

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for NOVEMBER 2014



Trout live in nice neighborhoods

➤ **MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → The Madison Valley Medical Center Foundation is sponsoring an on-line fundraising raffle, “Predict the Madison River Ice Gorge.” Go to www.icejam.org and choose your time/date. → The Madison Valley Woman’s Club hosted another successful **Holiday Bazaar** on Saturday after Thanksgiving, with vendors filling the school gym. → There are cattle rustlers in Montana! And the Madison County Livestock Protective Committee is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of **cattle rustlers** in Madison County. This is still the wild west!



➤ **COMING DECEMBER HAPPENINGS** → The Ennis **Christmas Stroll** takes place on Friday December 5th, from 3 – 8 PM with music, hayrides, tree lighting at the park, pictures with Santa, refreshments and specials at the retail stores in town. <http://www.ennischamber.com/calendar.asp>. → On December 12th, the Elling House in Virginia City hosts **The Splendid Feast** – a gathering of hearty souls, culinary delights, and holiday cheer in a most spectacular setting. <http://www.ellinghouse.org/Elling/Events.html>. → The **Madison Theatre** will be showing a favorite classic Christmas movie every Tuesday in December as a free gift to the community – starting with “It’s a Wonderful Life” on December 2nd. → The Ennis Community Choir will present their annual **Christmas Concert** on Thursday, December 4th, at 7:00 PM in Virginia City and at 2:00 PM on Sunday, December 7th at the Madison Valley Baptist Church. → Cut down your own tree in the forest for a real old fashioned family Christmas. Tree cutting permits are just \$5 to cut a **Christmas tree** in national forests and BLM in Montana. Permits are available at local vendors. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/bdnf/news-events/?cid=STELPRD3822987>.



➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → **Property Tax Reappraisal** time is upon us. Montana currently reappraises property once every six years. It is a complicated process and the MT Dept. of Revenue has put together a preliminary model showing projected market value changes by county and by property tax category. It’s available at: <http://1.usa.gov/1DX5Sy3>. The market value of residential property statewide will fall by a 4.6 % average in the new base year of 2014, after making big gains in the three previous, six-year cycles. The last cycle’s base year was 2008, during the peak of Montana’s housing bubble. The average market value of residential property will fall in 16 western and southern counties, with the biggest drops of 20 percent or greater in smaller counties like Madison County. The biggest gains in market value occurred in eastern Montana in the heart of the Bakken oil boom, with residential market gains of 90%. → The Montana Dept. of Transportation offers some great tips, “**Are you Ready for Winter?**” on their website, <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/>. You can find a helpful Winter Survival Guide,

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http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/winter_maint/winter_survival.pdf, information on snow plows, travel conditions, weather, distance calculator and download a Travel mobile app. The State also provides good information on general severe weather survival at <http://serve.mt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2011-Winter-Checklist-for-website.pdf>.

Winter →



➤ **FISHING REPORT** → December 1, 2014, from *The Tackle Shop*, **Madison River Fishing Report**. While most are thinking about Black Friday shopping, holidays and family, some still have *trout dreams*. In fact if you want to get away from all the hustle and bustle of family this time of year, the Madison River is a great refuge. Most of the fishing this time of year is sub surface. Keep it simple and you will score. The standard Madison River nymph rig of a Patts Rubber leg stone fly with either an egg pattern or a midge larva will generally do the trick. Keep your eggs in the peach to flesh color and fish a 3X tippet. For the midge larva a zebra or brassie will work just fine. The white fish are still spawning so there is a bunch of eggs still in the water. Midges are the insect of winter and will be present all winter long. Location and timing are a big part of fishing this time of year. Pick a day with little wind and warmer temps and you should score. Look for winter holding water that is slower and has some depth. For you streamer guys, deep and slow is the new normal. Run your big bugs with a slow crawl over the bottom with an occasional twitch. Try streamers in olive and black and keep them in the smaller sizes. For you dry fly guys, you can still find a few heads up. Look for risers on good days with cloud cover and no wind. Look in slow turns and behind rocks in the slicks. Fish will rise to midges and the lingering BWO. Try a buzz ball or para midge on a 5X tippet and you should have no problem picking off the risers. *John Way*. See The Tackle Shop's reports at <http://www.thetackleshop.com/fly-fishing-report-Madison-River.asp>.

Check out other fishing reports at:

- ✦ Madison River Fishing Company at: <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.
- ✦ Dan Delekta, <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.montanatrou.com/>
- ✦ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.



➤ **HUNTING REPORT** → According to Chris DiMichele, owner of Deemo's Meats in Ennis, this has been his record season for game. The weather cooperated, Block Management access is growing and wildlife numbers are up – adding up to a successful hunting season. And this photo of a bull elk taken by our friend Michael Gerhart is proof of happy hunting!

➤ **WEATHER** → November was a roller coaster of weather! One day it was summer and the next day was winter. I think it is Mother Nature's way of getting our attention so that we start getting prepared for REAL winter! The high was 70° and the low was -13°. A real shock to the system. November precipitation was .92" which meant the snow shovels

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were needed. But Thanksgiving Day was clear, warm and beautiful, with dry roads for safe traveling. The cumulative precipitation for the year, so far, is **9.809”**. Our average annual precipitation is **13.36”**.

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS → 5 Unexpected Upsides to Off-Season House Hunting.**



According to Tara Nelson, broker and attorney with Trulia, once Thanksgiving comes around, most buyers and sellers think they might as well pack it in till spring. But she says there are some hidden benefits to house hunting during the holiday season.

1. Lower Competition for your Dream Home. House shopping during the off-season can mean fewer competitors, fewer multiple offers scenarios, and lower likelihood of being outbid.
2. Uber-motivated Sellers. Sellers who are willing to clear the whole family out of the house during the holidays is motivated to get their homes sold and ready to entertain your offer to make that happen. Even bankers handling short sales and foreclosures may be more motivated to move properties off their books and get transactions closed before the year end.
3. Can't Miss Properties that Won't Wait. Fewer listings come on the market and it is a great time to spot hidden gems that offer unique mixes of property amenities and location. And there are fewer buyers competing for them.
4. Keeping a Handle on your Cash. Many buyers and sellers find their financial plans – and cash cushions – derailed by taking themselves out of the house hunting mode. If you spend your holiday season focused on house hunting, versus gift giving, you'll minimize the likelihood of having to delay your real estate plans while you recoup from your holiday overspending.
5. Money Pits Become Crystal Clear. Buyers rely on inspections and disclosures to surface any hidden defects and property issues. Off-season house hunters have the unique advantage of being able to see the roof, drainage systems, slopes, basements, access, etc. of a property, performing under extreme weather conditions, which summer home buyers don't have. You can see a property at possibly worst time.

The off-season is a great time to buy, but the normal rules apply. Talk to your agent for real advice on what to expect. You may find you'll get more consideration, responsiveness, speed and a better deal than shopping any other time of year. Check out www.Trulia.com for real estate tips and property searches.

➤ **FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH → WESTERN MOUNTAIN HOME** on 20 fenced acres with spectacular views of valley, mountains & Ennis Lake. Comfortable home of 3,650 SF with 3 BR, 3 BA, stone wood-burning FP, large family room, + extra room, decks, 2-car garage, horse stall & corrals. Less than 15 miles NW of Ennis in the McAllister area. Total peace and serenity, except for all the wildlife that visit the property! 99 Elk Hills Road. **\$650,000.** (MLS #189543).



➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET → WASHINGTON** (November 26, 2014)—Pending home sales declined in October but remained at a healthy level of activity and are above year-over-year levels for the second straight month, according to the [National Association of Realtors®](http://www.nar.realtor.org). The [Pending Home Sales Index](http://www.fhfi.com), (PHSI) a forward-looking indicator based on contract signings, decreased 1.1 percent to 104.1 in October from an upwardly-revised 105.3 in September, but is 2.2 percent higher than October 2013 (101.9). The index is above 100—considered an average level of contract activity—for the sixth

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consecutive month. **Lawrence Yun**, NAR chief economist, says despite October's modest decline, contract signings have remained at a healthy pace now for six straight months. "In addition to low interest rates, buyers entering the market this autumn are being lured by the increase in homes for sale and less competition from investors paying in cash," he said. "Demand is holding steady but would be more robust if it weren't for lagging wage growth and tight credit conditions that continue to hamper those individuals looking for relief from rising rents."

The median existing-home price for all housing types in October was \$208,300, which is 5.5 percent above October 2013. Monthly median price growth has averaged 5.8 percent in 2014 (through October) after averaging 11.5 percent last year. "The increase in median prices for existing-homes has leveled off, representing a healthier pace that has kept affordability in-check for buyers in many parts of the country while giving more previously stuck homeowners with little or no equity the ability to sell," says Yun.

Yun says evidence of rising home prices allowing more willing homeowners the ability to sell can be found in NAR's annual survey released earlier this month, which revealed that the typical seller over the past year was in their home for 10 years before selling—an all-time survey high for tenure of home. NAR also recently released its economic and housing forecast for 2015-2016. Yun is forecasting existing-home sales this year to fall slightly below 2013 (5.1 million) to 4.9 million, and then increase to 5.3 million next year and 5.4 million in 2016. Yun expects the national median existing-home price to rise 4 percent both next year and in 2016.

The PHSI in the Northeast inched 0.5% to 87.9 in October, and is now 3.4% above a year ago. In the Midwest the index slightly declined 0.6% to 100.6 in October, and is now 3% below October 2013. Pending home sales in the South decreased 1% to an index of 118.3 in October, but is still 3.9% above last October. The index in the West fell 3.2% in October to 98.1, but remains 4.1% above a year ago.

The National Association of Realtors®, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing 1 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries. For additional commentary and consumer information, visit www.houselogic.com and <http://retradio.com>.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → November was a good month to complete pending transactions as the traffic slowed down. The holidays bring another round of visitors to the area to enjoy winter sports. Many potential buyers like to visit Montana in the winter to see how they like this season, BEFORE buying property here. They will be pleasantly surprised. **The Southwest Montana Multiple Listing statistics** for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall and Cardwell), through the month of **November 2014** totals are as follows:

- **LAND:** 290 vacant lots listed (\$3,000 to \$1,995,000); 2 pending sales (\$38,000 to \$49,900); 63 lots have sold in 2014 (\$2,500 to \$1,290,000), totaling \$6,265,977 which was 88% of asking prices.
- **HOMES:** 120 homes listed (\$67,500 to \$3,350,000); 13 pending sales (\$139,000 to \$1,999,000); 71 homes have sold in 2014 (\$69,500 to \$2,950,000), totaling \$21,648,600, which was 92% of asking prices.
- **RANCHES:** 5 listed (\$1,184,000 to \$9,950,000); 0 pending sales, 0 ranches have sold in 2014. (There are, however, a couple of ranch sales that are not listed on the MLS.)
- **COMMERCIAL:** 22 listed (\$85,000 to \$2,950,000); 0 pending sales; 2 commercial properties have sold in 2014 (\$76,200 to \$144,500), totaling \$220,700, which was approx. 93% of asking prices.

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

➤ **YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM MONTANA WHEN** ... *your uncle Bob or your best friend - anyone really - could officiate your wedding, IF you believe they're legally qualified.* And if they're not, you're still married - the County Clerk and Recorder is not going to investigate the matter when you turn in your signed marriage certificate! There is actually a state statute that says if you find out, after you got married, that the person was not legally qualified to do so, that does NOT invalidate your marriage! Montana law says a mayor, a judge, a Justice of the Peace, a tribal judge, a member of the clergy of any religious denomination, tribe or native group can solemnize a marriage. There is even a provision in Montana for something called a Declaration of Marriage, which is essentially a form that a couple prepares themselves, has it recorded, and declares themselves married. But then, who's checking?



➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA:** *Did you know that....* Our local **talc mine**, currently owned by **Imerys**, a company from France, started as the Yellowstone Mine in 1942? Ownership went from Cyprus to Luzenac to Rio Tinto to Imerys. The talc from this mine is 90 percent pure and of great color. It dates back to pre-Cambrian times, from 600 billion to a trillion years old. The biggest user of talc is the paper industry but is used in many industries such as plastic, paint & coatings, rubber, food, electric cable, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and ceramics. The local Yellowstone talc mine was a major employer in the Madison Valley for many years but has become more mechanized with fewer workers needed. Rumor has it that this is the second largest talc mine in the world and has 40 more years of talc, with its current configuration. Wikipedia describes talc as a mineral composed of hydrated magnesium. In loose form, it is the widely used substance known as talcum powder. It is the softest known mineral and it can be easily scratched by a fingernail. It can also be cut with a knife. Read more about this company, their mining activities and fun stuff about talc at: [http://www.imerystalc.com/content/corporate/About Imerys Talc/Who are we./History/](http://www.imerystalc.com/content/corporate/About%20Imerys%20Talc/Who%20are%20we./History/).



SEE YOU IN MONTANA!



Don & Toni Bowen, *Broker Associates with over 75 years of real estate experience, between them - covering residential, commercial, land & ranches. They are in the business of "match making."*



*And our new Office manager,
Elena Lopez Kinnear*



Thank you in advance for your personal referrals. Your referrals 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.mvmcf.org> – the Madison Valley Medical Center Foundation website
<http://www.mvvetsmemorial.org> – The Madison Valley Veterans Memorial website
<http://www.madisonvalleyexpeditions.com/> - a source for experiencing *authentic* Montana in our area

MADISON COUNTY:

<http://madison.homestead.com/index.html> - 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

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 SW MT MLS
www.houselogic.com – Helpful information from the National Association of Realtors
www.trulia.com – Search for homes for sale and sold, local information, and research
www.zillow.com – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates
www.homesandland.com – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates

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