

# Billings Gazette

## Triplets excited for next level

Missoula brothers ready for Battlin' Bears

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## Developer eyes new TIF district

City council votes to OK study of area west of downtown

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LARRY MAYER, BILLINGS GAZETTE

## ROAD RASH CAR WASH

Road Rash Riders of American Defenders members gather for a fundraising car and motorcycle wash at Magic City Custom Worx on 1st Avenue South on Sunday. The event raises money for the Montana Veterans Meat Locker.

# Relief panel lacks leader

MATTHEW DALY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Seven weeks after Congress unleashed more than \$2 trillion to deal with the coronavirus crisis, an oversight commission intended to keep track of how the money is spent remains without a leader.

Four of the five members of the Congressional Oversight Commission have been appointed, but House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., have not agreed on a chair, leaving the commission rudderless as the federal government pumps unprecedented sums into the economy.

Without a leader, the panel's remaining members can still do some oversight work, but cannot hire staff or set up office space. The four members have not met as a group since the economic rescue law was passed by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump in late March.

"If the commission is not functioning — which it is not — then there is no oversight" on a huge part of the economic rescue law, said John Coates, a professor of law and economics at Harvard Law School.

So far, "it's a non-oversight, oversight commission," added Kimberly Wehle, a visiting professor at American University Law School. Lawmakers trying to oversee the spending law "are surging down the rapids without a raft," she said.

Meanwhile, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell expressed optimism Sunday that the U.S. economy can begin to recover from a devastating recession in the second half of the year, assuming the coronavirus doesn't erupt in a second wave. But he suggested that a full recovery won't likely be possible before the arrival of a vaccine.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," Powell noted that the economy was fundamentally healthy before the virus struck suddenly and forced widespread business shutdowns and tens of millions of layoffs. Once the outbreak has been contained, he said, the economy should be able to rebound "substantially."

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# Lend me a lentil

Farmers donate crops to charitable organizations

MARI HALL  
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When a statewide shelter-in-place order was issued in mid-March due to the novel coronavirus, the Sikorski family wondered what they could do to help.

The family owns a farm and ranch located about 20 miles south of Baker, Montana, and they decided that while they couldn't donate money to organizations who needed it, they'd donate the next best thing: lentils.

Last Thursday, farm owners Kathy and Jerry Sikorski delivered more than 1,000 pounds of black lentils by truck to the Salvation Army, Family Service, the men's and women's shelters, and a few other organizations in Billings. Some will help distribute lentils to the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian reservations, Kathy Sikorski said.

"The economy now is tough, and we don't have thousands of dollars to send off to these places,"



MIKE CLARK, BILLINGS GAZETTE

Jerry Sikorski and his wife Kathy Sikorski unload 50 pound sacks of lentils that they are donating to the Salvation Army in Billings on Thursday. The Sikorskis are lentil farmers and said they had a great crop this year.

she said. "But I actually think that donating lentils is probably better."

Jerry Sikorski can fly about

450 pounds of lentils on his small Cessna 182 airplane, and so far, the family delivered lentils to Bozeman and Rapid City, South

Dakota. They plan to deliver to Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, and

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# Biden's VP search continues

Spotlight moves to how long he'll serve

WILL WEISSERT  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden has longed to win the White House for more than three decades. If he finally makes it there after November's election, he's already talking about leaving.

In an effort to ease concerns about his age, the 77-year-old presumptive Democratic nominee has said he wouldn't seek re-election if his mental or physical health declined. He has also re-

ferred to himself as a "transition candidate," acting as a bridge to a younger generation of leadership.

Biden is rarely known for sticking to a script, and the comments are evidence of his candid style. But they're also contributing to intense speculation about who is best positioned to lead the party after him.

"We do have a longer bench as Democrats, a younger bench in terms of elected leadership all across the country," said Democratic strategist L. Joy Williams, chairwoman of Higher Heights PAC, which promotes and supports African American women

as candidates and officeholders.

Biden has not ruled out running for a second term, in part because such an explicit pledge would immediately render him a lame duck in Washington, where political capital will be needed to manage the coronavirus recovery.

But the question of his long-term prospects looms over his candidacy, especially as he considers his options for vice president.

While someone like Elizabeth Warren could broaden Biden's appeal among progressives, the



CHARLIE RIEDEL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden greets supporters at a campaign rally March 7 in Kansas City, Mo.

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