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JUNE 26 & 27 | THE LODGE MARINA
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Live music with Todd Cowart.
Friday | Live music at the Tiki 6p. Wooden Boat Parade 8p.
Saturday | Boat Show 9a-6p. Food & drinks at the Tiki & live music 1-4p. Free Event!

News: Property south of town annexed **A3**
 WHITEFISHPILOT.COM

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Whitefish High School Class of 2026 graduates on Saturday, June 6. (Kelsey Evans/Whitefish Pilot)

Whitefish High School celebrates 112th commencement

By **KELSEY EVANS**
 Whitefish Pilot

Whitefish High School graduated 143 seniors in its class of 2026 on Saturday, June 6.

Seniors Lavena James and Unity Loveless gave introductory remarks at the 112th commencement, noting that 11 students maintained 4.0 GPAs and 36

students earned local scholarships.

Many graduates will enter the workforce or pursue further education. A dozen will be college athletes. One graduate will enter the armed forces.

Loveless said the class of 2026 is highly motivated.

In their senior year, speech and debate claimed

a state title and the DECA team sent 18 to nationals.

The boys soccer team finished second at state. Football advanced to the semifinals, volleyball finished second in the conference, and girls golf placed second at state. Swimming did well at state and wrestling had divisional titles. Boys and girls tennis swept

the state team titles. Track and field sent 23 to state and the baseball team tied for third in the state tournament.

Twenty choir students participated at the state music festival where they earned 10 superior ratings. Choir has 21 seniors, who sang "The Rainbow Connection" at graduation.

See **GRADUATION, A4**

City budgets for \$2M Ice Den roof replacement

By **JULIE ENGLER**
 Whitefish Pilot

Raindrops may stop falling on heads at the Stumptown Ice Den where the roof has been leaking for years.

A new metal roof, with a price tag of around \$2 million, is in the works. If funding is approved, the job is expected to be done by August 2027.

The city owns the Ice Den and the park it sits on and has had a management agreement with the nonprofit Whitefish Sports Facility Foundation since 2015, when the rink became a year-round facility. Currently, the city and the foundation are updating the 11-year-old management agreement.

The foundation manages all the operations inside the building, and the city maintains the structure and grounds. The board is made up of representatives from each of the facility user groups, and the public is represented by members of the Park Board.

The existing roof was built in 2002 and has needed to be overhauled for several years.

Rink manager Greg Harms started working at the Ice Den in 2014, and the roof has been leaking since then, he recalled.

"It has had some problems from the beginning," Whitefish Parks and Recreation Director

See **ICE DEN, A3**

CLASS OF 2026

Whitefish grad has ripple effect through positivity

By **KELSEY EVANS**
 Whitefish Pilot

Whitefish High School class of 2026 graduate Unity Loveless already crossed the stage and exceeded the commencement ceremony on Saturday, but her impact will continue to spread positivity long after graduation day.

"I would tell freshman to do everything they can – join every club, go to every dance," Loveless said. "And also, just to talk to everyone. High school is so much more fun when you're friends with everyone."

Loveless plans to double

major in political science and education with a minor in Spanish at Montana State University. She said she's always wanted to be a teacher but has become more drawn to politics in recent years.

"It's really important to have younger people in government, with new perspectives," she said.

Loveless grew as an individual throughout high school to become a leader on the school's speech and debate team, earning Coach Sara Mueller's student of the year accolade.

Loveless was one of 30 students from across the nation to serve on the National

Speech and Debate Association Student Leadership Council this year. As the Montana director of outreach, she worked to bring debate resources and representation to rural communities across the state.

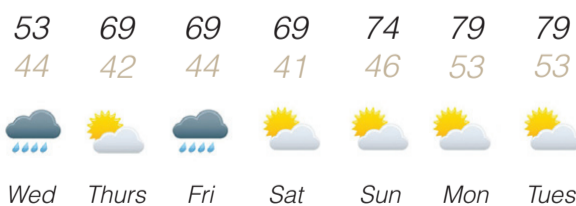
In the Flathead Valley, Loveless teamed up with classmate Scarlet Burke to pilot a speech and debate summer camp. The duo raised almost \$2,000 to host a week-long camp for Whitefish and Columbia Falls elementary students last July.

The camp was a great success as 30 young students



Whitefish High School graduate Unity Loveless. (Photo provided)

See **GRAD, A3**



“Much of my inspiration comes from time spent exploring the wilderness, where land becomes a teacher.

— Artist True Archdale

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