



Media Advisory

April 30, 2018

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Groundbreaking Ceremony to Mark Fairgrounds Redevelopment

The public is invited to join county commissioners and Fairgrounds users at a groundbreaking ceremony at 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 1, to celebrate the redevelopment of the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

The ceremony, which will kick off Phase 1 of redevelopment, will be held at the racetrack, and the public should enter through the rodeo grandstands on the southside of the Fairgrounds. The redevelopment will begin with demolition of the racetrack, which will make space for a new rodeo arena and grandstands, livestock center, parking lots and open space during the later phase of project. The County will repurpose the specialized equine dirt used for the racetrack surface by transporting it to the Big Sky Horse Park just west of Missoula.

Phase I will cost \$20 million – of which about \$15 million has been funded – and is expected to be complete within five years. It includes new utilities, renovations to historic buildings, a new maintenance shop, a new Learning Center to house the County Weed District and 4-H, perimeter landscaping and streetscaping, more than a mile of new trails and 10 new acres of open space. Future phases include 19 total acres of open space and the new livestock center, rodeo arena, ice rink and exhibit center.

"Our community cares deeply about this historic property," said County Commissioner Jean Curtiss. "We share memories of this special place that brings together the best of Missoula – urban, rural, young and old. It reminds us of where we came from and gives us hope about where we are headed. The Fairgrounds were once on the edge of a small town and served to showcase our agriculture. Now they are surrounded by a vibrant city and continue to connect us to our roots as we create new memories."

The Fairgrounds were purchased by the Missoula Board of County Commissioners in 1913 for \$16,000. More than 100 years later, after extensive planning, this community treasure will receive its first major reinvestment.

More information is available online at www.missoulafairgrounds.com/future.

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The Missoula County Fairgrounds mission is to promote agriculture, education, culture, recreation and community connection and to reflect the beauty and history of Western Montana. Our mantra is to be the physical space that embodies the diversity of Missoula County itself, connecting our urban vibrancy with our rural heritage, midtown with the neighborhoods, and tradition with innovation.