

NOMINATE  
A LOCAL  
HERO!



The Montana Standard is thrilled to cosponsor the 6th annual "Local Heroes" recognition and celebration.

The public is encouraged to nominate a "local hero" who might otherwise go unrecognized. The person may work in healthcare, in retail, in the public sector including public safety, in education, in the restaurant and hospitality industries, in the media, in financial services and accounting, or at a nonprofit.

From the public's nominations, at least 10 "local heroes" will be selected, and an event will be scheduled to honor them and celebrate their selection. Each will receive our gratitude and \$1,000, to be spent locally.

Please submit nominations at:  
[go.mtstandard.com/local-heroes](https://go.mtstandard.com/local-heroes)

  
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MONTANA STANDARD

Thursday, October 2, 2025

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# Turnout low for local gov't study hearing

**MIKE SMITH**  
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The Butte-Silver Bow Study Commission received a fresh batch of survey responses this past weekend but its first public hearing on potentially big changes to the local government didn't draw a big crowd.

Several of the 15 or so people who did show spoke in favor of a city-manager model of government outright or suggested support for one, and a few touched

on neighborhood councils and the divisive issue of fire services in Butte-Silver Bow.

One man, Larry Winstel, said neighborhood councils are needed but he mostly scoffed at things, saying local officials are breaking laws, the chief executive is a dictator position, commissioners "rubber stamp everything" and won't listen to him, city services aren't coordinated and the public works director won't return his calls.

Winstel even directed harsh words at the Study Commission, a group voters authorized in the 2024 primary then elected nine members from 33 candidates in the November election to serve on it.

"You should actually have citizens on this committee," Winstel told commission members. "I ran for this committee. I did not get elected and I'm glad I did not because I can accomplish more outside of this farce."

Others commended the Study Commission, which can put major changes to local government on the ballot next year for voters to decide.

"I want to tell everybody you're doing a great job," Ted Bury, a life-long resident, volunteer fire chief and former commissioner, told the group. "I applaud each and every one of you for trying to make our great community a better place."



**JOSEPH SCHELLER, THE MONTANA STANDARD**  
The Butte-Silver Bow Courthouse is pictured in this April 2024 file photo.

Please see **LOCAL**, Page A2

## THE SHELTER GAP



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

The Salish and Kootenai Housing Authority hosted the United Native American Housing Association conference in the Flathead Valley on Aug. 13, 2024, taking attendees on a bus tour of area housing.

# LAND IS PLENTY; HOMES ARE FEW

A patchwork of conflicting policies blamed for stalling development in Indian Country

**NORA MABIE**

**BLACKFEET RESERVATION** — The painting hangs on a wall in Blackfeet Community College President Brad Hall's house.

"I like it," said Hall's father, Ted, a retired Bureau of Indian Affairs superintendent. "Because I like the truth."

"Allotment Act," by Blackfeet artist Wilbur Blackweasel, depicts a Native couple driving a horse-drawn cart through an open landscape. In the ground in front of them is a metal stake marking their assigned parcel.

The General Allotment Act of 1887 (also called the Dawes Act) authorized the president of the United States to divvy reservation land into allotments for

distribution to individual tribal members. Tribal land that was not allotted was deemed "surplus" and opened to non-Native settlement. Allotment supporters argued that private ownership and agriculture would assimilate Native Americans into White economies and society.

The policy devastated tribes, disrupting communal ownership traditions and ultimately taking more than 90 million acres of land out of Native American control. The act would later be condemned for contributing to severe health problems and widespread economic instability in tribal communities.



JOHN STEMBER, MONTANA FREE PRESS

An Allotment Act pin north of Browning on the Blackfeet Reservation, photographed on Thursday, Aug. 27. The Allotment Act of 1887 would later be condemned for contributing to severe health problems and widespread economic instability in tribal communities.

Please see **SHELTER**, Page A4

# What the shutdown means for Montana

**CARLY GRAF & SEABORN LARSON**

Federally funded programs administered by Montana state agencies will continue as normal for at least 30 days, the governor's office said Wednesday, after an impasse in the U.S. Senate led to the first government shutdown since 2018.

The federal government shut down at midnight after Republicans and Democrats in Congress failed to reach an agreement to fund operations into the new fiscal year, halting a slew of services that flow out of Washington D.C., to the rest of the country.



Services deemed essential will persist during the shutdown. Social Security and Medicare payments will still be issued and federal Medicaid reimbursements will be delivered to states. Air traffic controllers and Transportation Security Administration staff will report to work, though they won't be paid until the shutdown ends. Federal law enforcement agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, will remain operational. Veterans Administration medical centers will stay open and the Indian Health Service can maintain its clinical operations.

But roughly 750,000 federal workers nationwide are furloughed and some services — like national parks — will operate with skeleton staffing.

That includes the civilian workforce at Malmstrom Air Force Base, which will retain enough of those employees from furlough to maintain essential operations. Airmen, meanwhile, will continue without pay until Congress reaches an agreement.

The Montana National Guard said on Wednesday it was still determining which activities are exempted from the shutdown, although certain full-time staff and "mission essential" employees will continue to come to work while pay is delayed.

Please see **SHUTDOWN**, Page A2

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