

Great Falls is slowly growing

more attractive to big-name chains /BUSINESS

GREAT FALLS

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Sunday, November 4, 2007

MONTANA'S NEWSPAPER

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One issue looms large

Candidates debate whether election rides on power plant

Grains of compassion



One poll for all

Find out where and how to register and vote /7A

Belt, Cascade A glance at area races /7A

Choteau native

helps combat

save a wonder

by selling rice

By KAREN OGDEN Tribune Enterprise Editor

Mary Hensley was a 22-year-old Peace Corps volunteer from Choteau, when she climbed on a military truck bound for the Philippines' lush Cordillera

She disembarked high in the ancient rice terraces, known to tourists as the stepping stones to the sky, or the Eighth Wonder of the World.

But armed iodized salt.

Her mission: To fight the goiters that bulged from the necks of

villagers, particularly women, mired in poverty and malnutri-

Three decades later — having pursued an American life a world away from the Philippine mountainsides — Hensley would return to her base village of Uma

with a new mission in a changed

with a new mission in a changed country.

Hensley's Ulm-based rice import company, Eighth Wonder, is selling "heirloom" rice — distinctive-tasting varieties cultivated for centuries by families in the mountains of the northern Philippines — in upscale restaurants and supermarkets across the

and supermarkets across the

United States.
While pleasing gourmet palates, the rice is putting cash in the pockets of impoverished farmers and helping preserve the

The United Nations Education-

zation recently recognized Hens-ley's work with a \$2,000 grant. It's a small sum from an Ameri-

can point of view, but it's enough

to purchase cleaning equipment so farmers will no longer have to

hand clean their harvest with

mortars and pestles.

"The stories that come out,

al, Scientific and Cultural O

United States.

imperiled terraces.

Little did she know she was stepping into a simmering civil

"They didn't tell us these things when we got dropped off," Hensley recalled. But she came

Mountains.

poverty and

By RICHARD ECKE

Great Falls voters on Tuesday will pick two city commission-ers, at least one of them new, and a mayor.

One hot issue in the race has been the proposed Highwood Generating Station, a coal-fired power plant that five Montana rural electric cooperatives want to build in cooperation with the city of Great Falls. The city would own 15 percent of the

plant, if it can obtain revenuebond financing for its share of the plant. The power plant would be located east of Great

Opponents of the power plant have blasted its environmental effects and the impact it could have on a Lewis and Clark portage route, sparked arguments over renewable energy as an alternative and criticized the

city for taking financial risks.
"I hope it's not a one-issue election," said plant supporter

Elna Hensley, a former city employee running for one of the two City Commission seats. "Certain candidates seem to be trying to make it so."

One of those candidates is

Stuart Lewin, who said "I am opposed to this plant and I don't want it constructed," during the last candidates' forum.

"It is a one-issue race," Lewin maintained Friday. There are plenty of other

See ELECTION, 7A



the lingering threat from lead and the second examined the threat from toxins in plastics. To read a rest of this series, including multimedia and interactive graphics, visit www.gftribune.com. You'll find a link on the home page.

Mercury may be taking huge toll on America's kids

➤ Widely used toxin could be causing brain damage in hundreds of thousands each year

By LARRY WHEELER Gannett News Service

ment attempts to erase it from household use, the poisonous metal mercury remains a threat to the environment and public

health, especially to children and women of childbearing age.

As many as 600,000 babies might be born in the United States each year with irreversible brain damage because pregnant mothers ate mercury-contaminat-ed fish, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Med-ical researchers are just begin-ning to explore the effect of mercury exposure on adults that leaves some in a disorienting "fish fog."

Nationwide, more than 8,000 lakes, rivers and bays are compro mised by mercury's toxic effects.

In Montana

Coming mercury-emissions standards controversial /4A

Where is all the mercury coming from, and can something be

done to stop it?

A partial answer can be found in the nearly 500 coal-burning power plants that supply about half the nation's electricity. The \$298 billion electric utility industry is the nation's largest source try is the nation's largest source of airborne mercury emissions and the latest target of federal

and state clean-air regulations. U.S. mercury emissions have been cut nearly in half since 1990 as municipal, medical and haz-

See MERCURY, 4A

Village locks down in fear of rabid wolves

By MARY PEMBERTON Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska dren in the village of Marshall do not go outdoors without an adult. They have been told to stay inside after dark. When night falls, three sentries are posted along the vil-lage periphery to keep the wolves

Precautions have been taken in the Eskimo village in western Alaska after a pack of wolves attacked sled dogs Oct. 26, killing three adults and three puppies. A wolf killed by villagers turned out to be rabid.
"There is a concern about the

pack that is left remaining that is wandering out there," he said. "That pack is still out there and might have the rabies."

On Friday morning, fresh wolf tracks were spotted a quarter-mile from town, said Ray Alstrom, mayor of Marshall.
Ron Clarke, assistant director

of the Division of Wildlife Conservation with the Alaska Depart-ment of Fish and Game, said it is likely that all members of the pack are infected with the fatal disease.
"It is likely all of them will die

of it," he said.

Rabies is spread through saliva and attacks the nervous system. The only way to determine if an animal is rabid is to cut off the head and test it. The disease is usually fatal in animals and

Marshall, with 380 residents, has dozens of dogs. Alstrom said many homes have at least a few dogs to help haul fish, check trap lines and bring home firewood. The wolf pack attacked three

dog teams, one belonging to Clem Kameroff. His lead dog, a 10-year-old female, was badly injured. She had to be shot and her carcass burned. Kameroff



said another injured dog, a 2-year-old, was put down Friday. "I am kind of hurting about it and feeling sad about it," Kameroff said. He uses the dogs

for subsistence and in village Kimberlee Beckmen, a wildlife

veterinarian with the Department of Fish and Game, said rabies is rare in wolves in Alaska, but the other pack members might be infected. "Rabies virus is present in sali-

va, and when several animals eat from the same source, the virus can be quickly spread to other

members of the pack," she said.
According to state epidemiologists, three people have died from rabies in the history of Alaska. Two of the three cases involved while the other one dog. The last case was in 1943 in Wainwright. Only 18 wolves have tested

positive for rabies in Alaska since 1977. The last confirmed case was in Dillingham in 1998.

Wolf encounters with dogs are

Wolf encounters with dogs are a fact of life in rural Alaska. "They kill them and eat them," Clarke said. "A wolf pack wan-dering by goes, 'Wow, look at that. There's an easy meal.'" The Rabies virus incubates in

for approximately three-12 weeks. Infected animals usually die within seven days of becoming sick.

The rice terraces of Banaue are a UNESCO World Heritage site

they both fill you with hope and also break your heart that some-thing so small can also have such

a huge effect on peoples' lives,' Hensley said.

See RICE, 5A

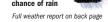


COURTESY OF EIGHTH WONDER

Harvest time near the village of Amganod in the Banaue area in Ifugao Province.

Great Falls forecast

High: 52° - Low: 26° Mostly cloudy with chance of rain



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