

Missoula Downtown Lowdown



Connecting our Community

Promoting, Supporting & Enhancing the Vitality of Downtown Missoula for the Betterment of Our Community



**President's Column
by Aimee McQuilkin**
Betty's Divine
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You know those mornings when you're heading to work and the fog lays thick over the Clark Fork River, but as the day passes, it lifts little by little and the sun shines through, and what started out as a classic Missoula inversion quickly turns into the sunniest day of all?

The same can be said about the future of Downtown Missoula as it currently stands going into 2016. It is so easy to get caught up in the negative and before you know it, you're complaining with your neighbor on the sidewalk about The Merc still standing empty, the new parking meters, and the panhandlers holed up right outside your window.

Fellow business owners, employees and lovers of Downtown! We are Downtown Missoula's advocates and we knowingly or not set the tone for our customers and staff. We are Downtown's most dedicated cheerleaders, and despite the various challenges we will always, to some degree, have to face...it is our duty to stay supportive, upbeat and positive.

What do we have going on that deserves bragging about? Let me offer you some talking points regarding cool Downtown projects we should all be shouting about, projects that both directly and indirectly generate more customers and more revenue for our businesses.

Despite decreased enrollment and budget cuts, **the University of Montana received an all-time record in research awards of \$83 million brought in from faculty last year.** 70% of this money stays in our economy. In addition, UM's Farm to College program is one

of the best in the country, spending over a million dollars with local vendors to bring local food to the students at the university. In 2015, Fodor's named Missoula #1 on 20 College Towns We Love To Visit. We love you, UM!

- **The Missoula College**, slated to open a year from now, will bring 2,500 students (not even counting faculty and staff!) through Downtown on a daily basis.
- **The Reserve Street Pedestrian Bridge** starts construction in April, which means we can get on a bike in Downtown Missoula and ride to Downtown Hamilton on a dedicated bike path! This is one of the many reasons Missoula ranks #1 by Smart Asset as a fitness friendly city.
- **Our city-wide bus is FREE!!** Ridership was up by 35% last year because of this sweet perk.
- So many building projects are either underway-like **Stockman Bank**-or about to get started, all bringing more residents and more jobs to our downtown. Three housing projects include Toole Crossing, the Old Sawmill District and the student housing project on East Front Street lot will result in approximately 1,150 new residents living Downtown.
- The arts and culture scene is off the hook! **The Missoula Art Museum is moving forward with the Art Park on Pine Street**, and the Missoula Public Library just rolled out the initial design for its full-block project.
- The craft brewery craze is here to stay and people actually travel far and wide to drink our beer! The only city with more breweries per capita than Missoula is Portland, Oregon. That's big! Just another reason why Missoula ranks #32 on Top 100 Best Places to Live in 2016 by Liveability.com. Psst...this puts us as the highest

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March 2016

- Spotlight: Habitat for Humanity
- Partnership Welcomes New Staff
- MDA Buys Building
- Parking Meter Tips & Tricks
- MDF Poker Tourney March 6

Please share with friends and colleagues!



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MDA Buys Building, Secures Long-Term Stability

The Missoula Downtown Association has had several different offices in Downtown Missoula throughout its 40-year history, floating from Higgins Avenue to Main Street to Broadway and back to Main Street over the years. The MDA has occupied its current location at 218 East Main Street since May 2006.

One of the big-picture, long-term goals for the MDA has been for the organization to own its own property. On January 21, 2016 that dream became a reality.

When Glacier Bank bought out Community Bank and decided to close the Main Street branch, TrailWest Bank, formerly known as Bitterroot Valley Family of Banks, purchased the building from First Security Bank. The space inside the building was broken out into condominiums, and the MDA purchased its front office from the bank and partnered up to share the common-area spaces.

TrailWest Bank will open its new Downtown Missoula branch in August, following the grand opening of its brand new bank at West Broadway and Palmer in late spring.

With financial support from the Downtown Business Improvement District, the MDA now has a 20-year mortgage with great terms and only an increase of 30% on its monthly payment. This permanent home for the MDA, the BID and the Missoula Downtown Foundation ensures long-term stability, support and success for the Downtown Missoula community.

The MDA is extremely grateful for the vision and leadership of Dan Cederberg, Cederberg Law, and Dan Schneider and his entire staff at TrailWest Bank for their support and partnership. It's a great benefit for a non-profit organization to own its space. Thank you TrailWest Bank!

Here's to another 40 years of the MDA!

President continued

ranked city in Montana.

- **The UM Adams Center** is working hard to bring more national level events to Missoula. In 2014, UM hosted the largest concert to ever take place in Montana to date - Paul McCartney. The Adams Center is planning to host to the Montana High School Association Boys Basketball State A Tournament (bringing 3,000-4,000 visitors March 3-5), and the 2016 USA Gymnastics Women's Junior Olympic Level 9 Western Championships April 25-May 1.
- The newly-remodeled **Wilma Theatre** has quickly become a destination for nationally-touring acts. I'm not sure about you, but my shop is slammed the day before and the day after big shows like last month's Grace Potter. We can't wait to see what this year brings for music Downtown!
- **The Clark Fork** is a healthy vibrant river, and we Downtowners are blessed to work so near it. When I first moved to town 20 years ago, nobody was even dipping their toes in. These days, between the summer tubers, the year-round surfers and kayakers, and the fishermen seen dotting the banks even in the winter, the river is always bumpin! The #7 question on Google's Top Travel Questions in the US for 2015 was "What to do in Missoula, MT?" I bet something about our dear Clark Fork River was one of the answers!
- Fresh off the press: plans have recently been submitted to city staff for a multi-story boutique hotel on the corner of Main and

Pattee. This will launch us into the next level, for sure. That's all I can say for now...

- **Hank Green** of You Tube fame (you may not know of him, but your teenager sure does!) will be moving his media empire to the old funeral home on West Spruce this spring. Between EcoGeek and VidCon, they will have around 25 employees coming to work Downtown daily.
- And finally, parking in downtown Missoula. This transition has been challenging for a lot of us, and it's so easy to blame decreased holiday sales (which were a trend across the entire nation for 4th quarter 2015, not just for us) on the new meters. They are here to stay, and now we must be proactive and support them. Help customers use them, direct them to our fabulous parking structures. The Missoula Parking Commission is an internationally accredited parking organization and serves to keep the parking Downtown flexible and in-flow. I know we continually look to Bozeman and their free Downtown parking with envy, but have you tried to park there recently? You have to park and walk at least 6 blocks on a good day. We don't want this.

You know how happy Missoulians are on those sunny days after the fog clears, and it's so contagious! Inform your staff about all this cool Missoula stuff, and counteract the negativity the media thrives on. We don't need Google, Fodor's or Liveability.com to tell us how great Missoula truly is.



Brennan's Wave at Sunset. Photo by Brian Christianson

Member Spotlight



Joining the Missoula community as an ABC affiliate in 1991, ABC FOX Montana has since grown to broadcast ABC and FOX stations into Kalispell, Butte, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Helena as well as in Missoula. ABC FOX Montana is located in a Missoula landmark, the former Carousel building at 2200 Stephens Ave, where their team of 46 employees takes pride in being a leader in broadcast technology.

ABC FOX Montana launched their first local newscast in 2012 and only continued to expand their local news services and community involvement. In 2013, Cowles Media Company of Spokane, Wa., purchased ABC FOX Montana, which gave them the capability of live remote news gathering from all over the state of Montana. ABC FOX Montana has produced full live news broadcasts from remote locations in Missoula like Caras Park and the Osprey stadium.

The 2015 launch of Wake Up Montana, a 2-hour statewide morning newscast from 5-7 am, brought a unique morning newscast to Montana with live reports and stories from all over the state as well as market specific weather for all communities.

ABC FOX Montana loves their relationship with the Missoula community and Downtown Missoula. They are the fastest growing television broadcast group in Montana and take a lot of pride in their community partnerships. Going into 2016, they will continue to commit to informing the community through broadcast journalism and are happy to have numerous Montanans return to Missoula to continue their careers with ABC FOX Montana.

ABC Fox Montana wants all members of the MDA to know that their doors are open and they would love to meet with anyone interested in learning more about their organization. They always enjoy hosting visitors, giving tours of their station, and discussing needs of other organizations and how to become involved as a partner.

For more information, contact Tom Ciprari (tom.ciprari@abcfoxmontana.com) or Rob Curran (rob.curran@abcfoxmontana.com)

Multi-Space Meter Must-Haves

We have all witnessed that some customers have struggled with the new parking meters in Downtown Missoula. After all, it's a significant change, both in process and product.

Because the new multi-space meters are here to stay, it's up to us - business owners, managers and employees - to share the positives and to help our community members embrace the change. We should anticipate spending the next several months learning about and talking up the new meters and what they offer to our Downtown constituents.

With that in mind, here are a few helpful tips to offer customers:

- Take a snapshot of your vehicle license plate with your phone. That way you don't have to "remember" your plate number. If you don't have a phone with a camera, write the plate number on a card, and put it in your wallet.
- For folks who are cautious about using their credit cards, they should know the new meters offer Tier 1 security, which means your card data is disposed of at the end of every successful transaction. In other words, the meters are more secure than the gas pump!
- Yes, it does take time for the meters to process credit cards, similar to the additional time it takes to process your credit card for an in-store purchase. This additional couple of minutes is a great time to breathe deeply and enjoy the fresh air in our beautiful Downtown.
- While folks may need to stand in line at the new meters to pay for parking, what they may not know is that they can pay for their parking at any meter Downtown, no matter where they park. So, if there is a line, then cross the street or walk around



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From Sonnets to Songwriting: The Writers' Room Classes March 5

By Caroline Patterson

The Writers' Room

Want to begin that story rattling around your brain? Or learn to write your own blues poem? Have you wanted to write a song but didn't know how? This is your chance. At The Writers' Room, writing workshops taught by the professional writers of the Missoula Writing Collaborative are here to help. In three sessions of 16 classes taught by MWC writers, you can learn anything from songwriting to prose poetry, writing a memoir to storming a novel.

"This is a chance for people to explore writing that they are curious about," says Caroline Patterson, executive director. "Our writers, many of whom have twenty years of experience, are very good at helping people overcome the fear of the blank page and move into the joy of creative expression."

The workshops take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in locations around Downtown Missoula: Fact & Fiction; Shakespeare & Company; Boyle, Deveny & Meyer; and the Missoula Public Library. Cost per class is \$60; \$150 for all three classes. There is a \$12 luncheon at the Top Hat, which features the short film "Kicking the Loose Gravel Home" by Richard Hugo, and a cocktail hour at Radius Gallery. Renewal credits are available for teachers.

The fundraiser benefits the Missoula Writing Collaborative which has, since 1984, taught creative writing to nearly 35,000 children in 28 schools and in their summer camp, Words with Wings. MWC writers are in schools from Ovando to the Seeley Lake, in all nine Missoula elementary schools, and five elementary schools on the Flathead Reservation of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

For more information, see www.missoulawritingcollaborative.org; Missoulawriting@gmail.com or call (406) 549-3348.

Rod Austin: Missoula Parking Commission's New Director

By Ginny Merriam
City of Missoula

Former long-time Missoula resident Rod Austin will begin a new job as director of the Missoula Parking Commission March 1.

Austin is a University of Montana graduate in business administration and has worked in Missoula, Shelby and Rudyard in bank management and lending; as the business development manager of Missoula Osprey owners Mountain Baseball; and most recently as the director of operations of the Downtown Business Improvement District of Missoula (BID) from 2008 to 2013. Austin was a very active part of downtown Missoula for 12 years, serving on the boards of the Missoula Downtown Association and the Missoula Parking Commission and as president of the MDA board and chair of the Parking Commission board.

"We are delighted to have Rod Austin returning to Missoula to be the new director of the Parking Commission office," said Parking board chair John Smith. "Rod's past experience as a parking board commissioner, his work at the Missoula BID and his career in banking will stand him well to handle the many challenges he will face directing a very vibrant and active parking program."

Austin was the first director of the BID, which is funded by property owners in the downtown area and works to enhance investment, security and commerce. During his successful tenure, he worked on the Downtown Master Plan, established a meticulous maintenance and cleanliness program and led the district to a 10-year renewal approved by more than 75 percent of its rate-payers. Austin worked with nearly every City department to collaborate and solve problems ranging from snow removal to downtown policing.

The Missoula Parking Commission is a component unit of the City of Missoula overseen by a five-member board of directors. Its FY 2016 budget is nearly \$1.9 million, which comes from parking operations revenue.

Meters Continued

the corner to pay for parking at another meter. Remember you can pay on the way to where you are going! Better yet, folks can meet someone new while they wait in line.

- Unlike parking at UM, you don't need to display a receipt on your dashboard, so there is no need to return to your car following your interaction with a meter. The receipt is simply a reminder of when your time expires.
- Since the cost of parking on the street has increased with the new meters, there is now even more incentives to park in the parking structures. Parking at Central Park or Park Place is FREE for the first hour and \$1.00 for each hour thereafter. It's a great deal, and your car is protected from the weather elements!
- The new meters allow you to carry your time with you. That means you can pay for three hours of parking and park in several different locations. With the old meters, if you moved before your time was up, then you would lose the meter time and have to spend more at the new parking spot. Taking your time with you is pretty convenient!

There are a lot more interesting advantages to the new parking meters, and we'll continue to share information here and across the community. It's up to us to help folks get comfortable with the new meters, so let's all do our best to be positive, promote the benefits of the new meters, and encourage our customers to keep connecting to Downtown!

Welcome Madeleine Hoyt: Customer Service Coordinator

The Downtown Missoula Partnership welcomes Madeleine Hoyt as our new customer service representative. With a bachelor's degree in Communications from the University of Montana, Hoyt is the embodiment of Downtown Missoula.

She is a resident of Downtown and has been the owner of Garden City Recycling for two years. She also works as a server for the Kettle-House Brewing Company on Myrtle Street and has pre-

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Hoyt Continued

viously worked for Tamarack Brewing Company and St. Paul's Lutheran Church Childcare Program.

Hoyt works the frontline M-F from 10 am to 2 pm and is excited to be part of the Downtown Missoula Partnership staff.

"I have a passion to be involved in the community," said Hoyt, "and I really love Downtown Missoula. I am excited to be a part of this organization."

Madeleine can be reached via email at info@missouladowntown.com or phone 406.543.4238.

Welcome Will Greenway: Community Development Manager

The Downtown Missoula Partnership welcomes a new Community Development Manager this month. Will Greenway makes his way to Missoula from the Downtown Tucson Partnership in Arizona, where he has served as the economic development manager for the last year.

With family members in the Flathead Valley, Greenway spent many of his childhood summers in Western Montana and at Flathead Lake.

"I have always wanted to live in Montana," he said. "This is a dream come true for me!"

Greenway has a bachelor's degree in regional development and a master's degree in planning, land use and urban development, both from the University of Arizona.

Originally from San Diego, he has also served as an emergency medical technician (EMT), a project manager, and a teaching and research assistant.

Greenway replaces Noreen Humes, who took the Executive Director position with Habitat for Humanity in January. His first day on the job will be Monday, March 7, and he will be primarily responsible for Foundation fundraising, grant writing, and business development initiatives.

He can be reached via email at will@missouladowntown.com or phone at 406.543.4238.

MISSOULA
Downtown
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COMMUNITY

New Member Spotlight



Habitat for Humanity of Missoula's (HFHM) mission is to end poverty housing throughout Missoula County and worldwide. In 1991, the first affordable home was built and

HFHM has continued to partner with eligible Missoula families and thousands of community volunteers ever since. They celebrate 25 years by building the 50th and 51st homes, which will include nearly 1000 vol-

unteers. HFHM's funding comes from local and national donors, grants, and through proceeds from sales at the ReStore, a retail store selling furniture, appliances, fixtures and building materials. As a new MDA member, HFHM now accepts Downtown Gift Cards at the ReStore in East Missoula. HFHM believes being a part of the MDA is important since Downtown is the heart of Missoula and an invaluable part of our community. The organization hopes people will volunteer for the two house builds this year. Volunteering on a build day is a great team building event! Visit www.habitatmsla.org for more information



Thanks to cooperating weather and 45 tasty beers, over 3,000 people attended Winter BrewFest at Caras Park on Friday, February 19.

Missoula Downtown Gift Cards Accepted at Downtown's New Parking Meters

One of the new and dynamic features of Downtown Missoula's new parking meters is that customers can now use Downtown Gift Cards to pay for parking. Much like a pre-loaded debit card, the Downtown Gift Cards are accepted at over 170 Downtown businesses, and now they are accepted at the digital multi-space parking meters.

Downtown Gift Cards can be purchased in person at the Downtown Missoula Partnership (218 East Main) or at the MSO Hub (140 N. Higgins) or online at www.missouladowntown.com. The cards can be loaded for any amount, and they can be utilized just like a credit card.

"We are delighted to offer yet another amenity of convenience to the new multi-space meters in Downtown Missoula," said Geoff Badenoch, Interim Director of the Missoula Parking Commission. "This is a great solution for those individu-

als who are not comfortable paying for parking with their credit cards. You can preload the Downtown Gift Card and use it until your balance is gone."

The Downtown Gift Card has been a long-standing benefit of membership with the Missoula Downtown Association. Last year the MDA sold \$242,800 in Downtown Gift Cards. Over the course of the last six years, the MDA has sold \$1,170,662.00 in Downtown Gift Cards.

Downtown business owners are welcome to purchase Downtown Gift Cards to distribute to their customers who aren't comfortable using a credit card to pay for parking.

For more information about the Downtown Gift Card Program, call the Downtown Missoula Partnership at 543-4238. For more information about the new parking meters, call the Missoula Parking Commission at 552-6250.



Welcome New Members!

B&B Express

Bruce Winchester
511 S. Caravan
(406) 203-2069
bruce.winchester@gmail.com
[facebook.com/bandbexpress/](https://www.facebook.com/bandbexpress/)

Big Thai Country

Jume Slover
P.O. Box 5918
(406) 240-9511
saowalak.slover@gmail.com
jumesthaicuisine.com

Habitat for Humanity

Noreen Humes
3655 MT Hwy 200 E. #B
(406) 549-8210
habmsla@habitatmsla.org
habitatmsla.org

Missoula Community Foundation

Caroline Lauer
110 West Front St.
(406) 926-2846
caroline@missoulacommunityfoundation.org
missoulacommunityfoundation.org

Taco Treat

Jody Kralich
1800 Bow St.
(406) 727-7582
jody.kralich@tacotreat.net
tacotreat.net

Crowds Descend on Caras for Winter BrewFest



Thank you to all who came out for the MDA's first community event of the season, Winter BrewFest! This was our most successful Winter BrewFest to date with around 3,000 glasses sold and 45 kegs drained during the event. Volunteers at the entrance were amazed to see the line extend all the way to the Carousel during the busiest times.

Folks danced to Ted Ness and the Rusty Nails and Off In the Woods and enjoyed Montana beers and food from Covered Wagon Hot Dogs, El Cazador, and Paisano's. Thank you to our sponsors: Kettle-House Brewing, Trail 103.3, Thrivent Financial, and K Design Marketing. A huge thanks to our over 100 volunteers, this event would not be possible without you!



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Promoting, Supporting & Enhancing the Vitality of Downtown Missoula for the Betterment of Our Community

How is the MDA Connecting Our Community This Month?

Advocacy

(Meeting Wed., Mar. 11 at 8:30 am)
 The Downtown Advocacy Committee has been working on a variety of issues that impact Downtown, including:

- Parking meter communications and outreach;
- Permitting for the Max Wave and repairs to Brennan's Wave;
- Strengthening the city ordinance on dog vaccinations;
- Connecting with new City Council and County Commissioners.

Marketing

Developing marketing materials to distribute about the multi-space parking meters.

Master Plan

(Meeting Thurs., Mar. 17 at 12 pm)
 The Downtown Master Plan Implementation Team has been focused on design guidelines, implementation of wayfinding, the long-range transportation plan, repairs to the Madison and Higgins bridges, and the next steps for broadband. Additional topics of interest include the Riverfront Triangle development, the college student housing project on East Front Street, and planning for a new library.

Membership

(Meeting Tues., Mar. 15 at 4 pm)
 New member recruitment.

Events

Selection of bands and vendors for Out to Lunch and Downtown To-Night begins in March. Planning of Garden City BrewFest is in progress.

For more information, contact
info@missouladowntown.com



Shout Outs

The Missoula Cultural Council produces First Night Missoula each year on New Year's Eve to celebrate the arts in Missoula. We would love to hear your feedback on how we can improve the festival – even if you've never been. Please help us out by taking this quick survey and as our way of saying thanks, four lucky participants will receive free admission for two to this year's festival. Take the survey at: goo.gl/forms/h8ly36KduP.

The Missoula Downtown Foundation hosts its 2nd Annual Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament Sunday, March 6 at the Hell Gate Elks Lodge (112 N Pattee St.). Register online today at missouladowntown.com/poker. Single Buy-In is \$100, Table of 10 is \$1000. Spectators can attend for \$5. No-host bar with food provided.

The 2016 St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on Saturday, March 12 on Higgins Ave starting at 12pm. Lineup starts at 11am. In addition, the Ancient Order of the Hibernians will be offering free rides at A Carousel for Missoula from 2-4 pm following the parade.

Run for the Luck Of It 5k, 400m Kids Dash, & 7 mile race will be Sunday, March 13. Hosted by Run Wild Missoula, the Kids Dash begins at 9:15am, 7 mile race at 9:30am, and 5k at 10:00am. For more information and to register online, visit runwildmissoula.org.

Please submit member shout outs by the 18th of each month to
info@missouladowntown.com