



## NEWS ADVISORY

Feb. 28, 2013

For immediate release

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# **PARK PLACE GRAND OPENING SET FOR FRIDAY**

## **City dedicates new parking structure March 1**

The City of Missoula invites the public to a celebration and ribbon-cutting for the new downtown parking structure on Friday, March 1, 4 – 6 p.m., with the ribbon-cutting at 5 p.m. with Mayor John Engen.

Park Place, at the corner of East Front and Pattee streets, will provide 322 public parking spaces, 40 of them for hourly parking and 282 for monthly lease. The five-story building will also have the largest installation of solar panels in the state and a street-level deli and market; the Market on Front will open in late April or early May, around the same time as the installation of the public art piece “Go With the Flow.”

The \$10 million project is a joint venture of the Missoula Parking Commission and the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA), both agencies of the City of Missoula. Its beginnings go back to the Downtown Master Plan and the redevelopment of First Interstate Bank. The Master Plan, completed in 2009, calls for a parking structure to support retail and office development along Front Street. The MRA’s participation brought an urban renewal district, which, combined with cash and bonding capacity, made the project possible for both City entities.

“It’s a great example of the use of tax increment funding to help create economic development opportunity,” MRA Director Ellen Buchanan said. “It also helped us keep a bank on the corner downtown where it has always been.”

While the bank building was a catalyst for the project, all the parking is public parking.

The parking structure was built using as many green building techniques as possible. They include the use of concrete with a high percentage of fly ash, a utility and industrial byproduct that improves concrete performance while recycling the material. The building also has high-efficiency lighting and a large installation of solar panels that provides 75 percent to 80 percent of the electrical needs of the building. Gordon Construction was the general contractor and MacArthur, Means & Wells served as architects.

Payment for parking will be fully automated – “state of the art,” Parking Commission Director Anne Guest said. Customers can pay cash at a kiosk on foot or use credit or debit cards on the way out from their cars. Like Central Park on West Main Street, the first hour of parking will be free, the second hour 50 cents and each hour \$1 afterwards.

Friday afternoon’s dedication will feature tours of the new structure and a program at 5 p.m. Anne Guest will offer thanks and welcome; Dan Kemmis of the MRA board will speak; and Mayor John Engen will cut the ribbon. The first vehicle to park will be a classic car from the Five Valleys Ford Club.

**Contact for interviews or more information:**

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