



The Meagher County News

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A PERFORMANCE on the main stage at the Red Ants Pants Music Festival last week. Photo by Tiffany Sweeney.

Twelfth Red Ants Pants Music Festival Hits High Notes

Strong local support credited for successful festival

The twelfth Red Ants Pants Music Festival wrapped up with a sense of purpose, and a big sense of pride. By now, most attendees have learned that their choice to purchase a wristband at the festival is making a lasting impact through the work of the Red Ants Pants Foundation to increase women's leadership, support working family farms and ranches, and enrich rural communities. The festival is also a chance for local artisans and businesses to showcase all White Sulphur Springs has to offer. Unlike many commercially-run music festivals, Red Ants is home-grown and fueled by the support of more than 250 volunteers – all for a good cause.

Whether it's Scott, Lynn and Cody Jackson preparing their pasture for the thousands of guests, or Barry and Chris Hedrich and the 2 Basset Brewery crew putting up fencing to

keep the festival grounds organized, it takes dozens of locals to make the festival a success. "We simply could not do it without the support of Meagher County, the city of White Sulphur Springs, and all of our neighbors who put in so much hard work to make the festival such a welcoming and wonderful experience," said Sarah Calhoun, founder of Red Ants Pants, producer of the Red Ants Pants Music Festival.

But all of that effort seemed to shine a bit brighter when Country Music Hall of Famer, five-time GRAMMY Award-winner, and former guitar player for Johnny Cash, Marty Stuart came to town and remarked with a sigh on stage, "I've been hearing about Red Ants for years and have always wanted to come here. Now I get it. This is the best festival in the world."

Other artists on tour also

commented on the notable hospitality of the community and kindness of the fans. "This has been one of the very best stops on our tour," said Madeline Edwards, who toured with Chris Stapleton in venues around the country.

It's not just stars in the music world that have taken notice that something truly special is happening in Meagher County at the end of every July. The Red Ants Pants Music Festival has been named "The Montana Event of the Year," by the Montana Office of Tourism.

Each year, with proceeds from the Red Ants Pants Music Festival, the Red Ants Pants Foundation awards grants to organizations and individuals whose projects further its mission. Family farms and ranches, rural community enrichment projects, and women's leadership organizations are supported as the foundation believes these hardworking folks strengthen the Montana way of life. "Thanks to festival proceeds, the fans have gifted over \$160,000 to projects across the state that support our mission. With 115 grantees in every corner of Montana, we sure appreciate people coming to celebrate the weekend with us as it has direct impact on enriching our rural communities," said Calhoun. "Hopefully that also makes every beer purchased on site a little tastier."

Planning is already underway for the next Red Ants Pants Music Festival, which is scheduled for July 25-28, 2024.



A WINNER of the costume contest celebrates! Photo courtesy of Red Ants Pants.

Baroque Music Montana to Perform in Ringling

Tuesday, August 15, Meagher County will be treated to a free concert at the newly renovated Ringling Church in Ringling. The concert will feature Baroque Music Montana presenting Fairest Isle and will begin at 6:30.

Baroque Music Montana, based out of Bozeman, specializes in chamber music inspired by history and performs works by composers of the Baroque period, as well as many pieces rarely heard since the eighteenth century. Playing on period instruments, the performers strive to bring music and audience together in historically relevant spaces.

Carrie Krause, violinist and artistic director, founded Baroque Music Montana, in 2015. Through a grant from The Juilliard School's Alan D. Marks Center for Career Services and Entrepreneurship, it

provides a performance platform for local artists, as well as visiting artists who have a deep appreciation for and investment in historical performances. Baroque Music Montana partners with many organizations throughout the state to provide public concerts and outreach programs. It also provides an annual Period Performance Workshop, which is sponsored by the Bozeman Symphony, in Bozeman. This year the workshop is August 18 - 20 and is open to professional and amateur players, as well as high school students.

This event is sponsored by Shane and Maggie Hedges and produced by the Meagher County Arts Council. Although the event is free, donations are highly appreciated so that they may continue their outreach programs.

Carcinogens Found at Malmstrom Missile Sites

The U.S. Air Force reported this week that polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a possible carcinogen, have been found in two missile sites overseen by Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls. They have ordered an immediate clean up of the materials at the sites.

The military began looking into possible carcinogens at the Montana base locations in January after nine officers who had previously worked there reported being diagnosed with blood cancer. Since January, more than 30 other blood cancer cases at Malmstrom and other bases have also been made public.

The team of experts took water, soil, air and surface samples between June 22 and June 29 from each of the launch facilities. Out of the 300 surface swipe samples, 21 came back with detectable levels of PCBs, including two that were above

the EPA's mitigation level.

"Based on the initial results from the survey team, which discovered PCB levels above the cleanup threshold designated by law in two of our facilities, I directed Twentieth Air Force to take immediate measures to begin the cleanup process for the affected facilities and mitigate exposure by our Airmen and Guardians to potentially hazardous conditions," stated Gen. Thomas Bussiere, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command.

No contamination was found in the air samples, and the Air Force noted that it is still waiting on air and surface samples taken from Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. They are still waiting on results from all water and soil samples taken from the three bases.

Governor Gianforte Welcomes New Medical School to Montana

Governor Greg Gianforte welcomed the Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine to Montana, cutting the ribbon on its new state-of-the-art medical school in Great Falls.

"As we focus on creating greater and better access to health care, and lowering costs for Montanans, Tourocom Montana is building a new pipeline of health care leaders to serve with compassion, excellence, and integrity in our communities," Gov. Gianforte said. "We're thrilled to welcome To-

uro College of Osteopathic Medicine to the Treasure State."

Breaking ground in 2021, Tourocom Montana's new 100,000 square-foot Great Falls campus is one of two medical schools in the state. Benefis Health System will serve as the college's clinical partner.

Addressing students at the school's inaugural white coat ceremony, the governor said, "Today, we celebrate not only you . . . but we also celebrate the promise of the future of health care in Montana."

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