

# Billings Gazette

## Finding a familiar feel

Wyoming star Sam Lecholat excited to join Bobcats in 2021 **SPORTS, B1**



## 'This is my voice'

Young artist turns South Side fence into call for racial justice **LOCAL & STATE, A5**



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BETHANY BAKER, BILLINGS GAZETTE

A double rainbow forms as the Mustangs play the Idaho Falls Chukars during opening night at Dehler Park on June 14, 2019.

# City considers how to use Dehler Park

## Lack of baseball leaves open field

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It might be a quiet summer at Dehler Park.

The Mustangs, Billings' Pioneer League Minor League Baseball team, announced Wednesday it was doubtful if regular season baseball for the team would start on time, if at all.

That's left the city of Billings to wonder how best to use Dehler Park, the Mustangs' home field. The Mustangs are affiliated with the Cincinnati Reds.

"How do we diversify its use?" city administrator Chris Kukulski said of the park. "That's the question we're asking."

Dehler Park is owned by the city and was built in 2008 when voters approved a \$12.5 million, 20-year bond. The final payment on the ballpark will be due July 1, 2027.

With the questions surrounding Minor League season play in the age of COVID-19, the city has been working with Billings American Legion to ensure some



BILLINGS GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Fans packed Dehler Park for the Billings Mustangs' home opener against Missoula in this 2016 photo.

baseball is played at Dehler over the summer.

"That's really been the focus at this point," Kukulski said.

So Dehler will host American Legion baseball, ensuring the community will still get to see games at the park, as part of the Goldsmith Gallery Tournament. Other matches are set to be played at Pirtz Field. The annual tourney will take place June 25-28.

But other events are a possibil-

ity. A local group has approached the city about holding a community event at the ball park toward the end of the summer, Kukulski said. The city is open to it; the only concern is protecting the field, he said.

Gary Roller, general manager of the Mustangs, said the organization is waiting to see what happens with the season. The Mustangs laid off three of its small front office staff in May.

"We're considering our options for non-baseball events if we aren't able to play this summer," he said. "At this point we haven't committed to anything."

Other communities in Montana hosting minor league teams have looked to alternate events to keep their ballparks busy this summer.

A letter released by Scott Reasoner, president of the Great Falls Voyagers, said the team will host family movie nights, a kickball league, American Legion baseball, trivia nights and other activities.

"The Voyagers' schedule was to begin on June 19 in Billings, and while we still wait for an official cancellation, the honest truth is we find it very hard to believe there will be professional baseball in Montana this summer," Reasoner wrote.

"The Voyagers know it is our job to bring family-friendly fun to our community no matter the challenge," he added.

COVID-19 restrictions this summer were one more blow to an already troubled Pioneer League.

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# Health official critical of rally

Doctor calls Trump's June 20 event a 'dangerous move'

**CARLA K. JOHNSON AND JILL COLVIN**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After months away from the campaign trail, President Donald Trump plans to rally his supporters on Saturday for the first time since most of the country was shuttered by the coronavirus. Trump will head to Tulsa, Oklahoma — a state that has seen relatively few COVID-19 cases.

But health experts question the decision, citing the danger of infection spreading among the crowd and sparking outbreaks when people return to their homes. The Trump campaign acknowledges the risk in a waiver that attendees must agree to absolving the campaign of responsibility should people get sick.

Originally, Trump had scheduled the rally for June 19, known as Juneteenth because it marks the end of slavery in the United States. Tulsa, Oklahoma, the location for the rally, was the scene in 1921 of one of the most severe white-on-black attacks in American history.

Trump did not know the significance to black Americans of the date and location he chose for the campaign rally, key Republican supporters of the president in Congress said Sunday.

Black community and political leaders denounced the move and called on Trump to reschedule. He resisted until late Friday when, in a rare turnabout, Trump tweeted that he had moved the rally to Saturday, June 20, out of respect for the view of supporters and others who had asked him to.

"There's special sensitivities there in Tulsa, but Juneteenth is a very significant day, so my encouragement to the president was to be able to pick a day around it," Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., said Sunday. Lankford said he was among several people who had spoken with Trump about the rally.

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# Minneapolis officers quit

## Police resign citing lack of support

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

MINNEAPOLIS — At least seven Minneapolis police officers have quit and another seven are in the process of resigning, citing a lack of support from department and city leaders as protests over George Floyd's death escalated.

Current and former officers told The Minneapolis Star Tribune that officers are upset with Mayor Jacob Frey's decision to abandon the Third Precinct station during the protests. Demonstrators set the building on fire after officers left.

Protesters also hurled bricks

and insults at officers. Numerous officers and protesters have been injured.

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights launched a civil rights investigation into the city's police department this month and the FBI is investigating whether police willfully deprived Floyd of his civil rights.

The department has faced decades of allegations of brutality and other discrimination against African Americans and other minorities. A majority of City Council members support dismantling or defunding the department.

"(Officers) don't feel appreciated," said Mylan Masson, a retired Minneapolis officer and use-of-force expert. "Every-

body hates the police right now. I mean everybody."

Deputy Chief Henry Halvorson said in an email to supervisors earlier this month that some officers have simply walked off the job without filing the proper paperwork, creating confusion about who is still working and who isn't.

Minneapolis Police spokesman John Elder downplayed the departures.

"There's nothing that leads us to believe that at this point the numbers are so great that it's going to be problematic," Elder said. "People seek to leave employment for myriad reasons — the MPD is no exception."

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JERRY HOLT, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

Cierra Hurst, of Brooklyn Park, Minn., and who grew up in Minneapolis, attends a gathering at North Commons Park in Minneapolis Sunday about how to address problems with the Minneapolis Police Department.



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