

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

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



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ **MADISON VALLEY “HAPPENINGS”** → On January 20, 2015 an early morning fire destroyed **The Sportman's Lodge**, an icon in Ennis for the past 70 years. The Sportsman's Lodge was the dream



of two native Montanans, Otis Crooker and his wife Laura, both born and raised in S W Montana. Otis believed that sportsmen would need a place to stay once they discovered that the Madison Valley was so rich in recreation. Otis and Laura scraped



together enough to add additional land, cabins and even a pool! According to their daughter, Stephanie Vujovich, who grew up at the Sportsman's Lodge and still lives in Ennis, her parents hand peeled the logs and built the main lodge, the cabins and the furniture. Her mother made all the curtains and bedding. Otis



was a pilot and during WWII was a flight instructor in the Army/Air Corps and continued this profession after the war, operating from his hangar and the grass airstrip that used to lie just behind the cabins to the west (now the North Forty project). During the '50's live gaming (which was technically illegal) flourished in the basement of the Sportsman's Lodge and was a big draw to gamblers and sportsmen alike. Gambling was outlawed in Montana

during the '60's but continued, underground, in many places. During the *heyday* of the Lodge, in those early years, Shell Oil and other large corporate planes would land on the airstrip and bring large groups of people here for hunting, fishing and gambling. Bing Crosby was an avid fisherman and would frequent the Lodge. There was a photograph in the Lodge of Bing playing piano in the bar on one of his visits. The Crookers were “hands on” owners and worked hard to make the Sportsman's Lodge the premier resort in the Madison Valley and to this day it is known throughout the state and beyond for being **THE** place to stay, eat and play in the Madison Valley. The current owners are planning to rebuild, maintaining the character and charm of the original lodge. → January is usually fairly quiet in town, but there is still so much to do that it's often hard to choose. 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 one of their monthly themed Supper Club dinners, with a 7-course Portuguese meal to a full house; the **McAllister Inn** continues to be a new favorite and open 7 days a week; the **Grizzly Bar** and the **Alley Bistro** are open on weekends; plus all Adult Education courses and volunteer organization activities!

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Whew! And then all the outdoor activities throughout the area! Plenty to do. → **The Ennis Café** is under new management and is being remodeled for a spring opening. The old signs are coming down making way for the new Summit Coffee & Café. → The **old First Madison Valley Bank building** will be home to a new Western store. We look forward to the new businesses and wish them all much success, which enriches the whole community. → **Sadie**, the “missing” dog, has been reunited with his owner and they are local celebrities, with front page newspaper coverage and television interviews. A great story with a happy ending.



➤ **COMING FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS** → Get your dogs ready! **The International Pedigree Stage Stop Sled Dog Races** begin on February 2nd in Jackson WY and run through February 8th, with one of the stops in West Yellowstone MT. The IPSSDR is the largest Sled Dog Race in the lower 48 states. Read more about it at <http://www.wyomingstagestop.org/>. → Founded in February 2006, the **Virginia City Winter Festival** is a fun-packed weekend of winter “sports.” Events include broomball, two-man log sawing, dog-in-a-wheel barrow race, kids sled race and whatever else they decide to dream up. The WF is held in the historic town of Virginia City, February 13 - 15. Call 406 600-5302 for more information. *Admit it – you know you want to do this!* Read more about what’s happening in the area in The Madisonian, <http://www.madisoniannews.com/>.



➤ **MONTANA NEWS** → Check out this beautiful time lapse video of **Montana landscapes** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dk-5HN4fvg>. → It is too soon to gauge the impact on aquatic life in the **Yellowstone River** after the recent oil spill. More at <http://mtpr.org/post/too-soon-gauge-oil-spill-impacts-yellowstone-river-fish>. More reason to fish the Madison River until they figure it out. BZN sets record for passengers in 2014. → **Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN)** handled 966,964 passengers flying in and out during 2014. This is up 9.3% compared to 2013 and sets another passenger record for BZN and for Montana. The Air Traffic Control Tower handled 80,722 aircraft operations during the year, up 7.7% from 2013. General aviation accounts for 74% of aircraft operations at BZN. In June, Bozeman Yellowstone Int’l Airport welcomed its 13th and 14th non-stop destinations as new seasonal non-stop service to Houston’s Intercontinental Airport on United Airlines and New York’s LaGuardia Airport on Delta Air Lines commenced. **BZN** handles more passengers than any other Montana airport and is served by five airline brands with coast to coast non-stop service including



Atlanta*, Chicago, Denver, Houston*, Las Vegas, Los Angeles*, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Newark*, New York LaGuardia*, Phoenix-Mesa, Portland*, Salt Lake City, San Francisco*, and Seattle/Tacoma. Passenger totals in and out by airline brand in 2014 were: Delta Air Lines – 388,251, United Airlines – 311,783, Alaska Airlines – 123,203, Frontier Airlines – 81,436, Allegiant Air – 59,037, and

Chartered Airline Flights – 3,254. Work continues on the new I-90 Interchange that will serve the airport and is expected to be completed in mid-2015. For more information about Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport visit <http://www.bozemanairport.com/>. *Denotes seasonal service.

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➤ **FISHING REPORT** → February 1, 2015 *from The Tackle Shop, Madison River Fishing Report.* “With the wealth of nice days we have been seeing lately it is easy to let the mind wander from traditional winter tasks and drift into fishing. If you have been having the same problem as me the only sure cure is to grab your waders and head for the Madison. A little casting cures almost any ill. For those wanting to get out the nice unseasonable winter weather is making the perfect storm for great winter fishing. Location is key during the colder months as the fish are stacked in the deeper and slower moving water. Once you find your spot nymphing will certainly bring fish to hand. We have been having luck with a large size 4 pats rubber leg followed by a pink or red san juan worm. Fish these dead drift about 7 feet behind and indicator and add a little weight if you’re not hitting bottom. If this does not work throw on a size 18 zebra midge or 3\$ Dip as most afternoons there is a good midge hatch.

For you dry fly guys fishing this time of year is a mid-day thing. We have been having a great midge hatch almost each day with rising fish. One report lately was great dry fly fishing to select risers behind rocks near Reynolds Pass. If you do see rising fish try a buzz ball, parachute midge or Griffiths Gnat on a 5X tippet. These fish will not move very far to take a floating fly this time of year so make the first cast accurate. As long as it is in their lane they should eat it. For you guys wanting to throw big and ugly streamers think low and slow. Keep them deep and with a slow retrieve. There is some great fishing this time of year and you’re almost guaranteed to have the river to yourself. Stop by the store or give us a call for the current river 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 Deleka 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** → Montana often gets a bad rap for weather, but no one can complain about the weather this year, so far! And the skies have been awesome. The recorded high in Ennis for the month of January was 57° with a low of -1°. The average high was 40° and the average low was 20°. January precipitation was just 1” of snow from only one significant snow storm, compared to an average precipitation of 1.45”. Our average annual precipitation is 13.36” and our snowpack is below normal.



➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **5 Tips for Getting Your Home Ready for the Spring Real Estate Market**, by Kyle Hiscock, *a top real estate agent, with Nothnagle Realtors, based out of Rochester, N.Y.*

Even though it’s the middle of the winter season, before you know it, spring will be here. Historically in most real estate markets, the spring is when it really begins to heat up. The spring real estate market generally yields the highest prices for those selling their home. This is only possible though if the proper preparations are taken *before* spring is upon us! If you’re thinking of selling your home in the spring, you must know that even though you may receive top dollar for your home, the competition will also be the strongest. This means it’s absolutely critical that you’re prepared for the spring real estate market so you can knock out your competition. Check out these tips so that you’re prepared.

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Begin Interviewing Prospective REALTORS® - It doesn't matter what time of year you decide to sell your home, it's critical that when selling a home, you know how to interview REALTORS® when selling a home. As spring continues to approach, the top producing REALTORS® will only continue to get busier. Make sure you start reaching out to the agents you think would be a great representative to sell your home sooner rather than later.

Know What Your Plan Is - One huge mistake sellers make is not knowing what their plan is once they sell their home. Are you planning on buying another home once your home sells? Do you have the option to move in with family? Can you rent, if need be? Can you buy non-contingent? These are things you should think about and know the answers to before the spring real estate market hits. It's a great idea to discuss your financing options with a local lender before you list your home for sale. If you can get pre-approved to purchase a home non-contingent, if need be, it can give you a huge advantage over any seller who is selling their home subject to finding a suitable property to purchase.

Consider Having a Pre-List Inspection - One of the biggest reasons a home sale gets derailed is due to the home inspection. Most buyers will opt to have their offer contingent on an acceptable home inspection. Some buyers can even get alarmed and scared by the smallest home inspection finding. It can be easy to avoid this possibility and have your home inspected by a professional before listing it. Having a pre-list inspection is one of the top things to do before listing a home for sale.

Know Your Local Spring Real Estate Market - Every real estate community and market is different. Some spring real estate markets begin in late February/early March and others begin in the middle of April. It's important that you truly understand your local real estate market. The best way to know your local real estate market is by hiring a top REALTOR®. Your REALTOR® should be able to advise you on current, past, and projected market conditions and also give you advice as to when you should list your home. The time you choose to list your home for sale is critical in the spring market. If you wait too long, it's possible you can miss that prime selling time frame. There are some REALTORS® who will even suggest beating the spring market competition and that it can be beneficial to list a home now and not wait until spring.

Clean & Organize - I know it's cliché but it's imperative to give your home a thorough "spring cleaning." This doesn't mean wait until spring though. Be proactive and start cleaning now; you'll be glad you didn't wait. A huge turnoff for prospective buyers is foul odors. Things such as smoke odors and [pet odors can kill home sales](#). When selling a home, it's important that you de-clutter and organize your home, too. A great way to achieve this is by packing. It may sound silly seeing as you haven't listed your home for sale yet, but you will need to pack at some point anyways, so why not do it now! Clean out closets and pack away anything that you don't have a necessity for. It is incredible how much better a home will show and how much quicker it will sell if it's organized and de-cluttered. Here are just a few things to make sure you clean before listing your home: *Wash your windows; Dust your blinds; Dust baseboard trims; Clean appliances; Clean shower(s) & toilet(s); Clean inside cabinets.*



Final Thoughts - The spring real estate market is a great time to be selling a home. Just because your spring market doesn't begin until mid-April doesn't mean you should wait to prepare for the sale of your home. Be proactive and follow the above tips for getting ready for the spring real estate market. You will be glad you did when your home sells quickly and for a high price!

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➤ **FEATURED PROPERTY OF THE MONTH** → **GET READY FOR GREAT FISHING!** Own



20 acres along the Madison River, south of Cameron. This parcel has beautiful views of river and mountains, privacy, borders BLM land on 2 sides and has **NO covenants or restrictions!** The river is less than 400' across a strip of BLM for miles of great fishing water in both directions. **\$375,000** with possible owner financing. Sphinx Mountain Tracts, Parcel 82. SW MT

MLS # 195117. Google Earth Coordinates: lat 45.153233° lon -111.707972°, Elevation: 5,334'.

➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE MARKET** → WASHINGTON (January 23, 2015) – Despite low inventory conditions, existing-home sales bounced back in December and climbed above an annual pace of 5 million sales for the sixth time in seven months, according to the [National Association of Realtors®](#). Median home prices for 2014 rose to their highest level since 2007, but total sales fell 3.1% from 2013. Total existing-home sales, which are completed transactions that include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops, rose 2.4% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.04 million in December from a downwardly-revised 4.92 million in November. From a year ago, December sales were higher by 3.5% and are now above year-over-year levels for the third straight month. For all of 2014, there were 4.93 million sales, a 3.1% decline from 2013 (5.09 million). The national median existing-home price was \$208,500, the highest since 2007 (\$219,000) and a 5.8% increase from 2013 (\$197,100).

[Lawrence Yun](#), NAR chief economist, says sales picked up in December to close a 2014 that got off to a sluggish start but showed encouraging signs of activity the second half of the year. “Home sales improved over the summer once inventory increased, prices moderated and economic growth accelerated,” he said. “Sales were measurably better in the second half – up 8% compared to the first six months of the year.” Total housing inventory at the end of December dropped 11.1% to 1.85 million existing homes available for sale, which represents a 4.4-month supply at the current sales pace – down from 5.1 months in November. Unsold inventory is now 0.5% lower than a year ago (1.86 million). “A drop in housing supply in December raises some affordability concerns in the months ahead as minimal selection and the potential for faster price appreciation could offset the demand from buyers encouraged by a stronger economy and sub-4 percent interest rates,” says Yun. “Housing costs – both rents and home prices – continue to outpace wages and are burdensome for potential buyers trying to save for a down payment while looking for available homes in their price range.”

The median existing-home price for all housing types in December was \$209,500, which is 6% above December 2013. This marks the 34th consecutive month of year-over-year price gains. The percent share of first-time buyers was 29% in December, down from 31% in November but up from a year ago (27%). First-time buyers in 2014 represented an average of 29% for the second straight year. A separate NAR survey released in late 2014 revealed that the annual share of first-time buyers fell to its lowest level in nearly three decades.

NAR President [Chris Polychron](#), executive broker with 1st Choice Realty in Hot Springs, Arkansas says Realtors® are optimistic the Federal Housing Administration’s plan to reduce annual mortgage insurance premiums will have a positive impact on first-time buyers once it goes into effect on January 26. “NAR is a strong supporter of the FHA and its vital role in the mortgage marketplace for homebuyers,” he said. “Realtors® support responsible lending to qualified borrowers and the move to lower premiums will enable more buyers to enter the market while continuing to protect taxpayers from the risky lending practices that led to the housing crash.”

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All-cash sales were 26% of transactions in December, up from 25% in November and 32% in December of last year. Individual investors, who account for many cash sales, purchased 17% of homes in December, up from last month (15%) but down from December 2013 (21%). Sixty-three percent of investors paid cash in December.

According to Freddie Mac, the average commitment rate for a 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgage in December fell to 3.86%, its lowest level since May 2013 (3.54%), and down from 4% in November. The average annual rate was 4.17% in 2014. Distressed sales – foreclosures and short sales – were up slightly in December (11%) from November (9%) but are down from 14% a year ago. Eight percent of December sales were foreclosures and 3% were short sales. Foreclosures sold for an average discount of 15% below market value in December (17% in November), while short sales were discounted 12% (13% in November).

Properties typically stayed on the market the same amount of time in December (66 days) as November (65 days) but for a slightly shorter time frame than a year ago (72 days). Short sales were on the market the longest at a median of 98 days in December, while foreclosures sold in 61 days and non-distressed homes took 66 days. Thirty-one % of homes sold in December were on the market for less than a month.

Single-family home sales increased 3.5% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.47 million in December from 4.32 million in November, and are 4% above the 4.30 million pace a year ago. The median existing single-family home price was \$210,200 in December, up 6.3% from December 2013.

December existing-home sales in the Northeast declined 2.9 percent to an annual rate of 660,000, but are 3.1 percent above a year ago. The median price in the Northeast was \$246,600, which is 3.2 percent above a year ago. In the Midwest, existing-home sales fell 3.5 percent to an annual level of 1.09 million in December, and are now 2.7 percent below December 2013. The median price in the Midwest was \$159,100, up 5.3 percent from a year ago. Existing-home sales in the South climbed 3.8 percent to an annual rate of 2.17 million in December, and are 7.4 percent above December 2013. The median price in the South was \$184,100, up 6.6 percent from a year ago. Existing-home sales in the West jumped 9.8 percent to an annual rate of 1.12 million in December, and are 2.8 percent above a year ago. The median price in the West was \$299,600, which is 5.6 percent above December 2013.

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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** → When winter comes, some of our sellers will say, “I want to take my property off the market until spring because nothing happens in the winter and the listing will get stale.” **Don’t believe it!** The only time it makes sense to take a property off the market in winter is if you can’t get to it through the snow drifts! Otherwise, there is often as much if not more activity during the winter months, by potential buyers who are more serious than the summer dreamers. January has been busy! **The Southwest Montana Multiple Listing statistics** for the Madison Valley area (including Ennis, Cameron, McAllister, Norris, Virginia City, Harrison, Pony, Whitehall and Cardwell), for the month of **January 2015** totals are as follows:

- **LAND:** 257 vacant lots are listed (\$3,000 to \$2,250,000); 5 pending sales (\$45,000 to \$129,900); and a total of 0 lots have sold so far in 2015.

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- **HOMES:** 108 homes are listed (\$67,500 to \$2,950,000); 16 pending sales (\$125,000 to \$1,999,000); and 3 homes have sold so far in 2015 (\$191,000 to \$1,062,500), totaling \$1,524,000, which was 89% of asking prices.
- **RANCHES:** 5 listed (\$1,184,000 to \$9,950,000); 0 pending sales, and 0 ranches have sold in 2014 or 2015. *(There were, however, a couple of ranch sales that are not listed on the MLS.)*
- **COMMERCIAL:** 15 listed (\$56,000 to \$2,950,000); 1 pending sale (\$98,500); and 0 commercial properties have sold so far in 2015.

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

➤ **YOU KNOW YOU'RE FROM MONTANA WHEN** *you know the Native Americans from the Browning area are “Blackfeet, not Blackfoot.”* Of the approximately 15,560 enrolled tribal members, there are about 7,000 living on or near the reservation. Nearly 27 percent of enrolled members are of three-fourths or greater Indian blood. The Blackfeet Indians are commonly thought to have acquired their name because of the characteristic black color of their moccasins, painted or darkened with ashes. The Blackfeet Reservation is in northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Its one-and-a-half million acres are bordered on the north by Canada and on the west by Glacier National Park. Learn more about the Blackfeet Nation at:

<http://tribalnations.mt.gov/blackfeet>.



➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA:** *Did you know that....* The first inhabitants of Montana were the Plains Indians? And... 6.5% of Montana’s population is Native American Indian compared to only 1.2% nationally? There are currently 8 distinct tribes of **Native American Indians in Montana** – The Blackfeet Nation (Blackfeet Reservation), The Chippewa Cree Tribe (Rocky Boy’s Reservation), the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (Flathead Reservation), the Crow Tribal Council, the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council (Gros Ventre & Assiniboine Tribes), the Fort Peck Tribal Council (Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes), the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. You can find out about Montana Powwows and other events at http://500nations.com/Montana_Events.asp.

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. 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.mvvetmemorial.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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