

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

NEWS of ENNIS and the MADISON VALLEY, MONTANA for JANUARY 2020



Trout live in nice neighborhoods



➤ MADISON VALLEY JANUARY “HAPPENINGS” → We welcomed the **Roaring Twenties** with



lots of fun events. There was fun at the **2020 Winter Fest** and serious competition at the **Pond Hockey Tournament** in VC and the **Hebgen Lake Ice Fishing Tournament** in West Yellowstone. → The youngsters enjoyed the **Kids “N” Snow Weekend** in W.Y. → The Elling House hosted a new **Chautauqua**. → Fans gathered at the VC Elks Lodge for football season. → Ruby Valley Brew in



Sheridan hosted another **Trivia Night**. → The Ennis Senior Center held a big **Dance & Social**. → New construction on **Main Street** next to the Library where Jane Rybus’ historic house stood, is taking shape. It is the first **new building** on Main Street for many years - and the **tallest!** → In with the new and out with the old! As in the 122-year-old **Varney Bridge**, which is just a memory - a piece of our local history.

➤ MADISON VALLEY FEBRUARY “HAPPENINGS” → You can sign up for a **Mapping & Orienteering in the Snow** class on Feb 1 at the Jack Creek Preserve. → Take an **Animal Felting Workshop** at the Ennis HS on the 8th. → Attend a **Chatauqua** at the Elling House on the 15th. → Attend a **Livestock Guard Dog Presentation for Ranchers** at the VC Elks Lodge on the 18th. → Participate in the **Montana Raptor Conservation** study on the 29th. → Or ladies, check out “**Gals & Guns – A Women’s Basic Handgun/Concealed Weapons Permit Class**” with the Montana Tactical Firearms Instruction in Three Forks on the 29th. Call (406) 451-8275 to register! → There lots of events happening in **Big Sky**, bigskyresort.com/events. → A gang of volunteers keep the **Ice Rink** open in VC for free skating with skates to borrow. → You can still find live music at **Willie’s Distillery**, **Blue Moon Saloon**, **Pony Bar**, **Norris Hot Springs (Water of the Gods)**, and the **Gravel Bar**, great shopping and dining, plus first-rate movies at the Madison Theatre and fun at the Bowling Alley! And there are several **gyms and fitness classes** in the area if you want to stay in shape!



➤ MONTANA NEWS → A Madison County cow has tested positive for **Brucellosis**, which could threaten Montana’s Brucellosis Class-Free Status. → Montana held a 2-day summit for groups that educate the public about **grizzly bears** to teach people how to live with and understand the ursines. Grizzly bear populations are growing in MT at about 2.3% a year. There are reportedly more than 1,850 grizzly bears in northcentral and northwestern Montana and the greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, which includes Wyoming. The bears are native to Montana and these iconic carnivores have high value to people and cultures, playing an important role in the state’s ecosystems and



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economy. Grizzlies have recovered, with a record number being killed by cars. They are also causing an unprecedented amount of damage to crops and livestock. Throughout most of Montana, one should expect to encounter a grizzly bear. **So, Be Bear Aware!** → **Jet Blue** will soon be offering non-stop, direct flights from Bozeman to NYC & Boston twice weekly. The **Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (BZN)** is now the **fastest growing** airport in Montana and in the northwest region of the US, as well as the 7th fastest growing airport in the nation! Check all information and flights at: <https://bozemanairport.com/>

➤ **FISHING REPORT** → **The Madison River Fishing Report for February from The Tackle Shop**
→ February is for lovers. That's why it is the shortest month. This Hallmark holiday falls mid-month to remind us what and who we love and to give us reason to survive. If it is the shortest month, why does it feel like it lasts forever? I think it is because we know there are some good things to come. Once the end of the month arrives the door starts opening and we get more daylight. This helps with the winter depression that strikes Ennis. Generally, the weather turns the corner (except for last year, then not so much!). Fishing starts to get going and spring thoughts replace those of powder days, expensive flower deliveries, and the winter funk. But right now, we are sitting pretty good on the snowpack with about 95% of average. This might be a little deceptive. We get most of our high elevation moisture from now 'till April. So, we have a good start and there is still a bunch of snow to come. We monitor this weekly and will keep you posted.

If you want to catch your "sweetheart fish," you have options. The midges have been active on our warm days. The standard bobber lobbbers with lots of lead will keep you bent in the deeper runs and even a few streamer eaters. Stone flies, eggs, worms and midge larva will do the trick down low. Keep them down and dirty just like Valentine's Day should be.

Spring is on the horizon folks and good fishing is just one calendar page away. Hang in there, get past the next few weeks and we are off to the races again. Stop by the store as new gear is arriving weekly. Not a bunch of traffic on Main street or in the store so come on by. We need to make a little money to pay for the Valentine's flower delivery. We ❤️ company... especially people who talk fishing. Look for our new podcast, **The Montana Fly Fishing Podcast**. Happy Fishing and God Bless, **FishEnnis**, 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.

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.montanatrout.com/>
- ✚ Yellowstone Fly Fishing at <http://www.yellowstoneflyfishing.com/madisonreport.htm>.

➤ **WEATHER** → January was another mild month – just waiting for the other (snow)shoe to drop! Winter is bound to come, one of these days! There was just enough of a cold snap that the Madison River started **gorging** but the temps have kept it from expanding. The January daytime high was **48°** and daytime low at **27°**. Nighttime high was **34°** with the low of **7°**. Recorded precipitation of **.51"**.

➤ **REAL ESTATE TIPS** → **FICO CHANGES COULD LOWER YOUR CREDIT SCORE ...** The U.S. consumer borrowing industry revolves around companies such as FICO, which help lenders decide

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whom to lend to. Credit-reporting firms including Experian, PLC, Equifax and TransUnion collect data on consumers and compile it in consumers' credit reports, which then determine their FICO scores. However, changes in how the most widely used credit score in the U.S. is calculated will likely make it harder for many Americans to get loans, as the changes create a bigger gap between good and bad credit risks. Take note:

- Consumers with rising debt levels will be scored more harshly.
- Consumers who fall behind on loan payments will accumulate black marks.
- Consumers who sign up for personal loans will be flagged.
- Consumers with already-low scores below 600 who continue to miss payments or accumulate other black marks will experience bigger score declines than under previous models.
- Credit scoring and reporting companies recently started factoring in such information as bank account balances and utilities payments.
- But these changes will also benefit consumers with already-high FICO scores of about 680 or higher will likely get a higher score than under previous FICO versions!

➤ **FIND A HOME FOR YOUR SOUL... Featured Property of the Month ...** Very attractive & comfortable home with large living/family room featuring an 18-ft wood vaulted ceiling. This 3BR/2BA home of 1,627 SF has an open floor plan that makes the home very livable, energy efficient & low maintenance. There is an extra room, abundant storage, a 2-car attached garage + lots of nice extras! Located at the edge of town bordering a nice greenbelt. 843 Mirza Way, Ennis. **\$325,000.** MLS# 341724. GoogleEarth Coordinates: 45.339455°, -111.737928°.



➤ **CURRENT REAL ESTATE NEWS** → WASHINGTON (January 22, 2020) – Existing-home sales grew in December, bouncing back after a slight fall in November, according to the National Association of Realtors®. Although the Midwest saw sales decline, the other three major U.S. regions reported meaningful growth last month. Total existing-home sales, completed transactions that include single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops, increased 3.6% from November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 5.54 million in December. Additionally, overall sales took a significant bounce, up 10.8% from a year ago (5.00 million in December 2018). On a full-year basis, total existing-home sales ended at 5.34 million, the same level as in 2018, as sales in the South region (+2.2%) offset declines in the West (-1.8%) and Midwest (-1.6%), as the Northeast remained unchanged.

Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist, said home sales fluctuated a great deal last year. *"I view 2019 as a neutral year for housing in terms of sales,"* Yun said. *"Home sellers are positioned well, but prospective buyers aren't as fortunate. Low inventory remains a problem, with first-time buyers affected the most."* The median existing-home price for all housing types in December was \$274,500, up 7.8% from December 2018 (\$254,700), as prices rose in every region. November's price increase marks **94 straight months of year-over-year gains.** *"Price appreciation has rapidly accelerated, and areas that are relatively unaffordable or declining in affordability are starting to experience slower job growth,"* Yun said. *"The hope is for price appreciation to slow in line with wage growth, which is about 3%."*

Total housing inventory at the end of December totaled 1.40 million units, down 14.6% from November and 8.5% from one year ago (1.53 million). Unsold inventory sits at a 3.0-month supply at the current sales pace, down from the 3.7-month figure recorded in both November and December 2018. Unsold inventory totals have dropped for seven consecutive months from year-ago levels, taking a toll on home sales.

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Properties typically remained on the market for 41 days in December, seasonally up from 38 days in November, but down from 46 days in December 2018. Forty-three percent of homes sold in December 2019 were on the market for less than a month. First-time buyers were responsible for 31% of sales in December, moderately down from the 32% seen in both November and in December 2018. NAR's *2019 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers* revealed that the annual share of first-time buyers was 33%.

Yun said conditions for buying are favorable and will likely continue in 2020. "We saw the year come to a close with the economy churning out 2.3 million jobs, mortgage rates below 4% and housing starts ramp up to 1.6 million on an annual basis," he said. "If these factors are sustained in 2020, we will see a notable pickup in home sales in 2020."

Single-family home sales sat at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.92 million in December, up from 4.79 million in November, and up 10.6% from a year ago. The median existing single-family home price was \$276,900 in December 2019, up 8.0% from December 2018. Compared to last month, December sales increased in the Northeast, South and West regions, while year-over-year sales are up in each of the four regions. Median home prices in all regions increased from one year ago, with the Midwest region showing the strongest price gain.

December 2019 existing-home sales in the Northeast grew 5.7% to an annual rate of 740,000, up 8.8% from a year ago. **The median price in the Northeast was \$304,400, up 7.4% from December 2018.**

Existing-home sales decreased 1.5% in the Midwest to an annual rate of 1.30 million, which is up 9.2% from a year ago. **The median price in the Midwest was \$208,500, a 9.2% jump from last December.**

Existing-home sales in the South grew 5.4% to an annual rate of 2.36 million in December, up 12.4% from a year ago. **The median price in the South was \$240,500, a 6.7% increase from this time last year.**

Existing-home sales in the West rose 4.6% to an annual rate of 1.14 million in December, a 10.7% increase from a year ago. **The median price in the West was \$411,800, up 8.1% from December 2018.**

The National Association of Realtors®, "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing 1.3 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

➤ **LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET STATISTICS** → Several closings, showings and new listings kept us busy, and the mild weather makes it easier to show property. There are more buyers coming from Bozeman and Big Sky looking for affordable property in the Madison Valley. **Big Sky Country** 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 2020**, are as follows:

- **HOMES:** 55 homes listed (\$85,000 to \$2,990,000); 9 pending sales (\$399,900 to \$995,000); and 4 homes have sold in 2020 (\$355,000 to \$828,900), totaling \$2,391,900 at 97.0% of list prices.
- **LAND:** 180↑ vacant lots listed (\$9,500 to \$2,200,000; with 7↓ pending sales (\$54,000 to \$185,000); and 9 lots have sold in 2020 (\$45,000 to \$505,000), totaling \$1,409,000 at 90.5%↓ of list prices.
- **RANCHES:** 7 ranches listed (\$599,000 to \$15,900,000); 1 pending sale (\$4,495,000), and 0 ranches have sold in 2020.
- **COMMERCIAL:** 14 listed (\$99,000 to \$950,000); 0 pending sales; and 0 commercial properties have sold in 2020.

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

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➤ **MONTANA TRIVIA...** *Did you know ... that Montana is home to approximately 5,000 Hutterites?* Often compared to Amish or Mennonites, Hutterites are a communal people belonging to a peace-driven Anabaptist sect that lives by the principle of non-resistance, the practice of not resisting authority even when it is unjust. Nearly 50,000 of them live around the Western U.S. and Canada in colonies of 80 to 150 people made up of families who live and toil together. Faith, family and hard work make up the core values of the Hutterites. Montana's Hutterite communities contribute more than \$365 million in annual spending for the state and 2,200 year-round jobs, according to what is being touted as a first-of-its-kind study by the University of Montana and Montana State University. They found that the presence of the 81 farming operations owned and operated by the 38 Lehrerleut communities examined in this study support production, employment and income in the Montana economy that is significant in size and scope. They said the relationships between their agricultural and other operations and the rest of the state economy leads to jobs and income in non-Hutterite and nonagricultural sectors, *"resulting in a larger economic pie for all Montanans to share."* The study, which looks at links between Hutterite businesses and Montana's economy, found that more than 80% of the Hutterite production is from grain, hogs and eggs, with grain making up 39% of that, 29% is from hogs and eggs making up 13%, research officials said. Hutterite products are sought out for their high quality and purity. Especially their turkeys! It is always an exciting opportunity when we see their trucks parked with their wonderful goods for sale! <https://www.greatfallsribune.com/story/life/my-montana/2014/08/10/hutterites-make-mark-montana/13796021/>



SEE YOU IN MONTANA! Be not afraid.

Our ERA Landmark Arrow Real Estate Team



Toni and Don Bowen, Broker Associates and Accredited Buyer Broker Representatives, with over 75 years of real estate experience, between them – covering residential, commercial, vacant land, recreational & ranch properties in the Madison Valley. And our new office puppy, Finley!



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

*Debbie Reilly-Richardson
Office Administrator*



*WE'RE NOT JUST HERE TO MAKE A LIVING
---WE'RE HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!*



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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

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

<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.

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 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

www.homesandland.com – Search for homes for sale and rent, home values and mortgage rates

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