



OCTOBER 2025

# NEWSLETTER



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## GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON AGING

**Area I Staff Represents Eastern MT Seniors**

Staff from the Area I Agency on Aging had the honor of attending the Montana Governor's Conference on Aging in Helena this September. The annual event brings together professionals, advocates, and policymakers from across the state to discuss aging-related issues, share resources, and collaborate on solutions to improve the lives of Montana's older adults.

A highlight of the conference was the opportunity to meet with Governor Greg Gianforte, who expressed his appreciation for the dedicated work of aging services staff across the state. The Area I team was proud to represent eastern Montana and showcase the important programs and services supporting seniors in our region.

The conference featured keynote speakers, panel discussions, and workshops on topics ranging from elder care innovations to legislative updates and community engagement strategies. The staff returned energized and inspired, bringing new ideas and strengthened connections to better serve the greatest generation of our area.

## MEDICARE SEASON IS HERE

### Open Enrollment Starts October 15th

It's that time again! Medicare Part D Open Enrollment runs from October 15 to December 7. This is the time each year when you can review your prescription drug plan and make changes if needed.

**Why review your plan?** Drug plans often change from year to year. Premiums, deductibles, and the list of covered medicines (called a "formulary") may not be the same as last year. Even if you're happy with your current plan, it's smart to double-check that it still works for you!

During open enrollment, you can:

- Stay with your current Part D plan.
- Switch to a different Part D plan that may save you money.
- Join a Medicare Advantage plan with drug coverage (where available).
- Return to Original Medicare and pick up a Part D plan.



Taking time to compare your choices now could help you save money in 2026 and make sure your prescriptions are covered.

**Remember: Any changes you make will begin January 1, 2026.**

## CHANGES TO YOUR MEDICARE.GOV EXPERIENCE

### Creating a Medicare Account

Starting this fall, creating a Medicare.gov account now requires a valid email address. The site uses email to send important security codes and updates, making it essential for both new users **and** those updating their accounts.

If you don't have an email address, here's what you can do:

- **Create a free email account.** Providers like Gmail, Outlook, or Yahoo offer free, easy-to-use email services.
- **Ask for help.** A friend, family member, or local senior services staff can assist in setting up an email account.
- **Keep it secure.** Use a strong password and store it safely. Be sure to check your email regularly for Medicare updates.

If you've tried registering and ran into problems, don't worry—once you create an email, you can return and finish setting up your account. Local aging offices and Medicare support are available to help.

**Note:** If you visit a SHIP Counselor (see following page) this fall, please bring your email password so they can better assist you.

## SHIP DIRECTORY

### Making Medicare Easy

If you live in Eastern Montana, you don't have to face Medicare questions alone. The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is available to help you understand your Medicare options (especially Part D) and make the best choices for **your** prescriptions, coverage, and budget.

SHIP counseling is:

- Free and confidential** – no cost, no selling. SHIP counselors don't work for insurance companies, so their advice is unbiased.
- Personalized** – you can meet with someone in person, by phone, or (if you can't travel) even at home.
- Helpful with all Medicare questions**, including Prescription Drug Plans, Medicare Advantage, Medigap, and comparisons.

Open Enrollment for Part D (October 15-December 7) is coming. Reviewing your prescription drug plan now with a SHIP counselor can:

- Save you money
- Make sure your medications are covered
- Reduce surprises like high copays or gaps in coverage

### Area I SHIP Directory

<p>Angie Stracener <b>406-345-2124</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carter</li> <li>• Prairie</li> <li>• Dawson</li> <li>• Wibaux</li> <li>• McCone</li> </ul> <p><i>Phone Appointments Only</i></p>	<p>Lisa Baxter <b>406-228-9751</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniels</li> <li>• Sheridan</li> <li>• Phillips</li> <li>• Valley</li> </ul>	<p>Debbie Weyer <b>406-234-8029</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custer</li> <li>• Rosebud</li> <li>• Garfield</li> <li>• Treasure</li> <li>• Powder River</li> </ul>
<p>Jodi Berry <b>406-482-0125</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Counties in Area I</li> </ul> <p><i>Phone Appointments Only</i></p>	<p>Tierney Messmer &amp; Felicia Iversen <b>406-433-3701</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richland County and Surrounding Area</li> </ul>	<p>Angie Manley <b>406-765-3412</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheridan County</li> </ul>
<p>Carla Brown <b>406-778-3595</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fallon County</li> </ul>	<p>Julie Bach <b>406-653-6221</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roosevelt County</li> </ul>	<p>Alyssa Toavs <b>406-653-6279</b></p> <p>Serving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roosevelt County</li> </ul>

## MONTANA ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS

### Connecting the Hearing Impaired

Living with hearing loss can make even simple phone calls or emergencies challenging—but Montana Accessible Communications (MTAC) is here to help. This program offers a range of tools, equipment, and services to make communicating easier and safer for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, have speech impairments, or other related challenges.



Through MTAC, qualified individuals can receive specialized phones, captioned phones, amplified phones, TTYs, or signalers that make communication easier. Staff also provide training and support to ensure each device is easy to use. In addition, MTAC supports Montana Relay services, so people can place phone calls using text, speech-to-speech, or captioned communication. These tools not only make conversations easier—they bring peace of mind and greater independence.

For more information or to apply, call **1-800-833-8503** or visit [dphhs.mt.gov/mtac](http://dphhs.mt.gov/mtac).

## FOR THE LOVE OF BOOKS

### Montana State Library Can Bring Back Your Love of Reading

Reading should be enjoyable for everyone, but vision changes can make it harder as we age. The Montana State Library wants to ensure that no one has to give up the joy of books, magazines, and newspapers.

Through the Talking Book Library, Montanans who have difficulty reading standard print can receive free access to audio books, large print, and even digital braille materials. Special players are available at no cost and materials can be mailed directly to your home or downloaded online.

Whether you love mysteries, history, westerns, or the daily news, the Montana Talking Book Library has thousands of titles available in easy-to-use formats. Best of all, it's **free** for Montanans with vision loss, physical limitations, or reading disabilities.

For more information or to sign up, call the Montana Talking Book Library at **1-800-332-3400** or visit <https://tbl.mt.gov>.

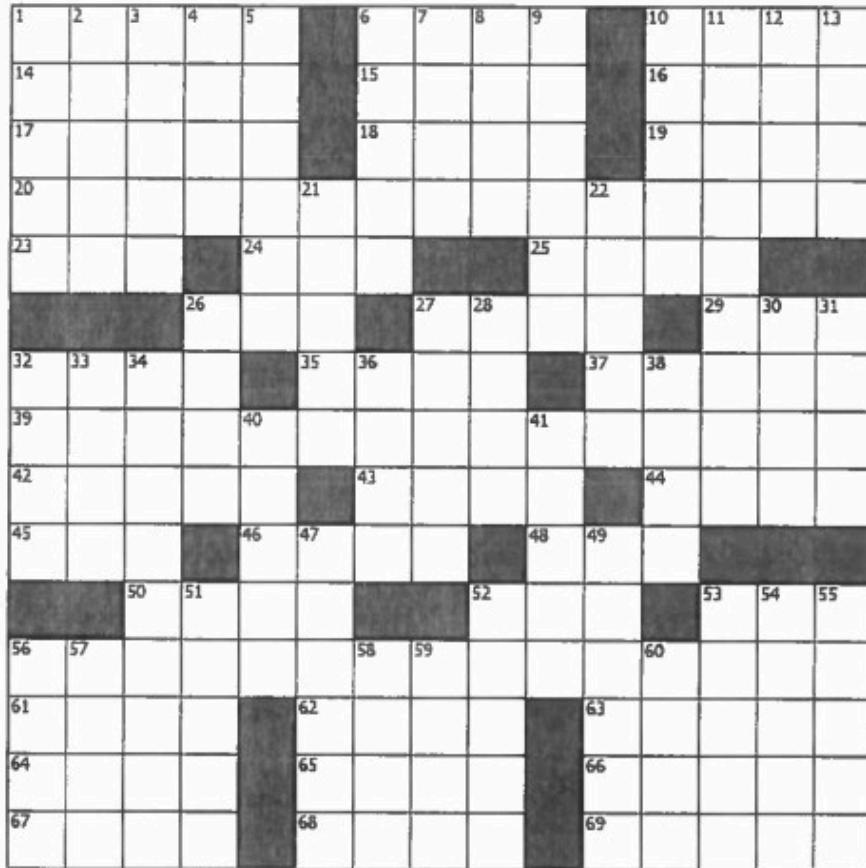


## YOUR OCTOBER BRAIN GAME

Keep your mind sharp! Brain games help improve memory, focus, and problem-solving skills—plus they're fun. A little daily mental exercise goes a long way in staying mentally healthy as you age.

### Across

- Movie mutt
- Virus prefix
- Imbibes slowly
- Use a blender, in a way
- Nail anagram
- College credit
- Surface extents
- It may get the brush-off
- Barker of filmdom
- Focal point of a weighty matter?
- It takes things to the extreme
- Preschooler
- Took much too much, briefly
- Bender
- "Casablanca" character
- Certain leather source
- Linebacker junior
- Reader (former magazine name)
- Boy toy
- Focal point of the politically moderate?
- Find diverting
- Natural table
- Some old laptops
- Job listing letters
- Tail end
- They're inhuman
- Gas or elec., e.g.
- Alphabetic run
- Fleur-de-—
- Focal point of a politician?
- Lovers' place
- Small and weak
- Played-out
- Slight interruption
- Emmy-winning Falco
- Available for occupation
- Turkeys
- Weightlifters' iterations
- Despots



### Down

- Maneuvering room
- Antidotes
- Word separating looks and everything
- Entree item, often
- It carries the words "Rey de Espana"
- Shell out
- Babe in the woods
- Soft bell sound
- Emcees' deliveries
- Charmingly sophisticated
- What employee theft is
- "Kalifornia" star
- Dog show command
- Noxious elephant, e.g.
- Poor Richard's forte
- One of the martial arts
- Extrapolate
- "I'm game!"
- The good earth
- Reebok competitor
- Hook hand
- One in Hanover
- More than recessed
- 1970s TV detective
- Bearded bloom
- Type of poetry
- The Santa Maria landed here
- One not getting a reception
- Expression of disapproval
- Is overrun
- They may appear in lids
- Bizet opera priestess
- alia (among other things)
- Printers' retention
- Iron follower
- Home of Iolani Palace
- In the altogether
- Quick cut
- Some still-life subjects

# WIRED AND INSPIRED!

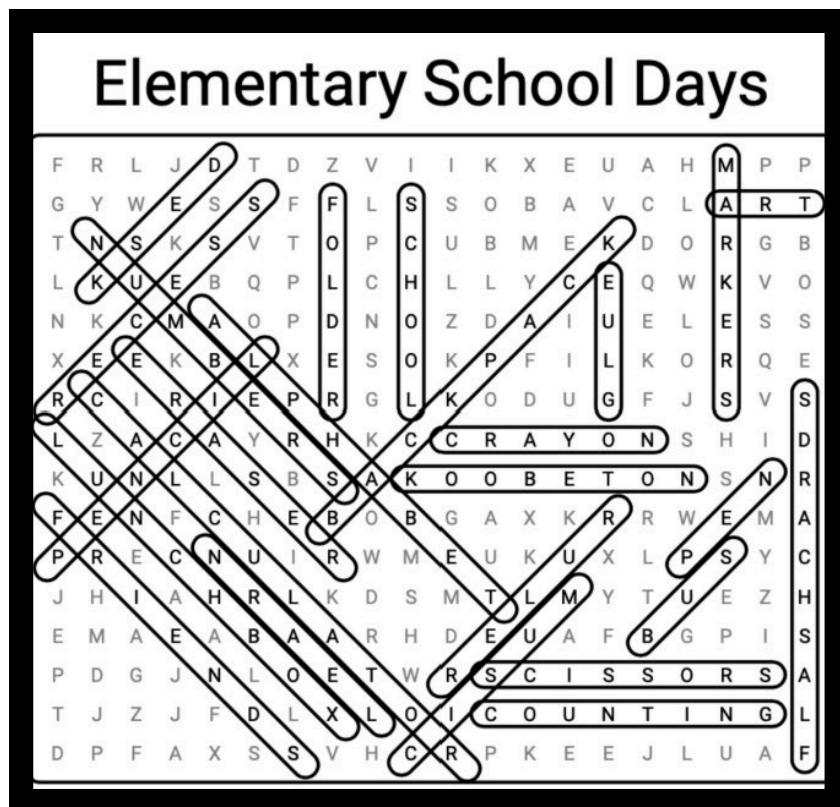
## Garfield County Seniors Are Ready to Surf the Web

Garfield County seniors now have a new way to connect, learn, and explore technology thanks to the Area I Agency on Aging. The agency recently delivered its first computer lab to the Garfield County Senior Center, a milestone made possible through a special grant.

This new lab provides seniors with access to computers, internet, and technology training, helping bridge the digital divide and keep older adults engaged in today's digital world. The Garfield County center is the first of four senior centers in the region scheduled to receive computer labs through this initiative.

"These labs will open up new opportunities for learning, communication, and independence for our seniors," said a representative from Area I Agency on Aging. "We're thrilled to start with the great staff and seniors in Garfield County and look forward to expanding this program to other communities soon."

## September Puzzle Solution



More puzzles are available monthly at:  
<https://www.aemt.org/programs/aging>



Area I Agency on Aging is able to fund the new computer labs through a grant from the Town Pump Charitable Foundation.