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OCT 31 2023

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Ravalli County Commissioners  
215 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hamilton, MT 59840

P.O. Box 358  
Stevensville, MT 59870  
October 31, 2023  
406-546-3522

Open letter to the Ravalli County Commissioners,

Jeff Burrows  
Greg Chilcott  
Dan Huls

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners,

To say I was appalled to read the headlines on the front page of the October 28, 2023, Bitterroot Star "County considers expanded alcohol use at fairgrounds" and on Page 4, "FAIRGROUNDS: County may allow more alcohol", would be only a small part of my reaction to those headlines!!!

To place the burden of creating more revenue for the Fairgrounds should not be placed on the plate of one person, but should be decided on by the Fair Board. Melissa Saville is to be managing the fair, not creating the Fairgrounds revenue.

Melissa "Saville said that she had toured about a dozen fairs around the state since becoming Manager and that maybe one of them didn't have alcohol." She also said "and I feel that we are one of the last Fairs that doesn't have that revenue source, and this is a way to show that it could happen at the Fair."

Melissa Saville is giving the excuse that every parent hears from their teenagers: "Everyone else is doing it". She did not give any statistics on how much revenue alcohol had brought into the

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Fairs that she visited, how many complaints they received about drunken people knocking other people around, spilling their alcohol on exhibits, or how much more security was needed on the Fairgrounds, and the added expense of added security.

Ravalli County was given the land to have the Fairgrounds on, with the stipulation that there would never be alcohol on the Fairgrounds. We have a very family friendly area where families can all come together and have fun and enjoy special Events. But at any cost and for any reason, allowing alcohol outside of the Farmers State Bank Event Center should never be allowed. I have attended and helped with events at the Event Center, and I have personally observed how many drinks one person can consume in one Social Hour.

When my husband was still alive, we used to attend the Missoula County Fair in Missoula. The year they brought in alcohol, was the last time we ever went. One lady fell on my back while we were watching the rodeo in the stands, and could have easily broken my back. People were spilling alcohol all over us, bumping into us, and being obnoxious. Then the next year we heard that the Missoula Fair eliminated a lot of the kids 4-H and FFA buildings, and reduced the area for displays that are normally "a fair." In the spaces normally occupied by families and fruit of their labor, the spaces were filled with commercial exhibits.

Thank you for reading my letter. May the Ravalli County Fair continue as a Family Friendly gathering, to be free to walk around in safety, enjoying the exhibits, the showings, and not be having to deal with obnoxious drunks and spilled alcohol.

Respectfully yours,

*Susan McCreary*