

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for FEBRUARY 2015



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ **MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → It has been determined by the state fire inspector that the fire at **The Sportsman's Lodge** was an accident and the owners hope to have the bar/casino part reopened by the end of March. → The **Madison Theatre** continues to show first run movies on the weekends; **Willie's Distillery** still has live music and good crowds on Friday evenings; **Banditos** held another of their monthly themed Supper Club dinners, with a 7-course Thai meal to a full house; **The Summit Coffee and Café** (*the remodeled Ennis Café*) is now open and wonderful; The **McAllister Inn** continues to be a favorite and open 7 days a week; the **Grizzly Bar & Grill** is open on weekends and the **Alley Bistro** is still the place to get a great meal and bowl a few lanes. → The **Sled Dog Races** and the **Virginia City Winter Festival** both had to make some adjustments due to the unseasonably warm conditions.



➤ **COMING MARCH HAPPENINGS** → Now here is a **must** – the MSU Extension Livestock Environment Department is offering a class here in Ennis on “**Carcass Composting.**” Better sign up quick! → The Madison Valley History Association is hosting their annual **Irish Stew Dinner** in honor of our founder, William Ennis' birthday on March 17. → Or you could go to Butte and celebrate **St. Patrick's Day** in the old Montana style! Check it out at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-annual-St-Patricks-Day-festivities-in-Butte-MT/185783291454565>. → Read more about what's happening in the area in The Madisonian, <http://www.madisoniannews.com/>.

➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → **FIREARMS:** The Montana House passed a proposal to prohibit enforcement of any new federal gun laws in Montana. The Senate endorsed a bill that would allow people to carry concealed weapons on college campuses and another bill allowing silencers to be used for hunting. → Montana is still a non-disclosure state as it relates to the **sales price of real estate**, after the amendment of a recent bill. A big win for privacy and private property rights in Montana! → A bill requiring evidence of **pumping septic** before the sale of property was also defeated.

➤ **FISHING REPORT** → March 1, 2015, **Madison River Fishing Report** from *The Tackle Shop*, “March is here and with it comes a few things. First, you now need a new fishing and hunting license. Second, we consider March to be the official start to our season. Days are growing in length and with that consistent good fishing and weather are on the horizon. If you're headed out on the Madison River to try and catch a few fish, the subsurface game still rules. You bobber lobbbers will be having the most opportunity to get and stay bent. The standard Madison River spring fare of a dark-bodied rubber leg stone fly nymph with a red or pink san juan worm should keep you entertained all day. If you want to change it up, try following your stone fly with a midge larva like the zebra midge or \$3 dip. Keep your eye out as the month rolls along for the first hatches of blue winged olives. They like a little warmer air

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temps and cloudy days. When you see them, switch to a may fly nymph like a P-tail, or Hogan's. For you dry fly guys, there are still opportunities. Watch for daily midge hatches around noon to start. These are best fished on warm days with no wind. When you see heads, switch to a para midge or buzz ball on 4X and you should take all risers. For you streamer junkies, low and slow are the rules of the game.



The water temps are still cold so they will need the streamer in their face. Fish your meat deep with a slow retrieve. Our best patterns lately have been black in color. Try a Sculpzilla in black or if you want to switch it up try an olive bugger. Both are good bets. As the water starts to warm up, start picking up the speed of your retrieve. New gear arriving daily as our spring orders show up. Stop by the store for the *up-to-the-second* fishing report." **John Way, The Tackle Shop.** 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 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.montanatrou.com/>
- ✦ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.

- **WEATHER** → Our pleasant January weather continued into most of February, but just I was tempted to pack away my winter wardrobe, it changed! Golfers were seen on the golf course most every day in February! And then the blizzard hit. Canadian Geese are hanging out in the hay fields. They are probably confused as to whether they're supposed to fly north or south! The recorded high in Ennis for the month of February was **42°** with a low of **12°**. The average high was **30°** and the average low was **16°**. February precipitation was **.19"** compared to an average precipitation of **.23"**.



- **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **Online Tools for Your Housing Search.**

There was a time when the only way to find homes for sale was to engage a real estate agent to send you listings or drive up and down the streets scouting "for sale" signs. In the past decade, an explosion of online real estate listings services has drastically changed the way Americans look for homes. It's now possible, with a click of a mouse, to find the sales price of the home next door, search for listings in a given school zone and take virtual tours of homes you're interested in. With the multiple listing services at their fingertips, most would-be buyers these days send listings to their agents rather than the other way around.

Home shoppers can look at homes for sale at **Realtor.com, Zillow, Trulia**, or your agent's website, among other sources. In some cities, the local multiple listing service includes a consumer website. And yes, there's an app for that. All the major services have mobile apps, and you can get text alerts and type notes on your phone as your significant other drives by. Some apps show you houses you may like based on your searches and those you've already looked at. This surge of online information has not eliminated real estate agents, but has changed their role from keeper of the listings to negotiator and guide.

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Realtor.com is tied to the multiple listing services, and in many areas, you can search the MLS using agents' or company sites. The services that are tied to the MLS are updated every 15 minutes, which makes those listings the most current. Listings on sites such as Zillow and Trulia can lag behind by hours or days. However, those portals have information that is not included in the MLS listings.

For example, a listing that has no address in the MLS-linked services may have an address at Zillow or Trulia. Most of the portals pull from public records data, which means the information is better in states where better data is available. The rural nature of our Montana properties is also a challenge for services like Zillow and Trulia which are designed for more urban real estate. Montana, being a non-disclosure state, provides no public sold information. So Zestimates and other statistics on these sites are inaccurate for Montana properties.

Important to know: Both Trulia and Zillow **sell ads to real estate agents**, and the agents who advertise are highlighted next to home listings. The recommended agents are not necessarily the listing agents for the homes you see and may not even specialize in the area. So while you can email questions to those agents who paid to be visible, you're usually better off finding your own agent through referrals or checking out agency websites and directing all questions and requests for showings to the agent working with you.

All the sites allow you to set alerts that notify you when a new property goes on the market. That's important in a competitive market, where you may need to jump on new listings immediately. Each service has its strengths and weaknesses. But **Zillow (who now owns Trulia)** recently reported that after April 1 they will no longer be contracting with Listhub, the nation's broadest and most widely adopted network for listing distribution with direct MLS connectivity. Therefore, Zillow will not have MLS data. **Realtor.com** is the listing site run by the National Association of Realtors. It's up-to-date, accurate and more about the properties and the agents than selling ads. www.realtor.com.

➤ **FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH** → **8.6 ACRES** near great fishing, in the foothills 20 miles south of Ennis, with underground power and phone plus a community water system. Privacy, accessibility, spectacular views and interesting topography. Even has Teepee Rings! Bull Wheel, Lot 28. **\$86,000.** (Southwest Montana MLS #196221) Google Earth Coordinates: lat 45.228247° lon -111.764751° Elevation 5,314'.



➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET** → WASHINGTON, February 27, 2015 — Improved buyer demand at the beginning of 2015 pushed pending home sales in January to their **highest level since August 2013**, according to the [National Association of Realtors®](http://www.nar.org). All major regions except for the Midwest saw gains in activity in January. The Pending Home Sales Index, (PHSI) a forward-looking indicator based on contract signings, climbed 1.7 percent to 104.2 in January from an upwardly revised 102.5 in December and is now 8.4 percent above January 2014 (96.1). This marks the fifth consecutive month of year-over-year gains with each month accelerating the previous month's gain.

Lawrence Yun, NAR chief economist, says for the most part buyers in January were able to overcome tight supply to sign contracts at a pace that highlights the underlying demand that exists in today's market. "Contract activity is convincingly up compared to a year ago despite comparable inventory levels," he said. "The difference this year is the positive factors supporting stronger sales, such as slightly improving

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credit conditions, more jobs and slower price growth.” Yun also points to more favorable conditions for traditional buyers entering the market. All-cash sales and sales to investors are both down from a year ago, creating less competition and some relief for buyers who still face the challenge of limited homes available for sale. “All indications point to modest sales gains as we head into the spring buying season,” says Yun. “However, the pace will greatly depend on how much upward pressure the impact of low inventory will have on home prices. Appreciation anywhere near double-digits isn't healthy or sustainable in the current economic environment.”

The Pending Home Sales Index in the Northeast inched 0.1 percent to 84.9 in January, and is now 6.9 percent above a year ago. In the Midwest the index decreased 0.7 percent to 99.3 in January, but is 4.2 percent above January 2014.

Pending home sales experienced the largest increase in the South, up 3.2 percent to an index of 121.9 in January (highest since April 2010) and are 9.7 percent above last January. **The index in the West rose 2.2 percent in January** to 96.4 and is 11.4 percent above a year ago.

Total number of existing-homes sales in 2015 are forecast to be around 5.26 million, an increase of 6.4 percent from 2014. The national median existing-home price for all of this year is expected to increase near 5 percent. In 2014, existing-home sales declined 2.9 percent and prices rose 5.7 percent.

###

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

We are still busy, here in the Madison Valley. The weather has been so nice, town is busy, people are visiting and the market has been steady. The Madison Valley also benefits from the popularity of Bozeman and Big Sky. **The Southwest Montana Multiple Listing statistics** for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall, Cardwell), for the month of **February 2015** totals are as follows:

- **LAND:** 266↑ vacant lots are listed (\$3,000 to \$2,250,000); 8 pending sales (\$8,000 to \$110,000); and a total of 5 lots have sold so far in 2015 (\$45,000 to \$115,000), totaling \$486,500, which was 95% of asking prices.
- **HOMES:** 110↑ homes are listed (\$67,500 to \$3,475,000); 11 pending sales (\$159,000 to \$1,999,000); and 12 homes have sold so far in 2015 (\$82,500 to \$1,062,500), totaling \$3,870,500, which was 90%↑ of asking prices.
- **RANCHES:** 6↑ listed (\$1,184,000 to \$9,950,000); 0 pending sales, and 0 ranches have sold in 2014 or 2015.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 16↑ listed (\$56,000 to \$2,950,000); 1 pending sale (\$259,000); and 1 commercial property sold (\$51,500) so far in 2015.

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

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➤ **YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM MONTANA WHEN** *"Bears wake from hibernation!" is the leading story on the local evening news.* This mild winter means that the bears are waking up from hibernation earlier than normal, in and around Yellowstone National Park. Bears begin looking for food soon after they emerge from their dens so outdoor enthusiasts should stay in groups of three or more, make noise along the trail and carry bear spray – or you might be lunch! Read more on this warning at: <http://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/news/15008.htm>.



➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA:** *Did you know that...* Bears hibernate during the winter months in most areas of the world with hibernation varying from a few days or weeks to 6 months or more? The denning period in Yellowstone National Park is approximately 5 months. (*Less this year!*) When temperatures warm up and food is available in the form of winter-killed ungulates or early spring vegetation, bears emerge from their dens, with male bears emerging first. To learn more about these interesting creatures, go to: <http://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/denning.htm>.



SEE YOU IN MONTANA!

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



And our Office manager,
Elena Lopez Kinnear



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.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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