



NEWS ADVISORY

Feb. 4, 2014

For immediate release

Development Services Open House Set for Feb. 7

Join the staff at the City of Missoula's Development Services in City Hall on Friday afternoon as they welcome the public with an anniversary open house 3-5 p.m. The event will include refreshments, tours with staff members, informational display boards and a continuous slide show.

The City's development group opened its doors in January of last year as the result of a complete remaking of Missoula's permitting and licensing services into city- and county-specific services. Mayor John Engen implemented the reorganization in an effort to improve service to the public.

"I couldn't be more pleased with our Development Services group," said Mayor John Engen. "We created this organization to address issues that had been lingering in the community for decades, and this re-organization addressed those issues head on. In the end, we're all about facilitating high-quality development in our community and working with the citizens we serve, whether they're building a single-car garage or a multi-million-dollar business."

To meet the goal of providing exemplary and efficient service, the reorganization brought together planning, engineering and building services to create "one-stop permitting" for developers, builders, contractors and citizens. Development Services also includes code compliance, historic preservation, business licensing, transportation planning and the Missoula in Motion program.

"Development Services has a staff of almost 50 employees who provide a wide range of services to the community," said Development Services Director Mike Haynes. "But most crucially we support economic development by having a team of professionals who offer 'one-stop shopping' to the development community; that is one group ready to guide an applicant through the development process all the way from initial concept to final completion of a project."

Development Services staff's work ranges from answering zoning, engineering and building code questions to locating and permitting utilities to inspecting buildings to the planning and design of transportation and infrastructure facilities to planning for future growth.

In 2013, Development Services issued about 1,400 building permits with a construction value of almost \$82 million. Including all types of permits, such as permits for sewer service, signs and fences, the staff issued 6,740 permits. With the reorganization complete, the wait period for plan review and permit approvals has decreased. In the works are plans to accommodate online plan submittals and online payments.

Two additional new features are the Development Review Team, which brings together all the principals in development review, including the Police Department, Fire Department and Health Department, and the Project Review Team, which meets at specified times to engage people who have ideas for development projects as early as possible.

"We're working hard to facilitate good development," Haynes said. "It's a collaborative process, and Development Services wants to be an active partner in economic development."

Questions? Please call.

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