



The CityLink

Official News and Information
from the City of Billings



Fall 2015

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New Utility Payment and Billing Options Coming

The Public Works Department is always looking for ways to improve service and better serve its customers. In the coming weeks, exciting new services will be launched to give customers more options in paying and receiving utility bills.

Payment Options:

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is a technology that allows customers to interact with the utility billing system via a telephone keypad or by speech recognition. Customers can pay by credit card or with their checking account by calling the main utility phone line at (406) 657-8315. Customers will also be able to set up recurring payments to deduct their balance due automatically through the IVR system.

Online payments can be accessed from the City's website at www.ci.billings.mt.us. While online payments are not new, Public Works will soon be able to accept recurring credit card payments through the online system. The City accepts Visa, Discover, and Mastercard.

Check upcoming utility bills for information on when the IVR and recurring credit card services will be up and running.

Auto-Pay allows customers to pay the full balance through automatic withdrawal from a bank account. Customers can avoid having to write a check each month, save money on postage, and

never have to worry about a late payment again. To sign up for Auto-Pay, send in a voided check or savings deposit slip showing your bank account number with a completed authorization form that can be obtained online at www.ci.billings.mt.us or on the back of your utility bill.

The City of Billings also has payment drop boxes located at the Police Station at 2910 3rd Avenue North and in the customer parking lot at the utility service center at 2251 Belknap Avenue.

Customers can also make payments at the window of the following First Interstate Bank locations:

- 730 Main Street in the Heights
- 3199 Grand Avenue
- 401 N 31st Street

Billing Options:

Budget billing allows customers to keep their utility bills consistent and budget monthly payments by averaging seasonal billing highs and lows. Call the office at (406) 657-8315 to begin this service.

E-billing is also now offered. This service gives customers the option to sign up for paperless billing. Customers can sign up for this service by accessing their online utility account at www.ci.billings.mt.us or by calling the office.

Inside this issue:

Code Enforcement	2	Billings Public Library News	4	Did You Know?	6
Transit Bus Rodeo	2	From Our Readers	5	City of Billings Solid Waste Division	7
Parks, Recreation and Public Lands	3	Billings Fire Department	6	Nonresident Travelers to Billings	8
		Community Conversations	6	We Want to Hear From You	8

Visit the City's website: <http://www.ci.billings.mt.us>

Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Division provides compliance assistance to neighborhoods and commercial areas within the City limits. The division also has a close working relationship with County Code Enforcement for compliance with zoning and nuisance regulations in the County. The primary focus for the Division is property maintenance, public nuisances and obstruction of rights-of-way.

City Code Enforcement Officers are Tanya Punt (657-8288), Don Vegge (657-8313) and Kathy Carson (247-8611). The division has a part time clerk, Trina Adams (237-6146).

Don and Tanya provide enforcement response in residential areas (over 39 square miles) and Kathy provides response to commercial areas throughout the City. Mike Schieno (652-2050) is a County Code Enforcement Officer and covers all areas outside the city limits of Billings, Laurel and Broadview.

The Division has on-line complaint forms through its City webpage <http://ci.billings.mt.us/index.aspx?nid=109> and accepts phone complaints, faxes (657-8327) and email concerns. Due to the volume of complaints, it is not always possible to re-contact all complainants. Please leave as much information as possible concerning the nature of your concern and its location so staff response can be efficient and effective.

The largest volume of complaints each year, besides overgrown lawns and unmowed vacant lots, is the proper storage and parking of recreational vehicles. In the first nine months of 2015, the Division handled 585 complaints on RV parking and storage. In 2014, staff handled 748 complaints on RV parking. The largest category for RV complaints is when an owner un-hitches a tow-behind trailer and leaves it on the street. City Code Section 24-406 does not allow the storage of un-hitched trailers on the street for any amount of time except when you are loading or un-loading the trailer.



GUIDE

FOR PROPER STORAGE OF CAMPER, BOATS & TRAILERS

(SECTION 24-406)

Do's & Don'ts

Do: Store your camper, trailer or boat in the back yard or properly store on the driveway, in the garage or at a storage facility.

Do Not: Use the City's on-street parking for storage of campers, trailers or boats in residential areas.



Transit Bus Rodeo

The City of Billings Aviation and Transit Department hosted the 24th Annual Montana Transit Association Bus Rodeo at Billings Logan International Airport on Sept. 12.

Participating in the Rodeo from around the state were seven Division One drivers, who operate large passenger buses, along with 19 Division Two drivers, who operate cutaway paratransit vans.

The competition consisted of written exams, pre-trip vehicle inspections, wheelchair loading/unloading and securement, and a driving course with various obstacles.

The event allows drivers the opportunity to not only show off their skills, safe driving habits, and knowledge but also to compete to represent Montana at national Rodeo events for both divisions.

The event also allows drivers the opportunity to engage with individuals from transit organizations from around the state during the competition luncheon and the evening's award dinner.

MET Transit was well represented at the competition, with three drivers competing in Division One and two drivers competing in Division Two. Overall, the City of Billings drivers placed as follows: Division 1 - Carey Pope 1st Overall, Daniel Hoff 5th Overall, and Roy Hostetler 7th Overall; Division 2 - Michael Pope 1st Overall, and Darrell Walker 4th Overall.

MET is very happy to announce that two MET drivers will be representing Montana at both national Rodeos in the coming year with Carey Pope competing at the National APTA Rodeo in Charlotte, NC, and Michael Pope competing at the National CTAA Rodeo in Portland, OR. This is the first time in Montana Transit Association history that our state will be represented at nationals by a father/son duo. Congratulations to both drivers and good luck at nationals!



Father and son Carey and Michael Pope will represent Montana at both the National CTAA Rodeo in Portland, OR, and the National APTA Rodeo in Charlotte, NC.

News from the Parks, Recreation & Public Lands Department



2016 Winter/Spring Activities Brochure

The upcoming 2016 Winter/Spring Activities brochure will be available December 1 at the Billings Parks and Recreation office and also on www.BillingsParks.org. In addition, this publication will be inserted in the December issue of Simply Family magazine and mailed to customers who have registered with Parks and Recreation over the last three years. If you would like to have one mailed to your home, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (406) 657-8371. The Winter/Spring brochure will feature adult sports, youth sports, adult fitness, outdoor recreation, and many special interest programs.

Tennis Court Reconstruction

Tennis anyone? The Tennis Court Reconstruction project at Pioneer and Castle Rock Parks is nearing completion. The four courts at Castle Rock Park are complete and open for play. The three courts at Pioneer Park will be completed soon. Staff is waiting for installation of the lighting system. Thanks to the Billings Tennis Association for the generous donation that made the lighting option possible.

These courts are state-of-the-art laser-leveled, post-tensioned, concrete surfaces which will provide a superior playing surface for many years to come. Two courts at Castle Rock Park have also been striped for Pickleball and one court striped for players 10 and under. One court at Pioneer Park has also been striped for players 10 and under. Both locations are now accessible to players of all abilities with new 5-foot wide sidewalks. So, grab your rackets, get outside and enjoy these new courts in the beautiful Billings park system.



Castle Rock Tennis Court



Winter Basketball Programs

City League Basketball

Come join the Recreation Department this winter for Men's and Women's City League Basketball. Register for either a Competitive or Recreation division. The registration cost is \$350/team with an additional \$40/player, due January 6. The registration deadline for this activity is Monday, Dec. 14. Games begin the week of Jan. 11, with post season play beginning Mar. 14. Schedule distribution will take place once all team and player fees have been paid.

- **Season:** Monday, Jan. 11–Monday, Mar. 14
- **Time:** Monday–Thursday (7-9 pm),
Sundays (4-8 pm)
- **Locations:**
 - Castle Rock (1441 Governors Blvd.)
 - Riverside (3700 Madison Ave.)
 - Lewis & Clark (1315 Lewis Ave.)
 - Will James (1200 30th St. W.)
- **Cost:** \$350 team fee + \$40 individual player fee
- **Activity #:** 7000-A

Boys Basketball

Looking for an introduction to basketball, or a way to challenge your skills? Boys basketball is the place for you. 4th, 5th & 6th grade fall basketball league will begin Oct. 21. The fall season will offer two types of play: beginner and advanced. Traveling teams are encouraged to sign up in the advanced league in order to broaden player knowledge and feel for the game.

- **Ages:** 8-12 year olds (4th, 5th & 6th grade)
- **Season:** Wednesday, Oct. 21–Saturday, Dec. 19
- **Time:** Beginner (5:45 pm -7:15), Advanced (7:15-8:45)
- **Location:** Games will be played Saturdays at the following locations:
 - Arrowhead (2510 38th Street W [M/W])
 - Eagle Cliffs (1201 Kootenai [M/W])
 - Highland (729 Parkhill Drive [M/W])
 - Newman (605 South Billings Blvd. [Tu/Th])
- **Cost:** \$65.00 resident / \$75 non-resident

Trails End Park

If you happened to be passing by Trails End Park on Aug. 29, you probably noticed it was bustling with activity. On that day, 180 community volunteers joined staff and volunteers from the Parks and Recreation Department, Billings Kiwanis Club, KaBOOM! and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana to build a new playground. The project was a culmination of a three-month process of engaging community members to help design and choose the new equipment. The new playground, picnic tables, benches and shade structures have brought new life to the park, located at 18th St. W. and Burlington. If you haven't stopped by to enjoy the new playground, it is worth the trip. Take your time enjoying the playground that was built by the people of Billings!



Volunteers building a new playground at Trails End Park.



Children sharing design ideas for the new playground at Trails End Park.



Billings Public Library News

Library Parking

Billings Public Library's parking garden is complete, and there's something new in the garden. The Library parking area is the first in the City to introduce a license plate-based parking kiosk for facilitating both free and paid parking. The community asked for some free parking when visiting the Library, so the first two hours of a visit are free.



So how does it work? First of all, park your vehicle in the parking garden and note your license plate number. You may wish to snap a photo with your phone if it's easier. Then estimate how long you plan to visit the Library. If it's two hours or less, it's free – just enter your license plate information into the kiosk near the south entrance of the Library building. This allows Parking Enforcement staff to know that you are parked legally. If it's going to be longer than two hours, round up to the nearest hour and enter that amount of time in the kiosk. You will be directed how much to pay, which ranges from \$1 for the third hour to \$15 for an eight-hour stay. Payments may be made with cash or a debit/credit card. Whether paid or free, you may choose to print a receipt for your personal use, but it need not be displayed on your vehicle.

Drivers who do not enter their license plate information, or who overstay the length of time indicated, are subject to ticketing. Rates apply Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Parking is free after 5 p.m. on weekdays and on weekends. Library patrons with a valid handicap placard or plate may park free of charge with no time restrictions.

MontanaLibrary2Go

Did you know that the Library has downloadable audiobooks and e-books available for free? If you love the convenience of these formats, there's no better deal around!

In conjunction with libraries across Montana, Billings Public Library provides the MontanaLibrary2Go service. You may listen to audiobooks on your MP3 player, computer or tablet or download e-books to your computer, e-book reader, tablet or smartphone.

The process is similar to checking out print books from the Library. Browse to make your selection, enter your library card number, and check out the book. Books are returned automatically when they are due – no fines! – or you may return them early if you are finished. You may also reserve items currently checked out by others.

The Library provides classes on using MontanaLibrary2Go on the first Tuesday of every month at 4 p.m. Call the Library to register at (406) 657-8258, and bring along

your favorite device to learn more. If you're ready to jump right in and explore, visit the Library's website at <http://www.billings.lib.mt.us>. From the home page, select the "Downloads" link, then the link to MontanaLibrary2Go.

Senior Outreach from the Library

The Library is for everyone, but what happens if you are no longer able to get to the Library on your own? For those Billings residents who are living in senior residential communities or who are homebound, the Library can come to you.

The Senior Outreach Program makes monthly visits with a mobile library to 18 senior residential facilities and nursing homes within the city limits. Staff brings the experience of browsing for library materials directly to the residents of these communities!

The collection features a wide variety of materials in all formats but has an emphasis on large print and audiovisual items. Staff also regularly delivers titles that have been specifically requested by patrons.

The home delivery service provides library materials to Billings residents on a monthly basis. This service is designed for patrons who have difficulty leaving their homes due to medical issues. When asked what she thought about the program, Sandra, a home delivery patron, answered quickly, "Simple, it has saved my life."

The Senior Outreach program also delivers items to a number of smaller, senior-assisted living facilities and group homes.

You can view the Senior Calendar at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/hmbcal> for the schedule of stops or call (406) 657-8255, if you have any questions about participation.



From Our Readers

Comments from Zelda Fink of Billings:

I especially like the Service Directory. I'd like to see a list of the schools in Billings and where they are located.

Answer:

The CityLink staff thought this might be a great time to reiterate what the City is responsible for and what we can and cannot address in this publication. The City is responsible for many departments and services, but cannot provide answers to questions that pertain to County, State or Federal agencies. **The City also cannot address questions regarding the school district and their policies. The School District is a separate governmental division, so your question should more appropriately be addressed to the District.** You may also visit the website at www.billingschools.org, for more information. Thank you for reading!

Comments from Randy Hafer of Billings:

I enjoy the CityLink newsletter that comes with the paper. I am wondering who to call if I see a streetlight that is burned out. There are two on the corner near where I live (7th and 26th downtown). I know that some lights are maintained by NWE and some by the City, but I don't know which are which. It occurs to me that the CityLink might be a good place to publish this information.

Thank you.

Answer:

The street lights throughout the City are maintained by either City staff electricians or NorthWestern Energy crew members. On the City's website (www.ci.billings.mt.us) you can view maps that indicate which street light districts are maintained by which entity. Once you are at the website, in the search box simply type "street light map" and hit search. There you will find the street light district maps separated by areas of the City (<http://ci.billings.mt.us/?nid=1683>). The districts colored pink are maintained by NorthWestern Energy crews (1-888-467-2669) and all others shown on the map are City-maintained light districts (406-657-8250).

If you are calling NorthWestern Energy, it is helpful to give them the location of the pole along with the number listed on the pole.

Comments from Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Torrence of Billings:

I enjoyed the article about the Airport parking and the "Did You Know" was very interesting. I would like to see an article about Code Enforcement in an upcoming newsletter.

*Thanks for reading the CityLink
and for sending in your great questions, suggestions
and comments!*



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Billings Fire Department

The majority of on-duty Firefighter shifts are dedicated to training.

The single most important aspect of being able to address a number of different types of calls, including structure fires, medical emergencies, and special rescue situations, is entrenched in the ability of Firefighters to have a solid understanding of how to safely deal with the emergency.

Over the past year, the Billings Fire Department has enhanced the driver training program and has made significant improvements to the multi-story training tower in order to train for above-ground fires, such as in high-rise buildings. The creative idea to use cargo containers to build a fire-training facility was economical and proved to meet all of

the fundamental training requirements associated with different types of structure fires.

On a more technical side, the Fire Department purchased computer-based training software that is capable of tracking nationally recognized training and recertification courses for fire suppression best practices, continuing education courses for medical recertification, hazardous material mitigation solutions, and a host of management and administrative support topics.

The National Fire Service embraces a proactive and aggressive approach to training in order to provide the best service when the public requires response to an emergency.



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HALLOWEEN FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- When choosing a costume, stay away from long, trailing fabric. If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so they can see out.
- Provide children with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
- Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper catch fire easily. Keep all decorations away from open flames and other heat sources like light bulbs and heaters.
- Use a battery-operated candle or glow stick in jack-o-lanterns. If you use a real candle, use extreme caution. Make sure children are watched at all times when candles are lit. When lighting candles inside jack-o-lanterns, use long, fireplace-style matches or a utility lighter. Be sure to place lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn and far enough out of the way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards.

Did you know?

Decorations are the first thing to ignite in **900** reported home fires each year. Two of every five of these fires were started by a candle.

- Remember to keep exits clear of decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes.
- Make sure all smoke alarms in the home are working.
- Tell children to stay away from open flames including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them. Be sure they know how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire (have them practice, stopping immediately, dropping to the ground, covering their face with hands, and rolling over and over to put the flames out).

We Want to Hear From You

Join your City leaders in a Community Conversation!

- Wednesday, November 4th – 12 noon – 1:30 p.m.
 - Billings Public Library's Community Room
510 N. 28th St.
- Wednesday, November 4th – 7 – 8:30 p.m.
 - Castle Rock Middle School Library
1441 Governors Blvd.
- Thursday, November 5th – 7 – 8:30 p.m.
 - Little Horn State Bank
2900 Central Ave.
- Tuesday, November 10th – 7 – 8:30 p.m.
 - Lewis and Clark Middle School Chorus Room
1315 Lewis Ave.
- Thursday, November 12th – 7 – 8:30 p.m.
 - St. John's Alberta Bair Conference Room
Rimrock and Shiloh

For more information about the City of Billings Community Conversations, please visit the City's website at www.ci.billings.mt.us. You may also contact Liz Kampa-Weatherwax at kampal@ci.billings.mt.us or (406) 657-8216.

Hope to see you there!

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2014, there were 5,187 business licenses renewals and 1,497 new business licenses issued, totaling 6,684 business licenses processed by the City's Finance Department.
- There are 31,555 total spaces at the Mountview Cemetery.
- In 2014, MET Transit vehicles logged 853,576 miles with 671,804 riders.
- The Billings Logan International Airport property consists of 2,200 acres of land, 176,000 square feet of Terminal Building Space, and 1,343 automobile parking spaces. In 2014, the Airport had 857,291 passengers flying into or out of Billings.
- In 2014, the Solid Waste Division served 37,263 residential and commercial customers and there were 165,729 trips made to the Landfill.
- In 2014, the Fire Department responded to 11,989 dispatched calls and conducted 1,553 building inspections.

City of Billings Solid Waste Division

The Solid Waste Division is a unit of the Public Works Department that provides commercial and residential garbage service for Billings. Residential service is billed at the rate of \$9.90 per unit per month for weekly collection (about \$2.48 per week).

In the areas that have alleys, 300-gallon barrels are provided by the City to be shared by 2-3 households. Where alleys don't exist, each household is provided with a 90-gallon barrel on wheels. The residents push the barrels out for collection on their day of service.

The Solid Waste office receives phone calls every day concerning different aspects of collection services. Staff thought it might be helpful to provide some guidelines for the residents of Billings regarding garbage collection.

General Information

Solid Waste workers will collect your trash from the public right-of-ways. Staff cannot come on to private property to remove items, even with the permission of the homeowner.

Because of the risk of injury, items weighing more than 75 pounds cannot be collected by the Solid Waste workers.

City ordinance states that refuse resulting from contracted work, be it tree trimmings, hot water heaters, carpeting, etc. is required to be disposed of by the contractor.

The Solid Waste Division no longer holds an annual Toxic Waste Roundup. Oil-based paint, stains, batteries, pesticides, herbicides and other toxic materials can be taken to the Landfill during regular hours. Used oil and anti-freeze are also accepted at the landfill, located at 5240 Jellison Road.

The Solid Waste Division accepts old household refrigerators and freezers at the landfill for a \$22 charge for City residents. The charge is for the recovery of the Freon by certified persons within the Division, which is required by federal and state regulations.

The landfill is available for Billings and Yellowstone county residents to use at no charge for household items brought in, weighing no more than 700 pounds. There is a charge for commercial use of the landfill, for residents of other counties that the landfill serves and for residents of the City of Laurel. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The landfill is closed on Sundays.

The Solid Waste Division observes the major holidays which include New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Your collection may be delayed by one day during those weeks. Please check your utility bills for any schedule changes.

Commercial containers should never be used by residential customers. Businesses pay commercial rates for their service and this act will be considered a theft of services.

Alley Service

- Use the alley barrel primarily for household trash.
- Top the barrel off with yard waste or larger items the day before collection.
- Keep the alley clean from your property to the middle of the alley.
- Place items too large for the barrel on your side of the alley for alley cleaning.
- Extra waste is cleaned from the alleys approximately every three to four weeks.
- Only residential trash should be placed in residential barrels.
- Lawn services or tree trimming companies must haul their own refuse.
- Branches need to be prepared in 4-foot lengths and bundled for pickup.

- Long items causing the lid to stand up can cause a mess when the barrel is emptied.
- To help prevent litter, please bag your trash. Tie a knot, it blows a lot!
- Residents should not move or turn barrels from where the City has placed them.

Curb Service

- Collection service begins at 7 a.m., and barrels and any extras should be out.
- The barrel should be placed with the lid opening toward the street.
- Reasonable amounts of extra will be collected on the same day as the barrel.
- Extra barrels shall be no larger than 32 gallons and should have outside handles.
- Extra should be placed at least 3 to 4 feet away from the 90-gallon barrel.
- Branches need to be prepared in 4-foot lengths and bundled for pickup.
- Overfilling the barrel can cause a mess when the truck empties it.
- Placing the barrel 4 feet away from obstacles (mailboxes, vehicles, etc.) is required.
- The truck must be able to reach the barrel from the street.
- Barrels cannot be stored at the curb and should be removed after being emptied.
- To help prevent litter, we suggest you bag your trash.

Holiday Schedule:

Holiday	Date	Trash Collection
Veterans Day	Wednesday, Nov. 11	On Schedule
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, Nov. 26	Delayed one day
Christmas Day	Friday, Dec. 25	Delayed one day
New Year's Day	Friday, Jan. 1	Delayed one day

If collection is delayed one day, it only affects the customers who would normally have trash pickup on that day and the days following. For example: Thanksgiving -- only Thursday and Friday collection will be affected. The Landfill will be open on Columbus and Veteran's Day, and will be closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Yard waste pickup will end the last full week of November and resume the first full week of April.



Nonresident Travelers to Billings in 2014

As a main entry point for visitors to Montana, Billings Logan International Airport participates in a program conducted by the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) to survey arriving passengers.

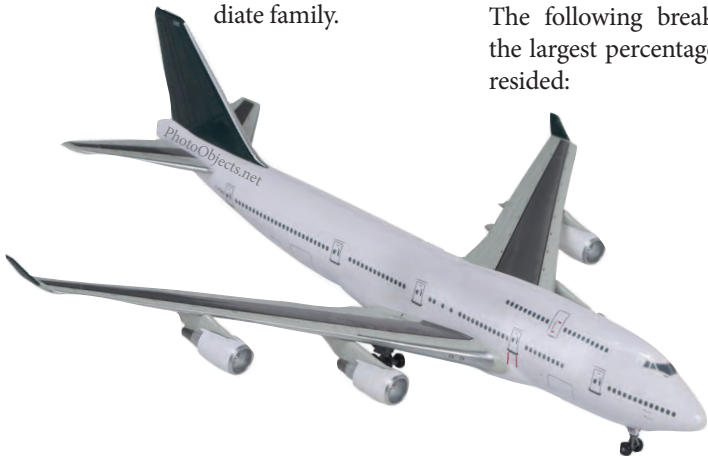
The ITRR collects visitor data such as where they reside, how long they plan to stay, whether they visited Billings before, and the reason for their trip to Billings.

The ITRR released the following survey results for 2014:

- 320,888 nonresident travelers arrived at the Billings Airport.
- The average length of stay was 6.70 nights.
- The average group size was 1.87 persons, with 58 percent of the visitors traveling alone, 14 percent as a couple, and 15 percent with immediate family.

- 23 percent of the visitors were first-time visitors, while 54 percent of the visitors were repeat visitors.
- 8 percent of the visitors own a second property in Montana.
- 45 percent of the visitors came primarily for business reasons, while 23 percent came to visit friends, relatives or for a family event.
- 27 percent of these visitors came primarily for vacation, with Yellowstone National Park being the top site visited by 59 percent of the travelers.
- 31 percent of the visitors reported using Internet search engines for their trip planning. 26 percent of these visitors used brochures in information racks and 23 percent used visitor information centers during their visits.

The following breakdown shows where the largest percentage of surveyed visitors resided:



RESIDENCE	PERCENTAGE
Washington	11%
California	9%
Colorado	9%
Texas	6%
Massachusetts	4%
Idaho	4%
Canadian Provinces	
British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia	
Countries	
Germany, Saudi Arabia, Peru, Turkey, United Kingdom, Australia	

We Want to Hear From You

Please provide us with input for our next newsletter.

What did you like most about the newsletter?
What would you like to see in upcoming newsletters?

Mail or e-mail your comments to us at:

citylink@ci.billings.mt.us
The City Link
P.O. Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103