

## 2008: A pivotal year in history

January 7, 2009 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 2338 Words OpenURL Link

Last year was an historic year for the country and for this area. New forms of energy were being developed and the country elected its first African American president. And to close things out, we had a winter like the old-timers talk about, with more snow than some of us can successfully negotiate.

Here are some of the events and people who made headlines in the Shelby Promoter in 2008.

January

Sunburst FCCLA had two members elected to district offices, Misha Kearns as district president and Kyle Watterud as district vice president.

Shelby had its first homicide in quite some time when three men and one woman were charged in the death of James Lee Jardine. One of the suspects, Alden Tracy Evans, committed suicide. The others charged in this death were Aaron Evans, Clyde Cosner and Cynthia Stokes.

Mortenson Construction and its subcontractors held a job fair for prospective employees to work on the wind energy project they are constructing between Shelby and Cut Bank.

The Main Street True Value store added a Sony Picture Station, a self-service photo kiosk that prints digital pictures in a matter of minutes.

Minerva Abastillas Calangi-Welker, or "Minnie" as she is known in town, completed her dream of becoming a United States citizen when she took her oath of citizenship in Great Falls.

February

Plans were announced to establish the Northern Transit Interlocal as a bus service for Hi-Line residents with Shelby as the town of origin. The buses will travel to both Great Falls and Kalispell.

A Shelby High School graduate, Ann Svennungsen, was inaugurated as the first woman president of Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas. She credited much of her success to her small-town background.

Pastor Haugestuen of St. Luke's Lutheran Church was honored with the President's Choice Award at the Chamber of Commerce banquet for his service to the community.

The Lady Refiners girls basketball team from Sunburst finished their season in first place in the 10-C district.

Torgerson Implement of Ethridge won the coveted CNH Silver Sales Club plaque at the national sales conference in Ames, Iowa.

Darold Tomsheck took the purple Grand Champion banner for his pen of prize-winning livestock at the Western Stockman's Show in Denver.

The Shelby Coyotes boys basketball team survived the Northern B Boys Basketball Tournament in Malta and advanced to the state tourney.

#### March

The Shelby Coyotes boys basketball team took first in the state tournament held in Belgrade by defeating Fairfield after losing to them in the district and divisional tournaments. Kevin Steiner was selected as Most Valuable Player at this tournament.

Raynee Pace, a senior at North Toole County High School, was the winner of the Intermountain Junior Science and Humanities Symposium in Salt Lake City and will go on to the National Symposium in Orlando. She won a full-ride freshman scholarship to the University of Utah.

The proposed Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line received support from business owners and elected officials at the public hearings that were held.

Marias Medical Center Foundation has chosen Roni Turner as their featured vocalist at their scheduled Black Tie and Blue Jeans event.

#### April

Ninety-year-old Ed Frazer received the 2008 Silver Spur Award during the KSEN Ag Appreciation dinner. He was honored for his service to the community, his loyalty to his wife, and his work as an advocate for veterans.

Isaiah Zell, Shelby's lone representative at the Montana Open Wrestling Championships in Billings, brought home a silver medal.

The Northern Transit Interlocal bus reports rider numbers are increasing as more people become aware of this service.

The Downtown Solutions Team, led by Vicki Dugger, was in Shelby to help create a plan for how to redevelop some key properties and improve public spaces and Main Street.

Shelby has been chosen as the site for a two-year study on obesity. City officials and the staff of Marias Medical Center have partnered with School District #14 on this project and are in the process of preparing how to develop a database.

Peggy Kanning joined a group of missionaries traveling to South Africa to teach the women of a small village there how to sew. They will furnish materials and sewing machines which will then be left with the women in Africa so they can help support their families.

#### May

Katsy Arves, a radiology technologist at Marias Medical Center, ran in the Boston Marathon this year, finishing in three hours 54 minutes and eight seconds.

Warden Jim MacDonald is leaving Crossroads Correctional Center and has accepted a position as warden of CCA Florence Correctional Center in Florence, Ariz.

Voters approved all school levies during the school elections, including four in Shelby and one each in Galata and Sunburst.

The Coyote boys won the 2008 district track and field championship in Great Falls. This was a great win for them as they had finished second to Fairfield for the last four years.

The Border Patrol is breaking ground for a new Sweet Grass station on Nine Mile Road. This is one of two new facilities being built along Montana's Hi-Line.

NaturEner announced that the first 107 MW phase of the Glacier Wind Energy Project is currently under construction and should be on line by October.

KSEN held their Athlete of the Year banquet honoring high school athletes chosen as Athlete of the Week during the year. Toole County athletes attending included Cori Thacker, Raynee Pace and Kevin Steiner.

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. She has been a valued community member and has been very active in the Visitor's Center as well as the Chamber.

The Crossroads Correctional Center "Skilled Companion" dog program has paid off and one of their dogs has been placed with a 7-year-old girl.

Local law enforcement earned over \$16,500 for Special Olympics during the Stand Up for Special Olympics fundraiser held in the KSEN parking lot.

Delores Pogreba has been named 2008 Family Connections Provider of the Year for her work as a child care provider. She has provided this service for 28 years.

A retirement party was held at the church for Pastor Joe Haugestuen, who became the pastor of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Shelby 20 years ago.

July

The Triangle Squares, a quilting guild covering a four-county region, made Cowboy Coolers to send to the troops in Iraq. These are bandanas with water-cooling pellets sewn into them that are soaked in water and worn around the neck to keep cool.

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.

Toole County Search and Rescue team is particularly proud of its dive rescue team. This requires performing six training dives and taking written tests to recertify every three years.

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 third and final stage for the Veterans Memorial Flag is to establish an endowment fund to keep America's colors flying for future generations. The 30-by-50-foot flag takes a lot of punishment from the wind and must be replaced regularly. This endowment fund will provide for these replacements.

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.

The Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. says that the U. S. Department of Energy has announced its decision to issue a Presidential Permit authorizing construction of a 230kV merchant transmission line that will connect the energy grids of Montana and Alberta.

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.

Mariann Fretheim and Kara Matoon were named to the second team District 1-B All-Conference Volleyball roster. Jeramiah Hayes and Chase Ballantyne were selected as All-Conference 1-B football second team players. Hayes was selected at the linebacker position and Ballantyne as a wide receiver.

#### 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. They have ordered a new supply and are taking prepaid orders.

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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## Irish wind energy company eyes Montana

December 28, 2008 | Billings Gazette, The (MT)

Section: News 411 Words

OpenURL Link

GREAT FALLS - A renewable energy development company with ties to Ireland is pursuing possible construction of Montana wind farms, and a facility to store compressed air in underground caverns to generate electricity at times of peak demand.

Gaelectric LLC opened an office in Great Falls two years ago and has since hired seven employees.

"It's much more efficient to build where the resource is and transport the load," Colin McGowan, the company's chief operating officer, told the Great Falls Tribune. The newspaper reported on the company's plans Monday.

The company is tightlipped about specific plans in Montana, but is not shy about promoting wind development. It has hired a Billings public relations firm. And in October, the company briefed state officials at the Capitol on its plans for storing electricity underground.

In November, Gov. Brian Schweitzer visited with Gaelectric officials in Ireland, after he received an award at University College in Dublin.

Montana is competing with other states for renewable energy development, and both the state and the industry need to promote themselves, McGowan said.

"How do we attract industry to Montana?" he asked. "There are a lot of people out there promoting their states."

Gaelectric isn't the only energy company with European ties doing business in Montana.

NaturEner, based in Spain, is building the \$500 million Glacier Wind Farm in Toole and Glacier counties, said Chantel McCormick, a senior energy development specialist with the state Department of Commerce's Energy Promotion and Development Division. And plans by Fuhrlander AG of Waigandshain, Germany, for a \$25 million turbine manufacturing plant are still moving forward, she added.

Gaelectric LLC of Great Falls is a subsidiary of Gaelectric Holdings of Dublin, Ireland.

The company also has U.S. offices in Chicago and Clarkston, Wash. The Washington office is the headquarters for Gaelectric Northwest, a recently formed joint venture with Air Dynamics LLC. The partnership is planning 4,000 megawatts of wind power development over the next five years in Idaho, Oregon and Washington, McGowan said.

In Montana, Gaelectric recently met with landowners in the Fort Benton area, but McGowan declined to reveal the locations of potential projects. However, he said he is "very hopeful" that project announcements will occur in 2009. The company has secured enough land options in the United States to generate 1,700 megawatts of electricity, he said.

Gaelectric is also investigating sites in Montana where it could build a compressed-air-energy storage facility.

McGowan says two such facilities are operating in Germany and Alabama, and a third is under construction in Ohio.

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## County offers tax break for NaturEner's Rim Rock wind project

December 17, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 792 Words OpenURL Link

There are two ways to look at the Glacier County Commissioners' decision to extend NaturEner Rim Rock Energy a tax break for bringing a new wind energy project to the county. Some taxpayers will view the action as "costing" Glacier County \$10 million over the next five years. Others will claim the commissioners' decision enabled a new industry to develop within the county's borders and increased the county's tax revenue by the same \$10 million figure.

Approximately 20 people crowded into the Glacier County Commissioners' chambers on Monday, Dec. 15, to listen and offer comments on the application submitted by NaturEner Rim Rock Energy, LLC, to obtain new industry tax benefits. Under state law, a new or expanding industry is taxed at 50 percent of its taxable value for the first five years after a construction permit is issued. During the next five years, that percentage increases by "equal percentages" or 10 percent until the full taxable value is attained in the 10th year.

NaturEner USA officials, Derek Moretz and Calvin Olson, were on hand for Monday's hearing. Both offered details about the proposed 300 megawatt Rim Rock wind farm project, which will boast 200 wind turbines, or almost three times the number that is currently erected at Natur- Ener's Phase I Glacier project east of Cut Bank. Phase II of the Glacier Project will see another 69 turbines erected, 40 of which will be in Glacier County.

Moretz confirmed that most of the wind turbines of the Rim Rock project will be located in nearby Toole County, but the "interconnect" station to the proposed MATL line will be located in Glacier County.

County taxpayer Russ Wahl asked what NaturEner's tax savings would be, if approved by the county commissioners. Exact figures weren't available for the Rim Rock project, but Natur- Ener's tax savings for their 106.5 megawatt Glacier wind farm was estimated at \$2 million per year for the first five years. NaturEner is also required to pay the county "impact fees" which are a portion of the total construction cost of the project. Glacier County will receive approximately \$600,000 in impact fees from the Glacier project over three years.

Wahl questioned if by approving the tax benefit application the commissioners would be "costing" Glacier County \$10 million in tax revenue.

Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce President LeAnne Kavanagh suggested the tax break be viewed as a tool to expand the county's tax base and invest in the future of Glacier County. The Chamber has extended its support to not only the wind farm projects, but the MATL transmission line as well. She pointed out if Glacier County chooses not to extend the tax break, she was sure Toole County officials would welcome and invite NaturEner to further expand its operation into Toole County.

Toole County Commissioners Allan Underdal and Ben Ober, as well as Mayor Larry Bonderud and Shelby Port Authority representative Deb Clark were all on hand for Monday's public hearing in Cut Bank. Underdal expressed Toole County's support of the project. He pointed out approval of the tax benefit gives Glacier and Toole Counties "a competitive edge" to attract wind farm projects to the area. Instead of viewing it as losing taxes, he said Toole County officials see this "as a gain in taxes." Underdal reminded those at the meeting that NaturEner is investing over \$1 billion in the area and those investments will in turn bring new tax dollars to the area.

Local ranchers Butch and Doreen Gillespie offered their support of the tax break for Natur Ener, adding they appreciate the company's support of area youth and the particularly the 4-H auction this summer at the Marias Fair.

Bonderud, speaking on behalf of the City of Shelby, reminded those present that the tax break is similar to those

available to local Main Street business owners in both counties. He suggested a better job may need to be done to educate these business owners about the tax incentives for new and expanding businesses. "It's just not the wind guys getting this," he added.

Cut Bank Mayor Joni Stewart did not attend the meeting to offer the city's support, but city councilman and local business owner Bill McCauley voiced support of the tax benefit. "One hundred percent of nothing is nothing. Anything we gain is added tax revenue." McCauley said the Glacier wind farm project was a "boom" to the community last summer, with contractors and sub-contractors buying as much locally as possible and "ran a clean operation." McCauley urged the Glacier County Commissioners to "definitely say yes."

Following the hearing, Glacier County Commission chairman John Ray and county commissioner Ron Rides At The Door voted to extend the tax benefit to NaturEner Rim Rock Energy. Commissioner Michael DesRosier did not attend Monday's meeting due to illness.

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## Toole County grants tax breaks for NaturEner's second wind farm project

December 17, 2008 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 691 Words

OpenURL Link

The temperature at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 15, hovered at 20 degrees below zero, but inside the Sunburst Library Meeting Room officials from NaturEner USA received a warm welcome from Toole County residents.

Comments made by Toole County residents attending the public hearing were overwhelmingly positive in support of continued wind development in Toole County.

Commission Chairman Ben Ober opened the hearing by introducing Calvin Olson, Derek Moretz and Dave Dumon of NaturEner USA. Chairman Ober then asked for audience comments and questions concerning Resolution #25-2008 which, if approved, would grant tax benefits to NaturEner USA for the proposed Rim Rock wind farm.

NaturEner Rim Rock Energy, LLC is asking Toole County to approve their application for the new or expanding industry tax break. Under state law, if approved, the Rim Rock project will be taxed at 50 percent of its taxable value for the first five years after a construction permit is issued. During the next five years that percentage will increase by equal percentages until the full taxable value is attained in the 10th year.

In the subsequent years the property must be taxed at 100 percent of its taxable value. As stated in Resolution #25-2008, the tax benefits granted to Rim Rock Wind Project and its owner, NaturEner Rim Rock Energy LLC, will commence with the property that is taxable on Jan. 1, 2010.

The proposed Rim Rock wind farm will be located in northwest Toole and northeast Glacier County. The exact number of turbines to be located in each county is unknown at this time, but according to Derek Moretz, the Project Developer, 200 wind turbines, with each tower producing 1.5 megawatts of power, will be constructed. Moretz estimated the construction phase will take six to eight months.

Audience members questioned if property taxes in Toole County would be lower as a result of the proposed project. Commissioner Allan Underdal responded, "Your taxes should significantly decrease with the completion of the Glacier and Rim Rock wind farm projects."

The first phase of the Glacier wind project produces 106.5 megawatts of power; approximately \$2 million will be paid in taxes during the first year of operation. A similar tax structure is expected for the 300 megawatt Rim Rock wind farm.

The impact fees from the Glacier wind farm were negotiated to be .16 percent of the total cost of construction, which provided Toole County approximately \$435,000 in the first year, with a slight increase expected in years two and three.

A large portion of the Glacier wind farm impact fees were used for Toole County emergency services such as fire departments, ambulances and hospital infrastructure.

An audience member then questioned whether a portion of the impact fees for the Rim Rock wind farm should be devoted to the roads in Toole County. Commissioner Miller explained, "Toole County is currently looking into purchasing a Walk N Roll packer that will improve the maintenance of roads, including the roads used for the wind farm project."

Commissioner Ober stated that Toole County was pleased with the way road maintenance issues were handled during Phase I of the Glacier wind project adding, "We didn't get a single complaint on roads during the Glacier wind farm project."

The expected life of the equipment of the wind farm project is 20 years. An audience member asked what would happen to the equipment once the life of the project was over. Calvin Olson, Director of Wind Energy Development for NaturEner USA, informed the audience, "Our leases with landowners have provisions stating when the land is finished being used for wind production, the land will be returned to pre-wind conditions within a year's time."

Following the question and answer session, several audience members expressed support for the proposed wind project. Dennis DeVries, the Director of North Central Montana Resource Conservation and Development, summed the evening up well stating, "Wind farms are clean and green and will give an economic boost to Toole County. I am in support of this project."

With no further questions or comments, Commissioner Underdal made the motion to approve Resolution #25-2008. Commissioner Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Ober thanked the audience for attending and the hearing was closed.

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## School board suspends student from activities, approves sale of bus

November 19, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 484 Words OpenURL Link

The Cut Bank Schools board of trustees met in both open and closed session on Tuesday, Nov. 11. The board conducted its regular monthly meeting in open session and also held a student discipline hearing in closed session. The discipline hearing, which was set for 8:30 p.m., interrupted the regular meeting, causing the board to recess for approximately 20 minutes, and then reconvene into open session.

Following the closed the session, the board voted to suspend student 2009-2 for 30 days from all school-related activities. The student was suspended for possession of drug paraphernalia. The board also recommended, but did not require, that the student attended counseling.

This was the second student suspended from school activities since the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.

In action taken during the course of the regular meeting, the board:

Held first reading on 10 policies, many that the district already has in place as common practice, but not policy. The wording of the policies was recommended by the Montana School Board Association. The board requested additional information on the proposed wording of a policy dealing with public comment and rejected a proposed policy and the "organization and content" of commencement exercises, preferring to stay with the policy currently in place.

The board accepted the first reading of policies dealing with board-superintendent relationship (new); annual goals and objectives (new); uniform complaint procedure (replaces existing policy); resolution of staff complaints (replaces existing policy); selection of library materials (replaces existing policy); notice to parents required by No Child Left Behind Act (new); Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) policy (new).

Second and final reading of the policies is scheduled for the board's December meeting. The community is invited to review the proposed policies and offer their input to the board at or prior to the Dec. 9 meeting. Copies of the policies are available at the Central Office.

Hired Lou Villemez as the middle school boys basketball combo team coach.

Accepted the offer of \$1,000 from Community Bible Church for the 1988 school bus which is no longer being used by the district.

Formally adopted the Interlocal Wind Generation Facility Impact Fee Agreement with Glacier County. The agreement calls for School District No. 15 to receive \$10,000 annually for three years from the impact fees paid to the county by NaturEner Energy Limited for the Glacier Wind Project. The agreement also establishes a board to administer the impact fees paid to the county. The board will be made up of the three county commissioners and a representative of the school district appointed by the school board. This board will meet at least quarterly, post their agendas and follow Montana's Open Meeting Laws.

Granted permission to District Clerk Scott Laird to dispose of outdated and unnecessary records as stipulated under state law.

Set the date of the annual superintendent's evaluation study session for Tuesday, Dec. 2. The study session will be closed to the public.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'School board suspends student from activities, approves sale of bus', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 19 Nov 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C0EDF27C0F8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C0EDF27C0F8</a>



## Construction of MATL line, new wind farm projects will expand area tax base

November 12, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 1343 Words OpenURL Link

Pondera County Commissioner Cyndi Johnson recalls vividly when officials from Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. first approached them four years ago. "The county commissioners insisted the bottom line was MATL must work hard to satisfy the concerns of our local land owners and ag producers." Today, Johnson and her fellow commissioners, Sandra Broesder and Joe Christiaens, believe "MATL has done that to the best of their ability."

Even though the MATL transmission line will not be located within his county, Toole County Commissioner Allen Underdal believes the line will allow for "subsequent expanded wind farm development," which in turn will lighten the tax burden of the county's taxpayers. Without it, "taxpayers will continue to shoulder the cost of schools and state and local government in Toole County."

The Glacier County Commissioners believe construction of the line will "allow the county to maintain its current tax level and not increase property taxes." That's good news for all taxpayers. County Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door also believes the line "will also potentially bring additional wind energy projects to the area."

And that's even better news for taxpayers, business owners and school administrators faced with declining enrollments, but more federal mandates and less money to meet them.

Tim Tharp, who is the Superintendent of Schools and high school principal for Dutton/Brady, believes "MATL is the necessary first step toward wind energy development in the region." Tharp contends that by expanding the tax base, all property owners will benefit. "As I have told many legislators, we can't rely on the State of Montana and local property taxpayers to cover the growing bills. We need to find ways to grow the pie so that everyone can benefit."

Bob Williams, Vice President Regulatory for MATL, estimates the overall tax revenue for local governments along the approved route is estimated at \$731,525 annually. Of that:

Pondera County will be the biggest benefactor with an estimated \$259,742 in added tax revenue.

Glacier County will receive an added \$236,698 in annual tax benefits.

Teton County's tax revenue increase is estimated at \$136,857.

Cascade County is projected to receive an added \$98,227 in taxes annually.

According to Williams, the total tax benefit to Montana over the next five years is estimated at \$3.6 million and over the next decade tax revenues from this project alone will most likely exceed \$7.3 million.

MATL won't be the only new taxpayer in the Golden Triangle area and nearby counties. MATL officials estimate the investment in wind farms currently in the planning phases "is as much as \$1 billion. That would translate into \$75 million in new tax revenue over five years and \$195 million over 10 years," said Williams.

The line's 600 megawatts of capacity have been awarded to NaturEner USA, NaturEner Canada, Wind Hunter LLC and Invenergy Wind Montana.

NaturEner is the first to construct a wind farm in the area. Phase I and Phase II of the Glacier Wind Farm Project are under construction in Toole and Glacier Counties.

Cut Bank Superintendent of Schools Wade Johnson has seen school enrollment drop 20 percent over the last four years. "The MATL line and the accompanying wind projects will bring families to Cut Bank with quality jobs that will help stabilize our student population."

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Supt. Johnson believes "it is imperative that the MATL project is completed, allowing further wind energy development to progress" in Glacier, Toole and Pondera counties.

Cut Bank Mayor Joni Stewart has already seen what kind of impact a wind farm project can have on a community. The Glacier Wind Farm helped Cut Bank retailers, restaurants, motels and rental owners, said Stewart. The City of Cut Bank saw an increase in the number of new accounts for its water and garbage services, said Stewart.

When asked if Cut Bank taxpayers can continue to shoulder the burden of maintaining the level of services and programs they currently enjoy, Stewart replied, "The community support in Cut Bank is wonderful and everyone has a very positive attitude towards maintaining community services," pointing to the recent passage of the annual \$50,000 park levy.

But she was quick to note, "Funds received from MATL will help the city address the shortfall of revenues and increase the city's ability to tackle some of the bigger projects on our Capital Improvement Plan."

Commissioner Cyndi Johnson stated taxpayers in Pondera County "have usually been willing to support the services provided by the county. Given the current state of the national economy, we all question our ability to maintain the same level of service. Energy costs have been particularly difficult to manage and budgets are tight all around." Johnson added, "Without some growth and development in our economy, we will experience some reductions in services to our constituents."

She also pointed out, "While Pondera County received no direct impact from the Glacier Wind Farm project, the project provided-and continues to provide-jobs. It also brought families to our communities, which was a definite benefit to local businesses."

MATL officials are confident the construction phase of the project will generate in the neighborhood of \$15 million in wages and benefits. Roughly two-thirds of the crew members hired will be paid an hourly wage of \$20 to \$26; employees hired to operate and maintain the line will earn around \$25 per hour. The number of full-time operations and maintenance employees that will be needed once the line is operational has not been determined.

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The Montana Legislature worked hard to compensate affected landowners by eliminating property taxes for Class 3 farmland within 660 feet of the centerline of the new transmission line.

Stewart said, "All of the land owners I have talked to look forward to having MATL's presence in the county. I do believe ag producers have been treated fairly by MATL and the State," she added.

Supt. Johnson concurred, noting, "There is always room for improvement. I have visited with many of the impacted landowners, and while most are not completely happy about the new landscape, the landowners with whom I have visited feel they have been treated fairly."

According to Williams, farmers and other landowners whose property is directly affected by the MATL line will be compensated by MATL three ways:

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"I believe MATL has done the best they can to accommodate the needs of the landowners and balance that with the benefits to be realized by the region as a whole," concluded Tharp.

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## Construction of MATL line, new wind farm projects will expand area tax base

November 12, 2008 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 991 Words OpenURL Link

Pondera County Commissioner Cyndi Johnson recalls vividly when officials from Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. first approached them four years ago. "The county commissioners insisted the bottom line was MATL must work hard to satisfy the concerns of our local land owners and ag producers." Today, Johnson and her fellow commissioners, Sandra Broesder and Joe Christiaens, believe "MATL has done that to the best of their ability."

Even though the MATL transmission line will not be located within his county, Toole County Commissioner Allen Underdal believes the line will allow for "subsequent expanded wind farm development," which in turn will lighten the tax burden of the county's taxpayers. Without it, "taxpayers will continue to shoulder the cost of schools and state and local government in Toole County."

The Glacier County Commissioners believe construction of the line will "allow the county to maintain its current tax level and not increase property taxes." That's good news for all taxpayers. County Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door also believes the line "will also potentially bring additional wind energy projects to the area."

And that's even better news for taxpayers, business owners and school administrators faced with declining enrollments, but more federal mandates and less money to meet them.

Shelby Schools Superintendent Matt Genger sees the MATL project having a positive impact on not only Toole County, but also Shelby School District #14. "I believe the potential tax revenues and the additional economic impact from MATL and the potential wind farm projects will have lasting, positive effects on both. With shrinking enrollments, creating a new funding source is essential to continue the current educational process."

Genger warns with new funding sources, he foresees budget cuts, which means "tough decisions concerning what is and is not essential in Shelby Schools."

Tim Tharp, who is the Superintendent of Schools and high school principal for Dutton/Brady, believes "MATL is the necessary first step toward wind energy development in the region." Tharp contends that by expanding the tax base, all property owners will benefit. "As I have told many legislators, we can't rely on the State of Montana and local property taxpayers to cover the growing bills. We need to find ways to grow the pie so that everyone can benefit."

Bob Williams, Vice President Regulatory for MATL, estimates the overall tax revenue for local governments along the approved route is estimated at \$731,525 annually. Of that:

Pondera County will be the biggest benefactor with an estimated \$259,742 in added tax revenue.

Glacier County will receive an added \$236,698 in annual tax benefits.

Teton County's tax revenue increase is estimated at \$136,857.

According to Williams, the total tax benefit to Montana over the next five years is estimated at \$3.6 million and over the next decade tax revenues from this project alone will most likely exceed \$7.3 million.

MATL won't be the only new taxpayer in the Golden Triangle area and nearby counties. MATL officials estimate the investment in wind farms currently in the planning phases "is as much as \$1 billion. That would translate into \$75 million in new tax revenue over five years and \$195 million over 10 years," said Williams.

The line's 600 megawatts of capacity have been awarded to NaturEner USA, NaturEner Canada, Wind Hunter LLC and Invenergy Wind Montana.

NaturEner is the first to construct a wind farm in the area. Phase I and Phase II of the Glacier Wind Farm Project are under construction in Toole and Glacier Counties.

Tharp "welcomes" the approval of the MATL line and the economic development it brings. Without the tax relief of the MATL line and wind energy projects, Tharp believes "we will likely see the continued economic decline of the region. I believe that alternative energy production is one of the best things we can do to sustain our economy and tax-structure."

MATL officials are confident the construction phase of the project will generate in the neighborhood of \$15 million in wages and benefits. Roughly two-thirds of the crew members hired will be paid an hourly wage of \$20 to \$26; employees hired to operate and maintain the line will earn around \$25 per hour. The number of full-time operations and maintenance employees that will be needed once the line is operational has not been determined.

Genger believes "anytime Shelby's business community benefits, the school district benefits." And that trickles down to taxpayers.

"The taxpayers cannot continue to make up the difference between the State's obligation and the actual cost of running the local schools," said Genger.

Without expanding the tax base and without additional funding either from the state or by expanding the county's tax base, "cuts will be made, determined by what the community prioritizes as important," concluded Genger.

Johnson stated the Pondera County Commissioners recognized efforts by the State of Montana and State Senator Jerry Black of Shelby and State Representative Llew Jones of Conrad in "bringing a good tax relief package to the table" not only for MATL but also affected landowners.

The Montana Legislature worked hard to compensate affected landowners by eliminating property taxes for Class 3 farmland within 660 feet of the centerline of the new transmission line.

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## MATL will grow tax base for Hi-Line Counties

November 12, 2008 | Valierian, The (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh| Section: News | 1343 Words OpenURL Link

Pondera County Commissioner Cyndi Johnson recalls vividly when officials from Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. first approached them four years ago. "The county commissioners insisted the bottom line was MATL must work hard to satisfy the concerns of our local land owners and ag producers." Today, Johnson and her fellow commissioners, Sandra Broesder and Joe Christiaens, believe "MATL has done that to the best of their ability."

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Teton County's tax revenue increase is estimated at \$136,857.

Cascade County is projected to receive an added \$98,227 in taxes annually.

According to Williams, the total tax benefit to Montana over the next five years is estimated at \$3.6 million and over the next decade tax revenues from this project alone will most likely exceed \$7.3 million.

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## Sitzmann and Powell in race for District II County Commissioner

October 29, 2008 | Glacier Reporter (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 711 Words OpenURL Link

Nearly twice as many absentee ballots for the upcoming general election have already been requested by voters than were in the primary election, reported Glacier County Clerk and Recorder Glenda Hall on Monday. According to Hall, her office has issued 1,551 absentee ballots for the Nov. 4 general election and as of press time, 885 have been returned.

Hall said her office issued approximately 850 absentee ballots for the June primary election and over 85 percent of those, or about 730, were returned.

One of the few contested local races on the general election ballot is for the seat of District II Glacier County Commissioner. The race features two relatively new faces on the political scene: Tony Sitzmann, a Democrat, and Independent candidate Bill Powell. The two men were asked to share their views on various issues.

#### Bill Powell

"County commissioners need honesty and integrity," said Independent candidate Bill Powell of his run for the Glacier County seat vacated by outgoing commissioner John Ray.

"There are a number of issues so a commissioner needs to be honest to make wise decisions for the county. We need to be creating working relationships because there are issues facing the Tribe, county and state and we need to resolve these issues to better serve the county residents."

Powell is married to Karen Pepion Powell, and they have two sons and two daughters. "My mother is Joy Guardipee Wagner and my stepfather is Jack Powell," said the candidate.

"I've worked at Blackfeet Community College for the past 21 years as the apprenticeship coordinator and have certified many individuals as journeymen in their respective trades and occupations. I enlisted in the U.S. Army and served with the 101st Airborne Division in Phu Bai, South Vietnam."

An example of the issues facing the county, said Powell, is the ongoing negotiations over Blackfeet water rights. "There's a big controversy there," Powell said. "Only with negotiations and understandings on all sides will there be any resolution. The whole county needs to be served," he continued, "but it seems like the east end gets more services than the west end. All areas of Glacier County need to be represented, including East Glacier Park, Babb, St. Mary, Starr School, Browning, Seville and Cut Bank.

"Also, economic development needs to be addressed," Powell said. "Our ranchers, farmers and small businesses need representation to accomplish this part. There is a need to establish a better working relationship among the county, tribal, state and federal governments."

#### Tony Sitzmann

"The most important factor now is that our mills have gone down in value over the last year," said Tony Sitzmann, the Democratic candidate for Glacier County Commissioner. Sitzmann was referring to one of the issues he feels Glacier County faces in the future.

"We need to build that up by having more taxable property in the county. MATL will help - that will affect Phase 2 of the Ethridge wind farm - and MATL will go across Glacier County, which should help with taxes." Sitzmann is referring to the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) transmission line and NaturEner's Glacier Wind Farm project.

Another issue facing the county is the road department. "The issue is that with the rising cost of petroleum products, the department is in a deficit so we need to find ways to economize, along with the other county departments, and look for ways for money to be saved," said Sitzmann.

"With my business background I think I can be an asset to the other two commissioners," he continued. "They all have great ideas, but mainly I want to hear from the constituents. The constituents have to be involved and they have to come to the meetings. As chairman of the Port Authority, it's obvious that people criticize, but they don't come to the meetings to talk things over; there's no community involvement so we have the same problems with people complaining, but no action."

Finally, while the Presidential election is on the block Nov. 4, Sitzmann says the results of the county race should matter more to local residents.

"It's really important as to who is elected to the county commission; it will make a big difference to the people of Glacier County, more than who gets to be President, because what happens in the county has more direct effects on the people who live here."

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## Two vying for Glacier County Dist. II Commissioner Seat

October 29, 2008 | Glacier Reporter (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 578 Words

OpenURL Link

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## Economy not slowing energy projects

October 19, 2008 | Billings Gazette, The (MT)

Section: News 726 Words

OpenURL Link

Financing prospects for large-scale energy projects in Montana have dimmed with the crisis on Wall Street, but some that already are under way should proceed as planned, state officials and developers said.

Across Montana, new transmission lines, pipelines, wind farms and coal and natural gas projects are proposed or under construction.

Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer told The Associated Press in a recent interview that several companies assured him their projects will not be derailed by the downturn. Still, he cautioned that the recent heady pace of development could end if the economic outlook remains grim and banks stay reluctant - or unable - to make large loans.

"There's no question about it, when we look at the big infrastructure economy, there could be a slowdown," Schweitzer said.

#### Cash in hand

Some projects had lined up cash before the crisis, such as the 210-megawatt Glacier Wind farm being built near Shelby for \$500 million. Half of the wind turbines at the site went online last week, and the remainder are set to come online next year, said Bill Alexander with NaturEner, the Spanish company behind the project.

Similarly, a \$400 million to \$450 million expansion of the Signal Peak Coal Mine is under way with a new rail line being built to the site. The project near Roundup is backed by at least \$125 million in private equity and by outside loans, said Signal Peak president John DeMichiei.

But getting those loans did not mean the company skirted Wall Street's problems altogether.

"If it costs more for a bank to borrow from a bank, you don't think they're going to absorb that do you?" he asked. "Like anything else, it becomes more expensive."

For projects still needing money, developers are trying to line up customers or otherwise demonstrate to potential investors that they can expect adequate returns. That includes a natural gas power plant proposed by NorthWestern Energy near Anaconda.

NorthWestern spokeswoman Claudia Rapkoch said the \$206 million project will be built with a roughly 50-50 mix of cash and debt. Before seeking that debt, the company is awaiting approval from the Montana Public Service Commission, which could come next spring.

PSC approval, she said, "gives assurances to the market that this is a viable project that will generate revenue."

Lining up customers in advance has long been considered a reliable model for securing loans, said Patrick Barkey, director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana. But Barkey said the current economic uncertainty will put that adage to the test.

"We always have credit cycles," he said. "What happens on the upside of a cycle is loans are made that shouldn't be made. And on the downside, there are loans out there that are really good loans, with money to be made, but the loans are not being made."

#### Still needing financing

Other major projects that need outside financing to go forward include a \$7 billion coal conversion plant on the Crow Reservation, the \$790 million Highwood Generating Station near Great Falls and a \$150 million Alberta-to-Montana transmission line.

The Crow plant is proposed by the tribe in partnership with Australian-American Energy Company. Australian-American's chief executive, Allan Blood, said when the project was unveiled in August that financing would be found - a claim repeated by company officials earlier this month.

For the Highwood power plant, Southern Montana Electric began earth-moving work on an 850-acre site last week. SME's Tim Gregori said interim financing will allow initial work to begin while the utility seeks a loan for the power plant's full cost.

The 230-mile transmission line, proposed by Canada's Tonbridge Power and known as the Montana Alberta Tie Line, is in the process of finalizing a \$90 million construction loan. The company also has an agreement with a customer to prepay \$35 million in future revenues toward the cost of the project, said Tonbridge managing director Rob McFarlane.

One energy sector expected to escape the tightening credit markets is the oil industry. That's because oil companies are sitting on large cash reserves built up when prices for the fuel soared over the past several years, said Schweitzer and economist Barkey.

"It's not going to be them going to Wall Street and saying, 'Please can I have some money to build a new well.' Big oil and little oil have been drilling a lot of wells and making a lot of money," Schweitzer said. "I fully anticipate they're going to continue to invest that."

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## Energy projects plow on despite downturn

October 19, 2008 | Montana Standard, The (Butte, MT) Author: Matthew Brown - 10/19/2008 | Section: State And Regional | 371 Words OpenURL Link

BILLINGS — Financing prospects for large-scale energy projects in Montana have dimmed with the crisis on Wall Street, but some that already are under way should proceed as planned, state officials and developers said.

Across Montana, new transmission lines, pipelines, wind farms and coal and natural gas projects are proposed or under construction.

Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer told The Associated Press in a recent interview that several companies assured him their projects will not be derailed by the downturn. Still, he cautioned that the recent heady pace of development could end if the economic outlook remains grim and banks stay reluctant — or unable — to make large loans.

"There's no question about it, when we look at the big infrastructure economy, there could be a slowdown," Schweitzer said.

Some projects had lined up cash before the crisis, such as the 210-megawatt Glacier Wind farm being built near Shelby for \$500 million. Half of the wind turbines at the site went online this week, and the remainder are set to come online next year, said Bill Alexander with NaturEner, the Spanish company behind the project.

Similarly, a \$400 million to \$450 million expansion of the Signal Peak Coal Mine is under way with a new rail line being built to the site. The project near Roundup is backed by at least \$125 million in private equity and by outside loans, said Signal Peak president John DeMichiei.

But getting those loans did not mean the company skirted Wall Street's problems altogether.

"If it costs more for a bank to borrow from a bank, you don't think they're going to absorb that do you?" he asked. "Like anything else, it becomes more expensive." For projects still needing money, developers are trying to line up customers or otherwise demonstrate to potential investors that they can expect adequate returns. That includes a natural gas power plant proposed by NorthWestern Energy near Anaconda.

NorthWestern spokeswoman Claudia Rapkoch said the \$206 million project will be built with a roughly 50-50 mix of cash and debt. Before seeking that debt, the company is awaiting approval from the Montana Public Service Commission, which could come next spring.

PSC approval, she said, "gives assurances to the market that this is a viable project that will generate revenue." Copyright, 2008, The Montana Standard, All Rights Reserved.

# Citation (aglc Style)

Matthew Brown - 10/19/2008, 'Energy projects plow on despite downturn', *Montana Standard, The* (online), 19 Oct 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16A306D9C89D8930">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16A306D9C89D8930</a>



## Fire Prevention Week addresses home safety

October 9, 2008 | Grove Sun, The (OK) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Community | 780 Words OpenURL Link

For firefighters, Oct. 9, holds a commemorative significance. It was on this day in 1871 that more than 250 people were killed, 100,000 people were left homeless, 17,400 structures were destroyed, and over 2,000 acres burned in the Great Chicago Fire.

Shelby Volunteer Firemen, left to right, Joe Pehan, Shawn Smith, Doyle Arves and Dan Whitted, show off the new 3500 gallon rural tanker truck, purchased recently by Toole County, with the help of wind generation impact fees from NaturEner USA's Glacier Wind Farm Project. Photo by Patti Warburton

In 1900 President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, which has been observed since that time. This year Fire Prevention Week falls on October 5-11 and according to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

The 2008 theme "It's Fire Prevention Week; Prevent Home Fires!" encourages everyone to take another look at the structure we all call home and make an assessment of our individual preparedness and readiness to deal with a fire.

Here are a few questions that will help you determine if you and your family are prepared to respond in a fire crisis situation:

- # Do you have a home fire escape plan that includes two exits, usually a door and a window, from each room in your home?
- # Does each family member in your home know what those escape routes are?
- # Does your home have smoke alarms on every level, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area?
- # Have you tested each fire alarm within the past six months?
- # Have you and your family practiced a fire drill in your home within the past six months?
- # Do you and all your family members know the fire department's emergency phone number?

Shelby Fire Chief Dan Whitted stresses the need for having a plan in place, "Readiness is important because of how quick a fire spreads. Seconds count; if you have no idea where to go, that's a few more seconds lost."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (FNPA) in 2007 there were an estimated 399,000 reported home structure fires that resulted in 2,865 civilian deaths.

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries according to the NFPA, which determined that 40 percent of all fires start in the kitchen.

According to Whitted, an additional hazard exists for Toole County residents where infrastructure is aging. "Older kitchens can be a problem, people have cupboards right above the stove, or lower cupboards."

Unattended cooking is the leading factor nationally for kitchen fires.

"Grease fires are a big deal. Anything you are cooking with as far as butter, margarine, and oils are considered grease fires. Never throw water on a cooking fire, put the lid on the pan or use baking soda to extinguish. Keep baking soda on the kitchen counter," said Whitted.

The highest fatalities in home fires are attributed to smoking materials, i.e. cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. The most common material first ignited in home smoking-material fire deaths were mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture.

In the Toole County area Whitted sees more electrical and candle fires. He suggests that if you are unsure of doing your own electrical work, it's worth the investment to have a professional come in.

During 2005, an estimated 15,600 home structure fires started by candles were reported to local fire departments. These fires resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 civilian injuries.

"Candles are very dangerous; they have their place, but we've had more candles fires in the last few years than we have cigarettes. People just leave them, it's a big problem," shared Whitted.

The top five days for home candle fires are Halloween, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

With a predicted severe winter ahead, space heaters offer an economical way to heat a home. However, if left unattended space heaters cause a significant fire hazard in a home.

Whitted urges, "Please be careful of those (space heaters). I wouldn't suggest having them too close to beds, linens, bedspreads and furniture. Make sure it is solid on the floor. Keep children away from them."

Firefighters are working this week to bring increased awareness and ask the public to take a few minutes in their homes and get prepared.

Firefighters are working this week to bring increased awareness to children in the community as they take school classes on tours at the new fire hall this Friday.

Ron Buck, assistant Fire Chief also reminds the public that the fire department is always on hand to do free checks of fire alarms at homes or businesses. Simply call the Shelby Fire Department to schedule an appointment.

"Fire prevention is a year long event" concluded Buck.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Fire Prevention Week addresses home safety', *Grove Sun, The* (online), 9 Oct 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1308EA063ACE3300">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1308EA063ACE3300</a>



## Donations for new wading pool nearly \$5,000 after two weeks

September 24, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 803 Words OpenURL Link

Two weeks after the Chamber issued its challenge to alumni and community members to donate \$5 and "pool their resources" to build a new wading pool, a total of \$2,295 has been collected. This nearly matches the \$2,500 donation from NaturEner USA, the owner of the Glacier Wind Farm project located east of Cut Bank, which kicked off the challenge earlier this month.

City officials said a new wading pool will cost just over \$30,000. As of press time, \$4,795 has been raised through the Chamber Challenge. Cut Bank has been without a wading pool for the past two summers but if the Cut Bank Chamber Challenge is successful, a new wading pool will be filled and ready to go by June 1, 2009.

"There hasn't been a day go by since the Chamber issued this challenge that we haven't received donations in the mail," said Chamber President LeAnne Kavanagh. "The people of Cut Bank are always very generous when it comes to supporting a worthwhile cause and, as you can see, that commitment to our community doesn't end when our graduates move away."

Cut Bank High School's newest alumni, the Class of 2008, donated \$355 from their remaining class funds to the project. That total represents \$5 for each of the 71 members of the graduating class. Several class members were home last weekend for the Homecoming festivities to present the check to the Chamber.

Cody and Connie (Gage) Love, both graduates of CBHS who now live in the Billings, were quick to send in their donation of \$200 last week.

Class of 1970 alum Joel Brandvold, who lives with his family in Cypress, Calif., hasn't been "home" for 34 years but hopes to return someday, he said in a letter, which accompanied his donation.

"Although I live in California, I am a Cut Banker at heart," he wrote. Brandvold keeps up on his hometown through his subscription to the Cut Bank Pioneer Press as well as the city, county and Chamber web sites, which he wishes were all more up-to-date. Brandvold included several positive and encouraging suggestions and ideas to help promote Cut Bank and its businesses.

Kristin Mattocks, who is an Associate Research Scientist in Internal Medicine at the Yale University School of Medicine, has been gone from her alma mater for a long time, but that didn't stop her from mailing in a check from her home in Hamden, Conn.

Mark Meyer, an avid Cut Bank Wolves fan who follows the goings on in his community regularly, sent in a donation from Fort Worth, Tex.

Other out-of-town donations were received from: Roger Gunlikson (Fort Collins, Colo.), Dana Neidhardt (Colorado Springs, Colo.), Brian Howell (Meridian, Idaho) and Georgianna Taylor (Hamilton, Mont.).

Local alumni have been equally supportive of the Chamber Challenge. Gary and Lori Altenburg made a generous donation in memory of her father, Jerry Goldrick, and expressed their appreciation to the organizers of the challenge for "all your hard work on this most worthy cause."

Betty Richter sent in a donation to the project in the names of Cathy Croft Schwartz, Chris Croft, Bill Croft and Bob and Betty Richter.

Donations have also been received this week from Cut Bank's Russ and Lorraine Wahl, John and Lynne Brown, Mike and Linda Bruch, Frannie Dusterhoff, Glacier Signs & Monuments, Josh and Kim Czech, Karla and Andy Harvie, Don Losing of Main Street Car Wash, Marky Jones, Lee Holden, Jill Heil, Kathy Jacobsen and Donna Davis.

Cut Bank Chamber director Gloria Taylor is spearheading the Chamber Challenge and hopes to raise enough money to have the wading pool, which has been closed the last two years, back in operation next summer.

According to city officials, the total replacement cost for the wading pool is \$30,030. The city crew will donate some \$6,400 in labor costs, leaving just under \$24,000 in funds needed to complete the project. As of press time, \$5,000 has been raised and the Chamber is hoping to raise the remaining \$19,000 by the end of December.

Donations to the wading pool project may be mailed to:

Cut Bank Chamber

P.O. Box 1243

Cut Bank, MT 59427

Donations are tax deductible and should be made out to the City of Cut Bank Park Board and earmarked "Swimming Pool Park Project."

In the first week the Chamber Challenge was issued, donations were made by: Joe Brekke (Banks, OR), Patti Shelden (Glendale, AZ), Juliet DeMasi (Darien, CT), Paul Arnot (Bozeman, MT), Charlotte Hamilton (Class of 1971, Sheridan, WY), Albert and Joy Trollman (Winfield, KS), Metha and Bill Edens (Class of 1957, Kalispell, MT), and Louis and Kim Stoltz, Carolyn Brown, Wade and Shannon Johnson, Bill and Helen McCauley, Joanne Zenzius, Jim and Gloria Taylor, Tom and Lee Shock, Curtis and Lana Miller, Larry and Betty Salois, Brian and LeAnne Kavanagh, Walter and Charlotte Barry, Dawn Texidor and Mick and Geni Laden, all of Cut Bank.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

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## Shelby looking for ways to extend life of landfill

September 17, 2008 | Shelby Promoter (MT) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 1200 Words OpenURL Link

#### Melanie Hoggan

The second in a three-part series, this article looks at the technology surrounding landfills, challenges faced by the Shelby Landfill and potential impacts from recycling.

Out of sight, out of mind, is often the mantra when it comes to what the public knows about the waste industry. For experts in the field of waste disposal, the science, engineering and federal guidelines associated with operating a landfill are at the forefront of making landfills effective and safe.

As Rob Tasker plans for the 100 tons of residential and business waste that comes to the Shelby Landfill each week, along with the 80 tons of dirt that has been arriving daily from the Glacier Wind Farm and city water pipe projects, he understands his job entails much more than simply "covering up." Industry terms like leachate, methane levels, density per cubic yard, open cells, and tipping face are just a few of the complexities that require expertise and monitoring.

What is known as Phase One of the Shelby Landfill (SL) consists of 65 acres of wide open Montana prairie to the northeast of Shelby. Divided into cells, a measurement for how much of the landfill is closed, active and available, 50 percent of the SL cells have been used, which amounts to around 35 acres.

Sitting in the city's new 2007 Caterpillar dozer, Tasker 's job is to distribute and compact waste throughout the tipping face, an area approximately 120 feet wide by 75 feet long which equals three active cells.

"I push loads out into the cells in two foot layers and then compact it by running over it with the dozer three to five times. When the next load comes in, I push it down and then compact it again. At the end of the day, after it has all been compacted, I put a layer of soil on top of it," he explained. In a week, the open area will receive four to five layers of compacted waste and dirt cover.

Because the landfill has a projected life of 10 years, Tasker is particularly interested in achieving the highest compaction rate possible each day. "The more pounds we can get in a cubic yard the more efficient we are with the space available to us," he said.

The national average for compaction is 1,200 pounds per cubic yard. At the Shelby Landfill the compaction rate is around 750 pounds. "The City doesn't have a compactor because of the expense," said Tasker.

What happens when space runs out? The City is making plans for a possible Phase Two site. However, to develop the second phase there will be an added expense. In order to keep leachate, which is contaminated water, from leaking into the groundwater, federal EPA guidelines require a liner for each new cell that is developed.

The high clay content at the current landfill acts as a barrier which keeps leachate from escaping. In Phase One there was no cost in putting down a liner because of the natural liner created by the clay.

In Phase Two, however, the sites under consideration do not contain the clay barrier and will require the additional cost to line new cells with a manufactured material. Liner requirements are expensive and include geotextiles, ard/or plastics on the bottom and sides of the landfill to prevent liquids from leaving the landfill and impacting groundwater.

At a cost that ranges from .90 per square foot to \$1.50 depending on the mil, or thickness of the material used, lining one acre of ground, using the thinnest and least expensive liner, would carry a price tag of \$39,204.

As the city of Shelby plans for the future and looks for strategies to extend the life of the landfill, Northern Montana Joint Refuse Disposal District (NMJRDD) is seeing a positive impact to their landfill from community recycling efforts.

The NMJRDD, which includes Choteau, Conrad, Valier, Cut Bank, and other areas of Toole, Glacier and Pondera Counties, tracks the number of tons that are not disposed of at their landfill due to recycling.

According to Ronald Collyer, District Superintendent for NMJRDD, in 2007 Choteau, with it's population of 1,781, recycled 100 gallons of oil, 100 cubic yards of appliances and light goods, 412 cubic yards of tires, 174 cubic yards of yard waste, 90 tons of cardboard, 48.45 tons of newspaper, 3.76 tons of aluminum and steel cans, 18.6 tons of glass.

Cut Bank, with a population of 3,147 also kept 400 gallons of oil, 454 cubic yards of tires, 136 tons of cardboard, and 75 tons of newspaper out of the NJMRDD landfill through volunteer recycling efforts.

"One year of recycling added about three years to the life of the landfill," said M & M Iron and Recycling owner Merle Shortman, who provides the recycling option to Cut Bank and surrounding communities through his privately-owned business.

With recycling loads coming in from as far as Many Glacier and St Mary, he sees first hand items that would likely end up at the landfill without his service. He describes the volume that is diverted from landfills this way, "If you took a four by four (recycling) box, and you stacked a dozen of them together, look at how big the area would be. If you took 100 boxes and stacked them together you can see the impact."

Shortman receives an average of 3,200 pounds of newspaper every 10 days. Winner of the Eco Star award, M & M Iron and Recycling has steadily increased the amount it recycles since Shortman took over two years ago.

Could recycling impact the Shelby Landfill and assist in extending its use? Michael Vogel, Environmental Quality Specialist from the University of Montana stated, "When it comes to residential solid waste control, recycling is a common way of reducing the volume of garbage dumped in landfills. About 71 percent of your household trash can be recycled."

Addressing the economics of recycling, Vogel said, "Because landfill space is decreasing, the average cost of disposing of one ton of trash continues to increase. Recycling can therefore save money by decreasing the amount of trash that must be disposed of. Collection and transportation costs are often offset by this avoided cost. Recyclables can also be sold for added revenue. "

Shortman said the easiest item for Shelby residents to start recycling would be newspaper. "If a trailer was set up with eight 4x4 bins on it, it could be hauled to Cut Bank." Shortman believes the cost of fuel and man hours to drive a load from Shelby to Cut Bank would be less than the cost to landfill the newspaper.

Tasker, who covers and compacts tons of paper, cardboard, and aluminum weekly said, "Recycling would be great if it was cost effective. You need cooperation on all ends. If you don't have cooperation from the public in doing it, then it's not worth it. It would be really nice to see something like that. I think Shelby will see some form in the years to come."

For now Shelby residents that are interested in recycling take their items to Great Fall or to M & M Iron and Recycling in Cut Bank.

Part three in this series will concentrate on what Shelby City officials are planning for the future, along with what kind of interest there is from area businesses and residents to recycle.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Shelby looking for ways to extend life of landfill', *Shelby Promoter* (online), 17 Sep 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F5B1EB37B58">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1F5B1EB37B58</a>



## Chamber challenges all alumni to donate \$5 for wading pool

September 10, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 887 Words OpenURL Link

What can a five-dollar bill buy today? Most folks would reply, "Not much." But Cut Bank Chamber director Gloria Taylor is hoping to collect enough of them from Cut Bank High School alumni and their parents to buy a new a wading pool for the town's Swimming Pool Park.

Taylor didn't realize the local wading pool had already been out of commission for a year until the Chamber hosted a Lunch 'n' Learn last April to help the Park Board promote its Park Levy.

"We have a lot of young families in town and we need to have recreational opportunities to offer them. We were told at our April meeting that some families have chosen to locate in Shelby and Conrad rather than in Cut Bank because we didn't have the recreational opportunities they offer," said Taylor, who is working hard to make sure Cut Bank has a wading pool or some sort of splash park for toddlers and young swimmers by next summer.

After convincing the Chamber Board of Directors this is a "must do" project, Taylor and Chamber President LeAnne Kavanagh met with the Fund Raising Committee of the Cut Bank Education Foundation and Alumni Association to see how the two entities could "pool" their resources and raise the needed \$30,000 for a new wading pool.

The Chamber was hoping to utilize the membership database of the CBEFAA to email alumni about the project and solicit their support. Unfortunately, at this time, no database exists and the cost to mail out information on the fundraiser is cost prohibitive. But that's not stopping Taylor.

"Every time you log onto your computer, fire off an email to a former classmate or old hometown friend and tell them about this project. And then tell them to pass it on. How many jokes and inspirational messages do you forward in a week? If you do this half as many times, think of all the people you'll be reaching," urged Taylor.

"If every alumni just gave \$5 to this project, we could raise enough to fix the wading pool and replace the playground equipment in the Swimming Pool Park," she continued. "Parents of alumni who remember what a great asset the wading pool was when they were raising their kids are also asked to kick in \$5 or whatever they can afford. I just can't believe we haven't had a wading pool in town for two years," said Taylor.

Taylor said members of the CBEFAA board have offered their individual support of the fundraiser.

Working with Sweetgrass Development grant writer Anne Thompson and City Recreation Director Jennifer Biegler, Taylor helped gather data for a \$35,000 Montana Department of Commerce Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) grant to help fund the improvements.

"It's a long shot, but at least we're doing something to get the project going," said Taylor, whose goal is to have the wading pool or a water park operational by June 2009.

According to Mayor Joni Stewart, the City Council is scheduled to discuss its funding strategy for the wading pool at their Sept. 15 meeting. If the city does not received the TIIP grant, it may try for a Fish, Wildlife and Parks grant next February.

"If the TIIP grant is not successful or the council decides not to pursue the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Grant, the city will rely on donations," said Stewart.

According to Stewart, the City had a preliminary study done, which included three options, and the option chosen

was total replacement. The preliminary design includes replacing the fill under the pool and clearing the wading pool drain. The total amount for the replacement is \$30,030.

Stewart said the city crew will donate some \$6,400 in labor costs, leaving just under \$24,000 in funds needed to complete the project.

The first donation to the project came in last month from one of the Chamber's newest members. Kavanagh spoke with officials from NaturEner in July asking if they would haul a blade from the Glacier Wind Farm project to Cut Bank during Lewis and Clark Days to be autographed by local residents. The Chamber had planned to provide information on the baby pool project to those lined up to sign the blade and to also solicit donations for the project at the same time.

When it was determined the blade was too long to be parked in the Parkview Senior Center parking lot, NaturEner's Director of Project Management, Klaus Obel, asked if the company could make a donation to the project instead. It wasn't long before Kavanagh received a check for \$2,500 for the wading pool project from Jose Maria Sanchez Seara, the CEO of NaturEner USA, LLC.

"The Cut Bank Chamber would like to thank NaturEner for their generous donation to this project and, more importantly, their more than \$400 million investment in Glacier and Toole Counties," said Kavanagh. "The positive impact this project has had on our community, our businesses and the Golden Triangle area as a whole is staggering. With the construction phase of the Glacier Wind Farm project drawing to a close, we look forward to the continued expansion of NatureEner's clean and green energy projects in this area," said Kavanagh.

Donations to the wading pool project may be mailed to:

Cut Bank Chamber

P.O. Box 1243

Cut Bank, MT 59427

Donations are tax deductible and should be made out to the City of Cut Bank Park Board and earmarked "Swimming Pool Park Project."

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## CBHS enrollment sits at 219, CBMS sees increase in new students on first day of school

September 10, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 507 Words OpenURL Link

On the first day of school last year, student enrollment was up by 24 students but Cut Bank Schools administration knew the trend wasn't going to be long-lived. This year, despite the 21 additional students enrolled in Cut Bank Middle School, overall enrollment is down by 22 students, reported school officials.

"Our enrollment numbers are always a little volatile this time of year," said Cut Bank Schools Superintendent Wade Johnson. "We anticipated the numbers to be down a little, but we're still hopeful the Glacier Wind Farm project will result in some families with school-age children moving in to the community."

Last year, enrollment figures posted on the first day of school were the highest in the previous six years with 791 students reporting for class. This year that number dropped to 769.

Cut Bank High School has less than 60 students in all four grades and the total number of students in CBHS is down to 219. The Class of 2012, or the freshman class, is the largest with 59 students. The Class of 2011 boasts 58 and this year's junior class, or the Class of 2010 is the smallest with just 50 students. Last year's CBHS Class of 2009 had 56 students but this year that number has shrunk to 52.

CBMS is the lone bright spot in student enrollment with both the sixth and eighth grade class sizes up significantly. CBMS enrollment is up 21 to 195. The eighth grade class is the largest in the district with 70 students, followed by the sixth grade class with 64 and the seventh grade class with 61.

Across town at Anna Jeffries Elementary School, the fourth and fifth grade classes are very similar in size, with 52 and 53 students respectively. That's down two from last year's enrollment of 107.

H.C. Davis Elementary School, which is home to grades K-3 and the district's Pre-Kindergarten and K-3 Special Education classes, is down just one student to 214 from last year's enrollment of 215.

The district's two Hutterite Colony schools have a combined enrollment of 36 students in grades K-8, which is eight less than last year. Hidden Lake's enrollment is five students, which is down from nine students. Glacier Elementary's is also down four students, from 35 last year to 31 this year.

Official count days for school funding or ANB (annual number belonging) are Oct. 1 and Feb. 1.

The following is a list of this year's class sizes. Last year's enrollment appears in parentheses.

H. C. Davis

**Elementary School** 

Kindergarten 53 (55)

First Grade 51 (52)

Second Grade 53 (54)

Third Grade 52 (49)



# • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'CBHS enrollment sits at 219, CBMS sees increase in new students on first day of school', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 10 Sep 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C0B523DC108>



## Road Dept. receives \$100,000 from wind farm impact fees

August 20, 2008 | Cut Bank Pioneer Press (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh | Section: News | 325 Words OpenURL Link

Glacier County Commissioners Michael DesRosier and Ron Rides At The Door approved distributing \$100,000 of NaturEner's \$188,943 Wind Generation Impact Fee to the Glacier County Road Department for operations in FY 2008-09. The action came during the commissioners' session on Monday, Aug. 18. Chairman John Ray is on vacation and did not attend Monday's meeting nor did Clerk and Recorder Glenda Hall who is attending a conference this week.

The commissioners are looking into the possibility of leaving the \$100,000 in an investment account and having Road Supervisor Bill Bandel draw out funds from the account as they are needed.

Bandel said at Monday's meeting that he and the commissioners have decided not to purchase two new motor graders for the department at this time. By deferring purchase of the equipment he will be able to utilize approximately \$240,000 for fuel and road materials for projects this fiscal year.

One of the priorities for Bandel's department will be applying Magchloride to dusty county roads. The product has been successful in controlling dust on the Sullivan Bridge Road and the LeBreche Road, said Bandel. He will be targeting roads with homes on the "down wind" side, including the first part of Henderson Road, Hall Road, the loop through NaturEner's Glacier Wind Farm Project and Meadow Brook Road, in anticipation of a future wind farm project.

"We're hoping for a good, open fall to work on these projects," said Bandel.

In late June, the commissioners voted to give \$10,000 of the impact fees to School District No. 15 for the school district's before and after school tutoring programs. The remaining \$78,943 in impact fee funds will remain in an investment account until it is needed.

State law mandates the owner or operator of a wind generation facility used for a commercial purpose is subject to local governmental and school impact fees for the first three years of construction. The fee may not exceed .5 percent of the total construction cost.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

LeAnne Kavanagh, 'Road Dept. receives \$100,000 from wind farm impact fees', *Cut Bank Pioneer Press* (online), 20 Aug 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C0A40224D40">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1C0A40224D40</a>



## County Road Dept. to receive \$100,000 from wind farm impact fees payment

August 19, 2008 | Glacier Reporter (MT) Author: LeAnne Kavanagh| Section: News | 325 Words OpenURL Link

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One of the priorities for Bandel's department will be applying Magchloride to dusty county roads. The product has been successful in controlling dust on the Sullivan Bridge Road and the LeBreche Road, said Bandel. He will be targeting roads with homes on the "down wind" side, including the first part of Henderson Road, Hall Road, the loop through NaturEner's Glacier Wind Farm Project and Meadow Brook Road, in anticipation of a future wind farm project.

"We're hoping for a good, open fall to work on these projects," said Bandel.

In late June, the commissioners voted to give \$10,000 of the impact fees to School District No. 15 for the school district's before and after school tutoring programs.

The remaining \$78,943 in impact fee funds will remain in an investment account until it is needed.

State law mandates the owner or operator of a wind generation facility used for a commercial purpose is subject to local governmental and school impact fees for the first three years of construction. The fee may not exceed .5 percent of the total construction cost.

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LeAnne Kavanagh, 'County Road Dept. to receive \$100,000 from wind farm impact fees payment', *Glacier Reporter* (online), 19 Aug 2008 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1D49DA6581E0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/167F1D49DA6581E0</a>



## What is Toole County doing with first \$435,648 impact fee payment from wind farm project?

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#### Melanie Hoggan

for the PromoterIn May of 2007, Gov. Brian Schweitzer signed into law the Clean and Green Energy Bill. This paved the way for the State of Montana to offer a tax rate of three percent, rather than the previous rate of 12 percent, to companies who want to develop clean and renewable energy within the state.

"This is not the lowest tax rate in the surrounding areas, but it is competitive. That was extremely important, because all these things are taken into consideration when a wind farm is going to locate in your state. We wanted to send a message to these types of companies that, yes, Montana welcomes you to invest in Montana; that we are willing to provide a tax rate that would be commensurate to what they pay elsewhere," said Shelby State Senator Jerry Black, who was instrumental in passage of the legislation.

With the legislative groundwork laid at the State level, counties are beginning to reap the benefits as clean energy business is attracted to Montana. Toole County residents don't need to look very far to see the result, with approximately 100 new turbines from the NaturEner USA wind farm anticipated in the Toole County portion of the Glacier Wind Farm project.

After negotiations between Toole County and NaturEner USA, Toole County has received \$435,648, which is the first of three impact fee payments from the wind farm giant.

Currently the money is in what County Treasurer Boyd Jackson described as a sweep account. "Each night the bank comes and sweeps out the balance, the bank applies the interest, and then it goes back in. The interest rate varies from day to day; it depends on what the daily rate is, usually around one percent," he explained.

Toole County Commissioner Allen Underdal explained, "The City and County hired a company that deals in impact fees. They did some negotiation with the wind farm company. We negotiated an impact fee. The impact fee is in there by law. It (the law) talks about half of one percent that you can go up to per year for the first three years. We negotiated that based on what impacts might be."

Underdal continued, "Because the project has changed in the last two years, the amounts have changed, but the percentage hasn't. It goes up in an incremental amount for each of the two years, plus an inflation factor."

With at least \$1.3 million coming into Toole County coffers over the next three years, the Toole County Commissioners will be the decision makers for how that money will be allocated or invested.

"It's at the discretion of the commissioners. We haven't sat down and said 'x' amount is going here or there. We are going to use this to get capital items for emergency services," stated Underdal. "Two of the things we have agreed to purchase are fire trucks-one for North Toole County (fire department) and one for South Toole County VFD, or at least participate in the purchase. We will probably use some dollars for the Sheriff's Department. Also, our road department will be affected. We will have to see how they are affected," he added.

Jackson confirmed \$200,000 has been paid out to the North and South Fire Departments for "general capital improvements."

"One of the impacts is fuel, it's an impact to everyone. It would help us on our vehicles, and maintenance for the vehicles we have now, it would be a tremendous help," said Toole County Sheriff Donna Matoon.

Black commented, "It's my understanding the county went to considerable expense to upgrade the roads. There were costs to move power lines, costs to upgrade county roads because of the tremendous weight and costs to widen corners so they were able to get blades and towers around the corners."

As budgeting for the 2008-2009 fiscal year begins, impact fees will be a topic of discussion. "We could set up a trust fund from these fees and not spend the actual dollars in the trust fund but the interest on a yearly basis. I am not sure how we will go about that. Obviously we have allocated some of the dollars already. We may build up a trust fund and utilize that interest. We haven't fully decided," said Underdal.

When asked what portion of the impact fees will go to the Shelby school system, Commissioner Ben Ober responded, "Zero. So far there are no families attending Toole County Schools, no extra teachers or textbooks that we know of."

Underdal added, "We talked to the school district superintendent, who was Tom Rogers at the time, and he felt there wasn't going to be any impact."

Matt Genger, who took over the reigns of Shelby Superintendent of Schools after Rogers resigned, is taking a different approach.

"I think the impact is an indirect impact. We see the need for qualified workers coming right out of school. That impact then is to our vocational track, like our shop program and our vocational training. The impact is the fact that right now the area is short of qualified workers," said Genger. He has met with the commissioners and will be following up with a proposal that demonstrates the impact to the school district.

In January 2009 taxes will be assessed against the Glacier Wind Farm property. "That will be very positive to have a large taxpayer pick up part of the tax burden," said Underdal. "I can't tell you how much. There are a lot of variables in the budgeting process a year down the road. But when you get another large taxpayer involved in paying, it certainly picks up a part of the tax burden from the people who have already been paying; this will be a considerable boost."

As the clean energy industry continues to shop Montana for possible sites to develop, counties such as Toole will be left with decisions of how best to take advantage of what Black called, "The most significant economic development since oil was discovered in 1922 and the Burlington Northern railroad was constructed."

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