

Winning photos

This week's PLAY section features the final photo contest category, plus travel, software, fashion, puzzles, TV movie listings and more /PLAY



GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

Ready to break the ice?

Annual Great Falls road race starts downtown today /1S



Letterman to audition pets in Great Falls

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Today's question

Should hybrid wolves be illegal? Question details are on 1M.

Hybrid wolves still in the wild

■ Pair of escaped animals roams Front, may have been seen

By MICHAEL BABCOCK
Tribune Outdoor Editor

Two of three wolf hybrids that escaped in November from a Wolf Creek residence remain loose on the Rocky Mountain Front and may have been spotted by game wardens earlier this month.

The hybrids were among four brought to Montana by a Florida woman who died along with her boyfriend in a Christmas Eve car wreck near Cascade.

That accident also killed one of the wolf hybrids that was riding in the vehicle. The fourth wolf hybrid was destroyed after it was captured in the Lincoln area.

Bruce Auchly, Fish, Wildlife & Parks information officer in Great Falls, said game wardens are sure that the wolf killed by a car on April 13 along Highway 200 west of Fort Shaw was not one of the hybrids. That animal was silver and didn't match photos of the black hybrids.

Auchly said game wardens have seen two canines recently that could be wolves or wolf hybrids.

One sighting was April 2 just south of Wolf Creek. Another sighting on April 4 was just southeast of the Birtall Road near the Cascade/Lewis and Clark county line about 12 miles from the previous sighting.

But Carolyn Sime, Montana wolf coordinator for Fish, Wildlife & Parks, says she thinks the game wardens might have seen wild wolves.

"I have no doubt that they saw large canines," said Sime. "The uncertainty is whether they saw one of these hybrids or a wild wolf."

A wolf hybrid is "some sort of large canine that has a mixture of domestic dog and wild wolf in its lineage," Sime said.

See HYBRID, 7A

Inside on 5A

Lack of transmission capacity is why we are behind in wind energy.

Senate bill could affect Montana Alberta Tie project.

Would the new power line affect our electricity bills?

Billion-dollar boon

Montana Alberta Tie would open door to flood of wind projects

By KARL PUCKETT
Tribune Staff Writer

The open country north of Great Falls stretching to the Canadian border — long known for its wheat — may be about to see an explosion of a new crop.

Harvested from towers twice as tall as the old Milwaukee Depot, with blades that reach nearly 400 feet into the sky, that crop is wind.

The growth hinges on regulatory approval and construction of the Montana Alberta Tie, a 203-mile-long transmission line that would tie into the U.S. power grid at Great Falls and the Canadian grid in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Three wind power developers have signed up to use the line, which would move power from up to 400

giant wind turbines, each putting out enough electricity for at least 300 homes.

The line itself and the nearby wind farms would require \$1 billion in capital investment, according to the developers.

Local government officials, who would reap up to \$4 million a year in property taxes from the transmission line alone, are on board. So are many landowners.

"I think it's really going to benefit the small communities that are just dying out here," said Larry McCormick, who owns land between Cut Bank and Shelby where a major wind farm is planned.

Other landowners have serious reservations, mostly because

See TIE, 5A



TRIBUNE PHOTO/STUART S. WHITE

Much of Montana's existing transmission system, such as these lines near Dutton, is booked, but new capacity would become available if a new line were constructed between Great Falls and Lethbridge, Alberta. The line, if constructed, is expected to prompt the construction of wind farms along it.



TRIBUNE PHOTO/KARL PUCKETT

Larry and Denise McCormick say the state needs new transmission lines to kick start the state's wind power industry. Land they own south of Ethridge between Cut Bank and Shelby would be part of a 300-megawatt wind farm along the proposed Montana Alberta Tie line.



More inside

- Astronauts enjoy unique appreciation of Earth /10A
- Reusable grocery bags gain popularity /Business section
- Thirteen easy ways to help the Earth /USA Weekend

Havre scientist key to landmark ruling on global warming

By KIM SKORNOGOSKI
Tribune Staff Writer

On April 2, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government is required to regulate greenhouse gases such as the carbon dioxide emitted by cars, trucks and power plants.

The decision could change national policy for decades to come and one of the key scientists behind it is a former Havre woman and emerging star in the global warming field.

Joellen Russell, 36, is the youngest of 14 scientists being asked to influence the Supreme Court decision. The scientific report con-

cluded that global warming is happening and people are to blame.

She also convinced John Michael Wallace, a University of Washington atmospheric sciences professor and one of the world's leading global warming experts, to sign on, and consequently several other scientists followed suit.

"It made me a little nervous to be pulled into the political end of the pool," Russell said. "This seemed too important to pass up. You can't in good conscious allow the (Environmental Protection Agency) to use bad science

See SCIENTIST, 6A



TRIBUNE PHOTO/STUART S. WHITE

Terry Johnson, chief analyst in the Legislative Fiscal Division, displays end-of-session humor on his office door.

Grueling '07 session leaving staff frayed

By GWEN FLORIO
Tribune Capitol Bureau

HELENA — The sign on Terry Johnson's door says it all: "EXTREME DANGER. Entry to this area would subject you to great peril! You will be mauled and rolled in to HB 820."

Johnson is the Legislature's principal fiscal analyst, and House Bill 820 funds the governor's office and several other state agencies.

At this point in the legislative session, Johnson probably knows the bill better than he knows his shoe size. In fact, the way the session

Messy ending

Pitched battle of wills leaves major questions as session nears end /1M

has gone, it's a wonder he can remember the latter.

With only five days to go, lawmakers are tired, even cranky at times.

But the walking dead can be found among the legislative staff, whose resources have been sorely taxed by the demands of multiple budget bills, and the hun-

See SESSION, 6A

U.S. building wall around Sunni enclave

In an effort to protect the Azamiyah residents of Baghdad the U.S. military is constructing a wall that will not allow traffic or walking into the area without traveling through manned checkpoints.



SOURCE: U.S. military

U.S. walls off Baghdad neighborhoods; residents uneasy

By SHASHANK BENGALI
McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — The U.S. military has begun sealing off Baghdad neighborhoods with concrete walls in a new strategy intended to calm Baghdad's sectarian flashpoints, but residents fear the barriers could deepen divisions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Seven so-called "gated communities" have been or are being built, according to military officials, and more might be coming under the

wide-ranging Baghdad security crackdown launched nine weeks ago.

Officials said the walls would help create islands of security by controlling the flow of people and vehicles in some of the city's most violent neighborhoods and by keeping armed groups from using the areas as launching pads or targets for attacks.

Residents say the barriers increase their feelings of isolation and make them feel like targets.

Inside on 3A:

- New pragmatism emerging from U.S. command team.
- Fallujah government official assassinated.

neighborhoods become either Sunni or Shiite, they will become even more vulnerable," said Yassir Ismail, a 34-year-old Sunni resident of Adhamiyah, one of the areas where the United States is putting up barriers. "Extremists from both sides —

or mercenaries — will have no more qualms. ... They will bomb each other to kingdom come."

U.S. officials acknowledged that the gated communities would wall sectors off from one another, but they said they were a temporary measure. The barriers are being built in consultation with Iraqi security forces and community leaders, officials said.

"Some of these enclaves will be more heavily ethnic in one respect, but the intent is to protect the population,

not to form sectarian enclaves," said Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, a U.S. military spokesman. "There's no long-term strategy to divide up the entire city."

Baghdad already is segregated beyond recognition, with Shiites and Sunnis huddling among their own in once-mixed neighborhoods, often relying for protection on whichever armed group dominates the area. Much of the city's devastating violence originates from these heavily militarized redoubts.

Today's Great Falls forecast
High: 61° — Low: 39°
Mostly cloudy



Full weather report on **BACK PAGE**

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