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Photo by Julie Simon

Potato harvest

Skone and Connors workers began their potato harvest on the home ranch south of Dillon last week. But wet weather is holding the operation up. Bill Cotton of the company said the potatoes are looking "just fair" this year.

Contractors, city still disagree on UBC adoption, enforcement

By BRUCE McCORMACK
Editor

Building contractors clashed with the city concerning enforcement of the Uniform Building Code in Dillon last week and the issue remained unresolved after a lengthy and sometimes heated discussion.

Builder Clayton Hildreth told the city council the inspection fee on a \$50,000 house would be about \$283. Amortized for 30 years at 12 percent interest, he said the homeowner would end up paying more than \$1,000 for that fee.

He said the building industry in Dillon "is in the dumps" and inspections will contribute to the high interest and material costs contractors already face.

Hildreth suggested the city not use the UBC, but rather adopt HUD's FHA minimum property standards, which he said "are more reasonable."

"There are more than 30 contractors in Dillon and the competition is very keen," he added. "Within that competition, quality is the key factor."

Mayor Connie Nicholas reminded the contractors that the UBC was adopted by the City of Dillon two years ago.

"I feel the city has been negligent in not enforcing it all this time," she added.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR Bert Reimer, who took much of the heat from the contractors, asked the assembled group how many had copies of the UBC. Only two people raised their hands.

Asked how many had read the UBC, only one person raised his hand.

"You are running scared about something you don't even know about," he said.

Reimer, contradicting the builder's position, said there is no conflict between the UBC and HUD standards.

The discussion then centered on what Reimer would inspect and what he would accept as approved from other agencies. He said he would accept plans approved by HUD, VA or FmHA, but would still inspect the construction.

"If you are going to accept that, why do you still need to inspect construction?" he was asked.

"Because design and planning is a very different thing from construction," Reimer replied.

Councilman Dan Carpita finally cut off the discussion, suggesting the builders get together and make the council a proposal concerning enforcement of the UBC, "since it appears that the code is mandatory."

Councilman Clay Edwards told the builders the council was not happy when it was forced to adopt the UBC.

"We sat on it for eight months because we didn't want it either, but we finally had to adopt it," he said. "The complaints you are making tonight should have been made three years ago in Helena."

Headed that Reimer would be "sensible" in his enforcement of the code.

Mayor Nicholas said Monday she has not heard any response or suggestions from the builders since the meeting.

Beaverhead and Ravalli districts may merge

The possibility of combining the Beaverhead County and southern Ravalli County House districts into a new Senate district will be among the topics of discussion when the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission meets Tuesday, Oct. 5 in Helena.

The commission is charged with redistricting the legislative and congressional districts after the federal decennial census.

Any two contiguous House districts can be combined to form a Senate district, under the commission's guidelines.

One possible pairing discussed when the commission met earlier in Missoula was the district 101 (Beaverhead County) and district 102 (southern Ravalli County) combination.

Other pairings being discussed are Powell County and the Big Fork district, or Big Fork and the majority of Glacier County.

Parkview Acres

Canine pal: Just what their doctor ordered

By JULIE SIMON
Staff Writer

"Well hello Niki! You remember me, don't you Niki?" called Elizabeth Hopkins as a large Golden Retriever trotted towards her, tail wagging.

A woman who a minute before had been frowning at the television set in Parkview Acres Convalescent Center's day room looked up and smiled. And suddenly everyone else in the room seemed to be grinning too.

"That's the way it always is," said Pat McNeill, a registered nurse who has been bringing Niki to Parkview Acres Convalescent Center since a local doctor suggested the visits last year.

It all started when Dr. Ron Loge started worrying about one of the nursing home residents, a woman who seemed depressed.

Mrs. McNeill explained Dr. Loge thought the company of a friendly canine might do the woman, who was fond of dogs, a world of good.

"Dr. Loge commented to me that it would be nice if the rest home could rent a dog," Mrs. McNeill explained. "But I didn't think that would be necessary since my family had Niki."

So, Dr. Loge wrote out the order calling for the visits and Niki's volunteer career was launched.

"I'd bring Niki once a week on Fridays while I worked at the nursing home," explained Mrs. McNeill who is now employed at Barrett Memorial Hospital.

"Since I went to Barrett I haven't brought him here as often, but the residents still remember him and seem to enjoy him."

As Niki trotted around the day

room greeting everyone in turn, Mrs. McNeill explained her dog likes visiting the rest home as much as the residents like him.

"They spoil him terribly," she smiled. "One resident even saved food for him and stuffed him every visit."

A 3-year-old Niki is more than willing to do tricks for residents for a treat or for a pat on the head.

"It's amazing how his presence seems to take people out of themselves," Mrs. McNeill said, some of the residents like to take Niki for walks while others are content just to pet him.

"I think the reason the residents like him is that he's friendly to everyone," Mrs. McNeill said.

"He likes the residents and pays attention to them. Everyone enjoys that kind of treatment."

Biggest in decade?

WMC students may top 950

Western Montana College may have its largest fall student head count in more than a decade if enrollment projections hold true.

WMC president Bob Thomas said he is "confident" the student head count will exceed 950 for the fall semester, but will probably not top the 1,000 mark.

Last year's fall semester head count was 880. That count was 952 in 1980. The largest head count prior to that time was the string of flush enrollments in 1968, 1969, and 1970.

He said the evening classes appear to be the area in which Western picked up many students for the head count.

Head count is not the official tally used by the Regents and state Legislature for funding purposes. The state

relies on the FTE (full time equivalent) for that.

"I have a strong feeling that our FTE will also be strong," Thomas said. "But we're still running our audit procedures and are not sure yet."

The cutoff for student enrollment was last Wednesday and the head count for FTE figures should be finalized by next week.

"We are all certainly feeling a lot better than we were for a while," Thomas added. "We had been running 15 to 50 ahead of last year's pace on a day by day basis, but we've been 50 to 75 ahead the last few days."

Thomas estimated that WMC's head count this fall may be the fourth largest in the school's history.

Equally divided

Forest eyes comments

Beaverhead National Forest officials say the 195 comments they received on their proposed management plan were divided between persons wanting more development on the 2.1 million acre forest and those wanting the lands left largely alone. The deadline for public comments on the 216 page proposal and a 354 page Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was Sept. 16.

"I think it would be fair to say that we had nearly equal numbers on both sides of the fence," said Joe Wagenfehr, forest supervisor. "But at the same time, although we had both ends of the spectrum of opinion represented, the points of view weren't extreme. Everyone seemed to recognize the need for multiple use although some people saw a need for, say, more intensive logging in one part of the forest or maybe more emphasis on wildlife in another part."

Comments were light compared to the 950 the forest officials received on their 1978 management plan.

"But although we had fewer comments this time around, I think we actually got as much or more 'meat' to work on," he said.

The supervisor said the 1978 plan prompted hundreds of comments about the wilderness issue.

"And many of those comments were gut reaction one-liners. This time people really took the trouble to study the proposal and comment on specific areas."

Wagenfehr said those specific comments will be the most valuable ones to forest officials as they begin their analysis of public thoughts on the proposal.

Of the 195 responses, 105 were from local area residents living in counties including Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Madison and Gallatin; sixty-one were from persons living in the rest of Montana and Idaho; and 25 were from national commentators.

Thirty two of the comments were from business and industry representatives or groups; 31 from environmental, civic and conservation organizations; 114 from private citizens and the rest from a variety of federal, state, local and academic viewpoints.

Wagenfehr pointed out the Forest Service is including in its analysis all comments postmarked by Sept. 17 because officials thought some letters might have been mailed late enough on Sept. 16 so as not to have been post-marked until the next day.

He said the officials talked to about 10 individuals who called their comments in and that those ideas will also be considered.

What happens to the comments now? Wagenfehr said comments from each letter are being extracted and placed with similar comments from other letters. What the public has to say will then be consolidated and presented to forest decision makers for their consideration as they shape their final plan.

"In addition to being responsive to public comment, decision makers must also consider legal and fiscal constraints, available technology and resource capability," Wagenfehr said.

The supervisor noted he and the Regional Forester will also have to work together to blend the forest plan with the regional plan.

"This ensures that the Beaverhead plan's goals and objectives are in harmony with those of the region and that the forest contributes its 'share' toward the regional plan," he said.

Wagenfehr said it will probably take until next summer to analyze the comments, rewrite the plan and have it printed. He noted although the DEIS must remain technically-oriented because of the demands of federal laws, that the proposal will be revamped so that it is easier for the average person to understand.



Elizabeth Hopkins is one of Niki's biggest fans. The Golden Retriever has been making regular rest home rounds to Parkview Acres Convalescent Center.