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October/November 2016

## **NEWS: Governor Steve Bullock Supporting Seniors and Their Caregivers**

Governor Steve Bullock understands that the entire state is going to be better off if seniors have the care they need to live independently in their own homes and stay engaged in their communities. Providing that care and support isn't just the right thing to do for seniors; it's the right thing to do for our kids and grandkids who benefit so greatly from continuing to have access to their elders' love, wisdom, and experience. And it's a good deal for the taxpayers as we help seniors avoid much more expensive nursing home care.

Sometimes the difference between staying at home and going to a nursing home just means having access to basic assistance with daily activities; sometime it means getting more substantial in-home healthcare. And sometimes it means making sure that our family caregivers have the training and support they need, including the ability to take much-needed breaks to attend to their own physical, emotional, and professional needs.

We've come a long way in supporting Montana seniors and their caregivers. During Governor Bullock's first term, we became the fourth state in the country to adopt the Community First Choice program, providing long-term supportive care in a home setting for people who would otherwise require institutional care. We're one of just 10 states implementing a similar program for veterans that provides a mix of services that can meet their care needs in their own homes and communities. And we're taking unprecedented steps to make sure that we have the healthcare workforce necessary to care for our aging population.

Governor Bullock has announced a plan to expand on the great progress we've already made in these areas by:





## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 48<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON AGING



On September 13-15<sup>th</sup>, folks gathered for the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Governor's Conference on Aging in Billings. This year's conference was in partnership with Community Services Bureau. The conference provided a diverse selection of topics.

Lance Robertson, Director of Aging Services for the State of Oklahoma and Dr. Whitney Bailey, Professor at Oklahoma State University co-presented a keynote address informing attendees about embracing the role of advocate and being prepared to help caregivers navigate choices.

Michael Smull of the Learning Community for Person Centered Practices held a preconference morning session with Home and Community based service program providers. He also presented the afternoon Keynote for the general assembly on "Having Positive Control over Your Life" and a more detailed breakout in the afternoon on the use of Person Centered Planning Tools.

Wednesday sessions included the Keynote Dr. Pam Roberts from the Journey of Wellness Program through Kalispell Regional Medical Center. She provided a very interactive and informative discussion titled "Navigating on the Highway to Health...". Her breakouts focused on **14 Healthy Habits for Aging** and Motivating **People Who Struggle With Limited Mobility**. **Tai Chi** and **Train Your Brain** were also popular sessions continuing the theme of caring for oneself and staying active.



This year's conference also included a two day track on Board Governance presented by Peggy Owens of Sage Solutions for Senior Centers and other senior organizations.

Other well attended sessions included Suicide among the Elderly, Protecting the Elderly from Abuse Fraud and Scams, Advocacy and Testimony, SNAP Outreach, Senior Hunger, Dementia Conversations, Medicaid Expansion, Housing, Peer Supports and Success Stories.



Julie Beckett closed our conference sharing her own story of advocacy for family members with disabilities. You can catch interviews of some of our Keynote speakers on Aging Horizons titled on Aging Horizons. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-Zz-CtL4W0>

***The Centenarian Luncheon Is Always A Favorite!*** 144 centenarians were honored during the annual centenarian luncheon which was held the first day of the conference. 8 centenarians from the Billings area joined the Governor and the conference attendees in celebration of their stories and wisdom. One of the older centenarian's, Barney Meyers turned 106<sup>th</sup> on the day of the centenarian luncheon and was honored with all the attendees singing happy birthday. Millie Eyre was the oldest centenarian in attendance (beating Barney by a few months). She will be turning 107 in December.



Other honorees were Bonnie Grossheusch, Madge Hoersten, Lilly Ryan and Bill Smith who are 100 years of age. Thelma Green is 102 and Mary Cann will be turning 102.

Governor Bullock was able spend time visiting with each of these wonderful folks to listen to their stories and congratuting them on their longevity.



**Awards Were Plentiful** during the conference. The Montgomery family was recognized during our Community Services Bureau Conference Awards Banquet in Billings In September. The family received this award for their extraordinary efforts to work with and advocate for children of all abilities.



This family shines a light on policies, places and products that further the goal of an accessible community for everyone with a disability. They spearheaded the building of Missoula’s All-Abilities Playground called “Silver Summit”. This state of the art playground is the first fully inclusive playground of its kind in Montana. Heath Montgomery also received the Pam Davis Award which recognizes an individual whose determination has impacted the development and promotion of quality community based services. Heath who is 7 years old has a “can



do” spirit and is a role model to those around him that are just like Heath, through determination, they can do amazing things.

**Other award winners included:**

Exemplary Program Award was presented to Maarten Fischer

Individual Advocacy Award was presented to Kathy Smith

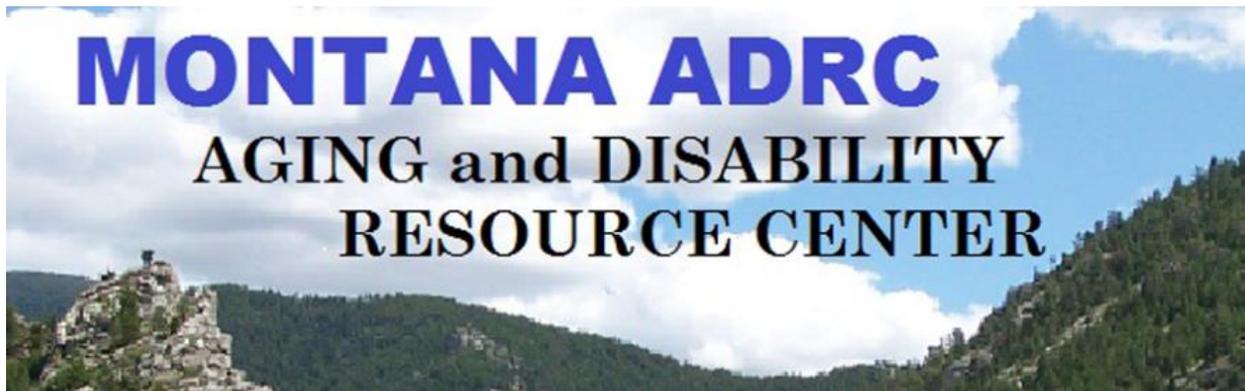
Volunteer Award was presented to Bonnie Hofer

Direct Care Awards were presented to Catherine Martella and Mark Cassel.

**Mini Grant Awards Were Announced** at the Wednesday Luncheon. This year 4 awards were presented to rural community programs who indicated the highest need and innovation in serving their community. The grantees were Westby Lutheran Parish Nurse Program ( a \$600 award) to expand transportation and medical needs for Westby residents, Hospitality House in Big Timber received \$600 to enhance their supply of fresh fruits and vegetables allowing healthier noontime meals for their senior citizens, Shelby Senior Center received \$600 toward immediate and necessary repairs for their center, and Musselshell County Council on Aging (CCOA) was awarded \$200 toward replacement of their broken food processor for meal preparation.

The Governor’s Council on Aging wants to acknowledge all of the programs that submitted applications this year and wished they could have been able to grant more awards.

***Looking for Resources????***



**Click on [www.Montana-ADRC.com](http://www.Montana-ADRC.com)**



# Medicare Open Enrollment

October 15-December 7

## ANNUAL ENROLLMENT IS HAPPENING NOW!!!!!!



Medicare Annual/Open Enrollment begins on October 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 7<sup>th</sup>. This is a great opportunity to review and, if you want, change your Medicare drug plan or Medicare health (Advantage Plan). The most important question to ask yourself is, “How well has my current plan been serving me?” The Annual/Open enrollment period is your opportunity to review the medications (and other services) your plan covers; the main reason to review your current plan annually, is to make sure the plan is best for you for the cost. Your new or revised plan benefits go into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.



For those who are computer savvy, the planfinder is a good tool to determine the best drug or health plan for you. You can go to the Medicare.gov site <https://www.medicare.gov/> for enrollment and other benefit information; using the planfinder, you enter your information into the Medicare data base and it will help you identify the plans and services that best benefit you.

If you prefer personalized assistance, SHIP Counselors are available to aid Medicare beneficiaries during the Annual/.Open Enrollment period. Contact your local SHIP Counselor through your local area agency at 1-800-551-3191; they can assist you with the process. Make an appointment early!

Be prepared for your appointment - Remember to bring:

- ✓ **your medicare card**
- ✓ **a list of the medications you are on -- preferably a printout from the pharmacy to be sure of accuracy.**

There are times when Medicare coverage can be costly, especially if you are on a low/fixed income and/or you are taking expensive medications. There are programs available to help those who meet the eligibility criteria;

- ✓ **MSP** stands for the **Medicare Savings Program**; it may pay the monthly premium for Medicare Part B. Eligibility for this program helps you save money to put toward your other expenses.
- ✓ **LIS** –stands for **Low Income Subsidy**; This program helps Medicare beneficiaries with their monthly Part D prescription drug coverage, using a national benchmark to determine the standard premium; this benchmark is adjusted annually so it is important to check every year. This program assists beneficiaries with the monthly premium and/or helps with co-pays related to their Medicare Part D plan; it may also allow the beneficiary to purchase their medication at a lower price.



Contact your local SHIP Counselors by calling your local Area Agency. They can assist you with Medicare issues as well as other programs that may benefit you.

For more information on this program, check out the SHIP website at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/SLTC/aging/SHIP> . For assistance with enrollment, contact your local SHIP counselors at the area agencies at 1-800-551-3191.

Be sure to catch the Aging Horizon Segment on Medicare Open Enrollment at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/aging/aginghorizons/ShowSchedule.aspx>



**SAYING GOODBYE TO A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE  
KELLY WILLIAMS, SLTC DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR  
RETIRES!**



Kelly Williams, the SLTC Division administrator has retired as of late September. Kelly has been with the state of Montana in several key positions ending here at Senior and Long Term Care. She has worked for the state of Montana for over 30 years with the last 16 years here at SLTC. Kelly has been instrumental in her advocacy for the aging population and adults with disabilities.



***We wish you well Kelly!***

***And***

**SAYING HELLO AND *WELCOME* TO A FAMILIAR FACE.  
BARB SMITH TAKES THE “LEAD” AS THE NEW SLTC  
DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR**

Barb Smith joined our team ----again---- Barb has been with the state for 23 years. She came from the Legislative Fiscal Division where she has worked for approximately 12 years. She however is not a stranger to Senior and Long Term Care. The other 11 years were dedicated to working with long- term- care projects and programs with 9 of those years within the division itself in the Community Services Bureau managing Medicaid home based services. Barb is once again among our hallways now as the Administrator “leading” to make a difference in the daily lives of Montanans. Barb adds “It is an honor to lead such a great staff that is dedicated to the mission of the division”.

Barb’s vision for Senior and Long Term Care: “As a state we are aging and as individuals we are one accident/diagnosis from needing support services. My vision is that we all work together to educate all Montanans about Senior and Long Term Care support and services.”





Barb's family comes from a long line of pole vaulters starting with her husband Pete who she met during college. Her oldest son Chase is carrying on the tradition of the ranking pole-vaulter on the Husky Track Team. He is a sophomore at the University of Washington. Her youngest son Daniel is a wrestler and a senior this year at Helena High. Daniel is weighing his options upon graduation and plans to attend college a little closer to home. Their dog Sadie (who I am told is really in charge) completes their family.

## **LEGAL DOCUMENT IN PERSON AND PHONE CLINICS HELP SENIORS WITH IMPORTANT ESTATE PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

A team of legal professionals visited five locations across the state this year to help people 60 and older complete important estate planning documents at no charge.

It is estimated that only 45 percent of Americans have completed wills. Many also lack durable power of attorney documents appointing who they wish to make medical or

financial decisions for them should they be unable to do so themselves. Not having these important safeguards in place leaves seniors vulnerable and places stress upon family and friends when a crisis happens or a loved one dies.



People 60 and older, who meet the financial requirements, can participate in the free legal document clinics. Clinic participants can complete a will, an Indian Will, Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care and Financial, a

Declaration of Homestead, a Beneficiary Deed and a Living Will. Participants will leave with notarized documents, copies of original documents and instructions about what to do with each.



Last year, similar legal clinics in seven Montana communities helped participants complete 959 documents and saved them an estimated \$595,000 in legal costs.



Phone clinics are also offered year round to every community all across the state. Person 60 and older can have a one-on-one phone conversation with a trained legal professional and have their estate planning documents completed, reviewed by a licensed attorney and



mailed to them with instructions on what to do with each document. The program is free of charge for seniors who meet the income guidelines. To sign up for a phone clinic, call John McCrea at 406-444-7783.

## **LIFESPAN RESPITE EXPANSION GRANT ANNOUNCED**

The Lifespan Respite Coalition announced the receipt of an expansion grant from the Administration for Community Living for Lifespan Respite Care Integration & Sustainability. This grant award of approximately \$133,528 is for one year (9/1/16-8/31/17) and runs concurrently with the current 3 year grant which also ends in August of 2017.

The objectives of this grant are to focus and expand the voucher use in our underserved and un-served counties, enhance the educational and outreach efforts to best support caregivers and to strengthen the coalition's efforts to pursue and secure continued respite funding. Several outcomes are anticipated as a result of this opportunity. These include increasing the use of the respite voucher by at least 50% or 15 additional counties which could potentially reach 200 new families and expand caregiver participation through resources such as social media. This grant will also assist in the current development of the caregiver support group using the faith based community.

For more information about this award and Lifespan Respite, visit the website at <http://dphhs.mt.gov/respite>

## ***SAVE THE DATE***

***Montana Lifespan Respite announces***

***2017 Summit***

***MAY 10, Helena***





## *November is National Caregivers Month*

### OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock  
GOVERNOR



Mike Cooney  
LT. GOVERNOR

October 19, 2016

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to recognize the month of November as “Family Caregivers Month” in the state of Montana. Montana has come a long way in supporting Montana caregivers. During my first term, we became the fourth state in the country to adopt the Community First Choice program, providing long-term supportive care in home settings for people who would otherwise require institutional care. We’re one of just 10 states implementing a similar program for veterans that provide a mix of services that can meet their care needs in their own homes and communities.

The network of family caregivers, covering the lifespan from the very young to the very old is invaluable to the health and well-being of older Montanans, Montanans with disabilities, Grandparents raising grandchildren and our families. Over 118,000 family caregivers in Montana are the backbone of our care system, providing daily assistance to manage health and personal care needs, enabling their loved ones to stay in their homes longer.

Caregiving is a rewarding experience, but it is also physically and emotionally demanding. Our family caregivers are there as full time partners, many juggling work and caregiving and often with no relief, nor an opportunity to request a well-deserved break.

Join me this month of November and every month, in recognizing the invaluable work of our family caregiver’s, who work to make certain they provide the best care possible for their loved ones. I encourage Montanans to acknowledge November as “Family Caregivers Month” and their theme: “Take Care to Give Care”.

Sincerely,

STEVE BULLOCK  
Governor



The National Caregivers Action Network has set the theme for this year which is

## “Take Care to Give Care”

*The National Caregivers Action Network published the following article which is located on their website:*

The first rule of taking care of others: *take care of yourself first*. Caregiving can be a rewarding experience, but it is also physically and emotionally demanding. The stress of dealing with caregiving responsibilities leads to a higher risk of health issues among the Nation’s 90 million family caregivers. So as a family caregiver, remember to pay attention to your own physical and mental wellness, and get proper rest and nutrition. Only by taking care of yourself can you be strong enough to take care of your loved one. You really do need to “*take care to give care!*”

- **Caregiving can be a stressful job.** Most family caregivers say they feel stressed providing care for a loved one. With all of their caregiving responsibilities – from managing medications to arranging doctor appointments to planning meals – caregivers too often put themselves last.
- **The stress of caregiving impacts your own health.** One out of five caregivers admit they have sacrificed their own physical health while caring for a loved one. Due to stress, family caregivers have a disproportionate number of health and emotional problems. They are twice as likely to suffer depression and are at increased risk for many other chronic conditions.
- **Proper nutrition helps promote good health.** Ensuring that you are getting proper nutrition is key to help maintain your strength, energy and stamina, as well as strengthening your immune system. Maintaining a healthy diet is one of the most powerful things you can do to take care of yourself and keep a positive attitude overall.



- **Ensuring good nutrition for your loved one helps make care easier.** As many as half of all older adults are at risk for malnutrition. Good nutrition can help maintain muscle health, support recovery, and reduce risk for re-hospitalization – which may help make your care of a loved one easier.
- **Remember: “Rest. Recharge. Respite.”** People think of respite as a luxury, but considering caregivers’ higher risk for health issues from chronic stress, those risks can be a lot costlier than some time away to recharge. The chance to take a breather, the opportunity to re-energize, is vital in order for you to be as good a caregiver tomorrow as you were today.

During **National Family Caregivers Month**, we remind family caregivers that to be strong enough to care for your loved one, you must

**Take Care to Give Care!**

<http://caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month>



### ***IT’S ALL ABOUT HELPING EACH OTHER***

Winter is coming soon and heating bills will pile up fast. Do you know someone who is worried about how they’re going to pay those bills? If so, call one of the numbers below to see what’s available for help, either for your friend or for you. In Montana, it’s about neighbors helping neighbors. That can be as simple as going with a friend to complete an application. Call now:

Montana Citizens’ Advocate at 1-800-332-2272  
Energy Share of Montana at 1-888-779-7589

You can also find information at [www.energysharemt.com](http://www.energysharemt.com).

### **Yes, Your Heat CAN Be Turned Off In The Winter!**

Many people think the utility company cannot disconnect your services during the winter. However, under certain circumstances that can happen but there are special rules in the winter time. From November 1 to April 1 a regulated utility may not shut off gas, underground propane, or electric service without prior approval from the Public Service Commission (PSC – the state agency that regulates some utility companies such as NorthWestern Energy, Energy West and Montana-Dakota Utilities). The PSC

does not approve winter shutoffs if the customer is unable to pay (as demonstrated by being a recipient of a public assistance program) or if a member of the customer's household is either at least 62 years old or handicapped. Remember, **it is the customer's responsibility to inform the utility** if one or more of these circumstances exist in the household. For more information visit the website of the Public Service Commission, <http://psc.mt.gov/consumers/energy/pdf/UtilityRules03012001.pdf> or call them at 406-444-6199 or 1-800-646-6150.

Additionally, electric cooperatives and propane vendors are **not** regulated by the PSC; each one has their own rules so be sure to check with your energy provider on what those are.

## ***HOW IS YOUR FOOD BUDGET?***

Minkie Medora, RD  
Nutrition Consultant, Senior & Long Term Care

When a person over age 60 or 65 does not have enough money to buy healthy food regularly, has to cut down the amount of food they eat or the quality of their food, has to use their limited money for other bills and cannot eat well, this is known as Food Insecurity. We all have to watch our expenses for food because food costs are so high, especially for good quality, nutritious food. But when a person has very few ways to get good food on a consistent basis – that person is Food Insecure and this can lead to seriously reducing their health.



Impact on physical and mental health: It is essential that seniors who are food insecure, or the people who work with them consider the impact of this problem and seek ways to improve access to nutritious food.

Feeding America – which is nation's largest organization that partners with food banks in all states has done a lot of research into the physical, mental and emotional impacts of chronic food insecurity. Their major findings show that seniors who are hungry are:

- 60% more likely to experience depression and stigmatization
- 53% more likely to report a heart attack
- 52% more likely to develop asthma
- 40% more likely to report an experience of Congestive Heart Failure
- At greater risk of hypertension, CVD, some types of cancer, Osteoporosis, anemia and other chronic diseases and conditions.

- At greater risk of Sarcopenia – or muscle loss and Diabetes
- At greater risk of decreased life expectancy

Lack of nutritious food, including protein foods, fruits and vegetables and whole grains can reduce the quality of food that seniors eat. The same study showed that the diet of seniors with less money for food results in lower intakes of critical nutrients such as



Vitamin C, the B vitamins, calcium, potassium, protein and other essential nutrients.

In addition, studies by Feeding America and the AARP show that nationwide about 6 million Americans over age 65 are dealing with depression, social isolation, loneliness. Many are also dealing with chronic conditions like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, stroke, and cancer. Poverty and concerns over meeting all costs, including food, add to the emotional impact in the later years.

Seniors try to cope with hunger in multiple ways including watering down their food, skipping meals, buying food of lesser quality, skipping medications, delaying filling important prescriptions and avoiding medical checkups. Many seniors also have dental problems which are costly to fix. This limits the type and amount the food they can chew.

Finding Solutions: There are several programs that help with food access for seniors in the state. The Senior and Long Term Care Division contracts for the congregate meal programs as well as Meals on Wheels to thousands of seniors in Montana. Most of these provide one hot and nutritious meal a day. Other ways to help with food are: SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Senior Farmers' Market vouchers and the Food Banks that work with the Montana Food Bank Network.

SNAP is an excellent program that is greatly underutilized by people over age 60. Some of the concerns seniors have about applying for SNAP are: the stigma for seeking help, feeling that others need the program benefits more than they do, not sure about the benefit amount available, not knowing the eligibility information, and above all – the challenge of filling out the application. Many seniors feel that they should not be asking for help from anyone, even at the cost of their well-being.

In fact, SNAP is an excellent program for fighting hunger on a regular basis and can take away the fear of not having enough money for food. Benefit levels vary depending



on other expenses that seniors have and their level of need. Here are a few SNAP/Senior facts:

- The average SNAP benefit for a senior living alone is \$113 each month.
- 9.3% of households in Montana have at least one person age 60 or older – and can get SNAP
- 15.3% of elderly SNAP households received the minimum benefit of \$16 per month in 2013.
- In 2015 SNAP brought \$171 million into Montana which benefitted not only hungry people, but Montana’s economy – helping the food grocers, their employees and the community as a whole.
- SNAP benefits can be used at local Farmer’s Markets – which also benefits local farmers

For those who feel that a benefit of \$15 is not much – keep in mind that SNAP dollars can be rolled over for up to a year and then redeemed. So you can save your SNAP benefits till just before the holidays and buy enough food to feed family and friends.

It is true that applying for SNAP can be difficult and confusing. Seniors who are interested in getting SNAP should contact their Area Agency on Aging or local Council on Aging. These folks are trained to apply for SNAP and can be of great assistance in order to make this a simple process. If you are not sure how to find these resources, check in with your local Senior Citizen Center.

In addition, the Montana Food Bank Network has someone who specializes in helping seniors apply for SNAP over the phone. You don’t have to leave your home to get the benefits. All you have to do is give them a call. They will be more than happy to help. The person to contact is: Jamelyn Steenhoek, SNAP Outreach Coordinator. Office (406) 215-1752, Cell (406) 239-6475, [jsteeenhoek@mfbn.org](mailto:jsteeenhoek@mfbn.org)

Remember – as a senior you are not depriving anyone else from getting the SANP benefits. Everyone who is eligible can get SNAP. Once you start getting SNAP, you will be able to improve your access to healthy food on an on-going basis.

***AGING IS NOT LOST YOUTH.....***

***BUT A NEW STAGE OF OPPORTUNITY AND STRENGTH.*** Betty Friedan



## ***Aging Horizons TV Show***

***The Weekly TV Show that Addresses  
Tomorrows Aging Issues, Today***

**“If you are asking about it, we are talking  
about it”**

Watch for us on the following Stations:

Sundays at 9:00AM on the following channels:

KWYB – ABC Butte/Bozeman

KFBB – ABC Great Falls

KHBB – ABC Helena

KTMF – ABC Missoula/Kalispell

We will also be on SWX and NBC in Billings– Saturday at 9:00AM on SWX and  
Sunday at 6:30AM on NBC (KULR8).

Did you know you can watch AGING HORIZONS on YOUTUBE?

Click on <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontanaDPHHS>

***August through October shows now featured!***

# **Announcing**

## **2017**

**49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S  
CONFERENCES ON AGING**

# **SAVE THE DATE!!**

<p><b>KALISPELL</b> <b>RED LION HOTEL</b></p> <p><b>SEPT 7 &amp; 8</b></p>	<p><b>GLENDIVE</b> <b>EASTERN PLAINS EVENT CENTER</b></p> <p><b>SEPT 12 &amp; 13</b></p>
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