

BECON
2/4/22

Breakfast was held at the Metra Café again but starting in two weeks we'll be in a different spot at Metra. See below for details.

Guests

- Phil Bauer brought in guests Theresa Bybee from Theresa's Paints and Joel Graf from Alibi Bail Bonds, LLC.
- Our speaker was Greg Wilson.

Announcements

- The bowling social event will be held on 2/19 at the Town and Country Lanes in Huntley starting at 3 PM. Sign-up for this event is occurring now. About 60 couples have already signed up.
- Also on 2/19 will be the Monster Truck event at Metra. You have until the evening of 2/12 to sign up for working that event.
- And again on 2/17 – 2/19 will be the M.A.T.E show at the Expo Center. John Eastman, Mike Fleming and Jerry Voto have that covered though.
- Next week's breakfast will be back at the Metra Café for a business meeting (no guests please) but starting on 2/18 and running for 3 weeks consecutively, we will be meeting at a different location in Metra – that being on the same basement level as the Café but around the corner to the west – in the area you would come into if you walked into the lower level glass doors (like if you were going from the midway area of the Fair into the lower level of Metra where the vendors display during the Fair). Metra is going to cordon off an area with their moveable walls to form a carpeted room for us that includes some storage space. This space will be bigger than the Café, which is definitely needed. After spending a few mornings there, the Board will be able to make a choice on a permanent meeting spot. I think the places up for final consideration will be this Metra space, the Moose Lodge and the American Legion on Broadwater.
- Finally, good news on the Metra contract. In that was a clause that allowed our contract to be extended for an additional three years barring any issues against us by Metra or us wanting to back out. This three-year extension commenced in late January and will be binding regardless of whether Metra ultimately privatizes. After this next three-years, another option is in place to extend the contract for three additional years, however, I'm not sure if this would also be binding if Metra is privatized.

Speaker

Our speaker today was Greg Wilson, a Billings local and past Downtown Exchange Club member who, if you watch Big Sky Conference football, have seen on the field as the referee for these games.

Greg started officiating way back in 1982 doing flag football games at Eastern Montana College and has been doing it since at the junior high, high school and college level including formerly in the Frontier Conference and now in the Big Sky. His officiating duties over the last 40 years have included many championship games including the 2012 FBS Championship game.

Greg spoke to us about his experiences being a ref, which he clearly loves and is passionate about, and fielded many questions from our group following his talk. He noted several of the changes he has seen regarding refereeing as well as in the game itself including the following:

- Officiating crew size in the Big Sky has increased from 6 to 7.
- Minorities and woman are now routinely considered for officiating jobs.
- Replay in football is very much a part of the game although in the Big Sky Conference only two replay cameras are in place – one in an endzone and one at the 50-yard line. So if a play occurs on the opposite end or side of the field from these cameras, it's pretty hit or miss if the play will be filmed in enough detail to change the call based on what is seen in the replay. Greg mentioned that he thinks replay has gone overboard in the NFL as so many things are subject to review, which ultimately breaks the momentum of the game and slows it down.
- The officiating crews are subject to quite rigorous scrutiny by a supervisor as well as other outside official peers following each game. They are given "scores" on their games (by refereeing position) and these scores are ultimately used to decide if they get selected to work post season games. On any given game weekend, the officiating crews arrive on Friday at the latest (for Saturday games), spend the evening reviewing their previous reviews and preparing for the game, and return home on Sunday. Officials make around \$1,350 per game plus expenses in the Big Sky, so these officials are doing this because of their love for the game and love for officiating. Jumping into a major conference like the Pac 12 would likely triple their game fees but it's not until you officiate at the NFL level that you can really make a career of this as the most senior officials there make in the neighborhood of \$20,000 per game.
- Greg noted that MT junior high and high school sports are begging for more referees so if you have an interest, please get in touch with the MT High School Association.

Have a great weekend!