

Missoula County Media Release

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New Missoula County Election Center Now Open

Missoula County's new Election Center is now open and providing voter and election services at 140 N. Russell St. The center will provide more space for staff to assist voters during the busy months leading up to elections, including late and same-day voter registration, as well as throughout the year.

For the past decade, elections office staff routinely moved from their permanent location in the Missoula County Courthouse and temporarily set up shop at the Missoula County Fairgrounds to accommodate increased demand for voter services leading up to elections. With renovations slated to continue at the Fairgrounds for several more years, this solution was increasing unsustainable.

At the new center, staff will be able to provide voter services in the same location year-round. The facility is also centrally located, close to a bus route and trail, and will provide about 200 parking spaces.

"We're excited about this new, permanent location that will allow us to better serve voters," said Elections Administrator Dayna Causby. "We're looking forward to working out of the new facility and providing the customer support that ensures everyone who's eligible to vote can cast their ballot."

The 14,500-square-foot center, which includes the main office space and a warehouse, will also host trainings for emergency management, law enforcement and other county staff. The county plans to remodel the buildings to best accommodate the various uses. Renovations are projected to cost around \$500,000 and slated to be complete ahead of the June 2020 primary election.

Missoula County acquired the property from the Western Montana Mental Health Center last month for \$2.78 million. In addition to renovation costs, the financing package includes the purchase of about \$255,000 in elections equipment, including an additional ballot processing machine and updated elections software, bringing the total to \$3.5 million.

The Elections Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Drivers should access the center using the Wyoming Street entrance located just west of Prince Street. Residents can also access the center via Mountain Line's Route 2 BOLT bus, which offers service every 15 minutes, as well as from the Milwaukee Trail, located about one block south.

Elections Center staff can help with all voter services, including registration, requesting an absentee ballot, address changes, retrieving undeliverable ballots and issuing replacement ballots. Voters can check their ward, registration status and polling place location at www.missoulavotes.com.

For more information, call Causby at 406-531-4026 or email dcausby@missoulacounty.us.

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