

DAILY INTER LAKE

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026

DailyInterLake.com

Serving the Flathead Valley since 1889

KALISPELL

City eyes new policies for block parties and parking lot events

By JACK UNDERHILL
Daily Inter Lake

Kalispell City Council on Monday will consider allowing special events in city-owned downtown parking lots and residential street closures for block parties. Council will hold a

work session at 7 p.m., Aug. 24 in City Hall, 201 First Ave. E. The city has occasionally received requests for both types of gatherings in the past. However, they are typically denied — save for occasionally allowing food trucks on municipal

lots — because the city lacks clear guidelines for either, according to a memo from City Manager Jarod Nygren. City-owned lots could potentially be made available for special events on weekends when parking demand is lower, and the requests could be

managed similarly to the city's rental, special event, vendor and alcohol permits, according to Nygren. Downtown Kalispell Forward recommended in a March report that the municipality consider leasing city-owned downtown parking lots to organizations for

weekend events at nominal fees. The city manages several downtown parking lots covering about 3.8 acres. Some spaces are reserved for monthly permit holders and employees. Others are either unrestricted

See EVENTS, A5

NEVADA



THIS IMAGE provided by Cari Kieffer shows part of the Hawk fire in Reno, Nev. (Cari Kieffer via AP)

Fast-moving wildfire threatens Reno, forcing thousands to evacuate

By JOHN RABY, JACK BROOK and JOHN SEEWER
Associated Press

A fast-moving wildfire that jumped over fire trucks and made it difficult for crews to reach hot spots destroyed homes in northwest Reno, Nevada, on Sunday. Shifting winds challenged firefighters trying to bring it under control, and authorities urged some 90,000 people to evacuate. At least six people — three first responders and three civilians — were injured, officials said. Officials said the fire was “human-caused” but did not provide details on how they reached that conclusion, or whether it was intentionally set or accidental. The Hawk Fire began Saturday and quickly grew to more than 23 square miles as it spread across the Peavine Peak area of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, where rugged foothills are ringed by homes and businesses near the California state line. Some 42,000 residents have been ordered evacuated as the “GO NOW” zone expanded, reaching the edge of the University of Nevada. An additional 45,000 people were in the adjacent evacuation warning zone. Authorities implored all of them to leave and be prepared to stay away for several days, because shifting and strengthening winds were expected to make the fire even more unpredictable. “Please get out if you can right now,” Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam said.

A family raced to grab possessions but lost their home

Cari Kieffer said a video posted on social media showed her house entirely burned down, with only a scorched basketball hoop still standing. “I woke up this morning and just started crying — all my kids, they lost everything,” Kieffer said Sunday. “We lost all our stuff. Everything we own is gone.” Kieffer had been watching her son’s football game Saturday when she learned that their home on the outskirts of Reno was in the evacuation zone. An app the family used to track the fire’s progress had been lagging significantly behind its actual location, she said, so they thought firefighters had kept the blaze from their neighborhood. Instead, Kieffer, her husband and their four children ages 3 to 16 raced to save their dogs and

Kalispell firefighter fails but comes back even stronger to fulfill dream

By ELSA ERICKSEN
Daily Inter Lake

Ryan Caterino never imagined his dream of becoming a professional firefighter could die. It was 2024, and the then-29-year-old was riding a high: after more than a decade in emergency medical services and three years of preparing and training to become a professional firefighter, everything was falling into place. He had passed the fire service’s notoriously grueling physical and written exams and landed an interview with his first-choice department in Kalispell. He walked out of the interview with a conditional letter of employment in hand. The idea that he might still be cut never even crossed his mind. “I had just met up with someone else who was going to be in my academy for lunch,” Caterino said. “As soon as we got done eating, I got the phone call: ‘Hey, this is Fire Chief Jessica Kinzer. You failed your VO2 max, so we can’t proceed with employment.’” Caterino was in shock. He had just signed a lease. Kalispell was the place he planned to build his life. The dream he had been working toward since he was 18 was just within reach. But the numbers didn’t lie. As the final step in the hiring process, Caterino had been required to meet with Dr. Dan Paine, an exercise physiologist at Logan Health, for a VO2 max test. Caterino ran on a treadmill at an increasingly frantic pace while breathing into a mask. Paine analyzed Caterino’s oxygen intake and carbon dioxide output to produce a number that the Kalispell Fire Department uses when considering new hires. Caterino needed to hit 12, and he was well below. “In that moment, I asked him, ‘How badly do you want to be a firefighter?’” Paine said. “He said, ‘Very badly.’”

CATERINO GREW up in Southern California. A proficient rock climber but poor student, he envisioned a future career as an emergency medical technician on search and rescue missions in the mountains. His high school teachers suggested he set his sights on something more attainable: perhaps as a flagger on a construction site. Their lack of confidence only fueled Caterino’s motivation. After graduating, he immediately enrolled in EMT courses and was hired onto an ambulance crew. At 18, Caterino worked his first 24-hour shift in the gritty streets of Los Angeles, and he knew he had found his calling. “I don’t know how to put it into words,” Caterino said. “You just know when you’ve found your place.” Three years into his time at the ambulance service, Caterino experienced the first of what he referred to as a “forced reset” in the form of an ended relationship. He moved to



RYAN CATERINO (center) is now a firefighter with the Kalispell Fire Department, after a year of hard work to pass the department’s VO2 max test requirement. (Photo provided by Ryan Caterino)

Colorado to be closer to the mountains and worked as a welder, but he soon returned to California and to emergency services, running the medical department for the Los Angeles Angels baseball team. And then, a second forced reset: Caterino’s father was diagnosed with leukemia. His parents had retired to Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and without a moment’s hesitation, Caterino once again packed up his life and relocated to Idaho to be near his family as they navigated cancer treatments. But after leaving his job and moving more than 1,200 miles, Caterino’s father received word that it had been a false positive. Relieved by the news, Caterino started his new life in Coeur d’Alene. He secured a job in the emergency room in town, but also volunteered with the Worley Fire Protection District, a small volunteer fire department serving the rural city of Worley, population 250. It was in Worley that Caterino

Monday PROFILE
Ryan Caterino

discovered his passion for firefighting, and with it the realization that he wanted to pursue the work professionally. FIREFIGHTING IS a demanding profession. The job requires physical fitness, sound decision-making skills and the ability to work in a team over long shifts and at all times of day. The application process to join a department full-time as a paid firefighter is a direct reflection of the commitment required for the job, challenging candidates physically and mentally and often taking up to a year to complete. First, there’s the written exam, which tests everything from reading comprehension to mathematics to mechanical reasoning to memory and recall. The candidate is also tested on personality and morality, the soft skills that make a difference when living in close quarters with crewmates for 48 hours at a time. Then, the Candidate Physical

See TENACITY, A5

TODAY’S PODCASTS & VIDEOS



This week: A felony assault charge tied to a beating near Glacier Park International Airport; a vaccine effort protecting bats at Libby Dam and a wastewater lawsuit. Scan the QR code.



NATION

Buc-ee’s chain draws outcry for launching fight over a mini mart’s beaver logo
PAGE A4



DELIVERY QUESTIONS
CALL 755-7018



© 2026 The Daily Inter Lake
\$1.50 daily