

MONTANA ROC NEWS

Edition 5

Spring 2019

Hello ROC Residents!

We hope that this newsletter finds you enjoying the spring sunshine and taking advantage of the beautiful weather! It was a very long winter and we are all looking forward to getting out into the ROC communities to make improvements and work on special projects.

Since the last newsletter, there have been two communities to come on board as ROCs in the state of Montana and multiple infrastructure projects have begun. It is a very exciting time for residents in Montana! In this issue you will learn more about:

- Our newest ROC's to come on board, Libby Creek in Libby and C & C in Billings
- The upcoming ROC Leadership Institute and Montana ROC Summit Trainings
- MT ROC Summit Mini-Grant Projects across the State
- Lorie Cahill's Tour "Under the Big Sky"
- Updates on housing bills in the Legislature

*Spring in
Montana*



We really enjoy finding new ways to keep you engaged in the work that NWMT and the ROC's in Montana are doing. We encourage you to take advantage of the training opportunities that are being provided in and outside of your community and register for www.myrocusa.org to keep informed on all things ROC.

ROC Leadership Institute

June 6-9, 2019

Southern New Hampshire University

Registration to this year's ROC Leadership Institution is open until May 24. Attendees will be accepted when they register on a first-come, first-served basis. Anyone who lives in a ROC is eligible to attend and the registration form can be found on myROCUSA.org.

This event offers a broad choice and a rich array of quality workshops and learning labs discussing community issues and sharing best practices and solutions to the challenges faced by ROCs across the country. Attendees will develop new skills, enhance their leadership experience, and build new collaborative relationships with peers and national partners. Participants at the Leadership Institute will bring back knowledge and skills gained from this experience to affect sustainable, positive change in the communities where they live.

ROC leaders must have a myROCUSA account in order to register for the Leadership Institute. Anyone without an account can sign up at myrocusa.org.

If you need help accessing your account, please reach out to ROC USA's Digital Media Manager, Melissa Proulx, at 603-513-2815 or mproulx@rocusa.org.





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New Faces at NWMT



Jim Domino works as a Cooperative Housing Specialist in the NWMT ROC program. He retired from the State of Montana after 30 years and brings a wealth of experience to the staff.

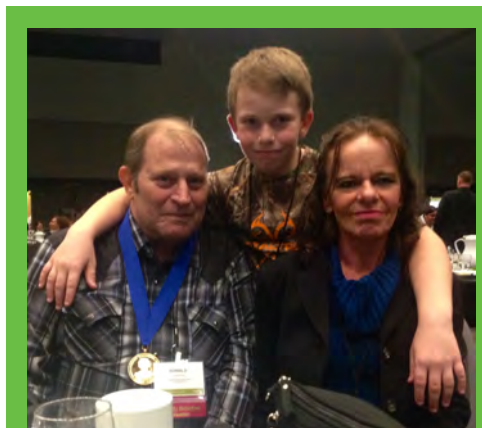
Jim helps to provide affordable, secure homes to manufactured home community residents by helping them purchase and run the communities they live in. He is also involved in researching and securing grants, loans and other funding assistance to help existing ROCs with infrastructure and community enhancement projects. Jim is passionate about using his skills to help make Montana communities better places to live.

Autumn Tigart is a Program and Administrative Assistant with NeighborWorks Montana, based in the Great Falls office. She has years of experience in administrative support and enjoys bringing her organizational skills to her role.

She offers support for NWMT ROC program staff and residents with tasks like data management and event planning. She aims to use her skills to increase process efficiency and facilitate further program growth across the state.



Honoring Don Feist



Don with his son, Joseph, and wife, Heidi in 2016, after Don received his Dorothy Richardson Leadership Award.

ROC resident and advocate Don Feist passed away this winter.

Don was an integral part of Trailer Terrace becoming a co-op through the ROC program and served as the president of the co-op for many years. He was also part of the team who secured a new water and sewer system for the upper court.

With his son Joseph usually at his side, Don kept a vigilant watch over the park and took a lot of pride in his board work. In 2016, Don won the Dorothy Richardson Leadership Award for his dedication and work. His work continues to be appreciated by NWMT and Trailer Terrace!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT = COMMUNITY IMPACT

The annual ROC Summit, held in Kalispell in October 2018, covered numerous topics relevant to resident ownership. The agenda included understanding financials, working with a property manager, and a featured presentation from ROC USA's Mary O'Hara surrounding the importance of community engagement.

To close out the two-day educational summit, each community in attendance received a \$500 Community Engagement grant for a project of their choice. Check out how the grants were put to good use in the different communities:

- **Buena Vista Community** - five-year celebration which included dinner, dessert, and a giftcard giveaway
- **Country Court Community** - community sign (*see photo*)
- **Green Acres Cooperative** - giveaway for a free month of lot rent and giftcards
- **Libby Creek Community** - community sign (*see photo*)
- **Missouri Meadows Community** - community bulletin board/rent drop
- **Morning Star Community** - goodie baskets for community members
- **Northwood Community** - bus stop solar lights & bench, picnic table for playground area (*see photo*)
- **River Acres** - LED solar lights for each home



New sign for Country Court Community



Bus stop at Northwood Community



New sign for Libby Creek Community

2019 ROC SUMMIT



SEPTEMBER
27-28
MISSOULA



Don't miss this year's Summit!
More details to come.

2018 CO-OP TOUR:

Greetings everyone! For those of you who don't know me, I am Lorie Cahill. I represent all our Mountain West Co-ops as your Director in the ROC Association. I am your collective voice to the executive branch of ROC USA. I, along with two other Directors across the nation are elected by your co-op leaders to represent, work on and deliver your ideas, concerns and successes in a way that ensures that we are moving toward our goals to continue to, not only better our communities more with each year, but to also add to our ever-growing family of co-ops, making our collective voice more and more powerful.

One of the things we worked on in the last two years has been cultivating a better personal relationship with co-ops and their leaders to get a first-hand look at their successes, as well as talk to them about their struggles and to be able to personally recognize their efforts. My 2018 goal to tour our great state of Montana and its ROCs made this possible.

Those of us who live in ROCs share many of struggles and successes in common. Whether it be sewer problems, water, decaying infrastructure, getting members engaged in our communities, leadership or a host of other things, I can assure you we share many things in common.

We also share many of our successes in common, as was evidenced throughout my tour. From a new sewer system at Green Acres; clean water at Trailer Terrace where they had not had clean water for over a decade before becoming a co-op; old and unsafe homes being replaced with new ones in many of these ROCs; new playgrounds, community centers, fences, roads...these are just a few of the many improvements I was pleased to see accomplished!

Many of the leaders I visited I have known for years, and I was not surprised by the commitment given to their communities. They represent an average of six years or better of serving on the board for their communities. I asked them what their biggest challenge is. I was overwhelmingly met with a common response, "Getting our members engaged in our communities!"

How can we get better engagement? It feels like we have tried everything! I too have asked myself this questions many times over the years. Perhaps the answer lies within the community itself. Each of you know why you do or do not engage in your community. Please give your reasons some thought and think about the impact your voice or action would have on your community. You have the opportunity to make positive changes that can have lasting impact.



Photo to the left: from Green Acres - Clarice Barnes, Rick Snyder, Steve McClain, Jim Fenn, Lori Meyer, Lorie Cahill, and Trish Fauth.

There is no one person in your ROC above another, we are all equal. This is what gives us the power to become "Better Together". In talking with people across Montana and other states, I think that we forget or simply aren't aware of how much opportunity co-ops have for success and security. It is our opportunity to have a voice that sets us apart from other "Mobile Home Parks".

continued...

UNDER THE BIG SKY

We are not creating a profit for our owners. We are creating safe, secure place to live and raise our families, decide our futures through our ability to control our rents, plan our infrastructure improvements, and improve our ability to help each other. Throughout Montana I heard about different programs in place to help our aging members, create community gardens to help feed families and build community centers to be able to bring their communities together.

Montana ROCs, I am truly inspired by my tour to each of your co-ops. Each of your leaders and members who have been involved in the improvements made to your communities are to be truly commended for your efforts. Montana continues to add more ROC's to our beautiful state through the help of our great partners ROC USA and NeighborWorks Montana.

I encourage each of you to consider making 2019 your year to engage! Help with a project, serve on your board of directors, run for a seat for ROC Association, be on a committee, or just let your voice be heard. I am more than proud to represent our Montana ROCs. You all greatly inspire me and I wish you the very best. Thank you for welcoming me during the tour.

Please go to Myrocusa.org to see my blog "2018 Co-op Tour "Under the Big Sky" it is a three part blog about each of your communities. It can be found under ROC Association blogs located at rocusa.org/blog/roc-associations-blog. Check it out!

ROC ON, MONTANA!



Brian Carter, Laurie Westendorf and Lisa Hussey
of Morning Star in Kalispell



Dan Drobny, past President of
Mountain Springs Villa in Red Lodge



Reception set up at Northwood in Pablo



Susan Villarreal, Secretary of
River Acres in Missoula

Who's New?

Montana's Growing ROC Community

Libby Creek Community



In October 2018, the community now known as Libby Creek Community became the tenth resident owned community (ROC) in Montana! The 12 home community is located at 34561 US HWY 2 in Libby.

Danielle, ROC Program Manager for NWMT, was the lead on this project. She was perfect for the project, not only because of her growing expertise working on resident ownership, but because she has a special connection to the community of Libby. Danielle grew up in Libby and graduated from Libby High School. Growing up in Libby she has seen both the downturn of the economy, as well as the hope of rebuilding.

"Libby is reinventing itself. There is a revitalization taking place and a big effort from the residents to bring new economic opportunities to the area. The ROC program naturally promotes pride in ownership and provides the resources to make capital improvements in the Libby Creek community upon purchase. I have a passion for the ROC program and the empowerment it brings to the residents of the communities and a passion for the community of Libby. Because of this I wanted to bring the ROC program to Libby. This is another small way to add to the effort taking place in Libby to revitalize the community, empower residents and bring back that thriving community I remember from my childhood," Danielle talking about Libby and resident ownership.

C & C Community



We are happy to announce that the 11th Montana ROC just closed on March 29! Join us in welcoming C & C Community, a 60-home community located at 307 South Billings Boulevard in Billings.

NWMT staff had a chance to talk with Chuck Barrett who owned the park for over 40 years. When he was considering selling the park he had no desire to displace the current residents, and being able to sell to his residents allowed him keep the people living there.

Chuck went on to say, "It's now the residents' - the fact that it is staying a mobile home park was my biggest priority. We didn't want to displace everyone that we had grown to know and some that had turned into family for us. We just felt good about that."

For NWMT, preserving homes that families and seniors can afford is a high priority. When we have a home that allows us to live a good life within our means, we are healthier and our neighborhoods grow stronger. We are thrilled to welcome C & C to the ROC family and look forward to seeing them grow as a community.

HOUSING BILLS IN THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE



NeighborWorks Montana has been very pleased with the efforts being made through the legislature to address housing needs across our great state. The Montana Housing Coalition has been very involved in advocating for a few of the bills and NWMT has been following them very closely as well.

We know that investments made in homes that Montanans can afford will result in community members who have healthier, more successful lives, which benefits our local communities as well as the whole state. Here is a little about the bills we have been following so far this year:

Senate Bill 18

Sponsored by Senator Margaret MacDonald: this bill proposed to create workforce housing tax credits, but it failed on the Senate floor with a vote of 23-27. We are disappointed that it did not pass, but we have been tremendously pleased by the outpouring of support and will continue to fight for housing that all Montanans can afford.

Senate Bill 204

Sponsored by Senator Margaret MacDonald: this bill would allow for the revision of personal tax exemption laws for mobile homes. If passed, this bill would exempt owners of homes that are at least 28 years old and worth less than \$10,000 from having to pay the personal property tax. The bill aims to avoid owner displacement due to an inability to pay the tax.

House Bill 16

Sponsored by Representative Dave Fern: this bill would create a loan program of \$15 million using coal tax trust funds for projects that construct or preserve homes that Montanans can afford across the state. Though initially proposed as gap financing, during its journey through the House, the bill was modified to focus on multifamily properties.

Grants Put to Great Use!

Morning Star Co-op in Kalispell completed a few much-needed projects thanks to grants from ROC USA and NeighborWorks America.

Utilizing a Better Together Community Grant from ROC USA, they made their community mailboxes safer by repairing the asphalt surrounding the boxes. The \$1,500 project was completed last spring.

This past fall, two new signs were installed at the entrances, as well as new speed limit and row number signs. This work was done in part with a \$2,000 grant from NWMT.

Does your co-op have projects that could benefit from a little extra help? Please be sure to talk with Danielle or James to let them know what your needs are so they can look into the possibility of a grant.

Giving Tuesday Success!

The 2018 NWMT Giving Tuesday campaign was designated to the community center project at the Northwood Community ROC and we were impressed with the results!

Through posts made on Facebook we were able to tell the specifics of the project and share photos of the community, which really helped folks feel connected to the project on a personal level.

The donations made the day of Giving Tuesday (Nov. 27, 2018) totaled \$1,950! Another \$1,000 was applied a bit later through a grant offered by the Town Pump Charitable Foundation.

With the success of this campaign, we would like to offer other occasional opportunities to raise money for special projects. If your ROC has something in mind, please be sure to email your ideas to Danielle (dmaiden@nwmt.org) or Jim (jdomino@nwmt.org).



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SAVE THE DATE

3rd Annual ROC Summit

September 27-28, 2019

This year's Summit will be held in Missoula and will include a variety of information and experiences including:

- a tour of the Missoula ROCs
- peer exchange with fellow ROC Residents
- discussion of community issues
- sharing best practices
- solutions and presentations on relevant topics

All are expenses covered including lodging, travel and food. This is a great opportunity to learn, network, and meet other ROC folks from around the state. Please plan to attend!

Registration will open on August 1 - stay tuned for more details. If you have questions now, please contact Danielle at 406.407.6444 or dmaiden@nwmt.org.

