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Thursday, October 8, 2026 • RavalliRepublic.com

MARLAND WHALEY FOUNDATION

‘IT’S THE JOURNEY’



SHANNA MADISON, MISSOULIAN

Dawn Whaley is co-organizing a festival in honor of her late husband, Marland Whaley, a well-known Bitterroot Valley cyclist and coach. MarlandFest will take place on The Property, an 80-acre off-grid piece of land with mountain bike trails on Fred Burr Road that's owned by Katie and Arthur Sykes.

Mountain biking festival this weekend honors legacy of renowned Bitterroot Valley athlete

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Dawn Whaley has struggled with profound grief ever since her husband of nearly 20 years, Marland Whaley, passed away from a heart attack in 2019.

He was a well-known cyclist, coach and father in the Bitterroot Valley. One of the last photos she has of him shows the couple posing with their bikes in front of Skalkaho Falls.

But now she's found that

helping others to enjoy the same things he did, like mountain biking and recreating in the mountains, gives her a renewed purpose.

Please see **FESTIVAL**, Page A4

AFFORDABILITY

Prices are top of mind with voters this cycle

Candidates take different approaches on big issue

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On a swing through one of Montana's most expensive and liberal counties, the Republican candidate for the state's western congressional district blamed higher costs everywhere from the gas pump to the grocery store on "crazy" policies pushed by Democrats, not the Republicans that control the White House and both chambers of U.S. Congress.

"If you live and pay taxes here in Missoula, or if you're paying higher rent because of the higher property taxes in Missoula, I don't have to tell you that things have gone crazy because you know it, you feel it and maybe have family members that have had to leave because of it," said Aaron Flint at a press conference last week outside the Missoula County Courthouse.

One month from Election Day, historically high gas and diesel prices and unrelenting inflation are driving talk of a blue wave in midterm races around the country. The average Democrat leads a Republican opponent by nine points, according to some polls, while President Donald Trump's approval rating has sunk below 40%.

In Montana, which has been a reliable GOP stronghold for much of the past decade, constituent sentiment about high costs isn't mapping neatly along partisan divides. Even Republicans are feeling the need to respond to what they're hearing from voters about high prices.

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High court hopefuls make final arguments

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Since before artillery began flying around this year's top-ballot races and before any federal candidates even declared for office, the Montana Supreme Court contest had been steadily marching along.

District court judges Amy Eddy and Dan Wilson both launched campaigns in early

2025 for this cycle's lone Supreme Court seat on the ballot, an open race to replace Justice Beth Baker, who will retire when her term ends this year.

Both candidates preside over the 11th Judicial District, better known as the Flathead County District Court. In Montana's fourth most populous county, five district court judges there divvied up 5,834 cases

in 2025, up from 5,560 cases filed in 2016, about the time both Eddy and Wilson took the bench. According to biographies kept online by the judicial branch, only one district court judge from Flathead County has ever been elected to the Montana Supreme Court; that was Frank Haswell, chief justice from 1978 to 1985.

But in many ways, this race has ended up

following the same script that's played out in Montana the last three cycles: a nonpartisan election often overshadowed by the spectacle of races at the top of the ticket. Even outside a presidential election year, this year's U.S. Senate race in Montana dominated the political discourse, and a high-stakes

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Weather
Sunny and warm
High: 76 **Low:** 44
Forecast: A10

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