

THIS WEEK
Kalispell hosts annual
Arts in the Park **C1**



MOVIE REVIEW
Live-action 'Moana'
nothing to sing about **C2**



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THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026

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County eyes more improvements at fairgrounds

By **HANNAH SHIELDS**
Daily Inter Lake
Report for America

The covered grandstands at Flathead County Fairgrounds are being considered for replacement.

The 16,000-square-foot seating structure may look good

for its age, but condition assessments conducted in 2024 and 2025 suggest replacing the roughly 100-year-old stands after decades of heavy use.

Fairgrounds Manager Sam Nunnally said there's long-term moisture damage around inaccessible areas, and the roof falls short of modern standards.

The stands are safe for public use, he added, and will be open for the Northwest Montana Fair and Rodeo in August.

"I have full faith in our grandstands," Nunnally said. "But we need to take a look at what long-term looks like."

County commissioners on July 2 began the search

for a firm to provide architectural services for what is known as the Flathead County Fairgrounds Grandstand Replacement Project. The scope of the project includes replacing the roof and the stands, adding VIP and press boxes, upgrading arena lighting and modernizing concession facil-

ities.

A contract is expected to be awarded on Aug. 11 with construction scheduled to begin in August 2027 and wrap up in July 2028.

The project proposes adding new features to the seating

See **COUNTY, A6**

BIGFORK BAY



A VIEW of Bigfork Bay on Flathead Lake where developers have proposed to build a marina on June 24, 2026. (Elsa Ericksen/Bigfork Eagle)

Developer requests more time for marina review

By **ELSA ERICKSEN**
Bigfork Eagle

The Polson-based developer behind a proposed a 97-slip marina in Bigfork Bay has requested additional time from the Flathead Conservation District to submit a 310-permit application, according to the District's Resource Conservationist Samantha Tappenback.

The Conservation District Board previously requested that the applicant, Cougar Ridge Development, provide more information ahead of its regularly scheduled July

13 meeting. A 310 permit is required for any project that will impact the banks of a perennially flowing stream in Montana. The proposed marina is on the Swan River where it meets Flathead Lake.

The deadline to submit the additional information to the Conservation District was July 6. According to Tappenback, the applicant said they were unable to meet the deadline and planned to submit the materials for the regular Aug. 10 meeting.

While the Bigfork Bay marina project will still appear on the agenda

for the July 13 meeting, Tappenback expects the board will not take any action and will table the permit application until the next meeting. Given the widespread interest in the large-scale project, she said the board may decide to schedule a special meeting to consider the application separately and hear public comments.

The marina site is on the northeast shore of Bigfork Bay, immediately west of the Flathead County public dock. Most of the project is in the water, but it also includes a sliver of shoreline between the bay and

Grand Drive.

According to plans submitted with the 310-permit application, the marina will include 97 boat slips, a boardwalk, a swimming area and a parking lot. No fueling would be offered at the marina, but there would be wastewater disposal provided to boaters. The application being considered by the Conservation District only pertains to the dock and not to any planned construction on the bank of the river.

The Conservation District received Cougar

See **MARINA, A4**

LOGAN HEALTH

Union backs doctor after contract not renewed

By **TAYLOR INMAN**
Daily Inter Lake

Union representatives, patients and healthcare workers gathered at Logan Health in Kalispell on Tuesday to push back on a decision by the hospital system to not renew an employment contract with Dr. Ruben Hipolito, a family medicine physician who has worked for the organization for seven years.

Representatives with the Union of American Physicians and Dentists argued that the decision to not renew his contract amounts to retaliation due to Hipolito's leadership role in recent unionizing efforts. Union representatives said they will ask Logan Health to renew his contract during ongoing bargaining efforts.

In January, primary care physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants voted to

See **UNION, A4**

GALLATIN COUNTY

ICE operation raises concerns among Latinos

By **VICTORIA EAVIS**
Montana Free Press

BOZEMAN – After a nationwide surge in immigration-related arrests reached Gallatin County last week, fear has gripped the local Latino community.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) carried out multiple operations around Bozeman and Gallatin Gateway throughout the week of June 29, according to multiple news reports. In some instances, single individuals were pulled over and taken into custody. In others, groups of people were arrested en masse.

ICE has not said how many people were taken into custody over the last few days, but

See **ICE, A6**

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ARTS IN THE PARK

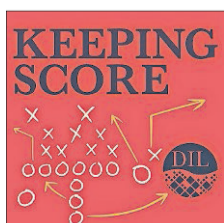
ARTS & MUSIC FESTIVAL

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TODAY'S PODCASTS & VIDEOS



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