

Remember

when the Sweet Grass County Sheriff's Department received a call on Saturday, August 16, alerting authorities to smoke rising from the Stephens Hill area. The team was recalled and the battle began again. A piece of equipment called a "probe-eye" was used to test the temperatures at different hot spots. The last report issued by the Incident Management Team indicated the fire had burned approximately 38,326 acres and containment costs had climbed to over \$2,500,000. Four residential structures were destroyed by the fire, all cabins that were not full time residences.

The Brundage fire, ignited by an extraordinary lighting storm Friday, August 18, forced Sweet Grass County resident Lawrence Allestad to evacuate 3,000 head of sheep he had been pasturing in the mountains near Jardine Ranchers and friends throughout Sweet Grass County and Paradise valley assisted in the move. Approximately two semis and 50 horse trailers were volunteered by a group of caring men and women willing to help a ranching family in need. Elaine Allestad, wife of Lawrence, and family friend Mike Atkins organized a phone tree to let people know transportation was needed. The volunteers then met Allestad, his son Billy, and shepherders Pete Clark, Keagen Kruger, and Charles Oberly in Gardiner where the sheep were corralled at the Rodeo grounds until being brought home to graze on the Allestad property near the Sweet Grass County Fairgrounds.

Rivers Across, Sweet Grass county's Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission sponsored "Manifest Scrutiny", an entertaining evening of food and fun that tested the knowledge of three local scholars of Lewis and Clark - Helen Pedula, John Stone, and Jim Sargent.

The Big Timber City Council was presented with two ideas for a permanent memorial to replace the memorial trees in front of the Carnegie Library that had been felled earlier. Betty Clair, a member of the American Legion committee overseeing the memorial, surprised council members by saying the committee would not be using wood from the trees as had been earlier planned. Little wood was salvaged, stated Clair, and so two other memorial plans were being considered. Dave Hodges and Dale Wood, both local artists, had presented ideas to the committee. Hodges' idea was a life-size eagle sitting on a globe with a rock base, standing eight to nine feet high. Wood's plan was for a fountain design that would be appropriate for the community. Estimates for the memorials range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

The council meeting was also the scene of disagreement among some members concerning a storage facility to be erected on the site of the lagoon to house county equipment. Hazel Ewan was named Sweet Grass County Senior Citizen of the Year, an honor she also won in 1996.

Back to school information from each of the area schools was printed in the Pioneer listing the faculty at each, daily schedule, and bus routes, among other things. Members of the Buckroosters flocked to the Langworthy cabin up the Boulder for their 56th roost filled with Barbershop singing, "horseshuz", cribbage playing, and storytelling.

August 29-September 4
Sweet Grass County Treasurer Vicki Uehling announced NorthWestern Energy owes the county approximately \$222,547.88 in delinquent property taxes. Touch America, once part of the now non-existent Montana Power, was also listed as owing the county \$29,887.81 in delinquent taxes. The



Carnegie Library Director Lauren McMullen is excited by the options a new system offers to patrons.

Big Timber City Council heard from a resident having a problem with a neighbor's barking dogs.

The Reed Point Community Club announced the Hobble Fire would not prevent the The Great Montana Sheep Drive 2003 from being held in their city. The drive is held every year as a fundraising event for the tiny town east of Big Timber. The National Historic Register Marker was dedicated at the Carnegie Library, which was built in 1913.

An accident in the city resulted in the arrest of one man. Dwayne Norskog, on a charge of Negligent Endangerment and Driving Under the Influence. The accident scene covered several blocks and also resulted in damage to two vehicles and a camper trailer, as well as injuries to a passenger in the vehicle. The Pioneer published pictures taken at the Sweet Grass County Fair during the finals of the Greased Pig Contest sponsored by the Otter Creek 4-H Club.

SEPTEMBER

September 5-11

Levi Bryan, 13 and a resident of Big Timber brought home honors from the Black Powder Catridge Silhouette National Shoot held in Raton NM August 11-14. Bryan competed against close to 400 other shooters and beat out some who were older by three times his age on his way to breaking two national records.

City resident Dave Moore asked the Big Timber City Council to give 20,000 gallons of water to each resident so they could afford to water trees and lawns in light of the drought. The council turned down

the request. The council also heard local businessman Ron Barron's request for approval to build a vehicle storage facility along Highway 191; the request was approved. Five generations of one family got together for a graduation celebration for the grandson of Big Timber resident Pearl Erickson.

September 12-18

In a surprising move, the Big Timber City Council approved a measure allowing city residents to sign up for up to 10,000 gallons of free water to try and save the trees of the city. In another council story, a disagreement continues over a proposed weed ordinance that could adversely impact the rights of property owners, according to Councilmen Cory Conner and Randy Rembold. The ordinance was first proposed as a way to force property owners to keep their weeds and grass cut in an effort to avoid a fire hazard situation. As written, however, it addressed other areas besides vegetation.

A story in this edition told of the confusing relationship between the Pioneer Medical Center and Sweet Grass County in light of the facility's request for a mill levy to fund operations. Although the PMC operates on money generated by fees for services, its employees are employees of the county. Banned Books Month was noted locally for the second year by the Big Timber Carnegie Library's Bag Lunch Day.

September 19-25

Linda Mlekush, a longtime resident of Big Timber, was severely injured in an accident in which her car ran over her. She was taken to

St Vincent's Hospital in Billings after suffering injuries to her chest, abdomen, pelvis, and legs. Two city residents, Vickie Wigen and Mark Ketchum, were able to help Mlekush and prevent her injuries from being even more severe. A support group for visually impaired persons was announced to be held at the Senior Center/Hospitality House. Caregivers and family members of the visually impaired were also urged to attend.

NorthWestern Energy paid \$209,950.57 in delinquent property taxes to Sweet Grass County. The Big Timber City budget recently approved by the city council was published and noted an increase of \$16,737 over last year's budget. City resident Owen Bokma told the city council, at a regular meeting, he felt one city employee, Ed Crocitto, Code Enforcement Officer, was guilty of "citizen harassment".

September 26-October 2

Sweet Grass County voters approved the special mill levy to fund operations of the Pioneer Medical Center. The approval means the facility will receive up to \$334,750 to subsidize the financially strapped PMC. The Sweet Grass County High School Homecoming King and Queen, Sean Jacquay and Anna Ferguson, were featured in a front page photo.

The Big Timber City Council was asked if they would be giving more free water during the months of October, November and December so more trees could be watered, they declined. Big Timber Grade School students ranked above the national average when given the Iowa Achievement Test. The Billings Opera Company announced they would be presenting **Hansel and Gretel** at the grade school gym September 30. Pictures of the SGHS Homecoming Parade were published in The Pioneer. The game was won by the SGHS Herders by a score of 47 - 29 over the Red Lodge Redskins. Leah Plaggemeyer, daughter of Jack and Shannon Plaggemeyer of Big Timber, was

named the 2002-2003 Western Defensive Player of the Year for college basketball.

OCTOBER

October 3-9

The Carnegie Library announced it was going high tech with the addition of computerized library cards and on-line services through the Montana Library Network.

Crystal Coffey-Avey said response from the recently published outstanding warrants list has more than paid for the cost of printing the information in various newspapers.

The Brundage Fire in the Hellroaring Drainage of the Abasorka Beartooth Wilderness continues to burn and officials were expecting to see an increase in activity over the next week.

October 10-16

Approximately 400 out of 740 city water customers took advantage of the Big Timber City Council's offer of up to 10,000 gallons of free water in September. Customers who signed up were credited with approximately 3,600,000 gallons of water, at a cost to the city of \$3,600.

A judgment was handed down in the case of feuding neighbors. Bob and Judy Faw and George Williams have been at odds over the Williams property right of way being encroached upon by a portion of the Faw's fence. Things came to a head in June when Williams knocked down some of the fence with a front end loader. Williams was fined and placed under house arrest for three days as part of his sentence.

Ron Barron received final approval from the Big Timber City Council for a vehicle storage lot that had been a point of contention at

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Happy New Year

and
Thank You
to all our customers

From all the employees at the
BIG T IGA

**WISHING YOU A
VERY HAPPY
NEW YEAR!**

**BIG TIMBER
VETERINARY CLINIC**

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Bill, Evelyn, Billy & Ben
& Jennifer

**TIME
FLIES...**

And now our New Year's
greetings are headed
your way!

**Sweet Grass
Conoco & Tire**

*Wishing you a
New Year
filled with
joy, peace
and prosperity*

**CONNER'S
CONCRETE**

**Cheers to
all our
friends!
Hope you
have the
best
holiday
ever!**

K-W FEED & GRAIN
Paula, Jennifer, Jane, Jerry, Kevin