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CASCADIA RISING

Responders hone parachuting and other skills at doomsday drill

PAGE C4

Police reports, obituaries PAGE C2



City updating economic development plan

By LEWIS KENDALL
Chronicle Staff Writer

The city of Bozeman will soon update its economic development plan for the first time since 2009.

The new plan will summarize the last seven years, examine the area's economic landscape and identify goals for continued business and wage growth.

"Since 2009, it hasn't been a standard curve here. All the changes that were associated

with the economic crisis have impacted this area," said Brit Fontenot, economic development director for the city. "Since conditions on the ground have changed, it seemed like a good time (to update the plan)."

On Monday, the City Commission will vote to contract the project to Portland, Oregon-based Leland Consulting Group. If approved, the group hopes to draft a new plan by the end of September.

The 2009 plan, the city's first attempt at economic develop-

ment strategy, was "aspirational" and in need of an update, Fontenot said.

"The effort was a good one, but some of the pieces in it were hard to measure," he said. "It was a little bit squishy in that way."

The new language should focus on the city's role in developing infrastructure to encourage economic growth, he added.

"I'm a firm believer that infrastructure is the key to the city's development. That's what we do best," Fontenot said, citing the

city-backed fiber project and several urban renewal efforts. "If you don't have good roads and pipes, no one is going to want to come to your town."

Economic development agencies Prospera Business Network, the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District and the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce, as well as several private entrepreneurs, will be included in the consulting process.

In addition to infrastructure, the city's goals for the plan

include augmenting the growing photonics, outdoor and high-tech industries, as well as increasing wages.

"Growth in everyone's opinion isn't ideal, but what most people need is a job — that's a part of it that underpins everything," Fontenot said. "If we don't have good paying jobs that allow people to buy into the culture that we love, we're kidding ourselves."

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SERVICE RECOGNIZED



ADRIAN SANCHEZ-GONZALEZ/CHRONICLE

Ted Williams, brother of U.S. Army Air Corps Pfc. Robert E. Williams, Jr., accepts the Bronze Star medal and Purple Heart medal awarded posthumously to his brother, presented by Montana National Guard Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Ireland, during a medal presentation ceremony at the American Legion Post 14 in Bozeman on Friday.

World War II veteran honored with posthumous medals

By WHITNEY BERMES
Chronicle Staff Writer

Ted Williams fondly recalled his older brother Robert, eight years his senior, and riding on the handlebars of Robert's green bicycle.

"I loved him very much but I was jealous of the things he got to do," said 89-year-old Ted to a crowd of a few dozen friends, family and military members gathered at Bozeman's American Legion on Friday afternoon.

Just prior to speaking, Ted was

presented with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, among other accolades, in honor of his brother Robert's service during World War II.

U.S. Army Air Corps Private First Class Robert E. Williams Jr. died while serving in the Philippines in 1942.

Seventy-four years later, Robert was honored for his service to the nation.

"Thank you so much for being here," Ted told the crowd. "God bless America."

In addition to the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, Robert Williams was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation,

Prisoner of War Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal, the Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation and the Philippine Defense Ribbon.

Robert enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1939. He was trained in mechanics and assigned to the 7th Materials Squadron, later attached to the 19th Bombardment Group and shipped out to the Philippines shortly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

More VETERAN | C2

Proposal would have presidential candidates pay state filing fees

Local official says mail ballot-only makes more sense

By TROY CARTER
Chronicle Staff Writer

A Montana lawmaker thinks presidential candidates should help fund elections by paying a filing fee, but a local official doesn't think it'll make a big difference.

State Rep. Bryce Bennett, D-Missoula, placed a draft bill in the 2017 legislative hopper this week that would require presidential candidates like Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump to pay a filing fee.



Bennett

Under current state law, presidential candidates need only submit a 500-signature petition for ballot access. Bennett doesn't have an exact amount in mind but it should be comparable with gubernatorial candidates who pay 1 percent of their annual salary. For gubernatorial candidates that comes out to \$1,982.

"Something around that level," Bennett said Friday. "For a presidential candidate that's a drop in the bucket."

Montana voters had seven presidential candidates on the 2016 primary election ballot. The president's salary is \$400,000. So Bennett's proposal, if it had been in place, would have produced \$28,000.

Charlotte Mills, Gallatin County's clerk and recorder, said this week's primary election cost her county, one of 56, roughly \$225,000. So the presidential filing fee isn't going to be that meaningful after it's divided among Montana's 56 counties, she said, assuming it is divided.

Mills is instead a proponent of eliminating all in-person polling places, relying on mail ballots only. That would reduce the cost of the primary and general elections to \$90,000, which is what a mail ballot-only school district election costs.

More CANDIDATES | C2

SUMMER IN THE CITY

Brothers build water slide in front yard for Friday night party at "Club Durston"

By TROY CARTER
Chronicle Staff Writer

While most people were finishing their lunch Friday, the Mann brothers were finishing a 12-foot-tall water slide in Elisha's front yard.

"Club Durston," as they call Elisha's house on Durston Road, featured a pool party, open to the public, Friday night.

"Basically we just sit around drink beer and come up with new ideas," said the 33-year-old Elisha as he worked shirtless, smoking a cigarette.

"He comes up with a new one every week," 44-year-old Jason Mann said as he eye-

ballled the framing that the two carpenters were hammering together.

For the previous 16 hours, the brothers had been using the garden hose to fill the 7,688-gallon pool they'd bought from Target for \$500. It's 18-foot-wide, 4-foot-deep and situated on the corner of Durston and 18th Avenue.

Once the pool's filled, the hose run water down the slide. Jason thought a yard sprinkler attachment might be a good idea.

Elisha, whose nickname is "America," said "It's gonna be pretty epic.... The only rule is don't jump off my roof."

The brothers expected 50 people to show up after the

sun goes down and the disco ball and tree lights go up. The beer will be flowing and they're going to mount a net in the pool for volleyball.

As the brothers worked, their friend Ashley Charnitski pulled her vehicle up curbside and grinned at their project.

"It gets a little more extravagant every week," she said.

Future party plans for the front yard, Elisha said, include a chef-cooked feast and a 1970s disco party.

"If it's epic, and we can do it, we will do it," he said.

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TROY CARTER/CHRONICLE

Jason Mann and his brother Elisha construct a water slide in the front yard of Elisha's house on Durston Road in Bozeman on Friday.