



**WEATHER
OUTLOOK**

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 39.

Sunday: Partly sunny, with a high near 40.

**WEEKEND
EDITION**

OBITUARIES

Delores Kaestner
Donna M. Munyan
James Michael Powers II
James Micheal Powers Sr.

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THE WESTERN NEWS

Friday, February 20, 2026

Libby, Montana

Volume 125, No. 15

Officials host public meeting for those affected by severe weather

By **SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER**
The Western News

Government officials are holding another public meeting next week about the December storms that wreaked havoc in south Lincoln County.

It will be held at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 in the Ponderosa Room at Libby City Hall.

The meeting is open to all community members.

Montana and Lincoln County Disaster and Emergency Services as well as state and federal partners will be there to answer questions about recovery

assistance and resources.

For those who cannot attend, participation is available through Microsoft Teams. You will have to register as this is set up as a public meeting.

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/26957173146680?p=Sf4fGltH-95QjplZQI1DW>

The meeting ID is 269 571 731 466 80. The passcode is fJ9KM3bF.

Following massive and widespread flooding Dec. 11-12 in south Lincoln County and the failure of the Lower Flower Creek Diversion Dam, workers have removed more than 8,000 yards of sediment from the

lower reservoir.

Multiple roads and bridges were washed out and the weather led Gov. Greg Gianforte to declare a State of Emergency.

Then, on Dec. 16-17, winds that approached speeds of 90 miles uprooted thousands of trees that damaged homes and property, blocked roads and caused power outages that affected tens of thousands of customers to nearly Christmas day.

Since then, damage assessments have exceeded \$15 million.

Also, taxpayers now have until May 1, 2026, to file various federal individual and business tax returns and make tax pay-

ments. Following the disaster declaration issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in mid-December, individuals and households that reside or have a business in Lincoln and Sanders counties as well as the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, qualify for tax relief.

A federal disaster declaration permits the IRS to postpone certain tax-filing and tax-payment deadlines for taxpayers who reside or have a business in the disaster area. For instance, certain deadlines falling on or after Dec. 10, 2025, and before May 1, 2026, are granted additional time to file.

IN REMEMBRANCE



An urn containing the ashes of Dr. Richard S. "Dick" Wood and an U.S. flag, representing his service to our country in the Navy, rest on Libby Volunteer Fire Department's 1932 Chevrolet Fire Truck Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026, at the City of Libby Cemetery. Wood was a member of the LVFD from 1973 to 1996. Services were held for Wood following his death on Feb. 10, 2026. Wood was a pillar in the community, serving countless patients at his dental practice, coached Little League, and supported many in their time of need. (Scott Shindledecker/The Western News)

Ralph caps first Olympics with fifth place

By **SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER**
The Western News

Libby native Konnor Ralph capped his first Winter Olympics with a fifth place finish in Freeski Big Air Tuesday at the 2026 Milano Cortina games.

The 23-year-old, who now calls Helena home, was part of a group of outstanding performers in the finals that left broadcasters and fans awestruck.

Ralph was seeded last entering the Freeski Big Air medal round, but scored an 86.5 in his first jump. He didn't land his second jump, putting the pressure on for his third and final jump. Ralph didn't disappoint, scoring 91.5 and giving him

See **RALPH, A5**

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Hospital welcomes new Emergency Department Medical Director

The Western News

Cabinet Peaks Medical Center is pleased to welcome Dr. Daniel Weeks to the Emergency Department.

Dr. Weeks recently relocated to Libby from Bowling Green, Kentucky, and is excited to begin serving patients and families across Northwest Montana.

Dr. Weeks brings a strong background in emergency medicine and a patient-focused approach to care. He completed his residency at the University of Louisville and earned

his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

"My goal is to provide compassionate, patient-centered care for acute medical conditions and to empower patients to better care for themselves," said Dr. Weeks. "I enjoy teaching, answering questions and helping demystify the medical process. Spending meaningful, face-to-face time with patients is a critical part of providing high-quality emergency care."

See **HOSPITAL, A5**



Dr. Daniel Weeks

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