



In today's edition!

Cowboy Poetry

COVERING CENTRAL MONTANA LIKE THE STARS

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'This house is a testament to the community'



Carla Allen and her mom Jeanne Erlandson stand in the living room of Erlandson's new home, which is filled with gifts and donations, including the decor on the walls from friends, family, and neighbors.

Photo by Will Briggs

First home up in Denton following West Wind Fire

By WILL BRIGGS | Reporter

On March 22, Jeanne Erlandson and her daughter, Carla Allen, watched as Erlandson's home was torn down. The demolition process lasted only 11 minutes. Less than three months later, they gathered at the same site for a much happier occasion: the construction of her new home.

Erlandson's house is the first new home built in Denton following the West Wind Fire that burned nearly 50 structures and over 10,000 acres Dec. 1 of last year. The 1,200-square foot, two-bedroom, two-bathroom modular unit features a spacious kitchen with a large island, front deck, luxurious master bath, and walk-in master closet that Erlandson is turning into a sewing room.



Erlandson's new modular home arrived June 17. Crews lifted the house by crane and placed it onto the foundation before completing its assembly.

Photo courtesy of Carla Allen

See Denton | Page 5

Ranching groups to appeal BLM's approval of bison grazing proposal

By DEB HILL | Reporter

It didn't take long for ranching groups to push back against a proposal to change grazing leases from cattle to bison on BLM land in Phillips County.

On July 28 the BLM issued a decision on seven grazing allotments, a total of 63,065 acres, administered by the Malta Field office. The decision approved a request by the American Prairie organization to change from grazing cattle to grazing bison on these allotments.



Karen Budd-Falen

The request dates to 2018, and included changing seasons of use, modifying some fences by adding electric wire, and removing some interior fences.

As part of the process, the BLM held public open houses to solicit comments and extended the comment period to allow for more public input. After receiving thousands of comments, both pro and con, the BLM issued a decision: allow the AP's proposed actions, or a combination of AP proposed and current management practices, meaning bison could be grazed under the permit system, and the season of grazing would be modified.

The decision drew fire immediately from those who have opposed the idea of bison grazing since the beginning.

"To say we are disappointed with the final decision would be an understatement. Ranchers have worked diligently for over a century caring for the public land livestock graze. Ranchers are held to the highest standards by federal land agencies in the areas of range management, range monitoring, range improvements, and processes within the BLM's grazing regulations, yet when concerns were raised regarding these areas in comments and protests, BLM did not acknowledge these concerns," said Montana Stockgrowers President Jim Steinbeisser.

According to Winifred area rancher Laura Boyce, a member of the Save the Cowboy group, that group has joined with the Stockgrowers and others to hire attorney Karen Budd-Falen of the Budd-Falen Law Offices in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Budd-Falen said she will file an appeal of the BLM's decision as well as a request for a stay. If granted, the request for a stay means the BLM cannot implement the changes until the appeal has been ruled on.

See BLM | Page 5

'Modern barracks' planned for missile worker housing in Lewistown

By DEB HILL | Reporter

"Nondescript" and "resembling modern barracks" are terms used by the U.S. Air Force to describe the housing to be built in Lewistown for workers on the project to decommission Minute Man III missiles and replace them with the new Sentinel missile system.

At the end of July the Air Force presented an overview of the project, including what the community might expect from being designated a workforce hub. There are only two workforce hubs planned for the Montana portion of the project. The two workforce hubs for Montana missile workers will be located in Lewistown and Great Falls.

At a July 28 community meeting held during the fair, contractors working on the Environmental Impact Statement answered general questions about how the project might affect Central Montana. Those seeking detailed information were referred to the draft EIS document.

The EIS covers a wide range of potential impacts from

the Sentinel project, including effects on air quality, water, biology and visual resources (how things look; the viewshed). According to the document, the workforce housing has the potential to impact visual resources at the highest level, VM 4, in the short term.

While the exact site for Lewistown's worker housing has not yet been decided, design details are emerging. The Air Force is seeking a 50-60 acre site located in a developed area of the city and near existing infrastructure. According to the EIS, the Air Force plans to coordinate fully with city and county officials and comply with all planning and zoning requirements.

As described in the report, the workforce hub includes a self-contained site with a residential area, a common area and an office/training area.

The residential area is made up of multiple three-story dormitories housing up to 3,000 single-person dorm rooms.



An artist's rendition from the draft Environmental Impact Statement shows how Sentinel worker housing and communal facilities for up to 3,000 workers might look. An Air Force spokesperson emphasized this drawing is only conceptual; the actual design might look considerably different.

Image courtesy of U.S. Air Force

See Barracks | Page 5

Ken Overcast
Performs at 5:30!

Montana's Longest Table

A FARM-TO-TABLE CELEBRATION DINNER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20TH, CORNER OF 2ND AND MAIN, DOWNTOWN LEWISTOWN

Adults: \$10, Youth 3-12: \$5, 2 & under: free || Doors Open-5:00pm, Entertainment-5:30pm, Dinner-6:00pm

TICKETS: MONTANASLONGESTTABLE.COM, LEWISTOWN ART CENTER & MSU EXTENSION OFFICE



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