



Independent Record

Helena-area candidates file to run for county positions, seats in Legislature
PAGE A2



Trump says he wants to be involved in picking Iran's next leader
PAGE A4



Friday, March 6, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

helenair.com

HELENA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

'TRADING PLACES'



SONNY TAPIA PHOTOS, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Local business leaders and representatives, along with Helena Public Schools administrators, sit inside the cafeteria at Central Elementary School on March 5, 2026, before participating in the Helena Education Foundation's Trading Places event.

Local business leaders swap roles with public school administrators during HEF event

SONNY TAPIA
sonny.tapia@helenair.com

The Helena Education Foundation hosted "Trading Places" on Thursday, during which Helena Public Schools administrators and local business leaders swapped places to see what it's like in the other person's shoes.

Pairs were grouped together and met at Central Elementary School before they headed off to see what it's like for administrators and business leaders on a typical workday.

Some of the pairs included Helena High School Principal Brian Kessler, C.R. Anderson Middle School Principal Kathleen Prody, YWCA's Interim Executive Director Denise King and more.

Roughly 40 people participated in the event.

Business officials from outside the district visited various classrooms and offices, learning about the district's improvement plans and witnessing responsibilities and



Superintendent of Helena Public Schools Rex Weltz speaks to local industry leaders and district administrators on March 5, 2026, at Central Elementary School for the Helena Education Foundation's Trading Places event.

the decisions administrators have to make, HEF officials said.

"Administrators learn about the world beyond their school walls

and see how schools can play a more active role in supporting local businesses and community organizations," HEF representatives said.

Racicot named US attorney for Montana

Veteran prosecutor steps into position after Alme resigns to run for Senate

SEABORN LARSON
seaborn.larson@lee.net

Tim Racicot, a 20-year prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Montana, is now leading the federal prosecutor's office here on an interim basis after its top official, Kurt Alme, unexpectedly filed to run for the U.S. Senate on Wednesday.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office for Montana confirmed to the Montana State News Bureau on Thursday that Alme resigned from the post on March 4.

Alme's surprise candidacy came less than eight minutes before the state filing deadline and in the same moments that Republican U.S. Sen. Steve Daines withdrew his reelection campaign, torching the script for what was expected to be a surefire bid for his third term.



Alme

The Hatch Act of 1939 prohibits federal employees, such as federal prosecutors, from political activities like campaigning for office to ensure they don't wield power in that office for political gain.

Alme has not returned calls from the Montana State News Bureau since he filed for office. He was appointed U.S. attorney for Montana during President Donald Trump's first term and reappointed last year after Trump took office for his second term. While President Joe Biden was president in between Trump's two administrations, Alme worked briefly as Gov. Greg Gianforte's state budget director.

Racicot has been with the federal prosecutor's office in Montana since 2005, and became first assistant U.S. attorney in August 2022.

He served as acting U.S. attorney in February 2025 when, upon Trump's reelection, then-U.S. Attorney Jesse Laslovich, a Biden appointee, was removed from the job. Laslovich was reportedly at his work-issued laptop when the machine shut down on its own.



City clears out homeless encampment downtown

Helena says it received complaints about tents blocking sidewalk access

BLAIR MILLER
blair.miller@lee.net

The city of Helena cleared the homeless encampment on Cruse Avenue Thursday morning following several recent complaints about tents blocking pedestrian access on the sidewalk, according a city spokesperson.

Helena police officers were seen at the site near the intersection of Cruse and 11th avenues between 10:30 a.m. and noon on Thursday. City spokesperson Amanda Opitz said officers worked with Good Samaritan's street team to tell people living there in advance of the cleanup — one officer said people got a week's

notice — and to connect them resources about where to find shelter, housing and other support.

Camping in a park or blocking Americans with Disabilities Act access, like blocking a public sidewalk, are right-of-way violations in the city, which Opitz said staff want to be responsive to while also working to find homeless people shelter and stability.

"We recognize that homelessness is a complex issue that cannot be solved through enforcement alone. It's not illegal to be unsheltered," she said in an email.

This past fall, the city began organizing its Extreme Cold Weather Temporary Shelter Registration Program after God's Love shelter, which the encampment sits behind, announced it was putting restrictions on who could use the shelter



SONNY TAPIA, INDEPENDENT RECORD

A man dumps a torn-and-tattered tent into the back of a Helena city truck during a cleanup on Cruse Avenue on Thursday.

Please see ENCAMPMENT, Page A2