

Philipsburg Mail

This edition is for Jon Perry and the people of Granite County, Montana

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It's a wrap at Fair

Reece Rigby, with Golden Opportunity 4-H, leads his cow through the Blue Ribbon Pavilion last week at the Tri-County Fair. For more fair coverage see pages 8 and 9. Photo by Michael Stafford.

Sec. Stapleton touts record

by Scott Sylvester

The Philipsburg Chamber of Commerce played host to Corey Stapleton, Montana's Secretary of State, during their meeting last week. Stapleton and two staff members spent two days in Philipsburg as part of his "Things That Matter" tour, and participated in a roundtable discussion with Granite County business owners as part of the meeting with the Chamber.

In addition to overseeing elections for the state and maintaining official records of state government, the Secretary of State's Office is also responsible for reviewing, maintaining and distributing public interest records of businesses and nonprofit organizations in the state.

When he became Secretary of



Montana Secretary of State, Corey Stapleton

State Stapleton pledged to visit every one of the fifty five counties in the state within two years. Stapleton said that when he took over the agency it was very antiquated in the way that it stored records. Everything was printed out and stored in boxes. He made the decision to

digitize the agency which made it function much better.

Stapleton said that his agency is unique in that it doesn't get any taxpayer money. He said that his agency's budget of six to seven million dollars is entirely funded by fees, 85 percent of which is from the businesses in the state.

"When you get online and pay your fees every year to register your business that is how we operate. But we're very much (motivated) to do right by you, since our money comes from businesses. So we very intentionally want to give back and help support that. Part of the mission of this office is to help commerce thrive. So we're here to talk about what's on your mind," Stapleton said.

See **Secretary** on page 5

Pre-K possibly coming to Philipsburg

by Scott Sylvester

"Any early childhood program that we could have is very beneficial and a good idea, if it's sustainable and affordable."

Those were the words of new Superintendent of Philipsburg Schools Kevin St. John in making the case for an early kindergarten program as part of the school system.

"It's very good for the kids. It's something that could be really good for us because we kind of lack maybe a little bit of day care and these pre-school programs in the community. It would be awesome if we could make that happen," St. John said.

He said that he thought that a part-time program could cost as much as twenty five to thirty thousand dollars, and that the ideal situation would be to obtain a grant for the program because then the money for the program would be provided.

Without a grant then the program would have to meet a certain threshold in terms of numbers of children enrolled in order for it to be financially feasible.

St. John said that state regulations gave the School Board the power to allow children to attend school as early as age four.

This would allow the school district to include these children in the Average Number Belonging (ANB) in calculating the basic entitlement funding received from the state. Without grant funding St. John thought that the program may need to maintain about 10 children enrolled in order for it to be cost effective.

"If it's a part time program, let's say \$2,500 per kid, you'll get ANB to pay for that program. So, 10 kids, you could have \$25,000, you could pay for that program, and you could run an early kindergarten program like that," the Superintendent explained.

St. John said that the problem was trying to anticipate the number of children that might enroll in such a program. That made it hard to budget for, and he didn't want to initiate a program that was going to lose money.

"Aren't we just taking the same problem that we have now with kindergarten and pushing it down a year? Presumably, if the kids are there, it will pay. If they're not, it won't. We're just taking the same problem and moving it to an earlier age group," said board member Ciche Pitcher.

See **Education** on page 3

Fair demolition derby ends in tragedy

by Michael Stafford

A horrific accident during the final round of the Tri-County Fair Demolition Derby in Deer Lodge resulted in one fatality and several others critically injured.

The accident occurred Sunday evening during the event. Powell County Sheriff Gavin Roselles said that a driver in

the derby made contact with another vehicle. The driver of the second vehicle completely lost control of his car, which went through a fence where it collided with spectators.

The point of impact was on the north side of the arena near where the log trucks were parked and one of those vehicles sustained damage.

Roselles said that the

part his office can currently confirm was that eight people were treated at the hospital and at least one person was Lifeflighted. One person was also confirmed as a fatality. The person was a 36 year-old woman from Anaconda who worked for the Powell County Ambulance as an EMT. The ages of those who were injured ranged from one year-

old to adult.

No names are being released at this point in time and the investigation is ongoing.

The demolition derby was the last event of the Tri-County Fair which took place from Tuesday evening through Sunday. Roselles said that the accident was a very tragic end to what had been a very good

fair and even more horrific by the fact that the large number of attendees to the derby saw the accident take place.

"We just ask for continued prayers for everyone involved and their families," said the Sheriff.

At this time no additional information is being released by the sheriff's office pending the investigation.