

From: [Joanna King](#)
To: [Cole, Bill](#); [Council](#); bocc@yellowstonecountymt.gov; [Kukulski, Chris](#)
Cc: [Max French](#); [Tim Mascarena](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana Rescue Mission
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:35:20 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)



Dear Mayor Cole, Members of the Billings City Council, Yellowstone County Commissioners, and Community Partners,

Over the past few months of transition, the Montana Rescue Mission has worked hard to rebuild trust within our community and strengthen partnerships with other local organizations that support people experiencing addiction, hunger, and homelessness.

Part of this effort is being open and transparent about our processes and resources to help the unhoused.

To that end, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with any of you to introduce myself and our leadership team and share our current statistics, mission outcomes, and plans for the future. Providing shelter to our neighbors is critical, but it's not enough. We work to shepherd people toward resilience, strength, and independence, ultimately enabling them to become productive contributors to Billings and its surrounding communities.

Additionally, if you haven't visited the Montana Rescue Mission lately, I am happy to arrange a visit so you can see our current operations firsthand. Don't hesitate to contact me using the information below.

Warm Regards,
Joanna King, Program Director



Joanna M. King, M.Div.
Program Director
a: 2902 Minnesota Ave, Billings, MT 59101
e: programdirector@billingslf.org
p: (406) 247-0140 X1118

From: [Myrna Lastusky](#)
To: [Cole, Bill](#); [Bohlman, Denise](#); [Boyett, Mike](#)
Cc: [Keehner, Toni](#); [Chris Kukulski](#); [Council](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Reminder that representatives from Beartooth RC&D will be attending Monday's meeting
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 3:32:17 PM



Sounds great, everyone! We'll see you on Monday and plan to speak briefly and answer any questions there may be. Have a good evening!

Myrna

Myrna Lastusky
Project Manager
Beartooth RC&D
mlastusky@beartooth.org
406-962-3914 (office)
406-425-4416 (cell)

From: Cole, Bill <coleb@billingsmt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 3:20 PM
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Cc: Keehner, Toni <KeehnerT@billingsmt.gov>; Chris Kukulski <cakukulski@gmail.com>; Council <council@billingsmt.gov>
Subject: Re: Reminder that representatives from Beartooth RC&D will be attending Monday's meeting

Thanks Denise and Myrna. The MOU is Item 1.E. on our consent agenda. Given the distance Myrna and crew are coming I think it would only fitting to have the representatives make a brief presentation so the council members (copied here) can get to know the mission of Beartooth RC&D and some of the leaders of the organization.

Looking forward to see you on Monday night!

Bill

Bill Cole, Mayor
City of Billings, Montana
coleb@billingsmt.gov
406-294-5700

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Subject: RE: Reminder that representatives from Beartooth RC&D will be attending Monday's

meeting

Thanks for providing us Nan's information, Myrna. I had forgotten she was planning to attend, too. Seems like you will have all your bases covered and represent Beartooth RC&D well.

Unfortunately, I will not be attending the meeting to meet Nan and Brad and see you again.

I'm sure the meeting will go splendidly! Thanks for coming in person, too!

Happy holidays to you!

~Denise

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Thanks, Denise!

Also, Nan Knight, our Finance Director / Brownfields Coordinator, will be present. We're looking forward to joining the Council and sharing any information they may need beyond what we provided. We understand your time constraints, so we will only do a brief presentation if you desire it; otherwise, we will just be available for any questions.

See you all on Monday!

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Subject: Reminder that representatives from Beartooth RC&D will be attending Monday's meeting

Good Afternoon!

Just wanted to let you know that Myrna Lastusky, Project Manager, and Brad Eik, Food and

Ag Director, for Beartooth RC&D will be at the meeting should you want to acknowledge their presence, or if there are any questions that could be addressed during Consent.

Thank you!



Denise R. Bohlman

City Clerk, CMC

bohlmand@billingsmt.gov

billingsmt.gov

316 N. 26th Street, 5th Floor

P.O. Box 1178 • Billings, MT 59103

P 406.657.8210 F 406.657.8390

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From: [Stephanie Waller](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reminder: Holiday Open House Next Thursday
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:51:36 AM
Attachments: [2025HolidayOpenHouseInvite \(1\).png](#)



Hi there,

Just a friendly reminder that the Billings Community Foundation's **Holiday Open House** is coming up **next Thursday, December 11th from 4:30–6:30 p.m!** We would love to have you stop by for a festive holiday cocktail, small bites, and time to mingle with community members we care about so much. Please join us!

Kindly RSVP to admin@bcfmt.org so we can plan accordingly!

(Feel free to use the First Interstate Bank parking lot for parking.)

Warmly,
Billings Community Foundation



HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

December 11th
4:30–6:30 pm
Billings Community Foundation
404 N 30th St., Billings, MT 59101

*Join us in honoring another season of
philanthropy; a tradition of giving that
uplifts every corner of our rural
communities and benefits all people.*



BCF
BILLINGS COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

RSVP to: admin@bcfmt.org

Stephanie Waller

Philanthropy Associate

admin@billingscommunityfoundation.org

(406) 839-5552

From: [Max French](#)
To: [Cole, Bill](#)
Cc: [Kukulski, Chris](#); [Pam Ellis](#); [BOCC](#); [Council](#); [Joanna King](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Montana Rescue Mission
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:26:32 AM



Mayor Cole,

Thank you for forwarding Ms. Ellis's correspondence and for keeping me informed. I appreciate the opportunity to understand the concerns being raised so we can ensure they are addressed promptly and accurately. I have reached out to our Shelter Program Director, Mrs. Joanna King, and she will be reviewing and addressing the concerns highlighted in the email.

I also want to reassure you, the Council, and our county partners that under our New Dawn initiative we have implemented very substantial, positive, and proactive changes across all areas of the Mission: operations, staffing, accountability systems, and the quality of care we provide to our unhoused neighbors. These reforms have already generated meaningful improvements, and we continue pressing forward every day with additional enhancements.

While organizational transformation of this scale does take time, we are firmly and steadily moving in the right direction. Our leadership team, staff, and Board remain committed to transparency, responsiveness, and responsible stewardship.

Thank you again for bringing this to my attention and for your continued partnership in supporting our community's most vulnerable residents.

Respectfully,
Max French
Interim Executive Director



Max French
Interim Director

2902 Minnesota Avenue
Billings, Montana 59102

Phone: (406) 247-0140

Direct Office: (406) 259-9117

Email: maxf@billingslf.org

From: Cole, Bill <coleb@billingsmt.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 2:25 PM
To: Max French <maxf@BILLINGSLF.ORG>

Cc: Kukulski, Chris <kukulskic@billingsmt.gov>; Pam Ellis <pamellis50@gmail.com>; BOCC <bocc@yellowstonecountymt.gov>; Council <council@billingsmt.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Montana Rescue Mission

Max:

I thought you should be aware of this correspondence so you can respond as you deem appropriate.

Bill

Bill Cole, Mayor
City of Billings, Montana
coleb@billingsmt.gov
406-294-5700

From: Pam Ellis <pamellis50@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 8:02 AM
To: Council <council@billingsmt.gov>; BOCC <bocc@yellowstonecountymt.gov>
Cc: Kukulski, Chris <kukulskic@billingsmt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana Rescue Mission

Last night, 105 unhoused community members slept on the floor of the Rescue Mission. Another 51 slept in beds. 349 beds were empty.

The Montana Rescue Mission in Billings currently has over 400 beds after opening its new "unified campus" in August 2024. The new campus includes separate areas for men, women, and families, and also offers 29 low-income apartments and 29 additional beds in the new building.

Local government funds have supported the MT Rescue Mission with very poor return. Where is accountability for using the resources available to assist?

Pam Ellis

From: Pam Ellis
To: Max French
Cc: Cole, Bill; Kukulski, Chris; BOCC; Council; Joanna King
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Montana Rescue Mission
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:16:32 AM
Attachments: image.png



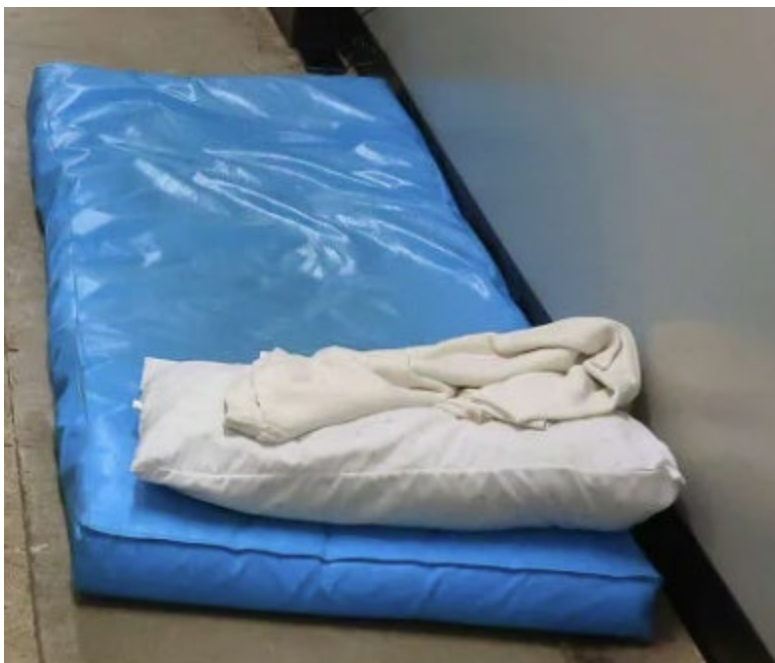
Thank you for your response.

Your email did not address the facts of my concern nor does it provide any data, just glowing adjectives. The publicity about the MRM indicated that the facility has 300 beds and 29 low income apartments https://www.kulr8.com/news/montana-rescue-mission-building-18-million-unified-campus/article_eff165c-a91b-11ec-8ea9-2f7e51b8f231.html. Other sources city 400 total beds.

On December 1, 2025 the Billings Gazette reported on MRM implementing Code Blue (**Rescue Mission houses 105 in emergency shelter due to cold** https://billingsgazette.com/news/local/article_5b2ae9c2-5778-4069-a7a4-d92b0b9ba3a4.html) Pictured were mattresses on the floor:. The article stated *The mission is currently housing 156 people including 105 in the emergency shelter.* I did the math 156 people - 105 on the floor leaves 41 in beds; the means at least 259 beds are empty.

What has the board done to hold themselves accountable?

Pam Ellis



I am not alone in disappointment by the MRM board and management over the years to provide the needed care and support for our unhoused residents. Friends worked with an individual who was sober and had employment as a night manager for a fast food restaurant. His duties included closing the restaurant in the evening which meant MRM locked him out and refused to admit him after "closing hours." I stopped donating when I confirmed through multiple sources that the MRM had people sleeping on the floor without a pillow. I did note that recently people slept on mattresses with a light blanket and pillow (but no bottom sheet).

Demand accountability | Jonathan Angel

https://billingsgazette.com/opinion/column/article_9c628e2f-f5cc-4de4-b87f-3528be0ff16e.html

Community advocates call for sweeping change from MRM's Board | Opinion

On Wed, Dec 3, 2025 at 10:53 AM Max French <maxf@billingslf.org> wrote:

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Subject: Re: Reminder that representatives from Beartooth RC&D will be attending Monday's meeting
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