

THREE FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District No. J-24 . 212 East Neal . Three Forks, MT 59752

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Superintendent News – December

Welcome to December and winter in Montana! The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas break is always busy and sometimes hectic for students as they are planning a change to their routines with a two-week Christmas break. The month kicked off with the annual Christmas Stroll on Main Street. What a great job by the Chamber of Commerce and the planning committee with the stroll this year! I wanted to draw attention to our middle and high school band instructor Sue Pitcher. Under her direction of the school choir and band, the stroll began with the tree lighting ceremony. Our students then continued to sing and play throughout the evening! The Imerys Tournament was also a huge success this month; a special thank you to Imerys, for sponsoring the tournament and associated costs with hosting the event. Additionally I wanted to say thank you to Mike Sauvageau and Justin Helvik for working the long hours over the two-day tournament. The tournament could not have succeeded without all of your planning and help running the event.

A group of five parents and community members have volunteered to aid in the establishment of the Three Forks School District Foundation. The foundation's focus will be to help students with scholarships, small innovative grant requests for our teachers, and to act as a fiscal agent for grants that the district might qualify for in the future. The foundation board is researching other area school foundations in hopes to create the mission, vision, and bylaws for the group while working to fill out all required paperwork to gain the 501c3 status for a non-profit. The next meeting will be Tuesday January 12, 2016 at 5pm in the superintendent's office.

Mr. Strickland and Mrs. Felz in the middle and high school held their annual community outreach sub for Santa and operation Santa Claus again this year. The students that participated in the two projects were able to purchase gifts for a Three Forks family for Christmas. Both programs are student and advisor driven, and highlight the true magic of Christmas for our students and the power in giving to someone else.

Our fiber optic high-speed internet is a reality for our school district. Our business partner of Century Link was able to secure federal funding to get the fiber to the district. The monthly service for the new high speed internet will be paid for over the next three years from e-rate and a federal rural education grant in REAP from

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the federal government. This is truly fantastic for our students and even better for our local taxpayers as there will not be any general fund local tax dollars spent on the new service. The ability for our school district to have a dedicated 100MB download circuit will begin to transform our classroom instruction for students where more focus is placed on student engagement in the content material, and more of a student-centered approach will take place in the classroom.

Our school district continues to educate the public for the need of a general fund mill levy in the spring to help sustain educational programs and personnel that are currently in place. I will be teaching a free adult education course on Montana School Finance and the need for a general fund levy on January 25-26 in the boardroom at the school. I would encourage anyone that wants more information on the manner in which the school is funded and the need for a general fund levy to come and learn with us and ask questions. Ultimately, our focus at the school and the need for a general fund levy is to prepare the next generation of workers for the local businesses and manufacturing plants in Three Forks. The investment in the school district over time will give back to the community of Three Forks and we all will see the impact.

We have been working diligently over the Christmas break to keep the facilities of the school looking in tiptop shape for our students and staff. The custodial staff have been working on cleaning classrooms, and hallway carpets to keep the school clean. The gyms have all been cleaned as well, and the old gym will have a fresh coat of finish on the floor ready for all of the P.E. classes and events that take place in that space in the winter months. Our winter sports are in full swing and over the next couple of months our facilities are used to their capacity each day of the week by our students, and community members. Please if you have, spare moments come over to the school and attend a sporting event, concert, or assembly so that you can also see the investment that we all have in our students.

Merry Christmas,

Robert DoBell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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