

‘LEADS WITH KINDNESS’



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

The new Director at the Missoula Family YMCA, Lindsay Hutson, pictured on Friday, Aug. 22 in Missoula.

YMCA has new Director of School Age Programs

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Lindsay Hutson didn’t grow up knowing much about the YMCA, as her hometown in Idaho doesn’t have one.

“But of course, you know, I heard the song,” she said with a smile, referencing the 1978 hit by the Village People.

But when Hutson was applying to work at the Missoula Family YMCA she realized her values were aligned with what the organization was offering. And the staff at the YMCA agree.

This Monday Hutson will officially become the Director of School Age Programs. Senior Director of Youth Development at the Missoula Family YMCA Eli Catton knew Hutson was the right person for the job.

“Not only does she have the expertise to carry out the position, but she has the right approach to every interaction she has with her staff, with the families of our participants, with the kids themselves,” Catton said.

“She leads with kindness,” he said. “She’s everything we need.”

Hutson knew since she was in second grade she wanted to be a teacher.

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Eli Catton, Senior Director of Youth Development at the Missoula Family YMCA

“I always got done with my schoolwork early and would help the kids that struggled a little bit,” she said. “My teachers really encouraged me to do that, which was really good for me, because I could explain things to kids in a way that the teachers couldn’t.”

When she was in middle school decided she wanted to be a band teacher. In her high school years learned to play different instruments with a focus on the oboe, which she said looks like the clarinet but has two reeds instead of one.

“My band teacher said, ‘Well, you need to play oboe because you can get good scholarships,’” she said.

Hutson went to the University of Idaho and graduated with a degree in elementary education with a music endorsement.

She taught in the Lakeland School Dis-

trict north of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho for 14 years and the Post Falls School District west of Coeur d’Alene for three years, teaching “a little bit of everything,” she said, from kindergarten to junior high, to band, choir, drama, and elementary music.

When levies weren’t passing in Post Falls, she and her husband, who also teaches elective classes, “saw the writing on the wall,” and in January moved to Missoula.

During her 17 years of teaching, she would have upwards of 700 students at a time, sometimes across as many five different schools. She’d run into students all over when she was in Idaho, like in Walmart or in coffee shops.

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3 refineries in Montana get EPA exemptions

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BILLINGS—Refineries in Billings, Laurel and Great Falls received Environmental Protection Agency exemptions Friday as part of President Trump’s stated goal of strengthening American energy production.

Refiners were exempted from a 2005 federal law that ultimately aims to reduce how heavily consumers rely on fossil fuels by mandating an increase in the amount of renewable fuels that were blended into gasoline. The exemptions for Montana will allow the refineries to avoid fiscal responsibilities associated with that mandate from the past few years, proving “economic hardship.”

According to the EPA, there was a “backlog” of 175 refinery petitions before the agency resolved them. President Joe Biden’s administration was largely disapproving of the exemptions, reversing Trump exemptions granted in his first term until that decision was overturned in court.

Billings Par Montana Refinery and the Laurel CHS refinery filed their petitions after Trump was elected for a second term, according to EPA records. The Calumet MT refinery in Great Falls applied for exemptions in 2022, 2023, and mid-2024.

The EPA ruling wasn’t a sweeping win for refiners in Montana though. The petitions were mostly only partially granted for the Montana refineries that applied, meaning they only demonstrated “partial hardship,” according to the EPA. Full exemptions were granted for 63 petitions, and partial exemptions, meaning 50%, were granted for 77 of the 175 petitions.

It follows the Trump administration’s state goal of unleashing American energy, with most rules and decisions standing to benefit the fossil fuel industry. In a statement, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., was supportive of the exemptions.

“I’m glad to see President Trump acting to support small refiners after the Biden administration blocked these critical exemptions for years,” Daines said.



AMY LYNN NELSON, BILLINGS GAZETTE

The Par Montana refinery just outside Billings, Montana is shown in this file photo.