

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER



NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for the month of SEPTEMBER 2011

Trout live in nice neighborhoods.

➤ **ENNIS AND MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → Most people you ask around here would say that September is their favorite month. The weather was great, there were lots of folks in town enjoying the abundant activities, social events and great weather. → The Ennis on the Madison Fly Fishing Festival was a big success and drew vendors, fishermen and visitors to the area in early September. But now the Farmers Market vendors have folded their tents until next summer and many of the restaurants will be closing for the winter very soon. → The town takes on a more sober look and the hustle and bustle of summer starts slowing down. The business people who work hard during our summer season can catch their collective breath and get some rest! → The biggest excitement lately was the big plane swooshing low through the valley. The best rumor was that it was a government spy plane! But the Madison County Montana Emergency Information website described it as a massive Air Force C-17 making a mock approach at the Ennis/Big Sky Airport while practicing short field landings in preparation for a possible deployment to Afghanistan. The 297,000 pound aircraft is capable of speeds near 515 MPH and has a range of 2780 miles. It must have startled some fishermen as it zipped into the Bear Trap Canyon! Check out <http://madison.homestead.com/>.



➤ **EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MADISON COUNTY, MONTANA, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!** These are the latest statistics from the County government, which are currently in the process of being revised. It is interesting to see the overall picture of this place that we feel is so special.

- Madison County contains 2.3 million acres: 46% Federally owned, 6% State owned, 48% Privately owned. 109,000 acres in Madison County are classified prime farmland.
- Madison County population is 7,691 (2010 estimate)
- Per capita income is \$19,615. This ranks 31st among Montana's 56 counties. Montana ranks 48th among all States in per capita income.
- Major business activities in Madison County are ranching, farming, construction, limited mining and tourism/recreation. Schools, medical services, county government, Forest Service, several resorts and several large construction companies are the County's major employers. Home construction,

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associated with extensive subdivision of the past 20 years, *was* one of the fastest growing industries in Madison County. Non-traditional ranch property owners are becoming more common. Family ranches, livestock numbers and successful year round main street businesses are being threatened by high land values and low agricultural economics.

- The County Seat is Virginia City, which was the Montana Territorial Capital from 1865 to 1875. The courthouse, constructed in 1875 is still used for County offices and the District Court.
- National Historic Landmark, Virginia City, one of the State's early successful mining towns, is now a visitor stop for thousands of travelers each year. Virginia City was home to over 10,000 residents in the mining boom of the 1860's and 70's. Virginia City and its neighboring town Nevada City are recognized as one of the busiest tourist attractions in Montana and are major seasonal employers. The State of Montana now owns and manages much of the historical district of Virginia City. Virginia City is a major seasonal employer in Madison County.
- Four towns in Madison Co. are incorporated: Ennis, Sheridan, Twin Bridges and Virginia City. All have functioning local governments. One out of three Madison Co. residents lives within the towns.
- Other communities in Madison County: Alder, Big Sky, Harrison, Silver Star, Pony, McAllister, Laurin, Norris and Cameron. They rely on County support for numerous services.
- Madison, Beaverhead, Big Hole, Jefferson and Ruby Rivers are all major rivers in Madison County. Beginning in Madison County the Ruby River is a headwater of the Missouri River. All rivers and numerous other waters in Madison County are popular fishing and recreation destinations.
- Much of Big Sky, one of the west's premier resort destinations, lies in Madison County. Seasonally, Big Sky employs over 800 service oriented employees.
- Madison County is experiencing many other changes. Four high schools in Madison County are experiencing reduced enrollments. Four grade schools (K-8) and two rural schools (K-6) note the same concerns. Community populations are staying fairly consistent. Observation leads one to think that most communities in Madison County are becoming retirement based populations. Several towns are noting numerous main street and other business closures.
- Madison County has an estimated 1,200 miles of County roads. (*And NO stop lights!*)
- October 1998 study (contained in the Madison County Comprehensive Plan, 1999 Update, which is currently under revision):
 - 73,000 acres were subdivided. Of 2,859 lots, approximately 19% were built on (545 lots).
 - Conservation Easements were in effect on 150,000 acres of private land.
 - Noxious weeds or weed seed infest over 200,000 acres.
 - Approximately 36,000 acres are considered flood prone.

➤ **OCTOBER EVENTS** → You've always heard say, "*there is NO FREE LUNCH!*" But on Friday, October 21st you can eat free at the 26th annual Hunters Feed and Chili Cook Off on Main Street, Ennis. This tradition started as a way for hunters to clean out their freezers and get ready for the start of hunting season. Good cooks prepare wild game dishes and serve up samples for FREE in front of the local businesses along Main Street, between 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM. Be sure and come early because some dishes disappear fast. Generally there are around 30 different dishes to try, so come hungry! But Arrow Real Estate will not be serving up the winning Elk Chili this year – Toni has hung up her apron. You can stop by and pick up a copy of her recipe, though! She will have information available on all the best hunting properties for sale in the Madison Valley.



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➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → Well, maybe it's not technically "Montana," but Yellowstone National Park announced they will open for winter use Dec. 15 with the same snowmobile and snow coach regulations from the previous season. Park officials are implementing a one-year-rule for the upcoming winter season to make time to better address public input on proposed long-term regulations. This is good news for visitors to West Yellowstone and locals planning to use the Park this winter. → Wolf Management is still a hot topic in southwest Montana. Our local county commissioners are asking the state for increased funding toward more active wolf management and livestock protection. One State Senator says that the "wolves have been ferocious this summer" in her district. Go to <http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/management/wolf/wolfid.html> to read more about the Montana grey wolf.



✚ **FISHING REPORT** → Kelly Galloup from the Slide Inn reports: "Dam: 1,090 cfs, Kirby: 1,150 cfs, Varney: 1,270 cfs."

"As we wait for more seasonable fall temperatures to stir the proverbial pot, fishing has noticeably slowed down on the Upper River. The dry fly bite has been pretty slow over the last three or four days, and we're guessing that the fish have seen (and been stung by) enough hopper imitations over the last two months to make them think twice about eating them. We've heard a couple people say that they've done decent on ants and beetles, but the nymph game has been a little more consistent. We've been doing best on baetis nymphs until around 10:00 am, and after that it's been all tan caddis pupa, midges, and small attractors. Streamer fishing is still best early and late, but again...things have slowed down a little during the afternoons. This should all change over the weekend, as we have colder temps and cloud cover a comin', which should get the baetis moving and the streamer bite back in full force."



...check out additional fishing reports at:

- ✚ Kelly Galloup's Slide Inn at: <http://www.slideinn.com/blog/category/fishing-report/>.
- ✚ Dan Delekta's report at <http://beartoothflyfishing.com/flyfishingreports/uppermadisonriver.htm>.
- ✚ The Tackle Shop's Orvis report at http://www.orvis.com/fishing_report.aspx?locationid=5974
- ✚ The Madison Valley Ranch at <http://www.madisonvalleyranch.com/blog/>
- ✚ Joe Dilschneider's Montana Trout Stalkers at <http://www.montanatroutrout.com/>
- ✚ Madison River Fishing Company at: <http://www.mrfc.com/MadisonRiverMontanaFishing/MadisonRiverReport.aspx>.



➤ **WEATHER**→ September weather has been absolutely awesome! September has the most consistent good weather of the whole year. It is the best time to be in Montana – the crowds have thinned out, the nights are cold enough for blankets, the days are warm enough for shorts and you could potentially, hunt, fish, golf, hike and even mow the lawn – all in the same day! The statistics show the **August** temperatures in Ennis as: a high of **85°** and a low of **30°**, with an average high of **66°** and an average low of **45°**. The average wind speed this month was just **7 mph!** Our recorded **September** precipitation totaled **.05"**. We are drying up and the valley is golden.

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➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS → Jobs and Home Ownership. You can't have one without the other.**

Good jobs enable people to achieve the American dream of home ownership. And every time a house is built, bought, or sold, jobs are created—lots of them—right here at home.

- Home sales in this country generate more than 2.5 million private-sector jobs in an average year. For every two homes sold, a job is created.
- Each home sale touches dozens of different professions.
- Every home purchased pumps up to \$60,000 into the economy over time for furniture, home improvements, and related items.
- Housing accounts for more than 15% of the Gross Domestic Product, making it a key driver in our national economy.
- Housing has led this country out of six of the last eight recessions.



America needs jobs. Housing creates jobs. That's one of the many reasons home ownership matters to people, to communities, to America. Strong federal government support of home ownership equals strong support for American jobs. Realtors® urge the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress—as they debate the new federal budget and reform proposals for the nation's mortgage finance system—to continue federal support for home ownership.

➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET**→ According to the National Association of Realtors®, Washington, DC, September 21, 2011, existing-home sales increased in August, even with ongoing tight credit and appraisal problems, along with regional disruptions created by Hurricane Irene. Monthly gains were seen in all regions (*but the greatest gain was here in the West!*). Total [existing-home sales](#) rose 7.7% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.03 million in August from an upwardly revised 4.67 million in July, and are 18.6% higher than the 4.24 million unit level in August 2010.

- Investors accounted for 22% of purchase activity in August, up from 18% in July and 21% in August 2010. First-time buyers purchased 32% of homes in August, unchanged from July. All-cash sales accounted for 29% of transactions in August, unchanged from July.
- According to Freddie Mac, the [national average commitment rate](#) for a 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgage fell to 4.27% in August, down from 4.55% in July; the rate was 4.43% in August 2010. Last week, Freddie Mac reported the 30-year fixed rate fell to a record low 4.09%.
- NAR President [Ron Phipps](#), broker-president of Phipps Realty in Warwick, R.I., said the market is remarkably affordable for people with secure jobs, good credit and long-term plans. “All year, the relationship between home prices, mortgage interest rates and family income has been hovering at historic highs, meaning the best housing affordability conditions in a generation,” he said.
- “The biggest factors keeping home sales from a healthy recovery are mortgages being denied to creditworthy buyers, and appraised valuations below the negotiated price. Buyers may be able to find more favorable credit terms with community and small regional banks...” Phipps said.
- Contract failures – cancellations caused largely by declined mortgage applications or failures in loan underwriting from appraised values coming in below the negotiated price.
- Total housing inventory at the end of August fell 3% to 3.58 million existing homes available for sale, which represents an 8.5-month supply at the current sales pace, down from a 9.5-month supply in July.
- Single-family home sales rose 8.5% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.47 million in August from 4.12 million in July, and are 20.2% above the 3.72 million pace in August 2010. The median existing single-family home price was \$168,400 in August, which is 5.4% below a year ago.

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- Existing-home sales in the West **jumped** 18.3% to an annual pace of 1.23 million in August and are 20.6% higher than August 2010. The median price in the West was \$189,400, down 13% from a year ago.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → Fall has historically been busy for real estate sales, and this year was no exception. We have never figured out the psychology, but we think maybe prospective buyers play all summer, then when fall comes they get serious about making a decision to buy property in Montana. The hunters will start arriving about mid month, so town gets busier while they gear up. The **Southwest Montana Multiple Listing** statistics for the Madison Valley (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall and Cardwell), for the month of **September 2011**, are as follows:

- **LAND: 366 vacant lots listed** (\$8,400 - \$2,490,000), **5 pending sales** (\$30,000 - \$175,000), **18 lots sold, year-to-date** (\$1,000 - \$355,000). *Lots sold in 2010, year-to-date, were 24.*
- **HOMES: 178 homes listed** (\$37,000 - \$3,250,000), **11 pending sales** (\$67,500 - \$689,000), **33 homes sold, year-to-date** (\$50,000 - \$1,995,000). *Homes sold in 2010, year-to-date, were 25.*
- **RANCHES: 9 listed** (\$849,000 - \$9,950,000), **0 pending sales**, **2 ranches sold, year-to-date** (\$925,000 - \$7,215,794). *Ranches sold in 2010, year-to-date, were 10.*

Area properties that did sell this year, sold on an average, for 90.87% of their listed prices.

➤ **YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM MONTANA WHEN...** a girls' basketball game fills the gym. (*Ennis captured the championship of the Montana Western C Divisional high school girls' basketball tournament, on February 28, 2011.*)

➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA** → Did you know that Virginia City was founded in 1863 and is considered to be the MOST complete original town of its kind in the United States? <http://www.virginiacity.com/>



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



**Toni and Don Bowen,
Brokers/Owners,
Arrow Real Estate**



**Jay Willett and Karen Swedman
Brokers, Arrow Real Estate
also Property Managers and Owners of
Apex Management**



APEX MANAGEMENT offers full service property management in the Madison Valley. Whether you are interested in using your home as a vacation or a long-term rental, or looking for assistance in finding a rental, you can expect quality service with a positive attitude. See our website at: www.apexmontana.com or call us at **(406) 682-7112**. Apex Management is **not** a part of Arrow Real Estate.

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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.mvvetmemorial.org> – The Madison Valley Veterans Memorial website
<http://ennis.communityblogs.us/2008/11/17/ennis-community-blog/> - comments and events in Ennis
<http://adayinthelifeofalemon.blogspot.com/> - famous local sculptor, David Lemon's site
<http://my-montana-moments.blogspot.com/> - Artist Penny Hall's photo journal of her MT experience
<http://ennismontanahomesandland.blogspot.com> – Ennis, Montana Happenings, from **Arrow Real Estate**

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

SKIING:

www.moonlightbasin.com – Check out latest snow conditions on the hill 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

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

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

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