

Clerk & Recorder: Robin Benson

Budget FY 17/18: Lincoln County has restructured the county budget and its process under a Finance Department which includes payroll and accounting personnel. With this change, we welcome County Administrator Darren Coldwell as the Finance Director. This is a positive adjustment and creates an improved budget process for county government and the taxpayers. We are again starting the budget process early. FY 17/18 budget work sessions began in February and are ongoing every week throughout the budget process. I am in full support of establishing a Finance Department. With more eyes on the budget, there is more attention to detail; all services are being looked at and everything is on the table.

Using a Homestead Declaration to Protect Your Home from Creditors: In Montana, up to \$250,000 in assessed value of a home or mobile home can be protected against most creditors' claims if the owner files a homestead declaration. After the homestead declaration form is completed, signed and notarized, it should be filed in the office of the Clerk and Recorder in the county in which the home or mobile is located. If married, both spouses should sign the declaration. **What is a homestead?** A homestead is the house or mobile home that a person lives in and land on which it sits. The property must be a person's primary residence for it to be eligible for a homestead declaration. This may include a mobile home or manufactured home where the owner does not own the land the mobile home is situated on. There are specific instances in which the Montana Legislature decided that it would be unjust to provide a homestead exemption. *Information taken directly from the Montana State University Extension MontGuide.* For more information, you can obtain a copy of the Homestead Declaration Guide in its entirety at the Clerk and Recorder's Office.

1910 Survey of Lincoln County Restored: A 1910 survey of Lincoln County was located in a vault in the courthouse and sent to Chicago for restoration. It is currently back in Lincoln County, has been framed and is hanging in the Courthouse Lobby. We became a county in 1909 and the map was finalized in 1910. Interestingly, the map is prior to the Libby Dam, so some of the towns no longer exist and names of towns have changed. The county has a records preservation fund that receives \$1.00 from every recording, so this project is not paid by taxpayer dollars. We are excited to preserve Lincoln County's historical origin. Printed copies of various sizes are available upon request.

A vintage World War I map has been donated to the Heritage Museum for preservation and public display. During the war, this map was made available so people could come to the courthouse to see where their loved ones were serving. Both maps are of great historical significance.

3rd Annual County Board Training: This is a time set aside for all County Boards, the Commission, County Administrator and the Clerk & Recorder to receive training and guidance collectively. This year, the main focus is going to be for all boards that receive public funds and has a budget. We will discuss an improved budget process, roles and responsibilities to the taxpayer and the M.C.A's that apply.

Election Administrator: Leigh Riggleman

Municipal Elections: For the cities of Libby and Troy and the towns of Rexford and Eureka are scheduled to be held Tuesday, November 7, 2017. Filing for these offices opened on April 20, 2017 and will close on June 19, 2017. Forms for filing are available from the Clerk and Recorder's office, City and Town business offices or from the Lincoln County Website at: www.lincolncountymt.us.

Looking Ahead: Election Judges training will be scheduled in the spring of 2018 and we are always looking for new judges. You must be a registered voter and we ask that you commit to working 2 days: the June 5, 2018 Primary Election and the November 6, 2018 General Election. If you would like to train, please give us a call and we will contact you with training dates and times.

This column is to inform, educate and engage the public. We are hopeful to pick topics of public interest. Feel free to contact us with any questions and comments.

Respectfully submitted by,

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