



## This week in sports

Recap of prep hoops season **B1**

# Lake County Leader

BREAKING NEWS >> LEADERADVERTISER.COM

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## Former Polson man files ADA complaint against library

By **KRISTI NIEMEYER**  
Editor

Former Polson resident Michael Ross has lodged a civil complaint in U.S. District Court in Missoula, accusing the North Lake County Library and its director, Abbi Dooley, of violating the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In an order dated March 3, U.S. Magistrate Judge Kathleen DeSoto allowed the case to move forward. The complaint,



ROSS

originally filed Aug. 4, 2025, seeks \$5 million in damages for what Ross alleges are “emotional and mental” injuries sustained due to the library’s decision to ban him from the premises in the summer of 2025.

According to previous

Leader reporting, Ross, who is completely blind, moved to Polson in February 2025. He was 41 years old at the time, and was a frequent visitor to the library, often seeking help from staff while conducting research, writing letters or filling out forms – in one instance, according to Dooley, for a Supreme Court case he was trying to file.

On his final visit, he was advised that library staff could

not assist with legal paperwork and that he would need to schedule an appointment in the future because his requests for assistance were too time-consuming for the small staff.

On July 19, Ross filed a police complaint alleging that the library had failed to provide him with accommodations for his disability.

According to an interview that Polson Police conducted with Dooley, dated July 24, the

director said Ross had visited the library approximately five times, and staff had assisted him during each visit, but then requested he make appointments for future visits because the library “did not have enough staff to help him and cover the front desk at the same time.”

She noted said Ross could be “slightly intimidating, in a nice way,” and said

See **LIBRARY, A6**

## Police seek suspects in attempted ATM grab

By **EMILY MESSER**  
Reporter

Around 4 a.m. on Thursday, March 12, the driver of a Ford F-350 appeared to intentionally back into the front door of Wilson Foods in Arlee, and two suspects attempted to remove the ATM inside.

The camera inside the store shows them yanking back and forth on the ATM for four minutes while they tried to break the bolts holding it to the ground. They failed to remove it and fled the scene.

In an interview Thursday afternoon, store owner Rowan Wilson explained that nothing was stolen during the attempted heist.

“It was really fast; it was like a grab-and-go but with an ATM machine,” he said.

Wilson received an alert from Mission Valley Security that the store’s glass was broken. But due to a high wind warning in the area on Thursday and because sometimes his fuel delivery truck sets off the alarm by shaking the glass, he thought nothing of it and told them not to send the police.

Just moments later, he received a call from Lake County Dispatch about a break-in reported by a neighbor. While typically he has to wait for the Lake County Sheriff’s Department to arrive, they were already in the area and beat him to the scene.

“I pulled up, and I was just kind of shocked. It’s like, ‘Wow, they really did it,’”

See **ATM, A6**

## SNOW DAY



When winter finally arrived last weekend, Viola Pablo and her canine sidekick were ready. Along with sister Catalina, they slid and scampered downhill at Riverside Park Sunday, relishing the first serious snowfall of the season. (Kristi Niemeyer/Leader)

## Winter’s outburst provokes slide-ins and outages

By **KRISTI NIEMEYER**  
Editor

With more than a foot of heavy, wet snow falling in some parts of the Mission Valley last weekend, road crews and first responders worked around the clock.

Mark Clary, head of Lake County’s Office of Emergency Management, said dispatchers fielded 87 calls for service concerning the wind and snow event that began Friday and ended Monday with rain. Among

those calls, residents reported utility issues, vehicle accidents and slide ins, roadway debris and other public safety hazards.

In a press release posted Tuesday morning on its Facebook page, Mission Valley Power said crews were still working on outages on North Finley Point, as well as areas along Kings Point Road and Rocky Point Road on the west shore of Flathead Lake. A few outages still remained in the Arlee and Evaro areas too.

“MVP employees will be working throughout the day and into the evening to safely restore power,” reads the announcement.

By Monday morning, power had been largely restored in areas along St. Mary’s Lake Road, east of St. Ignatius, and crews were at work in the Jocko Canyon east of Arlee, as well as adjacent to the Mission Mountains, east of Ronan.

According to the press release crews were “continuously working around the

clock” over the weekend to address outages caused by the heavy snow and wind. By Tuesday, resources were somewhat limited, since those who had worked nonstop were required to have a mandatory rest period before resuming their efforts.

Eugene Beckes, who lives east of St. Ignatius, reported that he and his wife lost power for about 12 hours after “a small but tall tree

See **WINTER, A6**

## New garbage hauler comes to county

By **EMILY MESSER**  
Reporter

At the beginning of March, Grizzly Disposal and Recycling began serving Lake County and within 10 days had secured 300 customers. Just like its competitor, Republic Services, Grizzly had to apply for a carrier license with the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC). This allows commercial haulers to haul municipal solid waste to the county’s landfill.

Lake County Solid Waste director Stacey Kintigh explained in an email to the Leader that the county stipulates that only solid waste collected within the county can be

disposed of in the county landfill. He noted that these commercial haulers must haul directly to the landfill, and the public will continue to take waste to the Lake County Transfer Station or other rural transfer sites to avoid increased traffic on Kerr Dam Road.

Billy Fisher, the general manager of Grizzly, said the current servicer could protest the new haulers’ permit, and he had expected a year-long legal battle with Republic, which they experienced in Missoula County. However, Republic did not protest this permit, which Fisher noted allowed his business to start serving the county a year sooner

than anticipated.

Fisher operated Western Montana Republic Services for five years before deciding to leave and partner with Lance Johnson, who had been operating a service in Bozeman since 2007. Together, they applied for a permit and started serving Missoula in 2021.

Now, with the expansion to Lake County, Fisher has leased property off the intersection of North Reservoir and Skyline Drive south of Polson. He is storing trucks at this yard and plans to build a shop there as he gains customers in the county.

See **GARBAGE, A6**



A Grizzly Disposal & Recycling dumpster sits outside Sweet Bliss in Polson. Sweet Bliss was one of Grizzly’s first customers in the area. (Emily Messer/Leader)

### QUOTE WORTHY

“I pulled up, and I was just kind of shocked. It’s like, ‘Wow, they really did it.’”

Rowan Wilson, Wilson Foods

### COMMUNITY

Pinewood cars fly to the finish

PAGE B8

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**FLATHEAD LAKE LEVEL**  
2886.51 feet on March 17, 2026  
Full pool is 2,893 feet



Vol. 65 No. 11