

**Exhibit Number: 7**

**SB 195**

**This exhibit has a booklet as well as an informational newspaper article.**

**The booklet that exceeds the 5-page limit therefore it cannot be scanned. The booklets' cover and back page has been scanned to help you when requesting information. The exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and can be viewed there.**



EXHIBIT 7  
DATE 1.18.05  
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<http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?display=rednews/2003/10/29/build/state/54-housing.inc>

## Report details lack of affordable housing

By ALLISON FARRELL

Gazette State Bureau

HELENA — The West is losing affordable housing for working families at an accelerated rate, and most cities in Montana are no exception, a new study released this week by the Rural Collaborative shows.

The group, a six-state nonprofit organization of affordable housing advocates, chose Missoula and Medford, Ore., as two representative cities of the West's changing development. These cities were profiled in a study called "You Can't Eat the View" to demonstrate how affordable housing is being pushed out by high-end development.

While Missoula was chosen for the study as a good example of the West's changing housing market, Bozeman, Whitefish, Billings and other communities across the state and region are experiencing these growing pains as well, said Deborah Halliday of Missoula, study author and chief policy analyst for the Center for Policy Analysis and Community Change.

"There's a huge disconnect between what people are getting paid and these housing costs," Halliday said Tuesday.

In Missoula, the median price of a newly built house totals \$209,000. Only three out of 10 Missoulians can afford that, her report shows. And in Lake County, \$5 million homes are under construction, while local workers cash paychecks at the median wage rate of \$29,000 per year.

"The West as a region is losing its affordability," Halliday said. But only to those who rely on the local economy for their living, she added.

Through the 1990s, Missoula County saw its population grow by 22 percent and the people moving in tend to be richer, older and more politically conservative than many of their long-standing neighbors, she said. Their income doesn't come from the local economy.

And it's these well-heeled newcomers who are creating a strong demand for high-end housing in Montana and the West, consequently driving up the average home cost and property taxes for everyone else.

In 1990, the average sales price of a home in Missoula was \$70,000. Today, it's \$160,000.

While newcomers are reveling in the relative "bargain" they got on property in Montana as compared to what they could buy for the same amount in California or New York, Missoula's — and Montana's — working class is feeling the economic effects, Halliday reports.

Her study shows that 58 percent of Missoulians cannot afford the average price of a home today and 28 percent cannot afford fair market rent. New homes are unattainable for most Missoulians and the cost of land lots increased 145 percent in the last decade.

While housing costs increased 31 percent from 1997 to 2001, incomes increased 6 percent, the report shows.

Advocates for affordable housing say there are solutions to Missoula and the West's growing housing crisis. They include development regulations that require developers to include affordable housing in new subdivisions, financial incentives for developers of low-income housing and bonuses for developers who increase the density of their developments with lower-income housing.

In Missoula, the upcoming City Council race is centered around development and growth. Other Montana cities are already taking action, Halliday said.

Bozeman and Whitefish are working aggressively to keep affordable housing in their communities, Halliday said.

The Bozeman City Commission just last month adopted housing strategies that foster development of affordable housing, said Marcia Youngman, city commissioner.

<http://www.billingsgazette.com/printer.php?id=1&display=rednews/2003/10/29/stories/stat...> 1/17/2005



# homeWORD bound

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homeWORD

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## Bringing the Bustle Back to Downtown Billings

On a hot August afternoon, the Acme Historic Preservation Project opened in Billings with a clip of the scissors by Mayor Chuck Tooley. Despite the heat, over 150 Billings residents turned out to celebrate the re-opening of the historic building and its transition into sustainable, affordable housing.

People gathered around a scaffold transformed into a podium inside the giant corridor of the commercial space entrance on the first floor. Although the commercial space is not completed, its magnificence is still evident. Taking to the podium to speak were Kelly Bruggeman, President of the First Interstate Bank Foundation and a member of homeWORD's Billings Advisory Board, Interim homeWORD Director, Judy Smith, Kim Olsen of O2 Architects and Mayor Chuck Tooley. Each speaker highlighted how the Acme will help revitalize downtown by bringing people back there to live.

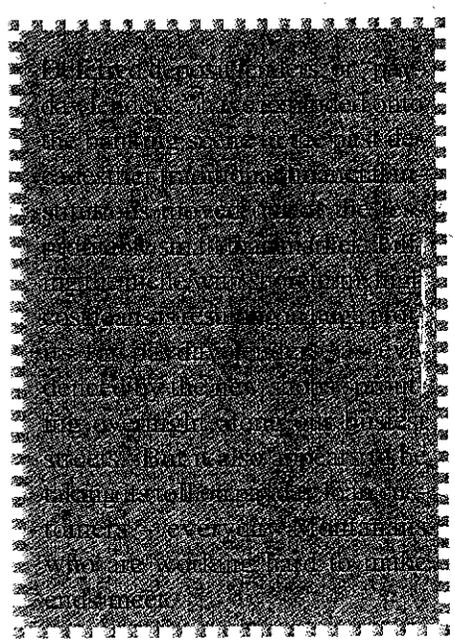
After the speaking ended, the crowd set off with their programs to take the self-guided tour of the Acme. Each location highlighted an impor-

*Acme continued on page 3*



Mayor Tooley speaks at Acme Grand Opening

## homeWORD Initiates Montana Alliance to Reform Payday Lending



With the possibility of payday lending reform in mind, homeWORD recently brought several organizations from across the state together for a planning meeting, including Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Montana, the YWCA, Montana Legal Services Association, Women's Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD), and Montana Credit Unions for Community Development. Also participating in the meeting to provide information and answer questions were the Montana Division of Banking and Financial Institutions, which regulates payday lenders, and the Montana Office of Consumer Protection.

Envisioning a coordinated, cohesive reform effort, the organizations in attendance decided to unite as the *Alliance for Responsible Finance* to see what can be done to address the problem of payday lending. Along with several other groups who were unable to attend, members of the Alliance plan to work together to address this complex issue from several angles, including

- increased consumer and advocate education
- development of more affordable short-term lending alternatives through partnerships between community organizations and traditional financial institutions
- legislative reform to increase consumer protections on high-cost and/or predatory payday lending products.

Several members of the Alliance will be spearheading the Campaign for Payday Lending Reform, which expects to bring proposed legislation to the 2005 session that would amend Montana's Deferred Deposit Lending Act (DDLA). The DDLA, passed in 1999, raises concerns for consumer

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homeWORD

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Missoula, MT  
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Glass...Art...Recycle...



Recycle Glass & Support Art



Glass...Art...Recycle...

### Locally Blown Recycled Glass - the Perfect Gift

homeWORD teamed up with local glass artist Robin Rogers and Art Missoula in an effort to re-install *Foundation (wish, belief, memory)*, Jennifer Reifsneider's public art piece located at The Gold Dust featuring glass blocks etched with the wishes, beliefs, and memories of Northside residents. The piece suffered severe vandalism a year ago and homeWORD is in the process of fundraising for its re-installation.

Rogers created new and stronger glass blocks out of recycled glass from the Missoula community. After each block was made, there is a portion of glass material left, and in an effort to use every ounce of the recycled glass, he turned the leftover material into beautiful tumblers.

These gems are available for purchase at Art Missoula for \$25. A portion of the proceeds will go toward the re-installation of *Foundation*. So, as you are searching for the perfect gift drop by Art Missoula at 219 W. Broadway and see the tumbler display.



### Convenient Curbside Glass Recycling with homeWORD!



homeWORD is excited to announce that we are introducing glass recycling curbside service in the city of Missoula. This service will allow you to recycle your glass bottles and jars from home. We will pick up your glass recycling for you.

For an affordable price of \$12.50 per month, you can sign up for curbside glass pick-up. Once you sign up, we will send you glass and plastic recycling bins. You will be able to recycle up to 25 lbs of glass bottles and jars per month. We will pick up your recycling bin for you. We will also provide you with a recycling bin for your glass bottles and jars. We will also provide you with a recycling bin for your glass bottles and jars.

Curbside is scheduled to start in October, so call now to schedule your monthly glass pick-up.

Please contact Brian Gibson at homeWORD  
541-355-6100 or email [brian@homeword.org](mailto:brian@homeword.org)