



US SENATE RACE

‘NOT GOING ANYWHERE’



SONNY TAPIA PHOTOS, INDEPENDENT RECORD

Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Alani Bankhead takes a question from an attendee at The Lodge in Townsend during an event on Aug. 5.

Bankhead staves off Bodnar supporters at Townsend event as dropout deadline nears

CARLY GRAF
carly.graf@missoulain.com

TOWNSEND — When Alani Bankhead, the Democratic nominee for Montana’s U.S. Senate seat, opened the floor to questions at a roughly 50-person event on Wednesday night, the questions asked before the organizer cut off the exchange weren’t about Bankhead’s candidacy.

“I am a Democrat, and I voted for you in the primary. But like thousands of other Democrats in Montana, my No. 1 goal is defeating (Republican nominee Kurt) Alme,” one woman said. “Will you continue



to show your strength as a leader by withdrawing from the race?”

Bankhead, an Air Force veteran and former counterintelligence officer, has said that nothing short of a “lightning bolt from God” would force her out of the race, and she gave no indication on Wednesday that she would change her mind.

“I’m not going to drop out,” she responded to the question. “Thank you for asking.”

Four people in a row stood to ask Bankhead to back out before the organizer ultimately shut the event down.

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Independent U.S. Senate candidate Seth Bodnar, left, speaks with a supporter on June 4 in Helena at The Rialto.

Genesis clothing outlet to open Helena location

CHRISTINE COMPTON
christine.compton@helenair.com

A new North Dakota-based athleisure clothing store is opening near Target this fall, the company announced Wednesday.

Genesis, with the motto “create your look,” is an outlet for name-brand apparel for men, women and children, primarily carrying beachy and outdoorsy lines like Billabong, Birkenstock and The North

Face. Online, most items go for \$30 to \$80.

It will be moving into 3321 N. Montana Ave., the previous shell for Leslie’s Hallmark Shop at the Northside Shopping Center strip mall.

Applications to remodel the space date back to late April, and a green light was given in June, according to city documents.

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CHRISTINE COMPTON, INDEPENDENT RECORD

A new retail store, Genesis, is expected to open in Helena at 3321 N. Montana Ave., between the Great Clips and Game Stop at the Northside Shopping Center.

PSC reveals info about data center agreements

Unredacted documents offer insight into projects proposed in Montana

ALEX MITCHELL
amitchell@billingsgazette.com

BILLINGS — The Montana Public Service Commission on Monday released some information about data center agreements that it had long shielded from public view.

Heavy redactions had kept the contents of some of the documents released hidden. Now, after the contents of entire pages were blacked out previously, one word was left redacted between the three documents.

The newly released documents offer some new insight into the scale of some of the proposed data center projects that NorthWestern Energy would support.

Multiple public interest groups had been pressing the PSC, Montana’s regulatory body for utilities, to provide these materials for months.

In a letter on July 31, NorthWestern told the PSC that it mostly had no reason anymore to redact its service agreements from the public. Therefore, it was seeking the public release of the three documents.

Two of the three data center developers, Quantica Infrastructure and Atlas Power Group, have said that the information shared in NorthWestern’s letters of intent were no longer considered confidential, NorthWestern attorney Sarah Norcott told the commission.

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Man to stand trial in Helena for allegedly raping woman

MIKAYLA MELO
mikayla.melo@helenair.com

A 20-year-old Mississippi man is going to trial in Lewis and Clark County District Court for allegedly raping a Helena woman last year.

Christopher Dalton Gomes was scheduled for a change of plea hearing Thursday morning, but his attorney, Brent Flowers, told Standing Master Hannah Roe that Gomes had changed his mind and would like to stand trial instead. His trial is scheduled to begin Aug. 18.

Gomes is charged with one felony count of sexual intercourse without consent. He was arraigned in Lewis and Clark County District Court in May 2025, and his bond was set at \$100,000, which he posted through a local bail bondsman shortly afterward, according to court documents.



Gomes

The affidavit states that on April 25, 2025, the Helena Police Department received a report from the victim alleging Gomes raped her on April 13, 2025. The victim told officers she and the defendant were kissing in the back seat of a vehicle parked in the Bill Roberts Golf Course parking lot.

According to documents, Gomes removed his pants and put on a condom, despite the victim telling him multiple times that she did not want to have sex with him. Documents state that Gomes removed the victim’s pants and underwear and got on top of her as she continued to tell him to stop. According to the documents, the victim tried to back away and repeatedly told him to stop, but Gomes continued to have sex with her.

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