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Missoula County

Media Release

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Emily Bentley Hired as Missoula County Director of Fairgrounds Development

After conducting interviews of three finalists, the Missoula County Commissioners have selected Emily Bentley as the Director of Fairgrounds Development. Ms. Bentley will begin her employment on January 30, 2017.

“I am thrilled and grateful for this opportunity,” Bentley said. “The Fairgrounds is a physical space that embodies the diversity we see in Missoula County itself, connecting our urban vibrancy with our rural heritage. I look forward to earning the respect of constituency groups and working with them to build a place that serves people from across the county.”

As the Director of Development, Bentley will be working with the community, staff and public and private stakeholders as Missoula County moves forward with the implementation of the Fairgrounds Master Plan that the Commissioners adopted in October.

“Emily understands the importance of the fairgrounds as a countywide asset that, while in the heart of Missoula, is used and valued by folks throughout Missoula County and western Montana,” Commissioner David Strohmaier said. “I was also impressed by her eagerness to engage both urban and rural constituencies, foster positive working relationships with county staff and stakeholders, and fully realize the potential of the fairgrounds as the gem that it is.”



Emily Bentley. Photo by Cathrine Walters.

Applicants for the position went through an extensive screening process, which included interviews with County senior staff, meeting with the fairgrounds staff, and ultimately an interview with the Commissioners.

“Emily has demonstrated a true commitment to our community,” Commissioner Jean Curtiss said. “All candidates had strong backgrounds in building public/private partnerships and had many qualities that would suit this position well.”

During each of these phases, Ms. Bentley stood out as the most highly qualified candidate for the position. Her successful work as the communications manager for WGM Group, her management experience, as well as her proven ability to work through complex public processes ultimately led the Commission to their decision.

“We were very fortunate to have had a diverse set of finalists to interview for the position,” Commissioner Nicole Rowley said. “The fairgrounds staff voiced strong support for Ms. Bentley which solidified my decision.”

“Ms. Bentley’s drive and enthusiasm are just what is needed to keep the momentum of the fairgrounds plan moving forward,” Missoula County’s Chief Operating Officer, Chris Lounsbury said. “Her knowledge of public process, relationships with key fairgrounds stakeholders and the Missoula community will help the Commission’s mission of ensuring vibrant redevelopment of the Missoula County Fairgrounds.”

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