We are a network of individuals and organizations working together to increase awareness and understanding about the natural, historical and cultural resources of Helena and the surrounding region. I help plan our Summer Walk Series which features a wide variety of guided educational walks that explore our area's natural and cultural treasures. These walks are free and open to the public and are a great way for folks to learn more about this wonderful place that we live!

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I love the strong sense of community. It's the kind of place where you are always running into someone you know- whether you

are grabbing groceries, hiking to the top of mount Helena or floating down the Missouri. There's something magical about living in a town where a familiar face is never far and where people genuinely look out for each other! Easy access to skiing,

hiking and fishing is also a great bonus!

What else should people know about you?

We just welcomed our first child, Franklin, into the world on May 30th! We can't wait to raise him here in Helena.



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

JOSEPH (JOE) MAY

Age: 37

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I was born and raised in Great Falls, Montana, and moved to Helena in 2016 for a leadership opportunity in senior living. My wife Amy and I were drawn to Helena for its strong sense of community, schools, and easy access to the outdoors. It's become a place where I've been fortunate to grow in my career, while Amy and I raise our six children surrounded by the natural beauty and shared values that make this community so special.

OCCUPATION

I'm the Executive Director at Touchmark on Saddle Drive, a full-service retirement community offering independent living, assisted living, and memory care. In this role, I lead a dedicated team focused on enriching the lives of older adults while fostering a culture of respect, purpose, and personal growth. I'm passionate about building systems and environments that empower both residents and team members to thrive.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I serve on the Alzheimer's Association Board of Excellence, volunteer as a cantor at the Cathedral of St. Helena, and have previously served on the board of St. Andrew School. I believe being part of a community means giving back through service, leadership, and meaningful engagement. Whether supporting aging adults or contributing to local faith and education communities, I find purpose in helping others feel connected and supported.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena has a rare mix of small-town warmth and big-hearted support. I love the close-knit nature of this com-



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

munity—where people show up for each other and where meaningful collaboration is possible. Living here allows me to balance a fulfilling career with outdoor adventures, whether that's golfing, running, or helping our kids discover the beauty of Montana's landscapes.

What else should people know about you?

My family is at the center of my life. My wife, Amy, and I are raising six children, and we're doing our best to instill in them a love for service, learning, and the outdoors. I'm always looking for ways to grow—both personally and professionally. I try to lead by example and contribute to communities, whether at work or in the wider Helena area, in ways that reflect respect, connection, and purpose.

Congratulations to Executive Director Joe May

for his recognition as a 2025 "20 Under 40" Honoree!

At Touchmark on Saddle Drive, we hire for both heart and talent.

Each year, the *Helena Independent Record* recognizes rising stars under 40 who are making a difference through leadership, innovation, and service. Joe exemplifies these qualities—and more.

TOUCHMARK ON SADDLE DRIVE 

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learn more.

ALI MARTIN

Age: 40 years old (within the last year)

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I'm not a Helena native, but I was born and raised in Montana. I grew up in Wisdom and went to high school in Dillon before attending Montana State University (Go Cats!), where I graduated with a master's degree in architecture in 2008. After a brief stint in Washington, DC, I returned home to Montana to help run my mom's restaurant in Wisdom. One day while working the lunch shift, I met John McKittrick, the founder of Schlenker and McKittrick Architects (later SMA). That unexpected encounter led to a job offer, and I began working at SMA in November 2011. At the time, the firm had just nine people—being part of its growth and evolution over the years has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. I moved to Helena shortly after joining SMA and quickly fell in love with this community.

OCCUPATION

I'm a licensed architect, Associate Principal, and the Helena Studio Director at SMA Architecture and Design. I lead our K-12 education sector and have had the privilege of working on projects across Montana, everything from schools and university residence halls to nonprofit and commercial buildings. I love collaborating with clients to solve complex problems and design buildings that reflect their mission and values. I'm especially passionate about educational design and how thoughtful spaces can support the social, emotional,

and academic success of our students.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

In recent years, I've served on the Helena Chamber of Commerce Board, been an active member of the Exchange Club, contributed as a board member for AIA Montana, and volunteered at events like Ales for Trails. These days, with two young kids (ages 4 and 7), much of my time outside of work is focused on family and supporting our local schools. I'm actively involved in the Parent Teacher Council at Broadwater Elementary, where my daughter attends, and continue to be engaged in efforts to improve our school facilities.

As an architect and as a parent, I care deeply about the state of our public schools. Through my work at SMA, I helped lead the Helena School District's Facilities Master Plan and am currently supporting the development of the scope and communication strategy for the 2025 Elementary and High School Bonds. My goal is to help the community better understand the condition of our school buildings and the urgent need for reinvestment. It's about ensuring safety, meeting basic needs, and creating environments where students and teachers can thrive. I want Helena to be a place where families feel proud and supported—and where our children have the tools they need to succeed.



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena is one of the few places in Montana that strikes the perfect balance between an urban center and a close-knit small town. I love the access to trails and the outdoors, and I feel lucky to raise my children in a place with such a strong sense of community. Hel-

ena's schools are among the best in the state, and I've seen firsthand how people here show up for each other. Our nonprofits are doing meaningful, boots-on-the-ground work, and there's a shared commitment to making this a great place to live. People are genuinely kind, and you can feel the impact of your contributions here.

More Martin, **PAGE 22**



Congratulations Ali!

Everyone here at SMA is proud to have you as one of our Associate Principals and Education Lead. Keep designing different!

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📞 (406) 442-4933
🌐 sma.design



KAELYN CLARKE

Age: 35

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I moved to Helena in 2014 when my husband got a job with the state. At the time, I wasn't sure what opportunities existed here for an interior designer — I had very little sense of the local market or how life in Helena might unfold. But it quickly grew on me. I found community, creativity, and a pace of life that allowed for both professional growth and personal grounding. What started as uncertainty turned into a place I feel proud to call home.

OCCUPATION

I'm an Associate Principal and the Director of Interiors at SMA Architecture + Design, where I've spent the last 11 years building not just a career, but a deeply meaningful chapter of my life. I lead an incredible team of six interior designers across four locations — including remote team members — and together, we work on a wide range of projects: from schools and libraries to healthcare spaces, workplaces, and cultural centers.

What I love most is the heart behind the work — the way design can quietly shape how people feel, move, and connect in a space. Over the years, this role has stretched and shaped me in ways I never expected. It's taught me how to lead, how to listen, how to collaborate, and how to trust both process and people. I'm still learning every day — and that's one of the best parts.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

Over the years, I've been fortunate to contribute in different ways — from serving on the Bike Walk Helena board, leading hikes with Montana Wilderness Association, supporting Prickly Pear Land Trust and YWCA, to being involved with American Society of Interior Designers and International Interior Design Association. Teaching interior design at Helena College for three years was a special way to give back and connect with the community.

Lately, balancing career and motherhood means my involvement looks a bit different. I focus on showing up where I can — teaching yoga or supporting community efforts quietly but with intention. Staying connected and giving back in ways that feel meaningful and manageable to this season of life is important to me.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

There's something super special about the scale of Helena. You can *see* the impact of your work. You can *feel* connected to the people and projects you invest in. And there's a beautiful balance between access to nature and access to community — like you can hike Mount Helena and then run into someone who wants to partner with you on a new idea before you've even changed out of your hiking shoes. That kind



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

of immediacy is rare, and I don't take it for granted.

What else should people know about you?

I believe in growth — personally, professionally, and creatively. Balancing roles as a mom, wife, friend, designer, leader, and

teacher has taught me a lot about juggling priorities with grace (and sometimes dropping a few). I'm passionate about art and creativity, which add color and connection to life. I value listening and staying curious, because both good design and a meaningful life require openness and a sense of humor. Also: I'm a playlist fan and can't resist good sourdough or dark chocolate.



Congratulations Kaelyn!



Our team is honored to have you as one of our Associate Principals and Director of Interior Design. Keep your positive pants on!

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NICOLE ANDERSON

Age: 33 (Fun fact: born on April Fools Day!)

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

I am not a Helena Native... but I am proud to have fallen in love with and married one! My husband and I met in Bozeman during my last semester of my master's in architecture in 2015. I was raised in Yakima, WA and didn't start my journey to Montana until meeting a good friend from Lincoln, MT while we are completing our undergrad degrees at the University of Idaho. She ultimately convinced me MSU would be the best place to get our master's degree and then introduced me to my now husband. Since the day I met Chance (husband), Helena was a non-negotiable final destination - and every day since 2020 when we purchased a fixer-upper in the mansion district and left our apartment lifestyles in Bozeman, I am thankful we call Helena home.

OCCUPATION

My career actually started in Oakland, CA following graduation from MSU. Two weeks before I met my now husband, I had accepted a job in downtown Oakland with a small firm owned by a MSU alumnus and Butte native as an Architectural Intern. While that offered great experience, it only took me a couple months to recognize the city life was not for me. I returned to Bozeman in 2017 and relaunched my career at SMA Architecture + Design in our Bozeman office joining a crew of only 3 others then.

As mentioned, Helena was always the final destination, so pursuing an opportu-

nity at a firm that had their main office in Helena was a no brainer. In May of 2020 after my husband completed his degree at MSU, I transferred to SMA's Helena office as we moved to Helena to start a family. My passion for Project Management became evident early on in my career and was only further supported by SMA in transferring to our Helena office. Since then, I have found my stride managing some of SMA's largest mixed-use, multi-family developments, and commercial office projects. Most recently those scopes encompass designs of all scales, including master planning Helena's Capitol Complex and full-scale building renovations where I primarily serve as the lead Project Manager of a team of Architects and Designers coordinating client, consultant, and contractor relations from start to finish. Additionally, I proudly serve on SMA's leadership team as an Associate Principal and our Director of Project Management managing SMA's overall systems for project resourcing, current and future project backlog planning and learning management. My love for spreadsheets, checklists and supporting our people to prioritize their project's management makes for a prefect alignment. I absolutely love what I do.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

City of Helena Zoning Commission - 2021-present Prickly Pear Land Trust Board Member - 2022-present Helena



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Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Helena Class of 2022 - 2023

My involvement in both the Zoning Commission and PPLT share an interest in the strategic growth of the City of Helena and surrounding areas. I am passionate about welcoming business and community members to this place we all call home in a way that supports the community's values and identity. Additionally, PPLT promotes and supports one of Helena's most acces-

sible amenities - the trails! I am a proud supporter of Helena's diverse playgrounds for community members of all ages and interests no matter how they define fun. As for Leadership Helena, I cannot say enough about how big of an impact that year of intense immersion in Helena's ecosystem has had on my career and commitment to our community.

More Anderson, **PAGE 22**



Congratulations Nicole!



We are privileged to have you as one of our Associate Principals and Director of Project Management. Thanks for keeping us in order!

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DESIRAE LINDQUIST

Age: 33

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I grew up in the beautiful Bitterroot Valley, just south of Missoula, where my love for the outdoors took root early. After high school, I moved to Bozeman to attend Montana State University—Go Cats!—and later worked in IT at the university. While I appreciated that role, I discovered my true calling in Association Management, where I could blend strong organizational skills with a passion for supporting people and communities. During my time in Bozeman, I also earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of Montana. That education deepened my understanding of leadership and public policy and continues to guide my work in serving others. After nearly six years with the REALTOR® Asso-

More Lindquist, **PAGE 22**



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD



CONGRATULATIONS *Desirae Lindquist*

on being named one of our community's
20 Under 40!

Your leadership and dedication to real estate and HAR make a true impact. This honor is well deserved — cheers to your continued inspiration!



2707 Colonial Drive, Helena • (406) 603-4793

WHITNEY BROTHERS

Age: 32

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I was born in the eastern part of the state, but my family moved to Helena when I was in second grade, and I'm proud to say I grew up here. I graduated from Capital High School then moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where I attended St. Catherine University and earned my Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

I often joke that around that time, my older brother had a bit of a midlife crisis and decided to move to North Dakota to work in the coal mines—which led my family to relocate to Bismarck. I lived in Bismarck for about seven years before returning to Helena to accept a position as a Forensic Nurse Coordinator at St. Peter's Health.

OCCUPATION

I am a registered nurse with a specialized focus in forensic nursing. I first learned about the field during my senior year of college at a Student Nurses Association conference, where I attended a talk given by a forensic nurse. I found it fascinating, though at the time I couldn't quite picture myself doing that work full-time. I began my nursing career on a medical/oncology unit and soon took a part-time position as a forensic nurse with a local nonprofit in Bismarck. Later, I transitioned to working on an observation unit while continuing my work in forensic nursing.

In 2021, St. Peter's Health announced plans to build a forensic nurse program and was seeking a full-time coordinator. I knew immediately this was my sign to return home to Helena and pursue forensic nursing full-time.

When I tell people I'm a forensic nurse, they often ask what that means. Forensic nursing can encompass a wide range of services. In our program, we have a team of eight nurses who care for victims of all ages who have experienced sexual assault. We've also recently expanded our services to include patients who have experienced strangulation.

Over the past nine years, I have worked as a forensic nurse, caring for adolescent and adult patients since 2016 and pediatric patients since 2018. In total, I've provided care for more than 350 victims who have experienced sexual assault or strangulation. I've trained numerous nurses to enter the field



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

and have served as both an educator and direct care provider testifying in the courtroom. Additionally, I have worked to raise awareness in the community by providing education on sexual assault, available services, and what steps to take if something happens to you or someone you know.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

As the Forensic Nurse Coordinator, I serve as an active member of the Lewis & Clark County Sexual Assault Response Team, the Lewis & Clark County Multidisciplinary Team, and the High-Risk Offender Task Force. I also currently serve as the registered nurse representative on the Department of Justice's Sexual Assault Response Network through December 2026.

Each of these teams is made up of diverse community and state partners who work collaboratively to provide resources and ser-

vices to victims of sexual assault and related crimes. Together, we aim to ensure a coordinated, compassionate, and effective response to those impacted by violence.

Throughout my life, I've always enjoyed volunteering with various community organizations. A few of my favorites include Grandstreet Theatre here in Helena, The Lyft Garage in Minneapolis, and the Cystic Fibrosis Association in Bismarck—each holds a special place in my heart for different reasons. Since moving back to Helena, I've found it a bit challenging to connect with a new volunteer opportunity, but I'm keeping my eyes open and look forward to getting involved again when the right fit comes along.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

It's clear that Helena has changed a lot over the past 15 years, yet it still holds the small-town sense of community that I grew up in and continue to love. I'm grateful to be back in Helena—a place where I can continue to grow both personally and professionally, while also working to help make it a better place for others to live.

Unfortunately, Helena is not immune to

the impacts of violence. But what sets our community apart from many others across the state and country is the strong network of community organizations that work together to surround victims with resources and support. These efforts promote helping and offer hope in the aftermath of trauma. I'm proud to be part of a community that not only works collaboratively but also believes and supports victims. We want survivors to know that we see them, we believe them, and we are here to help in whatever ways we can.

What else should people know about you?

When I'm not wearing my forensic nurse hat, I enjoy a few hobbies that help me unwind and take my mind off work. I love spending time with my partner, Sean—whether we're traveling, getting outside, or trying out a new restaurant. We also have a one-year-old Aussiedoodle named Tucker, who brings endless joy and laughter to our lives. Some of my other favorite pastimes include playing slow-pitch softball, catching a musical at Grandstreet Theatre, tackling an ever-growing list of house projects, and knitting socks—currently my favorite creative outlet.

ANNIE DANIELS



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 39

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

I am proud to be a fifth generation Montanan and a Butte Montana native. My husband and I moved to Helena after pharmacy school. He's from Saint Ignatius and we were looking for a town that was close to our families, could support two folks that work in a healthcare field and had opportunities for kids and families. We are passionate about providing a quality service to our lines of work and wanted to be in a town where we would be able to make an impact, to improve the health of friends and neighbors.

OCCUPATION

I am a Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. This is a very unique combination that allows me to work collaboratively with providers to maximize health

outcomes for patients, especially those with diabetes. I was able to get American Diabetes Association accreditation to allow for Medicare reimbursable services for the healthcare center that I work at, which supports financial stewardship in a time that has been challenging for many healthcare systems.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I have done a smattering of things helping at youth events, from career fairs to filling in for a practice, but my most consistent involvement has been with community gardens which support fresh produce access for those with limited resources. I was able to take this interest into my kids preschools- and that was an even more

More Daniels, PAGE 23

MEDICAL LEADERS SHAPING HEALTHCARE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Congratulations on being named to Helena's 20 Under 40.



DR. ROBERT MAHER
General Surgeon

A Helena native known for his calm demeanor and attentive bedside manner, Dr. Maher's patients trust him for his technical expertise and his genuine care.



WHITNEY BROTHERS, RN
Forensic Nurse Coordinator

Since launching the St. Peter's Forensic Nurse Program in 2022, Whitney has worked tirelessly to ensure that survivors of sexual violence receive trauma-informed care during one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.



ANNIE DANIELS, PHARM.D, BCPS, CPP
Clinical Ambulatory Pharmacist

Specializing in medication management and diabetes care, Annie works closely with doctors and other healthcare providers in a team-based approach to help patients achieve the best possible health outcomes.



St. Peter's Health

MADISON RAGSDALE

Age: 24

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

I moved to Helena in the 3rd grade and lived here until I attended MSU Bozeman. After graduating with my Bachelor of Science in the field of sociology I did a year in Billings, but I missed the sense of community that Helena provided and decided to move back to the place that truly felt like home.

OCCUPATION

I work at Family Promise of Greater Helena as a family case manager. Our mission as an organization is to provide shelter to children and their families and to help those who are on the verge of losing their housing find a way to keep it. As a case manager I help families find stable work, housing and teach life skills. As with any non-profit my job is never the same day to day, and I wear lots of hats. In addition to case management, I help plan and put on fundraisers, collect data for grants and a little bit of anything else you can think of. It is a highly rewarding job that never has a dull moment.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

Most of my volunteer time happens to be at Family Promise. I volunteer to host the families overnight and occasionally provide groceries or a hot meal. I am also part of Leadership Helena, which has not only helped me become a better leader but has introduced me to many wonderful people in our community! I believe that being an active member of the community is the best way to foster connections which can create lasting positive impacts on a larger scale.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena has a greater sense of community



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

and connection that is hard to find in other places. It is incredibly vibrant. It has a fascinating history and amazing access to nature in every direction. It has a little bit of everything that can make a place feel like home.

What else should people know about you?

I am always trying to learn something new, a new hobby, a new fact, or new training. I think education is incredibly important and I try to find ways to keep learning. When I am not working or learning I love to support our local businesses and can often be found at the Blackfoot or Fire Tower Coffee House downtown.

All of us at Family Promise are proud to congratulate Madison Ragsdale

on being a 20 Under 40 2025 winner!
Your dedication to making a difference in our community is truly inspiring, and we're honored to have you as part of our team.

Thank you for your commitment to Family Promise, Helena, and for being such a remarkable role model!



ZACH HOLSHUE

Age: 33

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

Helena has been home to my family for four generations, giving me a strong sense of belonging here.

OCCUPATION

As owner and operator of Matrix Construction, I'm proud to lead a team of 28 dedicated professionals who bring skill, integrity, and passion to every project we take on. Matrix Construction performs high-quality concrete construction for both residential and commercial clients. Based in Helena, our company is built on a foundation of hard work, reliability, and a commitment to excellence. I take pride not only in the structures we build, but in the people who make our success possible.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

Giving back to the community that's given me so much is important to me. I am proud to be a sponsor of the Disabled American Veterans Golf Tournament, and other organizations like the Helena Building Industry Association, Lewis and Clark County 4-H, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and American Legion



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

baseball. Supporting local causes and youth programs is something I truly value.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena is an incredibly welcoming and generous community. I've had the privi-

lege of watching it grow and evolve over the years, with continuous improvements in infrastructure and a blossoming of cultural activities and events. The strong sense of belonging, combined with the city's natural beauty and vibrant spirit, makes Helena a truly special place—and I couldn't imagine calling anywhere else home.

What else should people know about you?

When I'm not working, you'll usually find me outdoors. I enjoy archery and rifle hunting, playing golf, and making the most of Montana's open spaces. But above all, my favorite time is spent with my family—my wife Samantha and our two young daughters—enjoying the lifestyle we love here in Helena.

Congratulations, Zach Holshue!

Congratulations Zach, for getting the spotlight you deserve! As the driving force behind Matrix Construction, you've built a concrete business that stands out for quality, hard work, and serious dedication. Way to go, Zach! Your work ethic, integrity, and leadership qualities speak for itself, and this recognition is just the beginning. Keep crushing it!

MATRIX
CONSTRUCTION



WALKER COZZIE



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 28

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

I was born and raised in Helena. I graduated from Capital in 2015 and then went to Montana State to play football and graduated in the fall of 2019. After college I moved back home to start my career.

OCCUPATION

I'm a technology consultant at Sioux Surgical, which is part of Arthrex, the leading medical device company in the world. My role is focused on helping surgeons provide the best care for their

patients by introducing them to the latest and most efficient surgical techniques and technologies. A lot of my day is spent in the operating room, ensuring that our technology is working seamlessly, that everything is running smoothly, and that patients are receiving the highest quality care. In addition to supporting surgeons during procedures, I also help coordinate with my team to ensure that all the orthopedic staff in our region have the support they need to deliver optimal results.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you

in being an active community member?

The last couple years I have volunteered at the special Olympics state basketball tournament running stations at the skills gym. I also had the opportunity to volunteer at toys for tots with my family during the holiday season this last year shopping with families and getting to pick out gifts for kids. I believe it's important to give back to the community that has given me so much growing up here.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

My fiancé and I love living in Helena

and don't plan on ever leaving. We enjoy taking our two dogs on adventures, eating and drinking at local businesses, going to Capital and Carroll football games, golfing, going to the lake, fly fishing, listening to live music and spending time with family and friends that we are lucky to have in Helena.

What else should people know about you?

I just love this community and want to continue to see Helena thrive and grow so my fiancé and I can continue to enjoy this place we call home and hope to raise a family here one day so they can enjoy all the things that make Helena great.

ABIGAIL DOLAN

Age: 28

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

Born as a fifth generation Butte Rat, I moved to Helena when offered a scholarship to Carroll College. The opportunity to learn where my grandma achieved her nursing degree felt special. Unlike her, I was allowed to stay on campus, but we both found comfort in the jukebox and chocolate at the Parrot after dreaded essays. Just as she did, I fell in love with the community and found it difficult to leave.

OCCUPATION

I am ten years into being a downtown nomad and ten months into working as the program manager for the Helena Business Improvement District (BID). I have worked in coffee shops, breweries and even the Gold Bar; each acquainting me with another level of the Helena community. It was at these “third spaces” that I learned everyone has a story to share if you had time to put down your phone to listen. Getting to know the property owners, business owners, and patrons made me fall in love with Helena even more. Thus preparing me for this job which challenges me everyday.

The Helena BID was created in 1985 with the mission to improve resources, beautification and visibility to downtown businesses. Over the years it has successfully developed and maintained floral, trash, and banner programs. Since the dissolution of Downtown Helena Inc. (DHI), the BID has shifted focus to provide grants to keep events downtown, but also look into bringing more benches, murals, and mom and pop shops to the gulch. It has been a blessing that every event originally hosted by DHI has been picked up by local businesses. Thus, reducing the strain and allowing the BID to focus on its original mission of which it was created: improving and uplifting downtown—a mission I can stand behind.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

in being an active community member?

“There are three kinds of people: Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who say, ‘what happened?’” wise words spoken by the best thing that ever happened to the Yankees—Casey Stengel. With just one tweak, I believe there couldn’t be a more perfect descriptive quote for Helena. In a town of “you know what we should do” there lies a collective of persons who, by all odds, say, “Let’s”.

With over 1354 registered nonprofits in Southwest Montana, there is no shortage of opportunity to volunteer. For the same time as a Netflix episode, you can make a difference. I have been active in Big Brothers Big Sisters, downtown block parties, clean up days, and free tutoring programs. I also had the privilege to partner with HPD, HFD, and DOT to create a “safety series” that focuses on bringing crowd management, first aid, CPR, and active shooter training to downtown. I have learned that there’s a community that grows in giving. In addition, being a drummer’s girlfriend is also volunteer service when it’s last call and the van needs loading.

More Dolan, PAGE 24



Congratulations Abigail Dolan.

We are proud to congratulate you on being a 20 Under 40 winner! Your dedication to our community is truly inspiring, and we’re honored to have you as part of our team.

Thank you for bringing your passion and generosity to everything you do - both at the Helena Business Improvement District and beyond.



NATE KOPP



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 37

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

Originally from Western New York outside of the Buffalo area, I moved to Helena in January of 2015. My wife and I met building trails and working on conservation projects around the country and Helena was the next stop on what we thought was a seasonal adventure. We fell in love with this place, got hitched, bought a house, got a dog and are now raising a couple of Montanans.

OCCUPATION

I am the Program and Trails Director for Prickly Pear Land Trust. I oversee the Community Conservation program which includes South Hills trail construction and maintenance, over 500 acres of parks between Helena and East Helena, and an en-

vironmental education program that now provides thousands of education hours to area youth and community members annually. I have had the pleasure of being a part of PPLT since early 2015, starting as an intern, and working in a variety of roles and on a number of interesting projects over the past decade. From on-the-ground trail work to land deals to land management and stream restoration projects, I've done a little bit of everything. I'm tremendously proud to work for an organization that has such an impact on both the day-to-day lives of our community in connecting land and people as well as at a landscape level in protecting the places that we hold dear.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I am on the Montana Trails Coalition board, a statewide organization that advocates for trail funding and recreational opportunities for all Montanans. Through my work at PPLT I am fortunate to work with a number of groups in a volunteer capacity. I am consistently impressed with the youth-focused educational groups in town. Girls Thrive does awesome work, the Montana Discovery Foundation and Montana WILD are getting kids connected to nature and building a new generation of Montanans with a passion for the outdoors. Beyond my professional work here in Helena, I am also a 2022 graduate of Leadership Montana's flagship program. It's easy to be an active community member in this town—opportunities to help out or participate are plentiful. We are lucky to have a great community and great people working each day to keep it that way.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering

in the Helena area?

The easy answer is the natural beauty and outdoor opportunities. Coming from a background of working and playing outside, Helena's access, both locally, and regionally, to adventures is second to none. Whether it's hanging by a river, camping in the mountains, or hiking in the South Hills, our weekends fill up pretty quickly with outdoor fun. Beyond that, we've got a great downtown and plenty of good folks to spend time with.

What else should people know about you?

I believe there is a Tom Petty song for every occasion. I am a self-diagnosed chicken wing snob—I am not convinced that good wings can be found anywhere outside of Buffalo, NY. And being a Bills fan has taught me the wisdom of the phrase “next year's our year”. There's a lot of hope in that and I, just like Bills fans everywhere, am optimistic about the future and what comes next.

KENDRA KESSLER

Age: 32

Tell us a bit about yourself: are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

Born and raised in Helena, I'm someone who finds joy in the simple things—whether it's a quiet morning at the cabin, a hike through the woods, or a weekend spent hunting in Montana's backcountry. I'm a big fan of Taylor Swift, live music in general, and all things sports -mostly soccer. I love being with my dogs as much as possible, especially when it means bringing them along for the adventure.

OCCUPATION

Being a mortgage loan officer means helping people navigate one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives—buying a home. It's about more than just numbers and paperwork; it's about building relationships, understanding each client's unique needs, and guiding them through the loan process with clarity and confidence. From first-time homebuyers to seasoned investors, I take pride in making the mortgage experience smooth, transparent, and personalized every step of the way.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

Giving back to my community is something I'm deeply passionate about. I ac-



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

tively work with local high school freshmen through YAM (Youth Aware of Mental Health), focusing on depression and suicide awareness. As an affiliate of the Helena Association of Realtors, I participate in a wide range of service efforts—from picking up trash on Earth Day and planning fundraising events, to delivering essential supplies to the Helena Indian Alliance. I also spent five years coaching young women with Helena HYSA, and helped organize a suitcase drive for CASA and CPS that collected 135 suitcases for local children in need. Whether I'm volunteering at the Swish basketball tournament with the Helena Chamber of

Commerce or jumping in to support a local cause, I'm always looking for ways to show up and make a difference.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I love the strong sense of community that Helena offers and feel proud to be part of what makes Montana so special. My favorite part of living, working, and volunteering here is, without a doubt, the people. There's something unique about the way this community shows up for one another, and be-

ing surrounded by that kind of support and connection is what makes Helena feel like home.

What else should people know about you?

I love to laugh, and I'm pretty sure sarcasm is my first language. While I take my work seriously—whether it's volunteering or helping someone purchase a home—my favorite part is making people smile along the way. Life is too short not to enjoy it, and I believe that even during big or stressful moments, a little humor can go a long way.

Congratulations, Kendra Kessler!

We're so lucky to have you on the Evergreen Home Loans team. Your dedication to the real estate industry and your impact on the Helena community don't go unnoticed. **You are truly appreciated!**

Helena Office | NMLS# 2101498

639 Helena Ave, Suite A | Helena, Montana 59601

406.324.7222



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TRAVIS VINCENT

Age: 36

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

Shortly after I was born in Great Falls, my family moved westward. I spent my childhood backpacking, swimming and exploring the Flathead and Swan Valleys. At UM, I studied languages and economics. A Fulbright Scholarship took me to Russia. I then worked and studied in California, Italy, and Namibia, and the East Coast, camping along the way and finally earning a Master's in 2017. I escaped the city, borrowing grandpa's 2001 Camry to drive Montana's backroads in search of a conservation job. I happily landed at Prickly Pear Land Trust and now serve as the Lands Director.

OCCUPATION

When Mary Hollow first brought me on to PPLT in 2017, the organization was dipping its toes (literally) into wetland restoration with the Sevenmile Creek project. The land trust was gradually working into larger conservation projects at the same time. I lent a hand at everything from newsletter writing to planting willows, leading volunteer crews, tours, and field trips for science classes.

Around 2019, a salt-of-the-earth landowner, Doug Potter, walked into our office, interested in pursuing a conservation easement on his family's Spokane Hills ranch. Doug and his wife, Ronda, spent their lives reconnecting the property through hard work and pinching pennies. They wanted to keep it intact for agriculture and all the elk that winter there for the next several generations. Mary felt we *had* to do it and she tapped me as the project manager. Along with the very patient Potter family, I learned the ins and outs of conservation real estate and I fell in love with it.

Since then, our close-knit lands team has taken on some big, bold, and permanent conservation projects. We have helped several farming and ranching families protect their ground and the Missouri River watershed. We grew our land management program to over 2100 acres and opened new hunting opportunities. We completed our first Indigenous-led conservation project. We continue to add parklands to the South Hills, Prickly Pear Creek and beyond.

I look forward to my job every day—it is creative and impactful. I get to work on saving neighborhood trails, kick tires with



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

fun ranchers, and safeguard habitat for the wildlist of the wild critters.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I believe every kid in this state should have the same opportunities as I had. Currently, I serve on the Board of Montana Discovery

Foundation, a local non-profit that works with public school teachers to get rural students outside. I also volunteer with the Elkhorn Working Group, and support KGLT Independent Radio and Upper 7 Law. The City of Gold Toastmasters' club helps me string sentences together when I have to speak publicly.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I am so lucky to hunt with my dog or hike

with my girlfriend on the very lands and waters I work every day to protect. It feels like this community is all pushing in the same direction, toward a better future, and I am happy to be a part of it.

What else should people know about you?

In between work and outdoor adventures, I enjoy fixing up my extremely old house and raising ducks. I recently learned how to skate by falling down a ton in Helena's Adult Hockey League.

ERIC SEIDENSTICKER

Age: 32

Tell us a bit about yourself—are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I am not a Helena native, nor was I born in Helena. I was born on the Hi-line, but I have lived in a few communities across the state. I graduated from Beaverhead County High School in Dillon. After high school, I moved to Missoula to attend the University of Montana. I met my wife while attending college.

After college we bounced around a little bit. We were living in Jefferson County while I was working, and my wife was finishing up her master's degree. My great aunt is the reason that I wound up in Helena. My great aunt, whom was the Business Manager for MBAC at the time, told me about a job opportunity within her company. I applied for and accepted the position during the winter of 2015-2016. I was still bound to rental lease for 3 months, so I drove to Helena for 3 months and began working (my daily commute was about 140 miles). As fate would have it, an opening in the Helena Public Schools came available during the spring of 2016. My wife applied and received the job she is still working for today.

We finally moved to Helena during the spring of 2016, and we have been in the area ever since. We bought a new house in 2023 in East Helena. Both of our boys were born in Helena, and we are looking forward to raising them in the area.

OCCUPATION

To be honest, I have been working in economic development for 10 years and I still struggle explaining what I do. Economic development is abstract, and practitioners have to learn a certain rhetoric in an effort to explain what we do. In a nutshell, economic development is about improving communities, enhancing the private sector, attracting diversified investments, and deploying publicly funded tools (e.g., state and federal programs). MBAC, previously known as the Helena-Area Development Corporation and Gateway Economic Development Corporation, was formed on similar principles. MBAC merged with another economic development organization, Gateway Economic Development District (GEDD), several



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

years ago. Today, MBAC/GEDD focuses on community development, economic development lending in conjunction with our bank partners, business counseling, and interaction with our local governments across Lewis & Clark, Broadwater, and Meagher Counties.

I have held several roles in this field. I initially started as a community development specialist. I stepped away from MBAC for a while to pursue some other opportunities in the field. I worked for Jefferson County's development corporation for a few years before I came back to MBAC in 2021 to help with COVID relief efforts. Currently, I focus on assisting food & agriculture businesses across the MBAC region. We received a Food & Ag Development Center (FADC) designation in 2023 from the MT Department of Ag. Running this new program for MBAC has been rewarding. I think our food, agriculture, and natural resource industries deserve the utmost support and respect. I spend the remainder of my time working on community development projects and helping out with internal projects. Every day is a little different at MBAC!

More Seidensticker, **PAGE 24**

Congratulations!

MBAC

Montana Business Assistance Connection

Eric Seidensticker — 2025 20 Under 40 Honoree!

MBAC proudly celebrates Eric Seidensticker, Senior Program Manager and Director of our Food and Agriculture Development Center, for being named a 2025 20 Under 40 honoree.

Eric's leadership, dedication, and passion for Montana's communities shine through his work supporting rural businesses, mentoring others, and shaping innovative community policies. We're grateful to have him on the MBAC team!



ERIC SEIDENSTICKER

KARLI MOSELY AND ASHLY TUBBS



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: We hail from the 1990s. You can call us 90's millennials. (Karli is 37, AshLy is 35)

Tell us a bit about yourself- are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

As all good stories start, AshLy and Karli met at a bar. Not just any bar, but Ten Mile Creek Brewery. Karli was the manager and AshLy was, and still is, married to the co-owner.

AshLy has been orbiting and touching down in Helena her whole life, always calling some small town in Montana home. In very romantic and stereotypical fashion she married her high school sweetheart, a Helena boy. After college, they settled down in an old farmhouse on the sunny side of the Spokane Creek Hills where they still live today. AshLy thinks of Helena as the heart of the Big Sky State, representing all that is good about a slower pace and a western work ethic.

Karli wandered her way to Helena all the way from America's Dairyland. Her husband, her cat, and her nomadic soul set their sights west from the front seat of their 1970s GMC motorhome. They broke down at Clark's Bay and became camp-hosts living on Hauser Lake. Quickly becoming intoxicated by Helena's radiant beauty. They remain mesmerized and haven't found any good reason to leave. No, they don't still live in a van down by the river, but they do still have the traveler's spirit.

OCCUPATION

Hotelier is our name; hospitality is our game. We are the dreamers that cooked up Bell Hotel, an independently owned and operated 14-room hotel on Lyndale Avenue. Opening in spring 2026, it will be a fun little resting perch nestled by the old railroad- delivering a modern retreat with an eclectic vibe.

As self-proclaimed Community Champions, we don't take ourselves seriously, but we do seriously insist that

More Mosely/Tubbs, PAGE 24



Congrats to Karli Mosely & AshLy Tubbs!

Bell Hotel

www.bellhotelmt.com

Opening early 2026

We can't wait to "Lodge Like a Local!"

From Stephanie Bull
& all of us at

**Farmers
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Your Montana Bank Since 1907
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SAM MARTIN

Age: 31

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here – what brought you to Helena?

I am the military brat of two Glasgow, Montana raised parents. After my father's retirement from the Marine Corps, we moved to Helena (as it was halfway between all our Montana Family) where I spent my last two years of High School at Helena High. I left town for 4 years to go to college but returned after graduation and haven't left since

OCCUPATION

In technical terms, I am an Account Executive here at Alphagraphics. But in practice, my team and I are the secret weapon of many small business owners and marketing teams all over the western region. We provide experienced council on physical branding solutions, work to develop plans and strategies for physical branding campaigns, execute said campaigns, and we're always there when the defecation strikes the oscillation to pull Clients out the fire and save the day.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I've been involved with many organizations over the years; Helena College, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Helena Habitat for Humanity, Canyon Ferry Learning Center,



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

and many more. As our organization is involved with the majority of area non-profits, I've had the good fortune to be exposed to a wide variety of events and causes.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I love the "Big-Small Town" vibe Helena has. It's hard to put in other words. I suppose it is the tight sense of community we all have.



CONGRATS SAM!
on being named one of the
Helena 20 Under 40

alphagraphics®

Lindquist

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ciation in Bozeman, I was ready for a new challenge—one that would allow me to lead and make a broader impact. In July 2022, I made the move to Helena to become CEO of the Helena Association of REALTORS®. The transition has been both energizing and fulfilling. It's been a privilege to connect with the Helena community and support our dedicated REALTOR® and Affiliate members in their work.

OCCUPATION

As CEO of the Helena Association of REALTORS®, I lead a member-driven organization dedicated to supporting real estate professionals across Lewis and Clark, Powell, Broadwater, and Jefferson counties. We serve nearly 470 REALTOR® members and close to 100 affiliate members, offering education, resources, and networking opportunities to help them succeed. Our focus is on promoting professionalism, upholding high ethical standards, and advocating for real estate policies that benefit both our members and the communities they serve. What I enjoy most about my role is getting to support people who care deeply about their communities. REALTORS® are more than real

estate professionals—they're neighborhood advocates, housing champions, and community leaders. I'm proud to lead an organization that helps them grow their businesses while also advancing professional standards and protecting the dream of homeownership. No two days are the same, and I love the variety—whether it's bringing people together, finding creative solutions, or working behind the scenes to make sure our members, and our community, continue to thrive.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce and have had the privilege of working with local nonprofits like Helena Food Share, God's Love, and Habitat for Humanity. Even though I've only lived in Helena for three years, I've found it to be a warm, welcoming community that makes it easy to get involved. Giving back in meaningful ways—whether through volunteer work, attending local events, or simply supporting neighbors—has helped

me feel more connected and grounded here. Community involvement is something I've always believed in because it's where authentic relationships are formed and where positive change begins. It's also an important part of my role as CEO. Staying engaged allows me to better understand the needs and challenges facing our community, which in turn helps me more effectively advocate for REALTORS® and support initiatives that strengthen the housing market and local economy. Being part of these efforts has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my time in Helena so far.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

What I enjoy most about living, working, and volunteering in Helena is the strong sense of community that truly sets this town apart. People here genuinely care about one another, and it shows—in the way neighbors lend a hand, in the commitment of local organizations, and in the countless opportunities to get involved and give back. There's a real spirit of collaboration and support that makes Helena feel both welcoming and purpose driven. Beyond the community, Helena's access to the outdoors is a huge part of what makes it such a special place to live. Whether

I'm hiking, fishing, or simply taking in the natural beauty that surrounds us, spending time outside helps me recharge and stay grounded. It's a place where you can find both connection and peace—something I deeply appreciate in both my personal and professional life.

What else should people know about you?

When I'm not working, I'm usually outdoors, enjoying everything Montana has to offer. Hiking and fishing are some of my favorite ways to unwind, especially when I can bring along my four-year-old golden retriever, Murphy. He's always ready for an adventure and having him by my side makes exploring the trails and waterways even more special. As a longtime animal lover, I also enjoy meeting new furry friends wherever I go—it's one of the unexpected joys of being out and about. In addition to my love of the outdoors, I'm a bit of a foodie and really enjoy trying new restaurants whenever I travel for work, whether it's within Montana or farther afield. Sampling local flavors and unique dishes is one of my favorite parts of the journey. It gives me a chance to connect with different communities and learn a little about their culture through food, which always makes my travels more meaningful and memorable.

Anderson

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What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Most of all, I love how my career as an Architect supports our vibrant community in Helena and across the State. The organizations and people we service never cease to amaze me. Currently, I am managing a bundle of projects on the Capitol campus to design four major renovations creating hybrid workplaces for State employees working in buildings adjacent to the Capitol building. These buildings haven't seen an investment of this caliber since they were built in the 50s and 60s, giving us an opportunity to address millions of dollars in deferred maintenance that has burdened taxpayers for the last couple decades. I love how our work will significantly impact the working conditions of roughly 1500 Helenans and create jobs for construction trades in Helena and across the State of Montana.

What else should people know about you?

I gave birth to our first child in September of last year (a baby girl named Eedy), returning to work late December and cannot thank my fellow SMAers enough for how they welcomed me back! I seriously work with the best people who are making their own impact on Helena every day, while raising their families in our community – they are an inspiration!

In the fun fact department, I have a small obsession with State Capitol buildings and have visited 22 across our country including Hawaii and Alaska, with big goals to visit them all! Montana's Capitol building holds a special place in my heart for obvious reasons, but New Mexico and Texas are also at the top of my favorites list.

At home I spend most of my time managing a list of never-ending projects at our 1935 fixer upper, experimenting in the kitchen, looking for my green thumb in the garden, and enjoying my favorite place to relax, sitting on our patio soaking up a quiet evening after bedtime.

Martin

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What else should people know about you?

I'm a working mom, an advocate for public education, and someone who thrives on collaboration. I believe in the power of design to shape not just buildings, but communities. My husband and I are raising our two kids here in Helena, and we're both deeply invested in making this a great place for families. Whether it's showing up for a school event, helping neighbors, or finding time to enjoy the trails together, we're grounded in the belief that strong communities are built through everyday actions. I care deeply about giving back to the place I call home and using my skills to create lasting, positive change for Montana families. Also, I never turn down a good hike with my dog, a challenging design problem, or a chance to support a fellow parent or professional.

DR. ROBERT MAHER



THOM BRIDGE, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Age: 37

Tell us a bit about yourself-are you a Helena Native born and raised? If not, when did you move here - what brought you to Helena?

I was Born and raised in Helena, MT. I went to Smith School, HMS, and then HHS. I left for undergrad, medical school and residency, then I moved back to Helena to raise my family.

OCCUPATION

I am a general surgeon and the Trauma Medical Director at St. Pete's.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you

in being an active community member?

I work with medical schools and physician assistant schools from around the region teaching medical students and PA students. On top of that I volunteer my services at MT Wild. I love the community first and foremost. I was born here, and I loved growing up in Helena. Now that I'm back, I love to be able to give back to the community that helped make me who I am today.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

This is where my friends and family live and where my roots are. There are other great places in the world, but to me Helena is the best. From the surrounding mountains, to the trail systems, to the local businesses, to the fantastic arts scene, it is simply a great place to live, and I can't imagine raising a family anywhere else.

Wagner

continued from Page 3

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

My favorite thing about being involved with Helena and all that it has to offer is the people. I am a people person. I love meeting new people, creating connections, and watching those connections grow each day. It brings me joy watching people care so much about their community and all the different ways they can help. I enjoy seeing people making a difference and being able to be part of that difference being made in certain scenarios.

What else should people know about you?

I am passionate about the things I love. First and foremost – My family, my friends, and good competition. It might often times seem like it is more than passion, some might call it aggression but I assure you, I am just a very competitive person trying to get better each day. I also would mention that I grew up in the best household a person could ask for. My mother and father, Mary and Dan, along with all of my siblings: Lisa, Julie, Billy, and Dani helped me become the person I am. Growing up under that roof was something I will never be able to thank them all for. I truly am the luckiest guy in the world.

Daniels

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rewarding experience. I love working with young learners and teaching them about food and how to grow it for yourself is so important! In one location, with the help of a few energetic adults and students, we were able to restore a dilapidated garden space at a childcare center and unite teachers, parents, and local businesses to support an awesome garden space for kids! We planted and pulled, questioned and thought, watered, dug and learned about bugs. At the end of the season, we got to harvest, clean, and eat the veggies as healthy snacks in the classrooms!

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

I like the location and the community. There are opportunities to get involved and help a neighbor, who might just turn out to be a friend of another friend and so it goes. It is a great place to call home.

What else should people know about you?

When not trying to help people feel better by becoming their own expert in diabetes management, creating art and personalized pet portraits for my small business, shuttling kids to the next practice or nature trek, or digging around in a garden, I can likely be found running around the mountains with some combination of my 3 hounds or little French Bulldog- Judy.



Seidensticker

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Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

The MBAC team tries to be active with organizations and functions across our region. We have volunteered at places like Helena Food Share. As an organization, we are trying to reach out to other organizations and get more volunteer time on the calendar. Being active and informed in the community is important. Especially when directly engaging with public and private entities. We try to fill gaps and bridge con-

versations.

I have been part of numerous advisory committees with the City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County. I am the chair of Montana Economic Developer's Association (MEDA) public policy/legislative committee, so I get to spend time advocating for my field. Lastly, I am a member of NeighborWorks Montana's real estate/development loan committee. Working with organizations that cover the state is impactful.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Helena also has a lot of authenticity and history. I love taking my family to all of the local attractions, parks, trails, and businesses. I have always appreciated Helena's proximity to the rest of Montana. You can access most of the state's amenities within a day's drive.

As I mentioned, I moved to East Helena in 2023. The community support and engagement is impressive. I also like the grit and attitude of the community. I am excited to raise my boys in the community.

What else should people know about you?

I am a huge admirer of Montana history. I love to read about old buildings and historic places across the state.

I am an avid fan of the San Antonio Spurs. My wife once surprised me with tickets to a game during their last championship season. I found out later in life that my great uncle worked for the organization after his playing career in the American Basketball Association.

I like to think that I have raised and trained one of the most stubborn and hard-headed creatures on earth: the Bas-set Hound. Mine's name is Itchy, and he is 13 years old. I am not sure if I selected him, or vice versa.

Dolan

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What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

Community. I'm like an old man on a bar stool—I could talk for hours or grunt five words, but it all chalks up to the same message. The best thing about Helena is the community. You'll find it on the trails with no service or on the walking mall listening to the band and waiting for your Hopper order. Community is what makes or breaks this town and I continuously choose the former.

You get what you give.

What else should people know about you?

I come from a large Irish Boston family. Growing up, my grandmother insisted on family reunions—no excuses because nothing allowed you to get out of mandatory mini golf and a yellow t-shirt. These were my favorite memories. These gatherings helped shape me into who I am: a straight shooter who ruffles feathers. I'll open my heart and mind to you and hope that you'll do the same. I'm doing my best, but I have a lot to learn. Especially from John Murdy—the man is an encyclopedia of downtown Helena.

I'm honored to be included in this list, but I can't help but feel imposter syndrome. The other nominees, this year and in the past, have done wonderful substantial things in this town whereas I feel like I'm just getting started and haven't made a dent. I'd love to see more benches, murals, and accessible sidewalks downtown. So, I'm hoping, with your help, we can accomplish these goals and build up our town. That, together, we can be a part of the group that says "Lets".

Mosely/Tubbs

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our guests have an authentic Helena experience. From Jay Crider's art on the walls, to custom Montago coffee in ceramic mugs crafted by Archie Bray residents—our curated collaborations with Helena's finest small businesses at our guests' fingertips will immerse visitors in the Queen City culture. Helping to ensure our beloved local shops, eateries, and artists stick around for all of us to enjoy.

Watch the adventure unfold @ bellhotelmtr's spirit.

Q&A

What Community Service or Volunteer activities/ organizations are you involved with? And what interests you in being an active community member?

Picture this, a global pandemic forces local businesses to close doors—widespread panic spreads among small businesses. Two Gulch Rats (Karli + AshLy) hatch an innovative idea to prevent

losing the unique downtown stores that make Helena special. Community Crate, a monthly subscription box service showcasing locally curated goods, takes the town by storm.

Our plan was simple, pack + sell crates for a few months, keep our favorite spots afloat. COVID had different plans. But we held fast and stayed the course. 17 months. 17 unique crates. \$80,000 recirculated. 120 small businesses, artisans and local non-profits supported. Mission accomplished.

We wondered, what else can we do?

We thought, let's make Helena cool(er).

We said, "we are going to need a bigger box!"

Plans for Bell Hotel started to take shape. The same community centered mission, but in a different package.

What do you like best about living, working and volunteering in the Helena area?

The people and places are what we love about Helena. Starting the day with a sizzling cup of caffeine from a bakery, meandering in and out of artisan shops downtown— all with a dog (or two) in tow and bumping into friends on every block. Winding down the day with a visit to the new art installation then hitting the

Walking Mall for fresh pizza, cold beer, toe-tapping live music (with more friends of course) and a 620-acre backdrop of pristine natural park.

Helena is more than an adjective; it is a culmination of characters and charm. It can't be fully articulated; it must be experienced. Once you know, you know.

What else should people know about you?

This is just the beginning for two bell-hop gals.

