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# Media Release

## TBID Offers to Fund MetraPark Capital Improvement Fees to Keep MHSAs Tournaments in Billings

For Immediate Release

Billings, MT, June 18, 2012: The Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) Board of Directors took action Thursday to enhance its support for high school tournaments to be held in Billings.

Recognizing the value of high school sport tournaments to the Billings economy, and the desire to continue to welcome this vital tenant to MetraPark and the community, the TBID Board agreed to cover all capital improvement fees that are not collected through the contract between MetraPark and the Montana High School Association (MHSAs).

In the past, the TBID Board paid an average of \$30,000 annually to fund operational costs in order to secure MHSAs tournaments at the arena. Breaking down that investment, the TBID supplemented MetraPark's operational budget for tournaments by providing \$5,000 per small tournament and \$10,000 per large tournament. Additionally, the Board funds hospitality rooms for each tournament's coaches and officials at an average of \$10,000 per year, not inclusive of staff time invested and beyond their operational investment. The TBID Board agrees with Yellowstone County Commissioners in that the operations of the facility should be left to the commissioners and that there is a need to fund capital improvements. Following extensive discussions and contemplation by the TBID Board, the TBID's investment will now directly fund the capital improvement fees normally yielded from tournament ticket sales, resulting in an investment that is potentially larger than the \$40,000 annual investment of previous years. The TBID Board feels such money is well spent supporting and nurturing the local economy.

MHSAs tournaments, like the All Class State Wrestling Meet, bring nearly 30,000 spectators and participants to Billings every year. MetraPark's operational budget for each tournament netted between \$9,312 and \$25,508 in 2010, before indirect and direct overhead was factored in. Total, in 2010, all four MHSAs tournaments netted \$69,158 for MetraPark after the TBID's investment. Based on previous years' figures, the operational revenue for these events will still net \$39,158 for the venue with the TBID's investment shifted to the capital improvement fee. These tournaments impact

Billings' economy by no less than \$4 million annually. Continuing the community's tradition of welcoming tournaments is beneficial to the economy, quality of life and the sustainability of the MetraPark operations overall.

The lodging industry in Billings is a benefactor of these tournaments, as are retailers, restaurants, gas stations, and the local and regional economy in general. The Billings TBID Board is proud to have taken a leadership role in resolving this significant challenge posed by the Yellowstone County Commissioners.

The TBID was created in 2007 through the efforts of the Billings lodging community. The group is overseen by a board of directors consisting of seven variably sized hotel properties and is managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau. Marketing and promotional dollars are collected through a \$1 assessment per hotel room per night stayed in the Billings community. The funds are used to carry out the group's mission of generating room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing our region as a preferred travel destination.

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**The MISSION of the Tourism Business Improvement District is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing our region as a preferred travel destination.**