We love electric cars. There’s going to be a big push for electric cars, more wind power. All those things require copper. There’ll be a high demand for copper if all those expectations or plans come true."

Mike McGivern, MR vice president of human resources

Please see COPPER, Page D7
Shedding stigma; creating jobs

MICHAEL CAST
michael.cast@mtstandard.com

Jan. 28, 2021, making it an enforceable order of the court – done and done, in other words.

Completion of the majority of the dig and stream remediation is expected by 2025, Anaconda-Deer Lodge Chief Executive Officer Bill Everett said.

With settlement funding secured from Atlantic Richfield, Anaconda is quickly turning its image from that of an old-smelter town to a recreational basecamp. “When they turn into town from the interstate, they’re going to be seeing literally hundreds of people working throughout our community.”

Joe Willauer, the executive director of the Butte Local Development Corp., already has his eye on the next project. “For the next several years you’re going to be seeing literally hundreds of people working throughout our community to help clean up – whether it’s the yard rehabilitation, whether it’s up by the smelter stack. And this summer, you’re going to see a large team of individuals working the north hills of Anaconda.”

So all those are great-paying jobs, with great benefits, and feed and fuel the local economy. “All of that fits of Superfund in Anaconda, the consent decree, Everett said. “The details for these projects that we’ve been working on are right under the umbrella of what’s going on in Anaconda and will be the focus next week’s economic outlook look package in the Standard.”

The remediation work ahead will also lead to an employment boom, Everett said. “For the next several years you’re going to be seeing literally hundreds of people working throughout our community to help clean up – whether it’s the yard rehabilitation, whether it’s up by the smelter stack. And this summer, you’re going to see a large team of individuals working the north hills of Anaconda.”

Meanwhile, the Butte Poverty Solids Operations Unit Consent Decree became effective this past fall.

The Forge Hotel and new Barclay’s II are also just a part of the community. Our history is woven in the very fabric of Butte, and we’re proud to call it home. That’s why we’ve worked to create a place of healing and hope for families throughout our community.”

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Since 1881, when five Sisters of Charity came to serve God and the people of southwest Montana, St. James has been a part of the community. Our history is woven in the very fabric of Butte, and we’re proud to call it home. That’s why we’ve worked to create a place of healing and hope for families throughout southwest Montana.

Our ability to fulfill our mission is made possible thanks to the outstanding healthcare providers, nurses and associates and to you, our friends, family and neighbors, who allow us to serve you.
The study estimated that for every $1 million put into a restoration project, $2.9 million total economic activity is generated, including 31.5 full-time jobs.

“It is a different project, but it dovetails extremely well with environmental remediation and protection. To go from one project to another is going to be very smooth,” said the president of the SBCCA by early 2022, Hassler.

The study found the top three job sectors identified by restoration projects were construction (highway, water, system, dirt-moving, general construction) at 35%, environmental consulting (environmental or engineering services) at 15%, and government (oversight, engineering services) at 10%.

More recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics shows that employment in the field more than doubled between 2010 and 2020, increasing by 56% in that time period. After a brief slump during the pandemic, employment in construction is once again on the rise.

According to the EPA’s Montana Redevelopment Profile, in 2010 Montana Superfund sites surveyed by the EPA, property values had improved by a total of $785 million in annual sales, with 4,628 employees earning a total of $282 million annually.

On 15 Montana Superfund sites surveyed by the EPA, property values had improved by a total of $785 million in annual sales, with 4,628 employees earning a total of $282 million annually. At the time of the study in 2019, 330 businesses were operating on 13 Montana Superfund sites surveyed by the EPA, property values had improved by a total of $785 million in annual sales, with 4,628 employees earning a total of $282 million annually.

In 2020, 219 Montana Superfund sites were surveyed by the EPA, property values had improved by a total of $785 million in annual sales, with 4,628 employees earning a total of $282 million annually.

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Hospitals persevere, grow

Jade Doyle, CEO of St. James Healthcare, said that through it all, St. James has kept an eye on the bottom line. “We’ve inverted a lot in technology this year,” she said, pointing to advanced robotics that advance care in spine surgery, gynecology, urology and other surgical procedures. “The advantage is precision,” he said. “The physicians can use these tools to make procedures safer and more precise.

St. James is doing much to improve its physical structure. The most recent phase of the hospital was built in the 1950s, and renovation has been an ongoing process. The Labor and Delivery area on the fourth floor is headed now and completely renovated. And within a few weeks, the hospital’s Café Litt will be the same size as double the current space. New seating is to be done without closing off any of the current procedures that may be going on at the same time.

Amy Bensinger, assistant director of nursing, and Samey Johnson, chief nursing officer, prepare a vaccination dose at Community Hospital of Anaconda.

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Anita Varnavas, Carl Schilhammer, Jonathan Pine and Jonathan Pine will serve patients at their Butte and surrounding treating patients with spine and orthopedic conditions.

“We are also keenly focused on providing access to behavioral health services for Anaconda and our surrounding areas, as evidenced by expansion of our behavioral health support staff,” Villa and Hickey-Bryntgen added.

For Doyle at St. James, one thing that made navigating 2020 more successful was increased collaboration with regional hospitals including Barrett Hospital & Healthcare in Dillon; Ruby Valley Medical Center in Sheridan; Deer Lodge Medical Center; and Madison Valley Medical Center in Ennis.

“The presidents and CEOs got together,” Doyle said. “And more and more the doctors are getting to know each other and build relationships.”

“Of course, we really want to make sure that we help other regional hospitals. Care for their patients at this time was very important—so, that’s possible, and then to basically have a commitment here to help do that.”

One of the ways that was provided by recruitment, Doyle says. “We’ve been able to have physician assistants travel their needs in this area and we can augment that if means recruiting another physician.”

Landon Dybdal, CEO at Ruby Valley Medical Center, echoed Doyle’s sentiments.

“They have demonstrated reaching out to rural hospitals in Montana. I think it’s been great,” Dybdal said.

“Jay has been great to work with,” he said Friday. “I called him on something at 7 a.m. last week and he was there for me. And St. James is a wonderful partner. We try to give our patients the very best care possible, but when they need a more advanced level of care it’s good to know we have St. James close by.”

Doyle says St. James is excited about building a new primary-care walk-in clinic in the 3600 block of Harrison Avenue next to Staples. The clinic should be open in late fall of this year, he said. “We’re running out of clinic space here, and it made sense to us to look at nearby, near many people live. St. James also has a primary-care clinic in Butte. The clinic was run by St. Peter’s HealthCare in Helena for years and when St. Peter’s stepped out of it, then a couple of years ago part of a commitment the hospital has made to be a key provider for all of Jefferson County, which does not have a major medical center.

While this “surge” of COVID-19 came later than in many other places, it came with a vengeance in the fall. Rooe St. James and CHA were soon hit, both came through for their communities. CHA’s Villa and Hickey-Bryntgen said the pandemic “has had a significant impact on CHA’s operations.”

They added that “all great care continues to be provided to patients here, as well as to patients in our Butte and Anaconda locations.”

While the “surge” of COVID-19 came later than in many other places, it came with a vengeance in the fall. Rooe St. James and CHA were soon hit.

“We’ve always tried to get the message to people that if you need care, please don’t want people having symptoms and waiting too long to come in. In fact, in terms of COVID, there’s no safer place you could be than here.”

Ruby Valley’s Dybdal said the hospital had some rough months financially in 2020 because of the virus, “but things are beginning to look a lot better. We’re headed in the right direction now.”

He impressed a worry about getting people in his county “vaccinated. “We’re not getting the number of vaccine doses that we want,” he said. “It’s comforting to know that it’s not just us, everybody’s going through it, but it’s a big challenge.”

He’s looking at new ultrasound machines which will save many patients from having to travel farther for diagnostics— a key factor especially in the wintry.

While physician recruitment hasn’t been as big a challenge there as in some hospitals. “We’ve had good retention here. We have solid providers who want to stay here,” he said. “Recruitment is in another story.”

“This has been a lot tougher,” he said. Right now with what’s going on travel nurses are commanding a premium.

“We had a nurse we were trying to recruit who got an offer in Texas for double what we could pay,” he said.

Overall, though, the Sheridan hospital has come through the crisis in good shape. “The community support this facility gets is just amazing,” Dybdal said. Dybdal feels the same way about the St. James–founded with Butte.

“Spots is poised for a continued growth of what the people who should know—Rath lake’s “prized” board of the Butte Local...
The project, which re- moves heavily contami- nated waste material and water from the area around the Civic Center, is funded by damages to natural re- sources paid to the state of Montana by Atlantic Rich- field. Phase 1 of the removal complete, and the work continues to put much of the $36 million budget back- into the local economy.

Continued: The MonTana STandard FILE PHOTO

Mackov- ich Con- struction of Butte was awarded the $54 million contract to con- struct new Butte-Silver Bow vehicle and maintenance shops off Beef Trail Road, because the old shops lay atop ma- terial that still needs to be removed. Jim Ford, Montana’s Nat- ural Resources Damage Program manager for the Butte project, said the new shops should be done by Feb. 4, and demolition of the old shops and subse- quent waste removal begins on March 1. Butte firm Interstate Construction Services won the Phase 2 contract with the lowest bid of just under $7 million.

The BLDC’s Willauer said one of the great economic bene- fits to come out of Super- fund is the local expertise Butte’s achieved in meta- lization, talking about the work of consultants from like Water and En- vironmental Technologies (WET) and Pioneer, central to clean-up projects like the Parrot project.

“Yeah, we’re a Superfund site. But as a result of that we’ve also created world- class technology for en- vironmental remediation from both the private sector and then of course the work the government has done up at Tech,” he said.

On Wednesday, Ford and WET president Josh Vincent virtually updated members of the Butte Natural Re- sources Damage Restoration Council on the Parrot proj- ect. Administration, technical consultants, various gov- ernment players, Butte, and interested community members, tuned in to a few tiny details in the restoration to come. Dis- cussion turned from Par- rot to Butte-Silver Bow, to the WET work.

“The long, puzzling road ahead unabashed its ugly face. The complexity of the projects and the many un- certainies made it hard to see the future. But experts committed to cleaning up the daunting mess calmly discussed the best uses for new con- cerning everything from the layers to the new geological strata, the paths contami- nated groundwater might take. The future economics of the matter took a back seat to the scheduling of the now.

Russ Erickson thanked everyone going on this thing, “She said.”

“We’re just ready to get back to work on this thing,” she said.
Copper

MR is budgeted to add four new employees for a total of 378 this year, McGivern said. In 2019, the mine's tailing impoundment permit for a 50-foot lift typically holds about 10 years of tailings, McGivern said. MR will begin working on the next permit this year. The mine life goes out 40 years, McGivern said. We have an operating policy — if we can buy local, we buy local, " McGivern said. “We have an operating policy — if we can buy local, we buy local," McGivern said.

The 2020 Performance Leadership Award for Top Quartile Performance in Outcomes, awarded by The Chartis Center for Rural Health, in partnership with the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health; • The 2020 Performance Leadership Award for Top Quartile Performance in Quality, from same organization; • 2020 Top 100 Critical Access Hospital, also awarded by the Chartis Center for Rural Health; CHA award was also won by Barrett Hospital & Healthcare in Dillon; • Montana Rural Healthcare Performance Improvement Network’s Quality Improvement Award for CHA’s work on improving Readmission Rates.

MR is budgeted to add four new employees to the community and in our chamber e-Newsletter and on social media exclusively.

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