

# Program converting wind into power, educational experience

June 2, 2010 | Valierian, The (MT) Author: Hayli Thompson| Section: News| 407 Words OpenURL Link

Valier Public School has joined an elite group of rural schools in the renewable energy crusade with a wind turbine project. Wind For Schools is a program involving 11 states and is currently in its third year in Montana.

"The program is designed for rural communities to expose students and the community to a working example of wind energy," explained Sean Micken, Montana's State Facilitator.

In the three years of existence, Valier marks the program's 11th school to receive a turbine,

The 45-foot tower was erected just west of the football field last week. It will be hooked up to run the scoreboard and the power to the concession stand using what Micken refers to as a "piggy bank."

Micken explained, "When the wind is blowing, the energy it produces will be stored until the scoreboard and concession stand are used."

Micken, along with MSU interns Nate Cox and Phil Johnson, spent the day in Valier constructing and placing the turbine and showing several classes just how it all works.

"The great thing about this program is there is such a wide variety of curriculum. K-12 students will have the opportunity to learn about electric and kinetic energy, and aerodynamics. It can be geared toward science or math and at several different levels," added Micken.

The program also offers a professional workshop for teachers to help introduce the new curriculum.

According to Micken, "Valier is a great example of why a small turbine like this is so important. This area will be impacted by wind energy with the big wind farm just north of town." He continued, "It is a great chance for people in town to relate to a project that is up and working just over the hill," referring to NaturEner USA's Glacier Wind Farm project.

Schools must be located in an area with wind to qualify for the program. An annual average of 10 mph to be exact. The average wind speed for Valier is 14 mph at 100 feet and 12 mph at 45 feet.

The funding for this project started with consumers' power bills.

"Every power bill statement has a Universal System Benefits (USB) Fund. This small amount from every payment goes to the construction, education, efficiency and renewable energy projects," said Micken. "I wrote a grant to get funding for six schools to receive a turbine this year from those funds."

So as the wind blows through Valier, area residents can now look at the positive benefits the students and community are receiving.

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# Pioneer Press recaps some of 2009's top news stories

January 6, 2010 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: Linda Bruch | Section: News | 2157 Words OpenURL Link

The year was 2009. It was a busy year, both nationally and locally.

At the beginning of the year, we saw a new United States President take office. We marveled at the miracle work of a pilot who landed a passenger jet on the Hudson River, saving all the passengers and crew aboard. We watched the slow progress our nation made throughout the year to heal the wounds of previous financial stresses.

Another strain of flu, H1N1, was introduced and new vaccines made their way across the country, hoping to ward off an epidemic. The King of Pop, Michael Jackson, saw his amazing career come to an end way too soon when he died this year. And Tiger Woods saw his career possibly come to an end too, but for a whole different set of circumstances.

Here at home we saw some new and exciting things happen too. While the list of newsworthy items from 2009 could go on and on, we decided to pick out a few pieces that were worth a moment or two of reflection. Sit back, relax, read and remember.

#### January

The winter of 2008 ended with a bang and continued rolling and snowing right on into 2009. Winter weather advisories piled up as did the snow. Inches upon inches were recorded and drifts measured feet upon feet.

Tony Sitzmann took office this month beginning his term as one of three Glacier County Commissioners. He replaced outgoing commissioner John Ray.

Dr. Steven Hjartarson returned to Cut Bank taking over the veterinary practice at Northern Veterinary Clinic. Dr. Gary Cassel had previously closed the doors of the clinic in November of 2008.

Dan and Pam Whitted also returned to Cut Bank reopening the funeral home they originally owned in 2005. They sold Whitted Funeral Chapel in 2006, but now, in 2009, they are back in business in Cut Bank and happy to be here, they said.

Tom Shock was elected as President of the Cut Bank City Council. JW Eaton held the position in 2008.

## **February**

The first baby of 2009 was born on Feb. 5 at Northern Rockies Medical Center. Thomas George Freeland Eubanks was the first healthy new baby of 2009. Proud parents are Sabrina Pendleton and Marvin Eubanks.

A fundraiser for Randy Matz, suffering from Multiple System Atrophy, showed the generosity of this amazing community. Over 400 people attended the fundraiser and over \$40,000 was collected to help offset the tremendous medical costs the Matz's had incurred.

Bill Abernathy and Marion Culleton were selected as the Parkview Senior Center's Valentine King and Queen during the center's Valentine Day celebration.

The Cut Bank Wolves boys basketball team took second at the District 1B tournament, losing to Fairfield in the championship game. The Lady Wolves basketball team saw their season end at the same tournament, losing to

Shelby and Cascade.

#### March

Mayor Joni Stewart announced she would be resigning her position in April, citing it was time to put her health and family first.

Cut Bank saw a new business open its doors this month. The Recoup Consignment, a second-hand store, located at 421 1st Street NW in the old Cut Bank Floral and Greenhouse location, is the place to sell or buy second hand "treasures."

Tanya Harper, owner of the Pioneer Bar and TNT Casino, received the Montana Brown-Forman Retailer of the Year award during a national convention held in Las Vegas this month.

Clayton Vermulm and Sammy Jo Bird were crowned Cut Bank High School's 2009 Prom King and Queen.

#### April

The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce held their annual banquet this month. Ticket sales were the highest ever recorded, topping out at over \$10,000. This year's speaker was Klaus Obel of NaturEner. Mike Bruch received the Outstanding Citizen of the Year award.

Danielle Wineman was named the 2010 Cut Bank Junior Miss. She is the daughter of Mike Wineman and Kimberley Butterworth. She received over \$1,200 in scholarships.

Doug Embody was appointed Cut Bank's interim mayor by a 3-0 vote of the Cut Bank City Council. Embody fills the unexpired term of Joni Stewart who announced she would be resigning April 25. Embody begins his work as mayor on April 26.

Montana Storytelling Roundup came to town once again this year. A talented lineup of musicians and storytellers entertained audiences throughout the weekend.

The calendar said spring should have sprung, but Mother Nature had other ideas as she provided Cut Bank residents with one more blast of winter.

### May

The 6th annual Block Party fundraiser was a hit once again this year as retailers and residents gathered for the weeklong celebration. The event culminated with an anniversary party held in honor of Billman's, who have been serving the area for 30 years. Over \$30,000 was raised at the block party, which will go towards the purchase of a C-Arm for the surgery room at NRMC.

The Cut Bank Volunteer Fire Department held their annual Fireman's Fling fundraiser this month. Proceeds from the event went towards the purchase of new fireman's gear, some of which is over 20 years old.

Cut Bank High School graduated 48 seniors this year, many of them being awarded scholarship monies which amounted to over \$191,000.

The new Glacier County Detention Facility opened this month, transferring prisoners and staff from the old facility to the new, state-of-the-art, more modern facility.

Another new business, the art studio, opened this month here in Cut Bank. Owners Dan and Sherry North will be offering a variety of art classes and will be displaying work from Dan and other artists in their studio.

The Cut Bank Wolves boys' tennis team captured their eighth straight state title this year. That amazing accomplishment put them into the MHSA record books where they have sole honor to that claim.

June

A late, or very early, snowstorm surprised Cut Bank residents early this month. Not only did the snowfall, but temperatures did as well, dropping out of the 60s and 70s into the 30s and 40s.

Josephine McDermott was named Parkview Senior Center's 2009 Senior of the Year. This retired schoolteacher, who is 95 years old, was honored to be this year's recipient.

It was announced that Phase 4A of the City of Cut Bank Water Distribution Project would be underway in a few weeks. Local residents could expect detours on Main Street, as that is where the bulk of the work from this phase will take place.

David and Adele Coe took over as the new owners of what was Bon Appetit Family Cafe. They have renamed the restaurant the Cut Bank Cafe. Along with the new name, they have made some changes to the menu as well.

July

Cut Bank's Lewis and Clark Festival was a resounding hit again this summer. A few new events were on tap as well as a host of old favorites. The weekend festivities, as usual, were very well attended.

Ray Christiaens became the new owner of Dye, Tavary and Judge, purchasing the business from Laurie Elhard.

The historic SP4449 steam locomotive went through Cut Bank this month on its way to the 2009 Train Festival in Owosso, Mich. The Southern Pacific locomotive was built in May of 1941.

Mike Reynolds was named the National Coach of the Year for high school girls cross-county during the national convention in Minneapolis. He has coached the girls' cross-country for 36 years and coached the boys since the program began in the late 1960s.

The 4-County Marias Fair arrived in Shelby for its 68th year, bringing fun and food for the entire family. The 4-H activities are always big at the fair and that was true this year too. Over \$250,000 was paid by auction bidders for steers, hogs and lambs.

Nate Kavanagh's FCCLA project won him a gold medal at the national FCCLA convention held in Nashville. Kavanagh, who will be a junior at Cut Bank High School in 2009, is the son of Brian and LeAnne Kavanagh. He is one of only two Cut Bank High School students to ever win a gold medal at this national competition.

# August

Hi-Line Relay for Life was in Cut Bank at the beginning of this month. Teams walked or ran around the track for the entire 12 hours this event was underway. Over \$33,000 was raised for the American Cancer Society.

Shakespeare in the Park performed in Cut Bank on Aug. 5, entertaining the summer evening crowd with the play The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Montana Fun Weekend took to the skies and to the streets and parking lots this August. Sadly, the nasty weather Cut Bank received over that particular weekend put a damper on a number of the activities. However, those who attended had a good time viewing vintage cars and airplanes.

Cut Bank Schools began gearing up for the 2009-2010 school year once again. This year students will enjoy an early-out on Fridays when classes conclude at 2:30 p.m.

Cut Bank's Danielle Wineman was named the Montana Junior Miss of 2010. She earned over \$2,000 in scholarships and will compete in the national finals in June of 2010. Wineman is the daughter of Mike Wineman and Kimberley Butterworth.

#### September

School doors opened on Sept. 2 for all students enrolled at Cut Bank Schools. Enrollment was up by 17 students.

Glacier Community Health Center's Board voted to suspend their OB program, the only one offered in Cut Bank, on Oct. 1. Both GCHC and NRMC began working on a solution.

Little Bear Child Care, a new child care facility, is set to open for business this month. According to owners Robert and Beth Carette, the facility will take children from infant to 12 years of age. Little Bear is located in the old Jean's School of Dance building at 101 S. Central Avenue.

Town Pump announced they would begin work on the remodel and expansion of the east end Town Pump within a few weeks. The new Town Pump will span the area where the old Point Drive-Inn, Point Motel and old east end Town Pump currently sit.

Chelsey Schwindt and Craig Ollinger were crowned Cut Bank High School's 2009 Homecoming Queen and King. The Cut Bank Wolves football team beat Superior in the homecoming game 17-0.

#### October

On Oct. 1, all bars, casinos and taverns in Montana complied with the Montana Clean Indoor Act, meaning they could no longer allow smoking inside their doors. Businesses not affected by this law are those found on the state's Indian Reservations.

The Rockies Healthcare Foundation held an Octoberfest fundraiser entitled Cold Hard Cash. The group Cold Hard Cash entertained the crowd with Johnny Cash songs.

Harlem Ambassadors, a United States touring basketball team, brought a different style of basketball to Cut Bank. Their Harlem Globetrotters type of play was a fundraiser sponsored by the Park Board with proceeds going to develop more programs at the Civic Center and swimming pool.

Jeff Kraft was hired as the City of Cut Bank's new Chief of Police. Kraft fills the vacancy created by Jason Abbott. He will begin his new position on Nov. 16.

## November

Nov. 7 was officially declared Ernie Stomsvik Day in Cut Bank. Ernie turned 100 years old this month and the entire community was invited to attend his birthday celebration.

Doug Embody was voted in as mayor of Cut Bank during the November election. Bill McCauley and Timothy Curtiss were also elected by the voters to fill the alderman positions.

The Cut Bank Christmas Bazaar, a holiday favorite sponsored in the past by the Women of Today, was put back on the November calendar thanks to the Montana Junior Miss organization. The Bazaar was, as in year's past, another huge success.

A blade failure at the Glacier Wind Farm halted wind energy production for a few days as repairs were made. High winds in the area were responsible for the damage to the faulty blade.

The Festival of Lights Parade and Social lit up the streets of Cut Bank this month, putting everyone in the holiday spirit.

St. Paul Lutheran Church held their second annual Thanksgiving Day dinner, inviting anyone from the community or beyond to join in the food and fellowship.

#### December

Thanks to the Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce, NRMC Auxiliary and community sponsors, the Festival of Trees and Keys "played" once again this month. The event featured a silent auction of beautifully decorated Christmas trees and a piano-comedy team. Close to \$16,000 was raised during the evening of fun.

Cut Bank residents showed their Christmas spirit in a big way by donating to holiday programs. This season Toys for Tots, Love Package, Glacier Care Center's Letters to Santa, Wishing Well's Take 5 and Remember and the Harvest Food Pantry, were a few of the organizations that benefited from the amazing generosity of this community.

Christmas music rang out loud and clear again this year as the people of Cut Bank put their voices together for the Community Christmas Carol Sing. Up to 100 people joined in the community sing-along.

Dr. Darrel Stock joined the team at NRMC. He will be putting his medical credentials to work at the Northern Rockies Rural Health Clinic, Glacier Care Center and NRMC.

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# Promoter takes one last look at top Shelby and Toole County news makers from 2009

January 6, 2010 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Melanie Hoggan | Section: News | 1217 Words OpenURL Link

2009 was definitely a year for news makers.

On a national level, there was the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama. Sonya Sotomeyer was the first Hispanic woman appointed to the Supreme Court, and Congress passed an unprecedented \$825 billion stimulus package designed to jumpstart the economy. Montana's U.S. Senator Max Baucus further carved out his national reputation as he introduced health care legislation for a national healthcare policy that continues to cause controversy throughout the nation.

In Montana, groundbreaking news included the full implementation of the Clean Indoor Air Act, a visit to the state by President Obama, continued development of alternative energy options – most notably wind energy, and in environmental headlines, wolves in Montana and Idaho came off the endangered species list.

Closer to home in Toole County, the completion of NaturEner's Glacier Wind Project and the start of its Rimrock Project put Toole and Glacier Counties on the map and final approval was given for the long-awaited Montana Alberta Tie Limited transmission line. More local highlights are recapped below.

## January

Dan and Pam Whitted purchased the Hi-Line Funeral Home in Cut Bank and continue to support the needs of families across the Hi-Line in estate and funeral planning.

After entering a guilty plea, Clyde Cosner was sentenced to 80 years in prison with half the term suspended for the murder of James Lee Jardine. Jardine died of either assault or exposure after he was assaulted and left in a coulee just east of Shelby.

Under the leadership of former Chamber Executive Director, Anne Thompson, the annual Shelby Chamber of Commerce Banquet was a success, featuring entertainer Eric 'Fingers' Ray.

## February

The year 2009 brought a historic centennial to many area families including the Wigens and Benjamin families as they celebrated their ancestors settling in the area in 1909.

The Town Pump food bank campaign raised a record \$1.45 million with contributions going to our own Sagebrush Food Pantry.

Coach Brian Hayes retired as the head wrestling coach after 19 years on the job developing wrestlers and young men with a work ethic to last their lives.

Brice Grotbo had the unique opportunity to serve for one week as a Senate Page for the Montana State Senate in Helena.

Denton Moberly received the gift of mobility by a surprise visit from the Scooter Store, which provided him with a new state-of-the-art scooter at no cost to his family. Moberly continued to spend the year recovering from injuries sustained during a poisoning incident while on duty as a Border Patrol Agent.

#### March

Montana State Legislators were busy determining where the state's share of federal stimulus money would go. Money has continued to find its way to projects in counties and cities throughout the state, including Toole County and the City of Shelby.

International relief agency, Convoy of Hope, made a stop in Shelby to pick up 100,000 pounds of seeds that were donated anonymously by a Hi-Line farmer. Big Sky Seeds generously agreed to donate the cost of cleaning and packaging the seeds which were then shipped and distributed in Haiti, El Salvador, and other third world countries.

March found Marias Medical Center and Montana Public Employees Union on the verge of a strike due to a bitter wage dispute. The dispute centered on a \$2 an hour increase that non-hospital county employees received.

Toole County Transit Authority introduced a new bus to its operation expanding free transportation options to area residents traveling both north and south.

#### April

Marias Medical Center held its annual Black Tie Blue Jeans affair with the Port Polson Players and their tunes from the 1950's.

The wage dispute between Marias Medical Center and Montana Public Employees Union is settled after intense negotiations, a vote to strike, and multiple filings of unfair labor practices suits thus avoiding a strike.

NaturEner officials hosted a public information meeting where they presented plans for their completion of the second phase of the Glacier Wind Project along with updates about the Rimrock Project.

## May

The third annual Cinco De Mayor event was a success in raising necessary funds to beautify Main Street during the summer tourism months with flower planters and flags throughout the business district.

The "new" Sports Club opened on Main Street with owners Matt Benjamin and Karen Manesco spicing up the menu.

The community said goodbye to 17-year-old Bret Wanken after a tragic accidental shooting. A memorial fund was established in his name to support one of his loves, 4-H.

## June

Shelby Gas Association and Marias River Electric rejected an offer from Energy West Resources to purchase the assets of Shelby Gas.

Teaching legend Larry Fauque retired from North Toole County High School after his 45-year career as the NTCHS science teacher. Students, faculty, and the community honored him at an open house gathering held in North Toole County.

Teri Iverson won the first "Citizen of the Year Award" from North Toole County at the Sunburst Gala Days for her many contributions to the Sunburst community.

#### July

Marias Museum of History and Art held its first event called Stakin' a Claim at the newly completed Museum Annex building. Artisans from Great Falls, Wyoming, and surrounding areas came to demonstrate old time blacksmithing, carving, and skills necessary during the homesteading era.

The historic SP 4449 Daylight Steam Locomotive made a stop in Shelby. Several local couples made the historic ride and shared their experiences with our readers.

The Marias Fair was held with another year of "Tough Enough for Pink," plenty of exhibits, the rodeo, rides, fun and food.

#### August

The Shelby Kiwanis Club hosted their annual pancake breakfast, raising funds for the many local causes they support, including a new robotics program for students in the RECCS program.

The Civic Center hosted its annual Fun Run with many participants and prizes including a category for the youngest runners.

The Bret Wanken Memorial Fund raised over \$13,000 for the 4-H program some of which will go towards improvements at the Marias Fairgrounds.

## September

The Champions Park Committee unveiled new T-shirts to raise money for the park.

Shelby's Safe Routes to Schools received national praise and attention as sidewalks were completed in corridors leading to the schools.

Congressman Dennis Rehberg secured \$200,000 in federal funding for revitalization of Shelby's downtown business district.

# October

Shelby native Janet Skeslien Charles kicked off her international book signing tour of her first novel, Moonlight in Odessa, at the Prairie Peddler.

The Prairie Peddler and owners Cindy Rogers and Bridget Larson celebrated 20 years on Main Street.

Marias Medical Center brought Dr. Kathie Voight on board to add to their physician's staff.

### November

The Veterans Day Pancake Dinner held in Galata was again successful in raising funds for local causes.

Dea Biancarelli was selected to travel to New York to participate in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.

MATL officials hosted a celebration in nearby Great Falls that included guest speaker Governor Brian Schweitzer. The event commemorated the beginning of construction for the 214-mile transmission line.

## December

The Main Street Stroll in Sunburst and Shelby beat the frigid temperatures and brought many out for the festivities of visits with Santa, hay rides, and local shopping.

The Second Annual Community Christmas Concert raised funds for the Toole County Ministerial Association while the Marias Museum of History Art sponsored 'A Prairie Christmas' and hosted several hundred attendees with temperatures in the negative twenties.

Local artist Rhonda Wiegand unveiled her newest art piece celebrating her homesteading heritage called 'Millie, Billie, Queenie, Jim and Dad."

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# Glacier Wind Farm up and running after blade failure

November 11, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 430 Words OpenURL Link

Blade failure-that's the official term for what two of the NaturEner USA Glacier Wind Farm II turbines experienced during high winds on Oct. 27.

According to Ken Young, NaturEner's Director of Asset Management, the quality team and engineers from Acciona Windpower, the turbine manufacturer, are investigating the incident. There were no injuries from the incident and no other damages reported.

Young said the turbines were immediately "immobilized" and Acciona experts were called in to review the blades. "It appears to be a defect in the blades, not the towers," said Young. As a precaution, 17 other turbines with blades from the same manufacturer's lot number were taken "off line" and checked, added Young.

The two blade failures occurred within about six hours of each other on Oct. 27, which resulted in the wind farm ceasing operation. Once Acciona crews were able to determine the failures were isolated to Glacier Wind Farm II, turbines in Glacier Wind Farm I were put back into operation on Oct. 28. Fifty of the 69 turbines from Glacier Wind Farm II were placed back into operation on Oct. 29.

Wind speeds were recorded at 18 meters per second, or roughly 40 mph, when the failure occurred. The turbines are designed to "cut out" when wind speeds hit 55 mph, said Young. Conditions at the time of the failure were well within the design capability of the wind turbines.

"They're doing everything they can," said Young, referring to Acciona's efforts to bring in two replacement blades and inspect the 17 blades with the same manufacturing lot number. "They have an aggressive schedule and there is no shortage of resources to get this done," he added.

On Tuesday, Young said 10 of the 19 turbines were returned to service on Monday, Nov. 9, and he expected to have seven more back in service yesterday. "This appears to be isolated to the two blade sets that failed and we should have the entire wind park back online in a matter of weeks," he added.

Young said the blades are en route from North Dakota and Arkansas and he believes the crane to install the blades will be coming from Billings. The blades, which were manufactured by LM Glasfiber in Little Rock, Ark., have a two-year warranty. Officials from LM Glasfiber are also onsite at the wind park, confirmed Young.

"The reality of it is there was a blade failure, which is a rare thing, and there is an investigation as to why it occurred. Safety concerns have been addressed and Acciona is exercising prudence to reduce the possibility of future issues," explained Young.

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# Glacier Wind Farm back in operation, two new blade sets on their way

November 11, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 431 Words OpenURL Link

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# Glacier & Toole Counties home to state's largest wind energy project

October 28, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 601 Words OpenURL Link

Last week was a week of good news for NaturEner USA, Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd., the State of Montana and Glacier and Toole Counties.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer and Jose Maria Sanchez Seara, NaturEner USA's Chief Executive Officer, dedicated the second phase of the Glacier Wind Farm on Wednesday, Oct. 21. The Glacier Wind Farm, which is located in Glacier and Toole Counties, is the largest wind energy project in Montana.

"This wind farm is one of the reasons Montana is on the map as a leader in wind energy development," said Gov. Schweitzer. "With a total of 210 megawatts, this is a significant contribution of clean and green, domestic energy to our region."

San Diego Gas and Electric has contracted with NaturEner to purchase some of the energy produced by the project's 140 turbines.

During the dedication ceremony, Ken Young, NaturEner's Director of Asset Management, provided a brief history of the project. At the "land owner and local officials appreciation dinner" later that evening, Young expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the project.

He said he has worked on projects in Texas and New York, but working in Montana has been an enjoyable experience. He described the area landowners as "good stewards" of the land, adding they are a "good fit" for NaturEner.

Seara recalled his first trip to Montana three years ago to review the area, which now boasts 140 turbines and a \$500 million investment by his company. "I know, I wrote the checks," he grinned. He, too, thanked the land owners involved in the Glacier Wind Farm project, describing them as "one of our company's most valuable assets."

Gov. Schweitzer pointed out it won't be long until the Glacier Wind Farm will be surpassed by another NaturEner wind farm, the Rim Rock Project, which is scheduled for construction 25 miles due north of the Glacier Wind Farm. NaturEner's projected investment in the 206-turbine wind farm is \$800 million. At 309 megawatts, the Rim Rock Wind Farm will be one of the largest in the Northwest and will create more than 500 construction jobs.

The Supreme Court of Canada, on Thursday, Oct. 22, dismissed the final appeal by an Alberta landowner group, which has been opposed to the construction of the \$213 million Montana Albert Tie Ltd. (MATL) transmission line. With the Canadian high court's decision, all avenues for legal challenges and appeals have been exhausted and construction of the transmission line and NaturEner's Rim Rock Wind Farm can begin.

"We are extremely satisfied with the decision from the Supreme Court of Canada," said Bob Williams, vice-president Regulatory, Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. "This was the last remaining road block and we plan to start construction as soon as possible."

The power line project has undergone a complex, comprehensive and lengthy regulatory approval process taking almost four years including public hearings, environmental assessments and stakeholder engagement at multiple levels in both Canada and the United States. "We will continue to engage with all the landowners, listen to their concerns and negotiate fair compensation for the use of their land," said Williams. "We are committed to being a good neighbor."

The 230-kilovolt line will run from Lethbridge, Alberta to Great Falls and will be capable of moving 300 megawatts of power either north to south or south to north. Construction of the line provides a more reliable supply of electricity for southern Alberta and northern Montana and accesses the power grid for almost \$1 billion in renewable wind power projects in the USA.

In dismissing the appeal, the Canadian Supreme Court also awarded legal costs to Montana Alberta Tie Ltd., NaturEner Energy Canada Inc. and NaturEner USA, LLC.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'Glacier & Toole Counties home to state's largest wind energy project', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 28 Oct 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C1E4F745838">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C1E4F745838</a>



# Glacier Wind Farm is state's biggest wind energy project

October 28, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh| Section: News | 601 Words OpenURL Link

Last week was a week of good news for NaturEner USA, Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd., the State of Montana and Glacier and Toole Counties.

Gov. Brian Schweitzer and Jose Maria Sanchez Seara, NaturEner USA's Chief Executive Officer, dedicated the second phase of the Glacier Wind Farm on Wednesday, Oct. 21. The Glacier Wind Farm, which is located in Glacier and Toole Counties, is the largest wind energy project in Montana.

"This wind farm is one of the reasons Montana is on the map as a leader in wind energy development," said Gov. Schweitzer. "With a total of 210 megawatts, this is a significant contribution of clean and green, domestic energy to our region."

San Diego Gas and Electric has contracted with NaturEner to purchase some of the energy produced by the project's 140 turbines.

During the dedication ceremony, Ken Young, NaturEner's Director of Asset Management, provided a brief history of the project. At the "land owner and local officials appreciation dinner" later that evening, Young expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the project.

He said he has worked on projects in Texas and New York, but working in Montana has been an enjoyable experience. He described the area landowners as "good stewards" of the land, adding they are a "good fit" for NaturEner.

Seara recalled his first trip to Montana three years ago to review the area, which now boasts 140 turbines and a \$500 million investment by his company. "I know, I wrote the checks," he grinned. He, too, thanked the land owners involved in the Glacier Wind Farm project, describing them as "one of our company's most valuable assets."

Gov. Schweitzer pointed out it won't be long until the Glacier Wind Farm will be surpassed by another NaturEner wind farm, the Rim Rock Project, which is scheduled for construction 25 miles due north of the Glacier Wind Farm. NaturEner's projected investment in the 206-turbine wind farm is \$800 million. At 309 megawatts, the Rim Rock Wind Farm will be one of the largest in the Northwest and will create more than 500 construction jobs.

The Supreme Court of Canada, on Thursday, Oct. 22, dismissed the final appeal by an Alberta landowner group, which has been opposed to the construction of the \$213 million Montana Albert Tie Ltd. (MATL) transmission line. With the Canadian high court's decision, all avenues for legal challenges and appeals have been exhausted and construction of the transmission line and NaturEner's Rim Rock Wind Farm can begin.

"We are extremely satisfied with the decision from the Supreme Court of Canada," said Bob Williams, vice-president Regulatory, Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. "This was the last remaining road block and we plan to start construction as soon as possible."

The power line project has undergone a complex, comprehensive and lengthy regulatory approval process taking almost four years including public hearings, environmental assessments and stakeholder engagement at multiple levels in both Canada and the United States. "We will continue to engage with all the landowners, listen to their concerns and negotiate fair compensation for the use of their land," said Williams. "We are committed to being a good neighbor."

The 230-kilovolt line will run from Lethbridge, Alberta to Great Falls and will be capable of moving 300 megawatts of power either north to south or south to north. Construction of the line provides a more reliable supply of electricity for southern Alberta and northern Montana and accesses the power grid for almost \$1 billion in renewable wind power projects in the USA.

In dismissing the appeal, the Canadian Supreme Court also awarded legal costs to Montana Alberta Tie Ltd., NaturEner Energy Canada Inc. and NaturEner USA, LLC.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'Glacier Wind Farm is state's biggest wind energy project', *Shelby Promoter* (online), 28 Oct 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F6DF621BA20">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F6DF621BA20</a>



# Governor dedicates Phase 2 of state's largest wind project

October 27, 2009 | Sidney Herald (MT) Section: News - Montana | 249 Words

OpenURL Link

Gov. Brian Schweitzer along with NaturEner company officials dedicated the second phase of the Glacier Wind Farm last week

Phase 2, which is now online, is a total of 103.5 megawatts, combined with Phase I for a total of 210 megawatts. The Glacier Wind Farm is Montana's largest wind energy project.

"This wind farm is one of the reasons Montana is on the map as a leader in wind energy development," Schweitzer said. "With a total of 210 megawatts this is a significant contribution of clean and green, domestic energy to our region."

NaturEner USA began construction of the Glacier Wind Farm in 2008 near Shelby to be built in two phases. Gov. Schweitzer spoke at the official ground breaking of the first phase on July 17, 2008, which went online at the end of October 2008. Located in the hills between Cut Bank and Shelby, the first phase generates 106.5 MW.

NaturEner is already planning another large wind farm, a deal cemented during the Governor's trip to Spain in September. The Rim Rock project is about 25 miles due north of the Glacier project. Rim Rock, with an investment of \$800 million, will include an additional 206 turbines – or 309 megawatts – and will be one of the largest wind projects in the Northwest. Construction of this project will coincide with that of the Montana Alberta Tie transmission line.

Glacier Wind Farm created more than 350 construction jobs. It is estimated the Rim Rock project will create more than 500 construction jobs.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

'Governor dedicates Phase 2 of states largest wind project', *Sidney Herald* (online), 27 Oct 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12D7BCE7CE343B00">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12D7BCE7CE343B00</a>



# Glacier Wind Farm near Shelby grows to 210 megawatts

October 22, 2009 | Billings Gazette, The (MT) Section: State and Regional | 102 Words OpenURL Link

HELENA - The Glacier Wind Farm in north-central Montana has almost doubled its power generating capacity to 210 megawatts under a recent expansion.

Representatives of NaturEner, the Spanish company that developed the wind farm, joined Gov. Brian Schweitzer on Wednesday to dedicate the completion of the project - the state's largest wind energy development to date.

In September, NaturEner announced it would build another wind farm 25 miles north of the Glacier site that will generate an additional 309 megawatts of electricity.

That project is being built to coincide with construction of a new transmission between Montana and Canada - the Montana Alberta Tie line.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

'Glacier Wind Farm near Shelby grows to 210 megawatts', *Billings Gazette, The* (online), 22 Oct 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12D816E9437F9970">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12D816E9437F9970</a>



## Pioneer Press staff wins awards in state contest

July 1, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 400 Words

OpenURL Link

The Cut Bank Pioneer Press newspaper staff brought home 18 awards from the annual Montana Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest.

Competing in the second largest weekly division, which includes newspapers from around the state whose circulation is 1,500 to 2,999, your hometown newspaper's staff earned awards for reporting, photography and advertising in 16 different categories.

The contest was judged by the North Dakota Newspaper Association. The awards were presented June 20 at the 124th annual convention of the Montana Newspaper Association in Kalispell.

A listing of the awards won by the Cut Bank Pioneer Press staff appears below:

Special Awards

Best Freedom of Information Effort: LeAnne Kavanagh, First Place. (Coverage of county government issues.) Judge's comment: "Your tenacity should be applauded by your readers."

Community Service: Second Place. (Wading Pool Challenge series.) Judge's comment: "Your top notch coverage of the wading pool drive showed that this paper cared about its community, young and old alike."

General Excellence in Advertising: Honorable Mention.

Special Section: Discover Cut Bank magazine, Third Place.

**Photography** 

Best Spot News Photo: Brian Kavanagh, First Place. (Photo of demolition of grain elevator.) Judge's comment: "Wow! The birds, the dust, the men running, this photo shows incredible action. Congratulations."

Best Outdoors or Nature Photo: LeAnne Kavanagh, First Place. (Photo of butterfly on flower.) Judge's comment: "Exquisite colors to go with good timing. What an outstanding summer photograph."

Best Sports Picture: LeAnne Kavanagh, Second Place. (Wolves boys basketball shot.) Judge's comment: "Great shot. Seems to be an extra couple of hands in the picture. Close and clear."

Jonna Tafelmeyer, Third Place. (Wolves wrestling photo.) Judge's comment: "I like the idea of a long narrow picture showing the whole bodies."

Best Feature Picture: LeAnne Kavanagh, both Second Place and Third Place. Kavanagh's portrait shot of veteran Don Goldrick at the Veteran's Day event placed second. Her shot of the smiling and screaming Winkowitsch twins sitting with the Stockman Bank Easter Bunny placed third.

Writing Awards

Best Business/Economy or Technology Reporting: LeAnne Kavanagh, First Place. (Stories on the Glacier Wind Farm.)

Best Government Reporting: LeAnne Kavanagh, Third Place. (County and city government stories.)

Best In-Depth Investigative Reporting: LeAnne Kavanagh, Honorable Mention. (Stories on the Montana Alberta Transmission Line.)

Best Personality Feature Story: LeAnne Kavanagh, Honorable Mention. (Celebrating the Life of Kelly Grubb.)

Best Front Page: Honorable Mention.

Best Editorial Page: Honorable Mention.

Best Sports Page: Third Place.

Best Headline Writing: Third Place.

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Staff Writer, 'Pioneer Press staff wins awards in state contest', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 1 Jul 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C18DE5390A8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C18DE5390A8</a>



# Final appeal denied: MATL slated to begin construction this fall

May 13, 2009 | Glacier Reporter (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh| Section: News | 1208 Words OpenURL Link

It has been five long years since area economic development groups and government agencies in the Golden Triangle area and at the state and national level first spoke out in support of the proposed 214-mile, 230-KW Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) transmission line.

Last week, action by the Alberta Court of Appeal dismissing the last remaining appeal of Canadian landowners, appears to have cleared the way for MATL officials to finally begin construction. The Alberta Court of Appeal's Decision 167 was officially released on Tuesday, May 5.

"MATL is pleased with the Court of Appeal decision, however our work isn't done yet," said Bob Williams, MATL Vice President, Regulatory. "MATL will continue to listen to and work with our landowner neighbors as we focus on acquiring the remaining Rights of Way and begin the construction phase." Williams said MATL hopes to break ground by this fall and anticipates the construction phase will take about 12 months.

During this phase of the project, a fact sheet provided by Williams predicts "in excess of \$15 million in wages and benefits" will be paid, with about two-thirds of those hired earning an hourly wage of \$20 to \$26 per hour.

"The entire 300 MW of capacity in both directions has been awarded to wind energy developers in Montana," continued Williams. All of the 300 MW north bound capacity has been awarded to NaturEner USA and NaturEner Canada. The 300 MW of the southbound capacity will be split between Invenergy Wind Montana LLC and Wind Hunter LLC. Invenergy has been awarded 180 MW of southbound capacity with the remaining 120 MW of southbound capacity going to Wind Hunter.

While these developers have not disclosed the locations of other potential wind farms, anemometer testing facilities have been observed near the MATL line in Toole. Glacier, Pondera and Teton Counties.

"This is really big news," stated Bill Alexander, Chief Development Officer for NaturEner. "We are very, very pleased with the decision," he continued. "This will be a tremendous benefit for not only the Golden Triangle area but also the State of Montana."

With last week's announcement, Alexander said NaturEner's second wind farm, the Rim Rock Project, will be moving ahead. The construction schedule of the project will depend on how fast the MATL transmission line can be completed and put into service.

The Rim Rock Project is larger than both Phase I and Phase II of NaturEner's Glacier Wind Project combined. The proposed Rim Rock wind farm will be located in northwest Toole and northeast Glacier County and will boast 200 wind turbines. Most of the wind turbines of the Rim Rock project will be located in nearby Toole County, but the "interconnect" station to the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) line will be located in Glacier County.

Alexander anticipates it will take more than one construction season to complete the Rim Rock Project, but NaturEner will "break ground and begin preparing the infrastructure for this wind farm project in hopes of having as much done as possible before the winter of 2010." Alexander said the turbines have already been ordered and are scheduled for delivery next year.

"After several years of development, it is nice to see MATL move forward and to know the line will soon break ground. MATL will bring much needed transmission capacity to our area and will help support the continued development of wind farms in Glacier County," stated Cut Bank Mayor Doug Embody. "The development of wind

energy continues to be a bright spot for our local economy," he added.

"It is certainly great news for the citizens of Glacier County," commented Glacier County Commissioner Michael DesRosier. "The revenues from increasing our tax base with this project will relieve the burden on local property taxpayers to support county infrastructure."

According to DesRosier, Glacier County leaders "stepped out on a limb somewhat with construction on the new jail shortly after building the new nursing home and, although we figured that we were able to build the jail, we felt it would really challenge our budget in the years to come. The wind projects that will result with construction of MATL will provide for a large part the operation of that new jail as well as improve our ability to improve other areas of infrastructure improvement and needed upgrades to county provided services without asking current taxpayers to come up with more."

DesRosier continued, "It is great to see Glacier County benefit from growth in new and emerging technology and our hope is that we can continue to explore and discover new businesses or development that provide not only tax revenue but jobs and expansion of our existing main street businesses. We hope Glacier County will continue to see such opportunities and be able to capitalize on them."

Llew Jones, Republican State Representative from Conrad, and an advocate of wind energy development, was "very pleased that the MATL line has successfully satisfied the appeal process both North and South of the border. Now instead of employing lawyers we can have some good jobs for engineer and construction workers." Jones also sees the line providing a healthy economic boost to the Golden Triangle area. "The MATL line offers the potential for more than a billion dollars worth of development across northcentral Montana."

Toole County Commissioner Allan Underdal agrees. He believes "MATL and wind energy companies have the potential to invest more than \$1 billion in Toole, Glacier and Pondera Counties in the next couple of years. That is extremely positive news for this area at a time when economic news is generally negative."

MATL estimates annual "overall tax revenue for local governments along the route is \$731,525" with Pondera County receiving an additional \$259,742, Glacier County \$236,698, Teton County \$136,857 and Cascade County \$98,227 each year.

No portion of the MATL line will be located in Toole County, but county officials anticipate receiving additional tax revenue from wind farms constructed within the county.

"We are very pleased to see the MATL project move forward," said Shelby Mayor Larry Bonderud, who expects the area will now see "planned wind energy projects move forward. It is these wind projects that will have the long term positive effect on our area. Transmission is the key to wind projects and if this area is going to have more wind projects, transmission lines must continue to be developed," said Bonderud.

"MATL is only a piece of the puzzle," he continued. "People need to understand that an electrical transmission project scheduled for south of Great Falls and in southwestern Montana can have a real positive impact on the ability of companies to develop wind projects in our area."

Pondera County Commissioner Cynthia Johnson, speaking on behalf of her fellow commissioners, stated, "Pondera County is very excited to welcome MATL and the economic benefit the transmission line will mean to our county. As commissioners, we are especially appreciative of the effort made by both the MATL company and the independent property owners to come to a timely agreement regarding routes, right of ways and other negotiations. The MATL line is the first step toward making more renewable energy available to customers on both sides of the border."

Johnson also expressed the commissioners' appreciation to Jones and State Senator Jerry Black "for their roles in facilitating this project."

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LeAnne Kavanagh, 'Final appeal denied: MATL slated to begin construction this fall', *Glacier Reporter* (online), 13 May 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1D555C33F498">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1D555C33F498</a>



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# Wind energy companies urge governor to veto two Senate bills

May 6, 2009 | Independent Record (Helena, MT) Author: KAHRIN DEINES; 05/06/09 | Section: Local | 881 Words OpenURL Link

Montana's leading providers of wind energy are urging the governor to veto two utility-sponsored bills that they argue would destroy state-mandated renewable energy quotas.

Senate Bills 257 and 403 passed the Legislature and await action by Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer. He has until May 11 to sign or veto the bills. If he does neither, they automatically become law.

The companies Invenergy and NaturEner USA, along with three other renewable energy businesses, sent the governor a letter dated April 23 expressing concern the bills would stall renewable development in the state.

"It's finding ways to reduce the amount of renewable power that will be developed in Montana and we think there's a lot of great potential in the state," said Mark Jacobson, director of development for Chicago-based Invenergy.

Invenergy operates the 130-megawatt Judith Gap Wind Farm in central Montana and NaturEner USA owns the new Glacier Wind Farm north of Great Falls. Together the two companies represent almost 90 percent of the total wind energy produced in Montana, which despite its vast wind resources is ranked 15th in the nation for production.

NextEra Energy Resources, a subsidiary of Florida Power and Light Group, Inc. that is the largest provider of wind and solar energy in North America, also signed the letter, along with the Irish wind company Gaelectric and photovoltaic manufacturer REC Silicon.

Senate Bill 403, sponsored by NorthWestern Energy, is a complex piece of legislation that seeks to make it easier for the company to meet renewable quotas set by state mandates.

At the center of conflicts over the bill stands an esoteric commodity known as a renewable energy credit. These certificates -- often called RECs or 'wrecks' -- are granted to developers for each megawatt hour of clean power generated.

"RECs are traded like potbellies, like gold, so they're an environmental commodity and their prices goes up and down every day," said Jeff Swenerton, spokesman for the Center for Resource Solutions, a nonprofit that certifies about half of the credits sold in the United States and which opposes the bills.

Under Montana law, utilities must buy an increasing amount of electricity from renewable sources, such as wind, solar or geothermal, stopping at a cap of 15 percent in 2015. But they also have to match those energy purchases with an equal amount of RECs -- the goal being both to spur renewables' development and ensure the power is only used once to meet mandated quotas.

SB 403, which passed the Legislature handily, would allow NorthWestern Energy and others to forego buying both the RECs and the energy.

"The effect is going to be to drive small-scale independent renewable folks out of the market and the reason for that is these RECs will be double counted," said Sen. Ron Erickson, D-Missoula, during the Senate debate over the bill.

If counted twice, opponents contend the RECs will be worthless in regional trading markets.

But the utility has argued the measure is only intended to address what is essentially a double requirement for

renewable purchases that results in higher bills for its customers.

Federal law already requires purchases from small renewable producers, also known as qualifying facilities. But NorthWestern says these producers usually do not sell their RECs along with the power, instead choosing to seek higher bids in regional markets. Under SB 403, NorthWestern could count power purchased from these facilities toward meeting their quota, even without purchasing the associated REC.

"We are out to protect the Montana consumers and still meet all of our guidelines under the renewable portfolio standard," said Claudia Rapkoch, spokeswoman for NorthWestern Energy.

The second bill opposed by the wind developers, SB 257, has been shepherded by another large utility, PPL Montana.

It would allow hydroelectric dam upgrades to generate RECs. Since it applies retroactively to 2004, the measure would cover upgrades to the Kerr Dam southwest of Polson, as well as the planned Rainbow Dam upgrade.

The letter from the wind producers charges the change would flood the state's REC market, in effect eroding mandates for purchasing renewable energy.

According to the governor's office, if the state's renewable portfolio standards were left alone, they would generate demand for about 11,000 credits between now and 2014, but under the change proposed by Senate Bill 257, roughly 300,000 credits would be generated by PPL Montana's dam upgrades.

The hydroelectric company rejects the claim that counting upgrades as a renewable would undermine state incentives.

"If you talk about destroying a renewable energy credit market in Montana, you're talking about a market that doesn't even exist today," said Dave Hoffman, spokesman for PPL Montana.

That's because currently NorthWestern Energy already has enough RECs from the Judith Gap project to meet its quotas until at least 2013, leaving only a handful of smaller utilities with unfilled quotas.

But critics say that altogether the changes imposed by both bills could leave renewable developers in Montana holding RECs and power they cannot sell either in state or out of state.

"If you can't tie a REC back to actual energy the chances are really good that there will be a lot of states that will view Montana's RECs skeptically," said Andrea Coon, director of Western Renewable Energy Generation Information System, which tracks credits for Western quota compliance markets. "It could be possible that a lot of states will just refuse energy being generated in Montana."

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KAHRIN DEINES, 05/06/09, 'Wind energy companies urge governor to veto two Senate bills', *Independent Record* (online), 6 May 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12B5CFF4F103AF08">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12B5CFF4F103AF08</a>



# NaturEner in area completing Phase II of Glacier Wind Project and continuing Rim Rock Project

April 15, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh| Section: News | 599 Words OpenURL Link

NaturEner USA is back in Toole and Glacier counties with plans to finish Phase II of the Glacier Wind Project and continue development of its Rim Rock Project, which will be the largest wind farm in Montana and the Northwest.

Officials from NaturEner were busy earlier this month with meetings. They met with county commissioners in Glacier and Toole counties, followed by a "kickoff" construction meeting for Phase II of the Glacier Wind Project. Next, NaturEner hosted a packed housed at a public meeting to update property owners and interested community members on both the Glacier and Rim Rock projects. Their next stop was the annual Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce banquet, which featured one of their Project Managers, Klaus Obel, as the featured speaker.

The messages at all three events were the same: NaturEner is pleased with the cooperation and support they've received from local government officials, business and community members and landowners and they are looking to be good "tenants" and stewards of the land that will be home to their wind projects for years to come. NaturEner is committed to bringing clean, green energy and conservation to the USA and is dedicated to the development of wind energy and other forms of renewable energy.

The 21,000-acre Glacier Wind Project is located south of Ethridge and features 140 turbines, 100 of which are located in Toole County and the remaining 40 are in Glacier County. The wind farm's maximum output, when both phases are complete, will be 210-megawatts, which is enough power for 60,000 homes. This project will boost property tax revenues in Glacier and Toole counties by an estimated \$4 million annually.

The proposed 25,000-acre Rim Rock Project will also be located in Glacier and Toole counties and will boast 206 turbines. This project, which will connect to the Montana-Alberta Tie Limited (MATL) transmission line, will generate a maximum output of 309 megawatts and will produce enough wind energy for approximately 90,000 homes.

NaturEner is confident operations from projects will have minimal impact on the grazing areas and cropland in the area.

NaturEner officials believe the Rim Rock Project "will diversify and contribute to the local economy through property tax revenue, wind impact fees, job creation and royalty payments for generations."

NaturEner is well aware that spring seeding in underway and encourages farmers to help them "coordinate use of the roads" by contacting their main office south of Ethridge at 339-5200 the day before they will be moving equipment. Delivery of the wind turbine pieces began last week and will continue for several weeks. Erection of the turbines will be completed in late July or early August and ideally will be "online" by Oct. 31.

Last year, peak employment relating to the Glacier Wind Project was around 310 people. Phase II will employ about half that number.

In speaking at both the public meeting and the Chamber banquet, Obel shared some interesting trivia about the turbines, which are manufactured by Acciona.

The towers are 262 feet tall and weigh 290,000 lbs.

The Nacelle, which is 29 feet long and sits atop the tower, weighs 110 lbs.

The diameter of the rotor is 252 feet and it weighs 73,000 lbs.

From the group to the tip of the blade pointing upward is 388 feet.

The total weight of one wind turbine is 473,000 lbs.

The lifespan of a wind turbine is 20-30 years.

The turbines will produce power 5,000 to 6,000 hours of the possible 8,760 hours in a year.

Each wind turbine undergoes two scheduled maintenance sessions per year and needs an oil change every four to six years.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'NaturEner in area completing Phase II of Glacier Wind Project and continuing Rim Rock Project', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 15 Apr 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C1556F672D0>



# NaturEner invites community to informative 'meet & greet'

April 1, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 369 Words OpenURL Link

April has arrived and that means NaturEner USA, LLC is gearing up to complete Phase II of their Glacier Wind Project.

NaturEner development, construction and operation teams invite property owners, interested community members and county leaders to an informational public meeting, on Thursday, April 2. The meeting will be held from 5-7 p.m. at the main office of the Glacier Wind Project, which is located just south of Ethridge, at 1321 Hjartarson Road.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the development of current and future wind projects in Glacier and Toole Counties. Doors open at 5 p.m. for an informal "meet and greet" reception, followed by presentations by NaturEner representatives and then a question and answer session.

NaturEner officials will be presenting plans for the completion of the second phase of the Glacier Wind Project. The infrastructure for Phase II has already been installed and residents in Toole and Glacier County will soon see crews hauling in equipment and erecting the remaining 69 turbines. Forty of the total 140 turbines in the Glacier Wind Project, which includes Phases I and II, are located in Glacier County.

Once the remaining turbines of the 210-megawatt facility are in place and on-line, Glacier and Toole Counties will have bragging rights to the largest wind farm in Montana.

The meeting will also include discussions and updates on NaturEner's Rim Rock Project. According to Project Developer Derek Moretz, "We will be providing an update on the development plan of the Rim Rock Wind Project and be discussing our efforts to minimize the impact of various environmental and cultural resources in the area."

The proposed Rim Rock wind farm will be located in northwest Toole and northeast Glacier County and will boast 200 wind turbines. That is almost three times the number that is currently erected at NaturEner's Phase I Glacier project east of Cut Bank.

Most of the wind turbines of the Rim Rock project will be located in nearby Toole County, but the "interconnect" station to the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) line will be located in Glacier County.

Both Toole and Glacier Counties have extended tax breaks to NaturEner USA, LLC in support of the construction of the Rim Rock project.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

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# NaturEner returns to finish one wind project, start a bigger one

April 1, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT)

Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 370 Words

OpenURL Link

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# Hospital employees vote to strike, ask for public support

March 25, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT)

Author: Melanie Hoggan | Section: News | 1248 Words

OpenURL Link

On March 23 the Marias Medical Center union members met with Montana Public Employee Association (MPEA) Field Representative Mark Langdorf to tally the strike ballots from the 80 voting members. By a vote of 41-17 the bargaining unit has voted to go on strike. After close to three months of negotiations between MPEA and Marias Medical Center management, employees have put forward a strike date beginning April 25 at 12:01 a.m.

Positions at Marias Medical Center (MMC) affected by the strike include LPN, CNA, business office staff, aides, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance and cooks, which total approximately 120 full and part-time workers.

"We are dedicated; we are hard-working, caring, professional people," said Cindy Frydenlund, an employee of 33 years at MMC. "I love my job, I love the people, but 30 plus years should account for something more than \$13.22 an hour."

By law, union employees are required to give MMC management 30 days notice before the strike will take effect. An agreement, however, could still be reached during that interim 30-day period.

"We will do whatever is needed to maintain services for our community for both the short and long term. It is our intention to get negotiations settled and keep people working using all avenues available to maintain services to our community," stated MMC's Chief Executive Officer Mark Cross.

According to Langdorf, "Both sides are saying I am not going any further. That's where we are. The bargaining unit is exercising their right as organized employees to exercise concerted activity. At some point someone has to yield. The bargaining unit could simply evaporate. Does the public put pressure? Do the county commissioners yield?" In Langdorf's opinion, "The prospects are very, very grim, but until the work group and management want to sit down and resolve differences. What else can the outcome be?"

The last offer put forward by MMC management was rejected on March 3 by employees. "MMC offered a 2.5 percent increase to all base salaries in the 30-year wage scale, and they receive a step increase in addition to their health insurance premium increase. This accumulates to at least five percent for each employee covered under the MPEA contract." Cross added, "The combination of increasing the beginning base wage, annual step increases for the 30-year matrix and cost of health insurance, along with state benefits of sick leave, vacation pay, holiday pay, PERS retirement of 6.9 percent employer matching contribution, shift differential as well as merit pay makes MMC's pay matrix one of the most expensive in the state."

Also included in the offer was an increase in monthly premium insurance coverage for individuals from \$485 up to \$495 through June 2009, and then up to \$520 through 2010.

Although MMC is operating in the red with reported operating losses of \$3,785,823 over the last four years, some union members believe Toole County should look to new sources of tax dollars to fund the requested \$2 per hour increase by union employees. "There is a reported \$2.5 million coming in taxes from the new windmills over the next two years. What the county commissioners need to do is to re-channel and re-funnel money that is coming in. This is new revenue we have never had," said Tim Duve, a 12-year MMC employee.

Duve believes the Toole County Commissioners should take the issue to the public by allowing a public vote to increase the 10 mills (\$150,000) the county is annually providing to the hospital in order to cover the increase in wages to MMC union employees. "The public needs to be involved in this; it should go to a vote," stated Duve.

According to Toole County Commissioner Allan Underdal it would take an additional 53 mills per year, more than five times the current contribution, to sustain the \$800,000 pay increase through tax revenue sources alone. "If a vote was taken and passed, property taxpayers in Toole County would pay the bill. Two of those taxpayers are Glacier Wind Energy I & II."

Underdal also pointed out that, of the estimated \$1.8 million that will be paid in property taxes by the Glacier Windfarm Project for fiscal year 2009-2010, only 28 percent, about \$500,000, will actually make it to the Toole County coffers. "Seventy-two percent of that \$1.8 million would go for state or local school funding. The state would receive about 15 percent of that for equalization and the university levy. The local school district would receive the other 57 percent. We (commissioners) are not able to just consider this as new revenue and spend it. The additional tax base will help to reduce local taxes as a result of the increase in the value of the mill."

While Duve believes the "straw that broke the camel's back" was the \$2 per hour increase county employees received and MMC employees did not, he believes MMC employees have been underpaid for years. "This is not a new thing. We do not have competitive wages compared to other hospitals in our area," he claims.

According to Langdorf, several health care organizations in the state have higher starting wages than MMC. "At the Columbia Falls veterans home, a state facility, a nursing home for homeless veterans, the starting wage is \$8.50 an hour for a CNA. That includes state health insurance and the statutory holiday and annual leave provision. Likewise, the Montana Mental Health Nursing Center, a geriatric home, starting wage is \$8.50. In Lewis and Clark County, at the Cooney Convalescent home, a County nursing home, the starting wage is \$10.22 an hour."

Cross pointed out, however, the facilities Langdorf is referring to are state-operated facilities or do not fall under the same category as MMC.

"We base our wages on the Montana Hospital Association's (MHA) salary survey and, given the information, we are competitive," stated Cross. Every health facility in Montana submits compensation information and the MHA compiles and distributes the findings. CEOs can then determine what is happening in the market statewide, and also what is competitive within the niche they service. MMC falls under the category of Critical Access Hospital-a facility with 25 beds or less.

The MHA Salary Survey shows CNAs at Critical Access Hospitals average a starting wage of \$9.21 per hour, compared to MMC's starting wage of \$9.36 per hour. The MMC wage amount includes health benefits without annual leave or personal leave options. Employees can select up to 22 paid days off, resulting in a starting salary of \$7.56 per hour.

LPNs at Critical Access Hospitals statewide average a starting salary of \$13.11 per hour. MMC's starting wage for LPNs at the high end is \$14.22 per hour, which includes health benefits and no paid days off, and \$11.75 per hour at the low end with personal leave and state leave options up to 22 paid days off.

Employees who voted for the strike hope the public will come in on their side. Duve pointed out, "When we do go on strike, there is no type of income, not even from the union; we don't get a penny. We need to have the public say whether they are for us or not. We are going to need the public's support. We have our homes and our bills to pay, our own hardships going on, but we have always been there for the public. People (employees) are tired of getting pushed aside; thrown scraps. People are tired of nobody caring."

Union member Jane Frydenlund added, "If you are concerned about the hospital going on strike, talk to the board members and call the county commissioners, they are in charge of the budget."

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Melanie Hoggan, 'Hospital employees vote to strike, ask for public support', *Shelby Promoter* (online), 25 Mar 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F6423704BD0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F6423704BD0</a>



# County Commissioners elect Underdal as new chairman, future looks promising for county

January 28, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Melanie Hoggan | Section: News | 609 Words OpenURL Link

At the last Toole County Commissioners' meeting of 2008, County Commissioner Allan Underdal was elected Chairman for the final two years of his current term.

Commissioner Ben Ober served in that position during 2007 and 2008, which were also the last two years of his term. Voters re-elected Ober to another six-year term in November of 2008.

Toole County has three full-time county commissioners. In addition to Underdal and Ober, Dave Miller also holds the position. The commissioners typically meet on Mondays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. on the second floor of the Toole County Courthouse. The agenda for those meetings is posted on the bulletin board outside their office two business days prior to the meeting.

Meetings of the county commissioners are open to the public and county residents are encouraged to attend.

According to Toole County Clerk and Recorder Mary Ann Harwood, the Commissioners receive a salary of \$42,765 annually. The salaries of elected officials are set by state statute, but annual raises are determined through a recommendation from the Toole County Compensation board. Members of this board include the three commissioners, Toole County Attorney Merle Raph, Toole County Sheriff Donna Matoon, Toole County Treasurer Boyd Jackson, Harwood, and Toole County taxpayers Dave Wollan and Vern Anderson, both of Shelby.

Each Toole County Commissioner serves on a variety of boards including the Montana Department of Correction Advisory Council, Port of Northern Montana Board, Marias Medical Center Board, and Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors, to name a few.

Underdal sits on the Executive Board of the Montana Association of Counties (MACO). He is currently involved in keeping tabs on the 3,000 legislative bills in play at the State Legislative Session to accurately assess the impacts to county governments. "We have to be aware of bills; they may affect counties in a big way," stated Underdal.

As the Toole County Commissioners look ahead to 2009, one of the major projects on the horizon is the re-roofing of two thirds of the Marias Medical Center. The commissioners will be bidding out the project in the next several weeks and have currently set aside \$300,000 from the Glacier Wind Farm impact fees to pay for the project.

Another project being considered by the commissioners is an energy update to buildings in Toole County, including Marias Medical Center. Underdal stated, "We are working on an energy update for some of our county buildings that will be a fairly large project."

According to minutes from the Sept. 11, 2008 commissioners' meeting, the goal is to update energy technology and minimize energy use in county buildings and to at least partially pay for the project with those energy savings.

While the 2009 calendar year is only a few weeks old, the county's 2008-2009 fiscal year is half over. The county's next fiscal year holds much promise for the county.

According to Underdal, new tax revenue from the Glacier Wind Farm project will not hit the county coffers until the 2009-2010 fiscal year. "Next year's budget will be impacted," said Underdal, adding, "You can expect to see a fairly significant impact there."

NaturEner will be taxed under the "New and Emerging Business" tax rules in Montana. According to NaturEner's Bill

Alexander, the company will pay approximately \$1.8 million in tax revenue for the work that has been completed to date.

The Commissioners also have a significant interest in the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Limited transmission line. Although the MATL route does not run into Toole County, the indirect impact to the county has the potential to attract new wind energy business to the area.

The Shelby Promoter will strive to update residents on county news of significant interest in future issues.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Melanie Hoggan, 'County Commissioners elect Underdal as new chairman, future looks promising for county', *Shelby Promoter* (online), 28 Jan 2009 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F611EF13038>



## One final look at 2008

January 14, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Staff Writer| Section: News| 1180 Words OpenURL Link

In this week's issue we will finish our trip down memory lane in reviewing the people and events that made news in 2008.

June

Attending the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Sweet Grass Border station were Senator Jerry Black and Representative Edith Clark, as well as Toole County Commissioners and local mayors. The station is expected to have a very positive impact on Toole County and the surrounding Hi-Line communities.

Randi Lenhardt, Director of the Shelby Chamber of Commerce for nearly 13 years, has chosen to retire. Local law enforcement earned over \$16,500 for Special Olympics during the Stand Up for Special Olympics fundraiser held in the KSEN parking lot.

July

Interim warden Sam Law has been named as the new warden at Crossroads Correctional Center. He and his family currently reside in Sunburst.

The Marias Fair hosted a "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" event in support of the Hi-Line Women Against Breast Cancer.

NaturEner's ground breaking for the Glacier Wind Farm brought out dignitaries from Shelby to Spain. Approximately 200 people attended this official ground-breaking ceremony.

Anne Thompson has been hired as the new Executive Director of the Shelby Chamber of Commerce, replacing Randi Lenhardt who retired. Thompson is also the new Community Planner for Sweetgrass Development. Both are part-time jobs.

The Shelby Promoter is proud to announce the hiring of a new writer, Melanie Hoggan. Her passion is teaching music, primarily violin, but she is equally talented as a writer.

The Hi-Line Women Against Breast Cancer golf tournament set a new fundraising record, bringing in \$57,159.

August

Megan Cross, a longtime Water Otter, has been hired as the head coach for the team.

Shelby Extension Agent Alice Burchak and a group of interested citizens got together last September to plan a community garden. Mayor Larry Bonderud helped solve the problem of where by providing unused property on the south side of Aronow Park. The community garden has been a great success.

Water line changes, while disrupting the streets, will fix obsolete pipes and result in better flow for residents. The 61-year-old pipe is being removed and new, larger pipe is taking its place.

Laura Jo McKamey designed a 384-piece quilt to be raffled off to help send the Shelby Youth Special Olympics Team to the Montana Special Olympics in May of 2009.

Chris Ivins, originally from Texas, has been named Assistant Warden at Crossroads Correctional Center.

#### September

Forever Fine Jewelry, owned by Jack and Dawna Widmar, celebrated its first anniversary. They are the only full-service jeweler in the Golden Triangle area.

Sunburst's Mason Kearns designed a science project to demonstrate that bio fuels have a higher energy value than conventional fuels. This project was a winner at the Montana State Science Fair in Missoula, garnering Kearns first place in Energy Education, the 2008 Naval Science Award and the Department of Environmental Studies Award. He also won overall best science project for the State of Montana in both physical and biological science at the sixth-grade level.

The City of Shelby, partnering with the nonprofit organization NeighborWorks Montana, has erected three homes in Shelby and has the potential for six more. There are various types of assistance available to homeowners who are interested in purchasing one of these homes.

#### October

Albertson's celebrated 10 years in Shelby with a \$1.5 million remodel, including a new deli section, a new entryway and cart stations outside.

St. William Catholic Church celebrated its 100-year anniversary on Sept. 28. What started as a congregation of 10 families has grown to 151 registered families.

Northtown Drug observed its one-year anniversary under the ownership of Ann Clark. The pharmacy continues a tradition of personal service established by the previous owner, Jack Wells.

Reigning over Homecoming festivities were King Jake Frydenlund and Queen Megan Hasquet. The Shelby Coyotes won their Homecoming game over the Harlem Wildcats 43-6.

The Northern Transit Interlocal bus is in full swing now and offers free transportation to Great Falls and Kalispell for such things as doctor appointments or shopping.

Wells Fargo Bank employees, local border patrol agents and the Living Faith Baptist Church got together to host a community dinner and silent auction fundraiser for the Moberly family. Border Patrol Agent Denton Moberly was recently poisoned and is presently unable to work.

The Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. has received authorization from the Department of Environmental Quality for construction of their 230kV merchant transmission line in Montana. The Certificate of Compliance was presented to Johan van't Hof, Chief Executive Officer, Tonbridge Power Inc. by Governor Brian Schweitzer at a news conference in Helena on Oct. 22.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has purchased the Lincoln property that straddles the Marias River nine miles southwest of Shelby and will use it as a combination state park and wildlife management area.

Brianna Seubert earned All-State honors at the State Cross-Country meet in Missoula. She had a 14th place finish out of 156 runners with a time of 20:06.

## November

The FBI and the US Border Patrol are offering a \$25,000 reward for information about the poisoning of Border Patrol Agent Denton Moberly as announced by FBI Special Agent in Charge Timothy J. Fuhrman at a press conference in

the Glacier County courtroom.

TLC Catering Plus provided their fourth annual free Thanksgiving Dinner to members of the community. Anyone in need or those who were spending Thanksgiving without family were invited to join them at the Shelby Senior Center.

Clyde Cosner pleaded guilty to Deliberate Homicide and Assault with a Weapon in the death of James Lee Jardine. The sentence recommended was 80 years in Montana State Prison with 40 suspended on the homicide charge and 20 years for the assault charge.

The Shelby Community Christmas Concert and Food Drive brought out local musicians from the Toole County area and Lewistown, featuring over 40 vocalists and instrumentalists. The concert was free but the public was encouraged to bring an item to donate to the Sagebrush Food Pantry.

### December

Shelby was awarded a \$500,000 low-interest loan to finance a series of improvements to its drinking water system. They have also qualified for a Renewable Resource grant of \$100,000 and a Treasure State Endowment Grant of \$750,000 according to Anna Miller, Financial Advisor of DNRC's Conservation and Resource Development Division.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church presented its longstanding musical Christmas tradition, Candles and Carols Around the Table. Started in 1991 by Laila Lindberg, who is still a member of the hand bell choir, Diane Hould has now taken over the director's duties.

Larry and Hazel Munson once again invited people to come out and see their Christmas collection displayed in two Great Northern cabooses.

Prairie Peddler offered bottled water to assist the nonprofit organization charity:water in building wells for clean drinking water in developing nations. Residents were eager to help with charity:water and the Prairie Peddler was sold out within four days of the article appearing in the Shelby Promoter.

Toole County approved NaturEner Rim Rock Energy, LLC's request for the new or expanding industry tax break. Under state law they will be taxed at 50 percent of the taxable value for the first five years after the construction permit is issued, increasing over the next five years until the full taxable value is attained in the 10th year.

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# Looking back on 2008's news, achievements and challenges

January 7, 2009 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: Linda Bruch | Section: News | 2162 Words OpenURL Link

Just when we finally got the year right on our checks and other important documents, the calendar changes once again and we enter into a new year; welcome 2009.

To some, the year 2008 may have passed by in one big blur. To others, it may have seemed like it was never going to end. Either way the year 2008 is now in the "books" and another 365 days are before us.

But before we seal up those books holding all the happenings from 2008, we thought you might like a trip down memory lane to take one last look at some of the people and the events that made the news in the Cut Bank Pioneer Press.

January 2008

Glacier Community Health Plan became the new "house" for a Veteran's Clinic for Cut Bank. January 7 was the first day VA patients were seen at GCHC, which will serve veterans from Glacier, Toole, Pondera and Liberty Counties.

BJ's Casino changed hands but kept the business in the family. Josh Larson and his dad Steve became the new owners, taking over for Gary and Thelma Bjorklund.

An ice-fishing tournament to benefit Special Olympics was held this month. The Hope Lake Ice Fishing tournament was the first of its kind and there is talk of this becoming a yearly event.

Alice Brotnov resigned her seat on the Cut Bank City Council.

January was a month of weather ups and downs. One day during this month temperatures reached a balmy 42 degrees above zero. Two days later, a cold front blew through giving residents a 51 below zero wind chill temperature to deal with. Thanks to those temperature extremes, Cut Bank made the Weather Channel several times.

# February 2008

Virginia Harman became the new Manager of Communications and Conservation Services at Glacier Electric Cooperative. Harman comes to Cut Bank from Jackson, Tenn. where she worked at Tennessee Valley Authority.

Northern Rockies Medical Center turned to the community in hopes of receiving contributions from them to pay off their line of credit, which exceeded \$500,000. Rick Billman and the NRMC Finance Committee came up with a way to raise the money and pay off the lender and the community of Cut Bank came through for the hospital once again.

Northern Transit Interlocal announced it would be starting a regional bus service beginning the first of March. Bus service will be offered to both Great Falls and Kalispell from ports in Cut Bank, Shelby and Browning.

JW Eaton was elected as the new Cut Bank City Council President.

Cut Bank High School's FCCLA members held their second annual Mr. Upperclassmen contest this month. This year's contestants were Michael Shea, Jeremy Whelchel, Dylan Huschka, Luke Barrey, Tony Fredregill, C.J. Faber, Josh Paulson, Clayton Vermulm. Proceeds were donated to Ann Larson, who had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. Fredregill was declared the 2008 Mr. Upperclassmen in the contest.

Cut Bank International Airport became part of the National Register of Historic Places thanks to the hard work of Roy Nollkamper, Bob Jacoby, Ray Salois, the WWII Airmen's Museum and the Glacier County Museum.

March 2008

A full house attended the Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce 61st Annual Banquet this month. Tamara Hall was the guest speaker that kept the crowd entertained and enlightened for the evening. The Cut Bank Volunteer Firefighters served a fantastic prime rib dinner. Ray Salois was named the Outstanding Citizen of the Year at the banquet.

Tippy Burtch and The Den received the Montana Brown-Forman award for being the 2008 Retailer of the Year.

The Parkview Senior Center and the Cut Bank High School Student Council once again sponsored a Senior Citizen Prom Night where the students and the senior citizens danced the night away.

Cut Bank High School Prom King and Queen were crowned this month with seniors Courtney Sheble and Jeff Brown receiving the honors.

Kelly Solberg was appointed to the vacant seat on the Cut Bank City Council, replacing Alice Brotnov. Solberg was the lone applicant to apply for the position.

## April 2008

Cut Bank IGA closed its doors for good April 19. The store employed seven full time and 15 part time employees. Rich and Rita Chadwick had been the store's owners for the past eight years.

The 14th Annual Montana Storytelling Roundup was held this month. A great list of entertainers, storytellers and artists headlined the fun weekend.

The 2009 Cut Bank Junior Miss program was held with four young ladies vying for the crown, Stephanie Hotchkiss, Lanaia Lewis, Autumn Nielsen and Melanie D'Isidoro. Lewis was the young lady that won the title.

Cut Bank Postmaster Darcy Hibbs received the Montana National Newspaper Association Benjamin Franklin Award for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Albertson's announced they would begin a \$1.6 million remodeling project for the Cut Bank store starting in early June and ending in September.

GCHC was awarded \$540,000 through a Rural Network Development Grant to improve access to healthcare for Montanans through health information technology.

Dave Losing, Lee Holden and Johnel Barcus were elected to a three-year term on the Glacier Electric Cooperative Board of Directors at the annual meeting held this month.

TJ Hansel resigned as Director of the Foothills Boys and Girls Club.

## May 2008

The Cut Bank Volunteer Firefighters held their first fundraiser called the Fireman's Fling. The evening included a silent auction, fabulous dinner and a live band. Over \$22,000 was raised, which will purchase GPS units for five of the fire trucks.

The Special Olympics Torch Run was held May 13. For 20 plus years law enforcement agencies throughout the

region have gotten involved by running, biking and walking all for Special Olympics.

Voting on the Park Levy was postponed from the June ballot to the November election. The Park Board wanted to be sure everyone understood the importance of the park levy and hoped to get that accomplished within the next few months.

The 2008 Block Party was held this month with proceeds from the two-day event going towards a purchase of a portable x-ray machine for NRMC. The event raised over \$22,000.

The blades for the first eight wind towers of the NaturEner Glacier Wind Farm Project arrived this month. The 120foot blades were delivered from a plant in North Dakota. Montana's largest wind farm, located in Glacier and Toole
Counties, will 140 turbines which will produce 210 megawatts of electricity. They hope to begin producing power by
Oct. 31.

Cut Bank High School had 71 seniors receive their diplomas this month.

Cut Bank High School seniors received nearly \$35,000 in CBEFAA administered scholarships this year. There were 63 scholarships awarded to 31 members of the 2008 graduating class.

June 2008

Democrat Tony Sitzmann won the June primary election for the County Commissioner seat and will face Bill Powell in the November election.

Dr. Adron Medley of Helena joined the NRMC team as a general surgeon, signing a two-year contract.

Another school year came to an end, allowing kids and teachers to enjoy the summer sunshine.

July 2008

The Cut Bank Lewis and Clark Festival was held this month with crowds of people lining Main Street for the parade and then moving to the City Park where the rest of the festivities took place.

Cut Bank High School hired a new principal this month. Daniel Wendt, who comes from Fort Benton, begins his work at the high school this August.

The Marias 4-County Fair was held this month much to the delight of fairgoers around the region.

August 2008

Hi-Line Relay for Life raised nearly \$30,000 for the American Cancer Society. Fifteen teams walked or ran during the 12-hour event, all for a good cause.

Cut Bank hosted the state Junior Miss program with 10 young ladies vying for the crown. Missoula's Julia Neaves was declared the 2009 Montana Junior Miss winner.

Montana Fun Weekend was once again another fun summer event for our region. The theme "smoke 'em, show 'em and race 'em" explains perfectly what took place over the entertaining weekend.

The first ever Guns and Hoses softball tournament took place this month. It was a fundraiser for the Foothills Boys and Girls Club, where over \$2,000 was raised for the organization. Local police and firefighters made up the teams playing for the benefit. The police department claimed the first year win. However, firefighters immediately began asking for a re-match.

One of the grain elevators located on Railroad Street was torn down by Merle Shortman and the crew at M&M Iron and Recycling. The rest of the elevators will come down at some point too as part of Shortman's plan to make room for the expansion of his recycling business.

School bells rang out once again this month as kids and teachers headed back to the classroom to start a new school year.

#### September 2008

Cut Bank Schools will once again have a school resource officer in their midst this school year. Cut Bank Police Officer Mike Schultz will assume that role assisted by Glacier County Sheriff Deputy Randy Eppinger who will be the Education Officer for the school district.

With school back in session, that means fall sports will be back on the field, gymnasium and courses over the next several months.

Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce posted a challenge to all alumni to help make the wading pool project a reality. Between the donations they hope to receive and the money the City of Cut Bank has put towards the project, it is the hope that a new wading pool will be ready by next summer.

Cut Bank High School Homecoming King and Queen were crowned this month. Seniors Alex Macias and Deidre Welker were the teens receiving the honor.

#### October 2008

Hi-Line Women Against Breast Cancer held their annual fundraiser receiving over \$12,000 in donations. The money they raised will go to help women all along the Hi-Line who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Charles Farmer took on the role of Glacier County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator, replacing Jim King who retired several months ago.

Fall may be one of the prettiest seasons, but it can also be the windiest as Cut Bank residents re-discovered this month. High winds were felt by everyone throughout the region with many places suffering damage to buildings and properties.

United States Senator Jon Tester stopped in Cut Bank this month participating in a mini-rally for the Obama campaign. Senator Tester spent time with Cut Bank residents listening to the issues critical to our area.

## November 2008

Montana's Capitol Christmas tree stopped in Cut Bank on its way to its new home in Washington, DC. The tree was selected from Montana's Bitterroot National Forest and will be placed on the nation's capitol lawn later this month. Local kids and adults made a number of ornaments that will adorn the tree.

St. Paul Lutheran Church organized and held a Cut Bank community Thanksgiving dinner, inviting those who might be alone on Thanksgiving or those that couldn't afford a dinner to join them. Church members served 70 meals on Thanksgiving Day.

GCHC recruited Dr. Phil McLain adding him to the team of physicians the clinic already has in place. Dr. McLain left NRMC several weeks earlier after they opted not to renew his contract.

When the results of the November election were tallied, Tony Sitzmann was declared the new Glacier County Commissioner. The Park Levy also passed by an overwhelming majority.

A favorite Foothills Boys and Girls fundraiser returned this month, much to the delight of Cut Bank residents. The Missed Cut Bank pageant had six contestants competing for the title. Jason Abbott was the winner, but in reality, it was the Foothills Boys and Girls Club that won, receiving about \$4,000 in donations.

The Cut Bank Women of Today held their annual bazaar this month, which kicked off the holiday season in Cut Bank. The same day of the bazaar, a holiday parade marched down Main Street that evening. Once the floats reached the Glacier County Courthouse, all the lights on the lawn lit up simultaneously. It was another wonderful Festival of Lights celebration.

#### December 2008

The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce and the NRMC Auxiliary got together and put on a Festival of Trees and Keys fundraising event. Not only were the decorated trees up for bid once again this year, but a team from Chicago Dueling Pianos also joined in the fun, entertaining the full house. The event collected over \$20,000.

Cut Bank lost its only veterinary service this month when local vet, Dr. Gary Cassel moved to Washington state. The office has temporarily closed its doors, while Dr. Cassel, with the help of community members continue looking for a vet.

The community of Cut Bank does an excellent job helping people in need throughout the year. However, around Christmas time, they always seem to step it up a bit. Once again the food pantry's shelves were filled with food donations, packages were placed under Christmas trees where they may have been none and food arrived in many households where cupboards once were bare.

The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce's wading pool challenge wrapped up this month receiving over \$18,000 in donations.

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