



Great Falls is slowly growing more attractive to big-name chains /**BUSINESS**

Volleyball, prep football results /**1S**

Pakistani president grabs power /**2A**

White Sulphur standoff ends /**1M**



Why it's a whole different ballgame; plus, TV listings and more /**PLAY**

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One issue looms large

Candidates debate whether election rides on power plant



One poll for all
Find out where and how to register and vote /**7A**

Belt, Cascade
A glance at area races /**7A**

By **RICHARD ECKE**
Tribune Staff Writer

Great Falls voters on Tuesday will pick two city commissioners, 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 revenue-bond financing for its share of the plant. The power plant would be located east of Great Falls.

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**

Toxic legacy:

Years after first warnings, lead, mercury and other poisons remain health threats



NOTE: This is the last in a three-part series. The first looked at 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.gftri-bune.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

Despite decades of government 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-contaminated fish, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Medical researchers are just beginning 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 compromised 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 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**

Grains of compassion

Choteau native helps combat poverty and 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 Mountains.

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.

Little did she know she was stepping into a simmering civil war.

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

But she came armed — with iodized salt.

Her mission: To fight the goiters that bulged from the necks of villagers, particularly women, mired in poverty and malnutrition.

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 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 United States.

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

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recently recognized Hensley's work with a \$2,000 grant. It's a small sum from an American 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, they both fill you with hope and also break your heart that something so small can also have such a huge effect on peoples' lives," Hensley said.

See **RICE, 5A**



COURTESY OF EIGHTH WONDER

The rice terraces of Banaue are a UNESCO World Heritage site.



EIGHTH WONDER

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

Village locks down in fear of rabid wolves

By **MARY PEMBERTON**
Associated Press Writer

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Children 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 village periphery to keep the wolves out.

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 Department 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 humans.

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



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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 races.

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 saliva, 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 wolves, while the other one was a 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 a fact of life in rural Alaska.

"They kill them and eat them," Clarke said. "A wolf pack wandering 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.

Great Falls forecast

High: 52° — Low: 26°

Mostly cloudy with chance of rain



Full weather report on back page

More travel plans are now online



Visit www.gftri-bune.com for Lewis and Clark forest travel plans. Site now includes Little Belts and Crazyes.

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