



On the Gulch

A Newsletter For and About City of Helena Employees



A Trumpet for the Fire Department?

Recently, the Helena Fire Department was contacted by a fire antique dealer from Las Vegas, NV. The dealer asked if Helena ever had an apparatus or company named "Rescue 1". He had a speaking trumpet (a low-tech megaphone) with the engraving, "Rescue 1 Helena". Other communities named Helena were ruled out as possible places from where this trumpet could have come.

In January 1874, Helena suffered another devastating fire, which took the life of one resident and caused almost \$900,000 in property loss. Helenans pooled their resources and made major improvements to help them prevent and suppress fires. One of those improvements was the purchase of a new steam fire engine from the Silsby Manufacturing Company of Seneca Falls, NY. Named "Rescue", most likely by the manufacturer, its arrival was heralded by the community and soon, Rescue Engine

Co. No. 1 was formed. This began the horse drawn era of firefighting in Helena. Among the equipment of such a firefighting company were speaking trumpets. They were cone-shaped instruments designed to amplify the human voice. These speaking trumpets gave the fire chief and company foremen the ability to communicate orders to firemen over the tumult and noise that often accompanied fires. Such trumpets were listed in our fire department's inventories, but their use seems to have died out by the early 1890s. This is most likely due to the dramatic improvement of Helena's water system. Hydrants replaced cisterns from which the noisy steamers drafted water, likely making communication much easier. Firemen simply connected their hoses directly to a hydrant and water delivery became a relatively quiet operation. Speaking trumpets, however, became symbolic of the officer rank. Often ornate, engraved silver or brass

trumpets were given to chief of officers upon their retirement from the fire service. These have become highly collectible among antique dealers. Examples of working speaking trumpets are very rare due to the fact that they often were damaged through active use or were relegated to the scrap heap when they were no longer needed.

Thanks to some quick fundraising, the speaking trumpet is now back where it belongs. Helena Firefighters purchased the trumpet and it's on display now!



150th Anniversary & Mural Dedication





Employee News

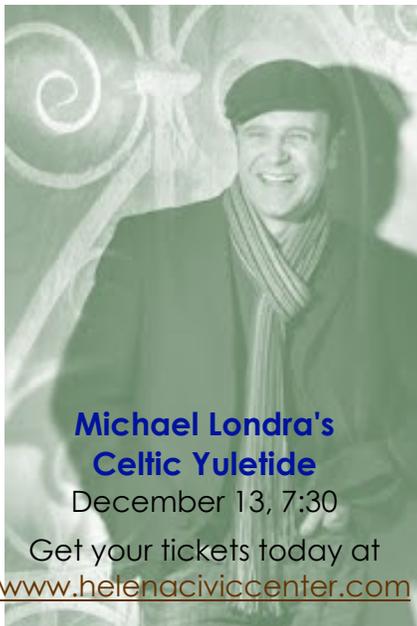
Congratulations to:

Chad Carlson, winner of the Western Montana Chapter PGA Teacher of the Year!

And welcome to:

Alex Waddell, Meter & Backflow Prevention Supervisor, and

Rachel Dickie, Evidence Technician at the Helena Police Department



Helena - A Growing City

More about the Westside Infrastructure Projects

The winter and spring you will hear a lot about the extension of city infrastructure into the west side of town. There are benefits and disadvantages of annexing property into the city; the benefits for area residents far outweigh the disadvantages in terms of safety, cost, and environmental impact.

A public meeting is scheduled on November 20th to help explain to area residents the process, timeline, and cost of these infrastructure projects. Dustin Ramoie, Senior Planner in Community Development, is working with all impacted city departments to ensure a smooth transition for residents. The first phase of the Westside Infrastructure plan includes properties that are fully surrounded by properties within city limits, they never officially annexed. Some of them are already on city water, some on city sewer, and some are on both. The difference is that they do not pay city property taxes, only county property taxes.

Why is it important that the city extend infrastructure to those properties?

1. Safety, Public Health - You have probably heard a lot recently about failed septic systems on the west side and valley around Helena. Encouraging (and requiring) property owners to hook into the municipal sewer system will improve treatment of that water, ensuring a cleaner environment for the future.
2. Cost - Over the past 20 years, the city has been allowing property owners to hook into our systems one at a time. This is the most expensive way to annex property, extending our main lines by the block. By installing the infrastructure in large phases, we decrease the cost to the city and to property owners by a significant amount!
3. Property tax income - The properties fully surrounded and on the edges of our city limits use city services daily. These same properties pay into the county tax base, and not the city tax base. By annexing them, their costs will not go up significantly, but they will be paying their share toward the services they already enjoy.

You probably have questions about these projects! Please contact Dustin (x8415), or visit the website for more information about the public meeting, maps, and other materials.

Prescription for Stress: One-minute Vacation

Sound ridiculous? A one-minute vacation may not sound like much but you'll be surprised how relaxing that one minute can be. Step outside and just stop and take look around for one minute – 60 seconds - and notice the change of seasons. This time of year is especially beautiful; from the beautiful sunrises and sunsets to the amazing colors of the fall foliage. Live in the moment and enjoy it! It'll put a brighter perspective on the rest of your day.