

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for DECEMBER 2020



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ **MADISON VALLEY DECEMBER “NON-HAPPENINGS”** → No cancellations, as nothing much was scheduled. But there were two events. The **Christmas Bird Count** took place in the Madison Valley on the 16th, as it is pretty easy to maintain social distancing while out counting birds! → The second was the **Ennis Yeti Stroll**, which included decorated shops open and offering refreshments and discounts, an ice sculpting contest, and ending with a Light Convoy, made up of all size trucks decorated with Christmas lights rolling down Main Street and side streets of Ennis. Pretty spectacular! You can watch it at: <https://www.facebook.com/yetistroll/>. → **Habitat for Humanity** broke ground on ten lots in the North 40 subdivision area behind the sportsman’s Lodge, which will help ease the lack of affordable housing in the Madison Valley. → Remember the white posts dotting Main Street all summer? They were the visible part of the Town of Ennis Main Street/Highway 287 **Traffic “Calming” Project**. The study results were released and may be found on the town of Ennis website at: <http://www.ennismontana.org/>. → The Madison River Recreation Management Rules became official on Christmas Eve.



➤ **MADISON VALLEY JANUARY “HAPPENINGS”** → There are no events scheduled for 2021, so far. The Ennis Theatre is still closed but the Bowling Alley is open. The restaurants and bars and shops are open and there is a wide open world of winter recreation out there. A brand new year!

➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → **Montana Census** estimates show that Montana is on track to gain a second House Seat! Thanks to all the newcomers moving into the state. Real estate agents are saying people are more interested in moving to Montana right now because they want to escape the COVID-19 pandemic and believe that less populated states are their best bet. Real estate is seeing all kinds of changes during the pandemic. There is always an increase in home-buying interest during the summer, but pandemic restrictions in other places are pushing some to make the move, sooner than later. People are looking for more space, the beauty of Montana, and less congestion. They feel safer here. → Montana reported 81,944 confirmed **Covid** cases as of January 2, and Madison County at 515 confirmed cases and 493 recovered. → Even the deer are suffering. **Chronic Wasting Disease** is on the rise and the Ruby Valley is a hotspot for CWD, which is a 100% fatal disease that infects members of the deer family, including elk, moose, mule & white-tailed deer. There is no known transmission on to humans, but the CDC recommends that hunters have their animals tested for CWD prior to consuming the meat and do not consume if the animal tests positive. Due to CWD, Montana FWP is extending the season for white-tailed deer through February 15th. Check it out at: <https://fwp.mt.gov/cwd>.



➤ **FISHING REPORT** → The Madison River Fishing Report, by John Way. Happy New Year everyone! The dumpster fire that was the past year is over and all I see is opportunity out in front of us. This is going to be a big year for the Madison, for Ennis and for all of us. The one thing we could use everyone to do right now is to crank up the music and do the snow dance. Two reasons. First, we could all use a little fun and dancing is fun, but best with a few whiskey drinks. Second, we could use some serious snow. We were supposed to have a wet, snowy winter but so far it has been very mild. So, have a few drinks, crank up the Kid Rock and shake that money-maker for some snow! You will feel better, and it just might work. (As of December 1, the Madison Watershed is at 81% of normal snow water).

If you are looking to get out and get that first fish of the new year, there is lots of opportunity, right now. Remember, in the winter it is more important to pick your day and spot, than anything else. Warmer days with no wind, are best. Also, look for the deepest, slowest spots you can find. Fish are stacked in their winter holes and when you find one, there will be a bunch more. As for the tricky stuff, try standard winter fare - Midge larva, worms, eggs, and stone fly stuff will all work. Recently the tiny and shiny midge stuff has been getting it done. As for tippet, think heavier than you expect. We have been doing the 2x routine recently. Not quite boat anchor rope, but plenty heavy. If you are still not getting fish, add weight. They want it in their face and will not move to get it. Always more weight. Bring good waders and warm thermal pants. Trust me on this one. A good pair of gloves will make or break the day. If you still want to be Covid-sensitive on the river, that face mask will keep you warm. A Bonus.

I believe the best way to make this next year great, is a positive attitude. If we all believe and have a great attitude, it will happen. Get out and fish while you can as old man winter will show up eventually and ruin our party. Lots of great stuff will be happening at the store this summer and in Ennis. Stay tuned. Stop in for flies, free coffee, or a good lie. Remember never let the truth get in the way of a good fish story. Coffee hour is on, all day long. Happy Fishing and God



Bless, **FishEnnis**, from John Way, Owner of **The Tackle Shop**, <http://www.thetackleshop.com>) Ennis, Montana, the **CULTURAL EPICENTER OF TROUT**. (406) 682-4263, or cell: (406) 370-5206.

Check out other fishing reports at:

- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at: <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.
- ✚ Dan Delekta at <http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>.
- ✚ The Madison Valley Ranch at <http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>
- ✚ Joe Dilschneider's Montana Trout Stalkers at <http://www.montanatroutr.com/>
- ✚ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.

➤ **WEATHER** → We enjoyed an extended Fall, with mild weather and very little snow. Just waiting for the other shoe to drop! The December daytime high was 55°, with a daytime low was 27°. The December nighttime high was 39° and nighttime low was 5°. So, December was not much colder than November. There is some snow left in the valley, north of Cameron, but it is a whole different world south of Cameron, as you get closer to Yellowstone!

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **SUMMARY OF MONTANA TAXES**. If you are wondering whether Montana is “tax friendly,” check out these facts and compare to where you live.

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- Montana has a progressive state income tax, ranging from **1%** to a top rate of **6.9%**. That rate is higher than the national average, but Montana has only a few other types of taxes.
- Montana fully taxes most forms of retirement income, while taxing a portion of Social Security benefits for retirees, above a certain income level.
- Property taxes in Montana are below the national average, with Montana ranked 24th of the 50 states for property taxes, as a percentage of median income.
- **Montana has no sales tax.**
- Counties in Montana collect an average of **0.83%** of a property's assessed fair market value as property tax per year.
- The median property tax in Montana is **\$1,465.00 per year** for a home worth the median value of \$176,300.00.
- The median property tax in **Madison County, MT** is \$1,251 per year for a home worth the median value of \$240,100. Madison County collects, on average, **0.52%** of a property's assessed fair market value, as property tax.
- Properties are reappraised every two years to determine taxable value.
- The average yearly property tax paid by Madison County residents amounts to about 2.53% of their yearly income.
- Madison County is ranked **942nd of the 3143 U.S. counties** for property taxes as a percentage of median income.

➤ **FIND A HOME FOR YOUR SOUL. FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH. A Full block (12 lots) in historic Virginia City, Montana!**

These 12 lots are equivalent to 1.295 acres, located in a quiet corner overlooking the town below. Enjoy everything exciting that historic Virginia City has to offer, with downtown just 5 blocks away. Be a part of living history. This special property borders BLM land, with hundreds of miles of trails from this property. This is a very desirable and unique property with many potential uses, close to great hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, trail riding, Yellowstone National Park, and more. **\$79,900.** MLS # 342395. Latitude 45.290800°, Longitude -111.942498°, Elevation 6,639'. <https://www.itourmedia.com/display/index/1787450>.



➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS** → WASHINGTON (December 30, 2020) – Pending home sales declined in November, according to the National Association of Realtors®. Month-over-month contract activity fell in each of the four major U.S. regions. However, compared to a year ago, all four areas achieved gains in pending home sales transactions.

The Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI), *a forward-looking indicator of home sales based on contract signings*, fell 2.6% to 125.7 in November, the third straight month of decline. Year-over-year, contract signings climbed 16.4%. An index of 100 is equal to the level of contract activity in 2001.

"The latest monthly decline is largely due to the shortage of inventory and fast-rising home prices," said Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. *"It is important to keep in mind that the current sales and prices are far stronger than a year ago."*

"The market is incredibly swift this winter with the listed homes going under contract on average at less than a month due to a backlog of buyers wanting to take advantage of record-low mortgage rates," Yun

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said. Yun predicts a favorable outlook for the housing market in the coming year. According to his 2021 projections, there will be a slight upward rise in mortgage rates to around 3% from the current 2.7% rate. Existing-home sales are expected to increase roughly 10% and new home sales by 20% next year.

"Economic growth is guaranteed from the stimulus package and from vaccine distribution, but high government borrowing will put modest upward pressure on interest rates," he said.

The November Pending Home Sales Regional Breakdown:

The Northeast PHSI slid 3.3% to 108.6 in November, a 15.3% increase from a year ago. In the Midwest, the index fell 3.1% to 115.9 last month, up 14.1% from November 2019. Pending home sales in the South decreased 1.1% to an index of 150.0 in November, up 21.3% from November 2019. The index in the West fell 4.7% in November to 111.3, which is up 10.4% from a year ago.

The National Association of Realtors®, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing 1.3 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

➤ **REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS:** Prospective buyers were calling and emailing all through the holidays, asking questions about specific properties and planning their spring trips out to check out the area. Often, they have never been to the Madison Valley, or even to Montana! Dreams are driving this market. I wonder when we will all wake up??! **Big Sky Country** Multiple Listing statistics for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony), for the month of DECEMBER, were as follows:

- **HOMES:** 30↓ homes listed (\$249,000 to \$2,500,000); 11 pending sales (\$125,000 to \$995,000); and 112 homes sold in 2020 (\$70,975 to \$7,300,000), totaling \$63,510,955 at 97.3%↓ of list prices.
- **LAND:** 99↓ vacant lots listed (\$34,900 to \$3,995,000; with 26↓ pending sales (\$37,900 to \$864,900); and 217 lots sold in 2020 (\$3,000 to \$1,800,000), totaling \$24,733,053 at 93.8%↑ of list prices.
- **RANCHES:** 5 ranches listed (\$599,000 to \$7,995,000); 0 pending sales, and 4 ranches sold in 2020 (\$1,225,000 to \$13,300,000), totaling \$20,425,000, at 89.9% of list price. No change from October.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 10↑ listed (\$114,500 to \$950,000); 3 pending sales (\$259,000 to \$549,000); and 4 commercial properties sold in 2020 (\$90,000 - \$375,000), totaling \$670,000, at 90.9% of list price. There are several commercial properties available for rent.

"The best investment on Earth is earth." Louis J. Glickman, real estate mogul/philanthropist

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA... Did you know.... That in the late 1860's, Virginia City, MT was home to the only five-story hotel between Chicago and San Francisco?** Virginia City arose as the settlement that supported the Alder Gulch gold rush of 1863. It served as the Territorial capitol for 10 years until 1875, wresting it from Bannack in 1865. Virginia City quickly became a boomtown of thousands of prospectors and fortune seekers. Today, Virginia City is living in two worlds – the "then" and "now." It is still the seat of Madison County and the town is open for exploration as an "open air museum" where you will find a mixture of old, preserved buildings in their original condition with "Old West" period displays inside. Information plaques about a particular building's past stand next to active restaurants, gift shops, and other businesses and helps add context to the vibe of the town, as a whole.



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After the gold all played out, the town was in serious decline by the 1940s, including Main Street. That's when Charles and Sue Bovey began buying the town and putting much needed maintenance into failing structures to save this unique window into Montana's past. By the 50's it was turning around again and becoming a ghost town tourist destination. It has since been designated a National Historic Landmark and most of "downtown" is now owned by the Montana state government. Currently, the Montana Heritage Commission oversees the Historic District of Virginia City and Nevada City. The Commission operates gold panning, the Nevada City Music Hall and Museum, and the Alder Gulch Railroad, a narrow-gauge passenger line that runs between the two "cities". Times were lively in old Virginia City. Apart from the hangings, it boasted the first newspaper and public school in Montana Territory. Stroll down the boardwalks of Main Street at your own pace – there is much to see and imagine here. When open, you can step inside many of the restored buildings and see how life was. Stores like the barber shop, pharmacy, general store, livery stable, millinery shop, cobbler, etc., often with manikins dressed in period clothes and the shops stocked with authentic period merchandise. Along the river are huge piles of riverbed, evidence of the massive dredging that took place there. One of these dredges, now a rusting ghost itself, can be seen in neighboring Nevada City. Yes, in Virginia City, it's easy to step back in time and see how Montana History lives. More information can be found on the city's website. <https://virginiacitymt.com/>.

SEE YOU IN MONTANA!

Social Distancing Champions, since 1889!

Be not afraid. STAY SAFE, SANE AND SOBER!



Toni Bowen, Broker Associate and Accredited Buyer Broker representative, with over 25 years of real estate experience, covering residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational & ranch properties in the Madison Valley.



Finley



Don Bowen, with 55 years as a licensed Broker, has decided to place his real estate license on "*inactive*" status in 2021, and do what he wants, when he wants, and will be a consultant and assistant to Toni. This is a new chapter for the Bowen Team.

After 26 years in this location, our office will be moving across the street, to the Lone Elk Mall, Unit 1D (the 5th door down the boardwalk). We are downsizing and streamlining, in this age of on-line shopping (*even real estate!*). We plan to be set up in our new location by February 1, 2021. Please stop in and visit us there.



Thank you in advance for your personal referrals. They are the lifeblood of our business and the greatest compliment you can give us.

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USEFUL WEBSITES TO REMEMBER → ENNIS AND THE MADISON VALLEY:

<http://www.ennismontana.org/> - for community and local government information

<http://www.ennischamber.com/> - The Ennis Chamber of Commerce website

<http://www.madisonvalleyhistoryassociation.org> – The Madison Valley History Association website

<http://www.mvmedcenter.org> – for information about the Madison Valley Medical Center

<http://www.mvvetsmemorial.org> – The Madison Valley Veterans Memorial website

<http://ennisarts.org/> - The Ennis Arts Association website for all artists!

<http://www.backroadtoyellowstone.com> – information for travelers about the route through our valley

MADISON COUNTY:

<https://madisoncountymt.gov/525/Emergency-Information> - for Madison County emergency news

<http://www.madison.mt.gov/> - Madison County Government website

<http://virginiacity.com> – Virginia City Chamber of Commerce

NEWS:

<http://www.madisoniannews.com/> - the latest news from the Madisonian newspaper for Madison Co.

<http://bozemandailychronicle.com/> - news from the big city of Bozeman, an hour northeast of Ennis

<http://www.mtstandard.com/> - news from historic Butte, an hour & ½ northwest of Ennis

MONTANA:

www.fwp.mt.gov/ - Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks website – for hunting and fishing regulations

<http://fwp.mt.gov/education/bow/> - “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” – a must for female newcomers!

<http://www.visitmt.com/> - Official website Montana Vacations, Recreation, Accommodations and Travel

<http://www.montanapictures.net> – for people homesick for Montana – a great visual connection

http://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis_list.shtml - State Highway Web Cams

<http://montanakids.com/> - State website for all things KIDS in Montana

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/index.htm> - Yellowstone National Park – for all things Yellowstone Park

<https://www.facebook.com/Ennisrealestate?ref=hl> – Facebook page for ERA Landmark Arrow R. E.

SKIING:

<http://bigskyresort.com/> – Check out latest snow conditions & things to do at Big Sky

<http://www.lmranch.com/winter/> - Lone Mountain Ranch in Big Sky for cross country trails

http://www.westyellowstonenet.com/skiing/cross_country_skiing.php - Skiing Yellowstone Park Trails

HORSEBACK RIDING:

www.wolfpackoutfitters.com – trail riding guides for the Madison Valley

<http://www.sphinxmountainoutfitting.com> – trail riding and outfitting guides in the Madison Valley

RANCHING:

<http://www.madisonvalleyranchlands.org/> - working to keep the ranching way of life alive

FISHING:

<http://www.madisonriverfoundation.org> - The Madison River Foundation

<http://www.montanatu.org/> - Montana Trout Unlimited

GOLFING:

<http://www.madisonmeadowsgolfcourse.com> – Madison Meadows Golf Course in Ennis

REAL ESTATE:

www.arrowreal.com – A wealth of resource information, local listings, and a portal to the Big Sky MLS

www.eralandmark.com – Our Main Office website, covering Bozeman, Livingston, Big Sky & Ennis

<http://www.realtor.com/> - The world’s #1 Real Estate website. The source for all properties on MLS

www.houselogic.com – Helpful information from the National Association of Realtors

www.homesandland.com – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates

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