

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for FEBRUARY 2022



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



- **MADISON VALLEY FEBRUARY “HAPPENINGS”** → The former Maples Coffee shop just north of Ennis now has a new name – **Sure Shot Coffee Company**. They must be fans of Sureshot Lakes, up in the Tobacco Root Mountains, NW of Ennis. → And the former Daily Grind is now called **Black Butte Coffee Company**. They must be fans of that black mass of volcanic rock up in the Gravelly Range, with lots of fascinating folklore. <https://www.summitpost.org/black-butte-mt/812809>. And they are all dressed up for Valentine’s Day! → Ennis High School offered several **Continuing Education** classes. → The Madison Valley Library hosted a **book signing for Tom Harpole**, of his book, *Regarding Willingness*, the 2020 winner of the Montana Honor Book Award. → The Virginia City Elks Lodge hosted game nights as well as **Brunch & Bingo** on Sundays. → There were several **Winter Rancher Roundtables**. → There were **Chautauqs** at the Elling House in Virginia City. The **Missoula Children’s Theatre** presented their annual performance at Ennis Schools. → A wonderful article was published by the University of Montana, about the Madison River. <https://www.umt.edu/this-is-montana/columns/stories/ennis-fly-fishing-mecca-of-montana.php>.



- **MADISON VALLEY MARCH “HAPPENINGS”** → **The McAllister Inn** will reopen March 5th. → You can play **Pinochle** every Saturday at the **Bear Creek School House** in Cameron. → You can now reserve your campsite in advance at Yellowstone National Park – Advance reservations. **Winter Rancher Roundtables** will be held for people wanting to learn more about many aspects of ranching. For more info call (406) 682-3181. → Make your reservations for the next gourmet **Wine Dinner at the Madison Valley Ranch** in Jeffers – March 11 & 12. Call 800 891-6158. → We expect there will be more **Chautauqs** planned for the Elling House Arts & Humanities Center in VC. Call for more info (406) 843-5454. → Jack Creek Preserve still has openings in their **Winter Outdoor Skills Camp!** It is a 3-day, 2-night program, for 14–18-year-olds, March 25-27. It will include classroom and field instruction focusing on winter backcountry safety, snow science and avalanche awareness, plus wildlife and habitat. Registration will open January 2nd and limited to 20. Check the **WINTER OUTDOOR SKILLS CAMP** webpage for more information and updates. → And *you can still ski, x-country ski, snowmobile, eat, drink, bowl, take in a movie and go shopping!*
- **LOOKING AHEAD** → More gourmet **Wine Dinners** are scheduled for the public at the **Madison Valley Ranch** – April 8th and 9th.
- **MONTANA NEWS** → Small businesses are the lifeblood of the American Economy. According to the Small Business Administration, businesses with fewer than 500 employees comprised 99.9% of all firms in the country as of October 2020. **Montana was recently ranked as the number one state to start a**

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small business, by the investment resource The Blueprint. Who are the creators of these entities? Where did they get their inspiration? What can we learn from their experiences? You can meet Montana filmmakers Peter Tolton and Samuel Steingraber, who set out to explore these very questions with a particular emphasis on the stories of entrepreneurs in Central and Southeast Montana. Their documentary, *Edge of the Plains*, focuses on the unique experiences of small business creators who transformed their business visions into reality. You can watch it here: **Edge of the Plains Documentary - YouTube**.

➤ **FISHING REPORT** → *From Big John*. We have flipped the calendar to March and the light at the end of the winter tunnel is getting brighter. While March usually comes in like a lion and we see lots of winter weather this month, the feel and hope of spring has arrived. If you drive around the valley, the new calves are bouncing around the fields, it is daylight past 5 in the evening, and even the air smells better. While we are all excited for spring to arrive, we still need more of Mother Nature to show up. We are currently sitting at about 85% of average on our snowpack. That reserve is “money in the bank,” bringing cool water, no fires, and a great summer. They have forecasted a wet spring, so let’s all hope that the weatherman is correct, this time.

If a guy (*or gal!*) wants to fish now, there are options. The gorge still has everything messed up from 8 Mile access to the Lake. This will not be fixed and useable until May. Think about fishing the lower river and above Lyons bridge. Nymphing midge larva will keep you bent for right now. Things will warm up as the month rolls along. The fish will be hungry, and the fishing will get good. Think eggs, worms, and stone fly nymphs. The rainbows will start to spawn, so there will be lots of eggs in the soup. Take advantage of this.



St. Patrick’s Day happens this month so grab your best Irish whiskey and take a snort. I hear a few snorts help with the snow dance. I plan to try it. In fact, stop by the store. We always have some whiskey in the back, next to the coffee, for just that purpose. Free shots if you do the snow dance, **and** bring snow! Hope is in the air and spring is right around the corner, after we turn the clocks forward. Personally, I vote we never change them again! This going backwards and forwards makes me dizzy!

New inventory is arriving daily at the store. Stop by and get your new fishing license before your first trip on the water. The license year starts March 1st. FWP has a new app for licenses. Yep, there’s even an app for that, now. Knowing how well the old system worked, I am waiting a little until they get the bugs out, before I download the app. Remember coffee and advice are always free, and good. Pray for snow. *Good Fishing and God Bless*, 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. ***If people concentrated on the REALLY important things in life, there would be a shortage of fishing poles! 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** → February began with a pleasant “false spring,” with temperatures in the 40’s and 50’s. Then winter roared back with a deep freeze! We had a daytime high of **54°** and daytime low of **-2°!** The nighttime high was **33°** and a low of **-21°!** There were 7 snowy days and 14 windy days. But no surprise there! Still need more moisture! Check out snow conditions at: <https://bigskyresort.com/snow-report>. The Gorge is melting, with channels visible in the Madison River.

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **Why You Should Consider Investing in Montana Real Estate.** According to personal finance freelance writer, Garrett Parker, writing for MoneyInc, **Montana**, the BIG Sky State, has some of the best real estate for the right kind of people. These are people who love the great outdoors, who prefer open spaces to city congestion, and who appreciate traditional American values. All of these are personal preferences, and are important when deciding whether to move there or not. But there are also a passel full of statistics that will help point you in the right direction. Montana’s Quality of Life ranking in the Top 10 of all states, and an all-important Infrastructure ranking that places it in the top 50 percent of the country. There definitely is room for improvement in the infrastructure, particularly when it comes to Internet access. But with a huge amount of land and just over 1 million people living in the state the potential for growth without a loss of the Quality of Life is huge.

1. **Economy** - Montana is ideal for people who want to start their own businesses or are looking to relocate to a business-friendly environment. It is in a tie for the 11th best place when it comes to the cost of doing business, and is considered to be a business friendly state. It boasts a state GDP growth higher than its unemployment rate (5.2% compared to a 3.9% unemployment rate) and has a corporate tax rate of only 6.75 percent. The economy for the average working person is just as bright, with a top individual income tax rate of 6.9% and the incredible advantage of a 0.00% sales tax. The gasoline tax is 32.25 cents per gallon, which is in the middle of all state gas taxes, but there are far more miles of roads to maintain compared to the others.

2. **Recreation** - A recent article in the Great Falls Tribune spells out the positive outdoor recreation environment of Montana. Did you know Montana was the 4th state in the country to create a Department of Outdoor Recreation? There is a reason for that which goes beyond the numbers. First, 8 of every 10 Montanans are involved in some type of outdoor recreation or sport. So, there is a considerable amount of personal income spending that stays within the state instead of going out of state or out of the country. The interest has translated into more than 71,000 jobs connected to the preferred type of recreation. But there are people from all over the country who fly into Montana airports to discover what it is like to go on an outdoor adventure. That interest generates more than \$286 million in annual revenue for state and local governments.

3. **Potential for real estate appreciation** - If you love the outdoors, Montana is the place to live – and invest in. Though the weather can be challenging, the population of the United States continues to increase, growing by some 50 million people in the last 20 years. Big cities are running out of room, and the available spaces are charging insane amounts to live there. Just ask anyone in New York City or Los Angeles. Then there are the natural disasters – hurricanes and earthquakes – that have become a part of life for people living on the coasts. Businesses of all sizes will need to either relocate or expand due to economic considerations, and the long-term question is where will they go? Many parts of the Montana economy favor business growth and expansion, and there is plenty of room to roam. Though many people question this perspective, all you need to do is look at what people were saying about North Dakota only a decade ago. Unless you are looking to flip houses for some quick money in the crowded cities, investing in Montana real estate is a long-term investment that will help you to achieve your investment goals.

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➤ **HOME FOR YOUR SOUL. FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH. BEAUTIFUL CUSTOM HOME on 33+ ACRES, BORDERING PUBLIC LANDS!**

This home was built to be 100% self-sustaining & totally off-grid with alternative power system & whole-house backup generator. (*But power is available in the area*). Built in 2015, it has 2,397 SF on main level and 2,398 SF on lower level that includes a one-car garage. There are 3 BR, 3 BA, Great Room with propane FP and huge windows to the magnificent views of Ennis Lake, the valley, and mountains! There is also a 2-car detached



garage, fencing around the home and the entire property is perimeter fenced. Just 20 minutes from downtown Ennis, yet it feels remote and private. Beautifully built and furnished. The perfect home for vacations or year-around living. **\$1,499,000**. MLS # 366926.

Google Earth Coordinates, at the house: Lat. 45.492511°, Lon. -111.731928°, Elevation: 5,438’.

➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS → WASHINGTON** (February 25, 2022) – Pending home sales slumped in January, continuing what is now a three-month drop in transactions, the National Association of Realtors® reported. Of the four major U.S. regions, only the West registered an increase in month-over-month contract activity. All four regions posted a decline in year-over-year activity. The Pending Home Sales Index (PHSI), a forward-looking indicator of home sales based on contract signings, fell 5.7% to 109.5 in January. Year-over-year, transactions decreased 9.5%. An index of 100 is equal to the level of contract activity in 2001.

“With inventory at an all-time low, buyers are still having a difficult time finding a home,” said Lawrence Yun, NAR’s chief economist. Alongside persistent supply constraints, Yun said house hunters are contending with a number of additional market issues, including escalating home prices and rising interest rates. Rates jumped by nearly a percentage point in January from December, further adding to monthly mortgage costs. *“Given the situation in the market – mortgages, home costs and inventory – it would not be surprising to see a retreat in housing demand,”* Yun said.

NAR expects economic conditions to be volatile in the coming months. The impending conclusion of the Federal Reserve’s asset purchase program in March paves the way for higher interest rates. Russia’s aggression in Ukraine is also likely to affect global oil supply, imposing further burdens on inflation and bringing about more aggressive rate hikes. *“There’s also the possibility that investors may flee toward safer U.S. Treasury bonds, which may result in temporary short-term relief to interest rates,”* Yun added.

Month-over-month, the Northeast PHSI dropped 12.1% to 84.3 in January, a 16.7% decrease from a year ago. In the Midwest, the index fell 5.9% to 104.4 last month, down 5.9% from January 2021. Pending home sales transactions in the South slipped 6.3% to an index of 134.6 in January, down 8.7% from January 2021. The index in the West increased 1.5% in January to 95.2, down 9.7% from a year prior.

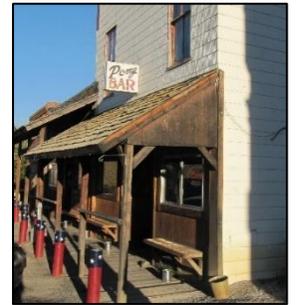
The National Association of Realtors® is America’s largest trade association, representing more than 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS:** February brought us a slight relief from the frenzy of the past year. Time will tell how the rest of the year goes, with so many factors affecting the world! **Big Sky Country** Multiple Listing statistics for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Nevada City, Harrison, Pony), for the month of **FEBRUARY** were as follows:

- **HOMES:** 14↓ homes listed (\$260,000 to \$2,275,000); 22↑ pending sales (\$375,000 to \$2,950,000); and 11 homes have sold in 2022 (\$199,000 to \$1,285,000), totaling \$6,591,900 at **100%** of list prices.
- **LAND:** 46↑ vacant lots listed (\$34,900 to \$4,997,000); 18↑ pending sales (\$95,000 to \$397,500); and 23 lots have sold in 2022 (\$60,000 to \$575,000), totaling \$5,878,000, at **94.4%**↑ of list prices.
- **RANCHES:** 1↓ ranch listed (\$7,995,000); 0 pending sales, and 0 ranches have sold in 2022.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 6↓ properties listed (\$465,000 to \$7,900,000); 1 pending sale (\$950,000) and 0 commercial properties have sold in 2022.

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

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA...** *Did you know that... The coolest bar in Montana is in Pony!* Just 32 miles NW of Ennis, this undiscovered treasure isn't just the center of activity in the area, it **IS** the activity! If it weren't for the electricity and running water, this bar would be indistinguishable from centuries past. Located in a truly one-horse town, it is secluded and almost forgotten. But in its heyday, Pony boasted a population of well over a thousand and was once called the “Metropolis of the Madison Valley!” Named for Tecumseh “Pony” Smith who arrived there in 1869 – (*he was called Pony due to his small stature*); the town is older even than the Alder Gulch gold discoveries. But in the fall of 1875, quartz discoveries brought prospectors flocking, and by 1900, the town had many handsome brick buildings, including a schoolhouse, bank, newspaper, stores, hotels, and saloons! McKittrick Hall was built in 1877 for community socials. This and the adjoining building became the Silver Dollar Bar around 1933. It has had several owners but has been known as the Pony Bar for many years. The town of Pony is now a cluster of summer homes with a few hardy year-around inhabitants. And the Pony Bar is a quiet treasure for the serious drinker-adventurer to find. But when you do, please keep the secret! It is a magical place. <https://montanaponybar.com/>.



SEE YOU IN MONTANA!

Social Distancing Champions, since 1889! STAY SAFE, SANE AND SOBER!



Toni Bowen, Broker Associate and Accredited Buyer Broker representative, with over 28 years of real estate experience, covering residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational & ranch properties in the Madison Valley.

Don Bowen, with 57 years as a licensed Broker, has placed his real estate license on “inactive” status in 2021, and will be a consultant and assistant to Toni. This is a new chapter for the Bowen Team.



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

<http://www.jackcreekpreserve.org/> - foundation that provides outdoor education and experiences.

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

<https://madisonjefferson.msuextension.org/> - water test kits, soil sampling, plant & insect id, etc.

<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.

<https://www.mtmemory.org/>. Montana Memory Project – find all about the history of Montana!

SKIING:

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

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

HORSEBACK RIDING:

<https://www.facebook.com/wolfpackmontana> – trail riding guides for the Madison Valley

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

RANCHING:

<https://www.facebook.com/madisonvalleyranchlandsgroup/>- keeping 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

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