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COVERING CENTRAL MONTANA LIKE THE STARS

# LEWISTOWN NEWS-ARGUS

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## Parking complaints on the rise, says Chief of Police



Parking complaints within the Lewistown business district are on the rise and the City is looking at different ways to address the issue.

Photo by Will Briggs

By KATHERINE SEARS | Managing Editor

Complaints about parking in the Lewistown business district continue to rise, and the City is weighing how to appropriately address the issue. On Monday, City Commissioners heard from Chief of Police Justin Jenness about the possibility of dedicating a code enforcement officer to downtown parking patrol.

"They're becoming more and more heated arguments," said Jenness of the parking complaints. "Business owners are tired of it; people who live in the downtown district are frustrated they can't park there overnight."

City Code limits downtown parking to two hours between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and prohibits parking from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

Chris Wright, Lewistown resident and owner of 406 Café on the 100 block of Main Street, addressed commissioners during the Oct. 17 regular meeting about his struggle with illegal parking in front of his business.

Wright said he has called dispatch multiple times about

people violating the two-hour parking limit.

"Someone was parked in front of my business for three days," said Wright. "I'd like to get the law enforced."

Wright told commissioners the parking issues are costing him money and he'd like to see something done about it.

Jenness said code compliance issues, like parking, are code enforcement issues, and not law enforcement (police) issues and are most often complaint driven.

"We don't have someone proactively down there hour by hour to see what's going on," said Jenness. "It's a very reactive approach."

This also makes it difficult for code enforcement to be equitable and consistent with parking compliance, Jenness explained. The complaint often comes down to one person's word against the other, unless there is evidence to prove the vehicle has not moved. The punishment is also miniscule even if the person is fined, Jenness noted.

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## Timeline for Sentinel Missile project pushed back

By DEB HILL | Reporter

While Air Force personnel originally suggested work on replacing the aging Minute Man missiles with the new Sentinel version might begin as early as 2023, it now looks like Central Montana won't see much activity until 2025 or later.



KellyAnne Terry

"The timeline has been pushed out about six years, according to conversations we've had with Northrop Grumman," said City Commissioner KellyAnne Terry. "It looks like it could be 2028 before the workforce hub is here and there are workers on the ground."

Terry and Fergus County Commissioner Ross Butcher are getting regular updates as the Air Force and its contractor, Northrop Grumman, begin finalizing plans.

"Conversations are opening between the community and Northrop Grumman, as they enter the design and planning phase.

Things are changing as they move toward finalizing the preliminary work. We know they want to build the workforce hub close to town, but probably nothing inside the City limits is big enough, so that's going to be a County conversation," Terry said.

Butcher said it's still too early to know where the workforce hub might be built.

What will actually happen here might be different than what people have in their minds."

— KellyAnne Terry

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# Bright Fall Colors



Layers of fall colors along Warm Spring Creek give way to a view of the South Moccasin Mountains. Most of the range is still black from the fire that raged across the mountains a year ago. However, the abundance of gold, green, orange, and yellow below brightens up the burn and makes for a beautiful Central Montana scene. See more fall colors on page 16.

Photo by Katherine Sears



Calves across Central Montana are headed to feedlots across the U.S. as fall shipping season is well underway.

Photo by Kris Descheemaeker

## Fall shipping in full swing

By KRIS DESCHEEMAER | Special to the News-Argus

The fall run of calves going to new homes is in full force in the Central Montana area. Producers have been shipping calves to feedlots in South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and other points east for a couple of weeks now.

The runs at Lewistown Livestock Auction have been getting larger with around 1,300 head of feeder cattle, 820 head of bred cows and 750 head of slaughter cows and bulls going through the sale yard on October 11.

The slaughter market has softened a little with the seasonal uptick in numbers coming to market this time of year. The slaughter market price was steady last week with a good cow going in the mid 70-cent range. This compares with the mid 50-cent range a year ago.

The bred cow sale was the first real test of the fall stock cow market with mixed results, according to Kyle Shobe, owner of Lewistown Livestock Auction.

"Good interest came from southeast Montana and the Dakotas, and fairly limited demand from the local and regional

area," Shobe said.

As drought conditions linger in the area local producers are hesitant to expand their cow herd with limited hay inventory.

The top end of the calves selling at auction found a pretty steady market. Calf quality was widely mixed, as country deliveries continue around the area and the cutbacks come to town with lightweight calves being an easier trade than the heavier calves.

Producers are seeing a stronger calf market than a year ago with a 515-pound steer calf bringing \$1.85 per pound at Lewistown Livestock's October 18 sale. Last year a 515-pound calf brought \$1.61 per pound in the same time period at the same auction. Unfortunately, much of the financial gain will be eaten up by higher input cost such as fuel.

Many Central Montana calves were sold by video auction through Superior Auction or Northern Livestock Video Auction earlier in the season and are now being shipped to the next destination point. Some local producers contract directly with buyers for October or November delivery.

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USPS 311-120

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OBITUARIES: J. POOR-BAWDEN, T. BROWN, S. CHAMBERLAIN

## Parking

◀ From Front Page

With Main Street being a state highway, Jenness said there is often contention with the Department of Transportation in regard to the parking problems.

"If a business opens before 6 a.m. and someone, like an employee or customer, parks and then the snowplow comes through, MDT comes to us [and asks why we aren't

enforcing the parking ordinance]," said Jenness.

While the busy parking season has passed, Jenness and the commission want to address the issue for next year. Jenness proposed dedicating a part-time employee to address the complaints.

"At least by having someone dedicated to it, we could get some numbers," said Jenness.

This would provide a benchmark to aid in future decisions about parking code. While this would increase expenses for code enforcement, as the part-time employee would need a vehicle, fuel, and maintenance,

along with a tablet and printer equipped, revenues from fines could cover for the difference.

"Enforcing parking ordinances would most likely make up for expenses," Jenness anticipated.

The City is also reworking parking ordinances, with possible solutions to overnight parking for residents.

"Say if you own apartments in the business district, you could purchase parking permits for tenants to park on side streets, not Main Street," said Jenness.

The permits would also allow the City to record phone number and email addresses to

communicate with permit holders about parking during road maintenance or special events, such as Chokecherry Festival.

While the City continues to work on a draft, they hope to implement some changes to downtown parking by next spring.

During the Monday, Oct. 17 regular meeting, commissioners also appointed Donna Strouf to serve an additional two-year term on the Historic Resources Commission; approved TIF funds in the amount of \$10,000 to Stokken Holdings, LLC for improvements to their building at 511-515 Janeaux Street; and approved amendments to the Tax Increment Finance investment plan.

## Shipping

◀ From Front Page

According to Logan Butcher, Superior Auction Rep, "On average, calves are coming in just a little bit light on weight, nothing crazy but just a tick light," he said. "Most is due to lack of water and the heat."

Butcher noted that the shipping season started earlier in

the year than normal due to the drought and grasshopper infestations, with some cattle leaving their home ranch in August.

Many of the calves Butcher is responsible for shipping are going into South Dakota, but a portion of the calves are staying here in Central Montana, heading just down the road to JBC Cattle, Inc., the Judith Basin County Farms feedlot outside of Hobson. According to Butcher, JBC is feeding between 20,000 and 30,000 head of cattle per year, many of them coming from the Central Montana area.

"Having a local buyer in the bidding process adds value to everyone's calves," Butcher said.

## Missile

◀ From Front Page

"They haven't looked for property here, so the actual location is vague," Butcher said. "It would make sense to have it close to existing services, but other than that, we really don't know where it will be. I get the sense they are working with the Kimball, Nebraska community to figure out what works best. For example, originally they said the workers would be in a gated compound and not free to go into town except maybe on one day a week, but then the community said, 'no, we want them in town spending money.' So there's give and take and room for local input."

Butcher said he's heard from Northrop Grumman that the actual number of workers to be housed here is still a bit up in the air.

"I think they are looking at 1,700 to 1,800, but nothing is set yet," Butcher said.

Butcher still thinks the air-

port would be a logical place for a workforce hub, but said regardless of whether that comes to pass, the airport will see increased activity.

Terry said when the Air Force personnel presented findings from the Environmental Impact Statement during the Central Montana Fair, it was a "worst case scenario."

"What will actually happen here might be different than what people have in their minds," she said. "Since Kimball, Nebraska will be built out first, we have time to discuss what we want and time to do it right."

Butcher stressed that Northrop Grumman employees will be subject to background checks prior to hiring and there will be a lot of oversight.

"It's the other people, the ones that come here because they see opportunity or jobs and are not Northrop Grumman employees that might create issues. It's an economic boom, which attracts people, but I am sure we can handle it with existing resources. We're not planning to build a new jail, for instance," Butcher said.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Board of Health to meet Monday

The Fergus County Board of Health will meet Monday, Oct. 24 at 5:30 p.m. in the basement conference room of the Fergus County Sheriff's Complex, located at 121 8th Avenue South in Lewistown.

Items on the agenda include approval of July 25, 2022 minutes, personnel announcements, and reports from departments.

Discussion and action will be held on the following items:

- Board of Health members
- Disposition of bodies update
- Septic rules
- Truck wreck policies.

### County commissioners to hold public hearing

The board of Fergus County Commissioners will meet for a regular meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 25 at 10 a.m. in the commissioner's office.

There will be a public hearing on the Taylor Boundary Line Adjustment Minor Subdivision, personnel announcements, and approval of the Oct. 11, 2022 meeting minutes.

Action items include Taylor Boundary Line Adjustment Minor Subdivision; appointment of Road Viewers committee for Natal Road Abandon-

ment and Vrooman Road Abandonment between Block 21 and Block 35 of the Lewistown Heights; and Oct. 25, 2022 claims.

### Family history and genealogy workshop to be held

If you are interested in learning more about family history or getting started with your genealogy, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints will hold a four week workshop on these subjects. The classes will be held on Tuesday evenings, 7 - 8:30 p.m., beginning on Oct. 25 and continuing through Nov. 15.

The class is free and will be held at the church at 120 Casino Creek Road. Class size is limited to six persons. Register early to take advantage of the resources and learn how to compose your family history with programs you can use at home.

For more information, call Jean at 406-535-5556, Randy at 406-380-2889, or Ed at 406-366-9879.

### Grass Range Fire holding annual meeting

The annual membership meeting of the Grass Range Rural Fire District will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7 p.m. at

the EMS Building, 607 Main Street, Grass Range. Have a cookie and a cup of coffee and view our latest equipment.

### Small Wonder Board to meet

The Board of Directors of Small Wonder Child Care meets Wednesday, October 26th at 12:00 noon. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at the United Methodist Church, Fireside Room, 512 West Broadway. Those wishing to attend the meeting should email the Board of Directors at [swboardofdirectors@gmail.com](mailto:swboardofdirectors@gmail.com).

### Truck or Treat is Oct. 31 at High School

The annual First Responders Truck or Treat will be held Monday, Oct. 31 in the Fergus High School parking lot from 4 to 9 p.m. First responders, along with Friendship Lodge #37 host the event.

First responders will be there with their response vehicles, handing out candy. There will also be a pumpkin-carving contest. School classes carve the pumpkins ahead of the event and the carvings are then judged by the community during Truck or Treat.

There will be hot dogs, hot cocoa, coffee, and lots of candy. The public is invited to attend.

## Bird hunters should be aware of highly pathogenic avian influenza in wild birds

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus was detected in wild birds and domestic poultry in Montana earlier this year. While HPAI cases in wild birds did appear to decline over the summer, there are detections of new cases in parts of the U.S., including Montana this fall. HPAI viruses are extremely infectious and fatal to poultry and some species of wild birds.

Some scientists have been concerned that the U.S. would see a resurgence of the virus during the fall migration. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is monitoring the situation by testing wild birds that display symptoms consistent with HPAI infection. While HPAI is considered a potentially zoonotic disease, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) continues to consider the risk to people from wild birds to be low.

Since it was first detected in the eastern United States in January 2022, it has spread to all four bird migration flyways, including the Central and Pacific flyways which include parts of Montana.

Human infections with bird flu viruses are rare but can occur, usually after close contact with infected birds. The current risk to the general public from bird flu viruses is low; however, it is important to remember that risk depends on exposure, and people with more exposure might have a greater risk of infection. Although the CDC considers risk of HPAI spread to humans to be very low, Montanans should take precautions when handling game birds or any sick or dead bird they find. Whenever possible, avoid contact with sick or dead wildlife. Even if a bird is not suspected to have died from a contagious disease, gloves should always be worn if a dead animal must be handled for disposal.

Raptors are susceptible to HPAI and are typically exposed via eating infected birds. The general recom-

mendation for falconers is to avoid hunting and/or feeding wild birds, particularly waterfowl, during the outbreak. Enhanced biosecurity practices with enhanced cleaning and limiting contact with wild birds or birds from other facilities is also warranted. Sick falcons should be promptly reported to a veterinarian and be quarantined from other birds in the facility.

Bird hunters should follow these simple precautions when processing or handling wild game:

- Do not harvest or handle wild birds that are obviously sick or found dead.
- Wear disposable latex or rubber gloves while cleaning game or cleaning bird feeders.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while cleaning game.
- People and equipment that have been in contact with wild game birds should

avoid contact with back yard poultry flocks.

- Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol wipes immediately after handling game or cleaning bird feeders.

- Wash tools and work surfaces used to clean game birds with soap and water, then disinfect with a 10 percent solution of chlorine bleach—one part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water.

- Separate raw meat, and anything it touches, from cooked or ready-to-eat foods to avoid contamination.

- Cook game meat thoroughly to an internal temperature of at least 165°F.

- Do not keep bird feeders near domestic poultry.

For more information on AI in wild birds, visit <https://fwpp.mt.gov/conservation/diseases/avian-influenza>, or visit the USGS website at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/avian-influenza-surveillance>.

**Elect Rick Vaughn**  
 In God We Trust Proven Leadership & Experience  
**FERGUS COUNTY COMMISSIONER**  
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