



MONTANA

Planned Parenthood sues Montana over new abortion laws. Page 3

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Evacuations ramp up

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military is coordinating with the Taliban while accelerating the airlift of Americans and Afghan allies from the Kabul airport, and also bringing in additional U.S. troops in a scramble to complete the evacuation in two weeks, Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

The disclosure by Pentagon spokesman John Kirby that U.S. commanders are speaking with Taliban commanders is an indication that the new rulers of Afghanistan, who swept to power after 20 years of war against the U.S.-supported Kabul government, will not interfere with the evacuation. Kirby would not discuss details of the Tal-

iban arrangement. "There are interactions multiple times a day" between U.S. and Taliban commanders, he said.

Overnight at the airport, nine Air Force C-17 transport planes arrived with equipment and about 1,000 troops, and seven C-17s took off with 700-800 civilian evacuees, including 165 Americans, Army Maj. Gen. William Taylor told a Pentagon news conference. The total included Afghans who have applied for Special Immigrant Visas and third-country nationals, he said.

The goal is to ramp up to one evacuation flight per hour by Wednesday, with potentially a total of 5,000 to 9,000 evac-

uees leaving per day, Taylor and Kirby said. Taylor said that more than 4,000 U.S. troops are now at the airport. That number is expected to top 6,000 in coming days, with airport security to be headed by an 82nd Airborne commander.

On Monday the airlift had been temporarily suspended when Afghans desperate to escape the country breached security and rushed onto the tarmac. Seven people died in several incidents.

Kirby, said U.S. commanders at the airport are in direct communication with Taliban commanders outside the airport to avoid security incidents. He indicated this com-

munication was in line with an arrangement made on Sunday by the head of U.S. Central Command, Gen. Frank McKenzie, when he met with Taliban leaders in Qatar and won agreement to "deconflict" forces and allow a safe U.S. evacuation.

Kirby said there have been no hostile actions by the Taliban, and that several hundred members of the now-defeated Afghan army are at the airport assisting in the evacuation.

He said U.S. forces plan to wrap up their oversight of the evacuation by Aug. 31, also the date President Joe Biden has set for officially ending the U.S. combat role in Afghanistan.



Pentagon spokesman John Kirby, right, listens to a question accompanied by U.S. Army Major Gen. William Taylor, Joint Staff Operations, during a media briefing at the Pentagon, Tuesday, Aug. 17, 2021, in Washington.



STAR PHOTO/Sharon Moore

Terrri Fandrich of the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce greets Marie Leautey, "Lootie," at the Hathaway intersection to give her a ride to Miles City on Sunday. The next day she returned to that location to continue her run.

Woman running around the world

By HANNA KAMBICH Star Staff Writer

Run Lootie, Run. Marie Leautey, "Lootie," 44, has made it her goal to run around the world. This French runner will cross four continents, 23 countries and over 26,232 kilometers, or 16,299 miles.

Within 10 days she quit her job, sold all of her belongings, brought two bags back to Europe to store at her parents house and began her trek across Europe on Dec 6, 2019. She finished on June 24. She then began her trek from Seattle to New York City on July 3.

"I get so much out of this journey. You have no idea how much it is filling me every day and I can give a little bit back as well."

— Marie Leautey, "Lootie" Runner

Lootie had this dream as a child to see the world and while for most children it eventually fades away, it did not for her. She is also running for a charity to raise money for them and to give them visibility as well.

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much it is filling me every day and I can give a little bit back as well."

The charity she is running for is the Women for Women International. This organization helps women affected by conflict and war learn skills they need to rebuild families and communities. When she

started her crossing of the U.S. in Seattle she met the CEO of the organization randomly because the CEO was visiting a family member.

In Europe she didn't need assistance. She was able to run to every location where there was a place to stay. Since beginning her journey in the U.S., this is the only week, the distance between Billings and Miles City; she needed help traveling to places where she could stay. She currently needs a ride Thursday morning out to Kinsey, where she will continue her run east.

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Murdoch's partners with Shodair Hospital

By DERRICK CALHOUN Star Staff Writer

Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply, including the Miles City location, will be partnering with Shodair Children's Hospital for Shodair's Building Hope for Montana Families Campaign.

The campaign will have Murdoch's locations around the state asking their customers to donate their spare change by rounding up their purchase price to the nearest dollar. The funds will then be donated to help Shodair better serve Montana families.

The Round Up fundraising effort will run through

September.

According to Kourtlin Adler, Assistant Manager at Miles City's Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply, this is the first time they have partnered with Shodair Children's Hospital. Kourtlin added that the main reason that they decided to partner with Shodair was that they wanted the money raised to stay in their local community. With Shodair Children's Hospital, 99% of the funds raised will stay in Montana.

Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply is joining other corporate sponsors as part of the project.

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Economic council applies for initiative

By HANNA KAMBICH Star Staff Writer

The Miles City Area Economic Development Council (MCAEDC) is applying for the Reimagining Rural Initiative.

The initiative gives local leaders the opportunity to rethink what is possible for rural community vitality. This three-night series includes virtual speakers on rural community vitality. Following the speakers, these communities will discuss ideas presented and ways to incorporate them into the community. There are 30 rural communities throughout Montana that will be chosen to partici-

pate. "This event creates a great platform to get community members together in one room to discuss our own rural community; our strengths, where we can improve and the visions for the future. There is no question that the people in this community make this one of the best places to live and it will be exciting to hear the ideas that can be generated around the table," said MCAEDC President Jenny Sloan.

According to John Laney, Executive Director of the MCAEDC, it is put together by people who understand Montana.

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