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BOOMTOWNS, BEAVER AND BISON



A scene from a historical re-enactment organized by the Fort Connah Restoration Society at Fort Connah in August 2012.

ARTHUR MOURATIDIS, MISSOULIAN

How trade posts shaped Montana

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Iconic Montana historian K. Ross Toole described the state's economy as a system of resource extraction. From the rise of the Copper Kings to today's ballooning tourism economy, someone has always looked to take something out of Montana.

"The Montana pattern has been brief, explosive, frenetic, and often tragic," Toole wrote in his book, *Montana: An Uncommon Land*, first published in 1959. "The economic picture has often been one of exploitation, overexpansion, boom-and-bust. The political scene has been equally extreme — from fiery, wide-open violence to apathetic resignation."

Some of the first white settlers traveling west to Montana did so to acquire highly sought-after furs and hides: beavers and,

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MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY RESEARCH CENTER PHOTOGRAPH ARCHIVES

A view of a two log structure, likely small trading stores, near Fort Union, Dakota Territory, with a couple tipis nearby and a larger camp in the distance. The Indians are possibly Assiniboine. This area was in Dakota Territory just east of the territorial boundary. The photo was taken during the Fisk Expedition of 1866 on the way from Minnesota to Montana Territory.

America at 250: The story still unfolding

This story is part of America 250, a series that examines Montana through both a historical and modern day lens. As we celebrate America turning 250 this year, we in turn are celebrating the people, places and things that have shaped the Treasure State. Future stories will focus on railroad systems and rail towns, historical relations with the media, cowboy culture, national parks and tribal history.

MINING ROUNDTABLE

Governor: Minerals key to US, Montana

Critical minerals supply a true 'crisis' in the U.S. or overstated?

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Gov. Greg Gianforte preached to the choir Wednesday morning and the choir preached back.

Gianforte hosted a roundtable discussion at Montana Tech about critical minerals.

Johnny MacLean, the university's chancellor, emphasized a point frequently made in recent years — that establishing a reliable domestic source of critical minerals and the means to process them is a matter of national security.

"We are at a watershed moment in our country's history," he said.

MacLean said two factors limiting the nation's advance in the world economy are an insecure supply chain for critical minerals and challenges with energy generation and transmission.

The 15 people who joined the Gianforte-led discussion also included Matt Vincent, executive director of the Montana Mining Association, along with representatives from mining or exploration projects, academics staff from Montana Tech and representatives from state agencies.

Vincent, Gianforte and others mentioned the support of the Trump administration and current congressional delegation for the domestic mining and processing of critical minerals.

"How can we align ourselves with what is going on there?" Vincent said.

Gianforte added, "How do we leverage this opportunity for our economy, national security [and mine responsibly]?"

Vincent described Montana Tech as a key resource — not only for research and development but for workforce preparation.

Goosing permitting

The governor received feedback from representatives of mining and exploration projects who hit notes from the same hymnal — insisting the state permitting and regulatory process needs streamlining.

A few roundtable participants cited workforce challenges.

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Officers shoot and kill armed man in disturbance

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A man armed with a shotgun was shot and killed by police following a disturbance on Thursday night at a home in the 4800 block of Hope Road in Butte.

Just after 10:30 p.m., Butte Emergency Dispatch received a call from a woman who told a dispatcher her ex-husband had fired multiple gunshots at her, according to a police report.

The woman, who was not injured, had fled from the home she shared with the suspect.

According to the police report, initial officers arrived in the area approximately four minutes after the original call and spoke to the woman, who was on the street near the home.

After making sure she was safe, officers went looking for the ex-husband, who was in a garage attached to the home.

Butte-Silver Bow Sheriff Ed Lester said the man was armed with a shotgun. While officers gave verbal commands to the suspect to drop his weapon, the man allegedly raised his shotgun toward an officer, Lester said.

Sheriff Lester said officers then fired at the suspect, who sustained multiple gunshot wounds.

Officers attempted lifesaving measures, said the sheriff, and A-1 Ambulance and Butte Fire Rescue also arrived. The suspect was pronounced dead at the scene.

Butte police requested investigative assistance from the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation.

"DCI investigators are at the scene and have been throughout the night," Lester said. "DCI will conduct a thorough, independent investigation into the

incident."

The body of the male suspect, whose name has not been released, was taken to the Montana State Crime Lab in Missoula for an autopsy.

No officers were injured. The names of the officers involved are not being released at this time.

The sheriff said additional information will be released when it becomes available.

Tracy Thornton is a reporter for the Montana Standard in Butte.

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