



Big Sky 55+  
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## Honoring Carol Juneau

### BIG SKY 55+ FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER

Sometimes a person's essence communicates to others the goal of an event or project without being stated.

This past December, Big Sky 55+ held a luncheon to honor one of our founders, Carol Juneau. We also honored Carol's late husband, Stan, who also helped found the organization. Originally, this event was conceived to be a small-ish lunch to thank Carol for all she has done for Montana



CAROL JUNEAU

as a whole. We thought we would get a dozen or so people together and encourage them to tell Carol what she has meant to them over the years. The small luncheon quickly turned into a large one, packed to the gills, and became an organizing event for older adults in Missoula. Instead of 10-15 people, 80-90 people came ready to work. We shouldn't have been surprised. Carol's essence is not one for flattery; it is one for action. The Juneau family has adopted so many people and accomplished so much; of course, it was the hottest ticket in town that particular Thursday.

Sen. Carol Williams summed up the feeling in the room nicely when she said, "I would do anything for Carol Juneau." Regardless of age, Sen. Juneau is and has been a mother or a grandmother to all of us. Superintendent Denise Juneau has shared her mother (and father) with many in the movement. The family leads by example.



DENISE JUNEAU

Big Sky 55+ was shaped from its inception by our incredible founders, ([bigskyfiftyfive.org/board-staff](https://bigskyfiftyfive.org/board-staff)) including Carol, who were not looking for accolades. They wanted to get things done, and knew that Montanans over 55 years old are the perfect ones to accomplish this. Carol's essence, and those of our founders, are imbued into Big Sky 55+: we get things done.



DIANE SANDS

Sen. Carol Juneau loves to hear from her friends across the state. Please take a moment to reach out to her and thank her for all she has done and for helping found Big Sky 55+. **Well wishes can be sent to [info@bigsky55.org](mailto:info@bigsky55.org)** and we will forward them to Carol.



CAROL WILLIAMS

#### BIG SKY 55+ BOARD MEMBERS

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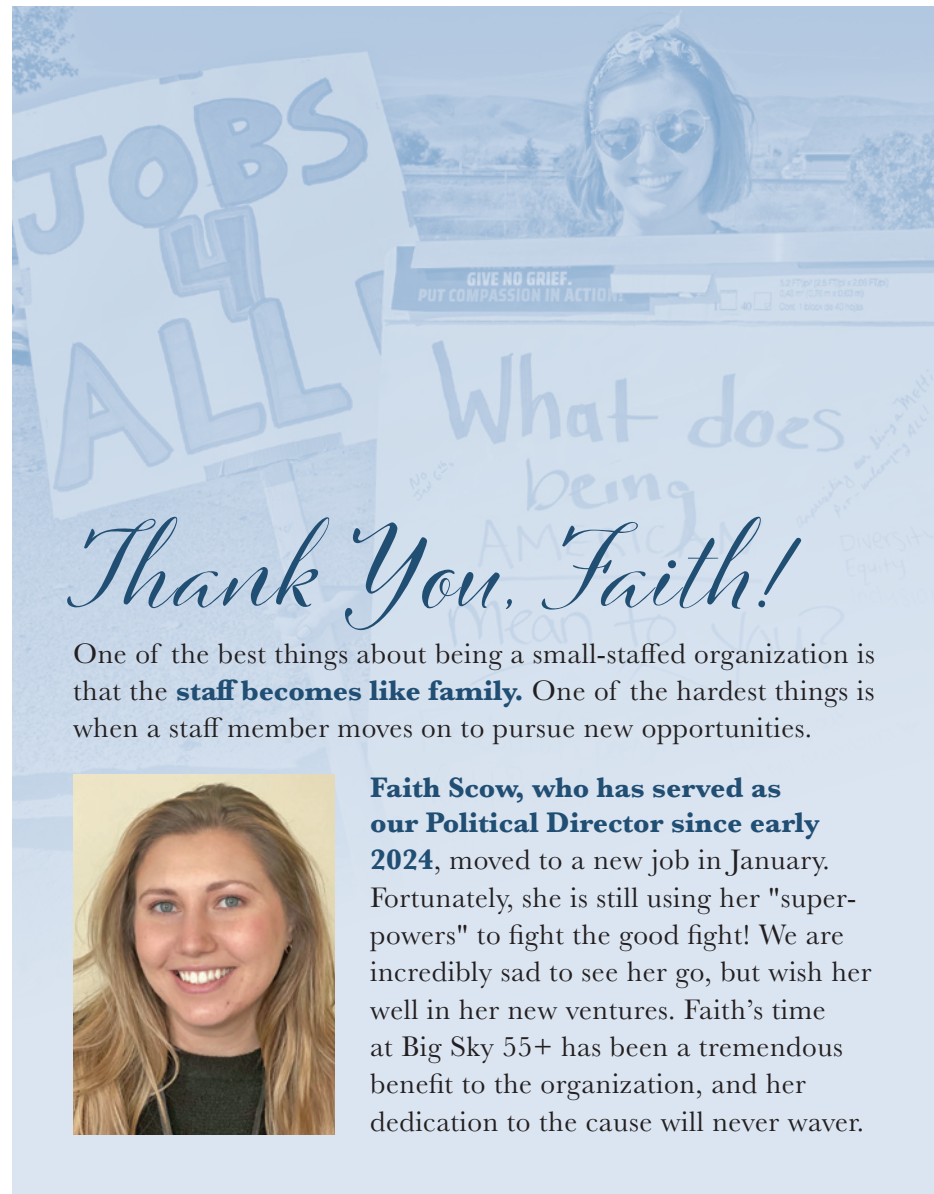
## Thank You, Faith!

One of the best things about being a small-staffed organization is that the **staff becomes like family**. One of the hardest things is when a staff member moves on to pursue new opportunities.



**Faith Scow, who has served as our Political Director since early 2024,** moved to a new job in January.

Fortunately, she is still using her "super-powers" to fight the good fight! We are incredibly sad to see her go, but wish her well in her new ventures. Faith's time at Big Sky 55+ has been a tremendous benefit to the organization, and her dedication to the cause will never waver.





by *Faith Scow* In a previous newsletter, I wrote about a cookies-for-neighbors concept. After, I teamed up with a staff member at Ability Montana to create a **Hey Neighbor!** community moment at the Butte Farmers Market. We talked with 174 people about **Hey Neighbor!**, handed out postcards and cookies (donated by 3B Bagels), and invited folks to write a short note and deliver it to someone who lives nearby. The ask was tiny, no speeches, no sign-ups, just a friendly nudge to reach out.

**A few snippets people shared after delivering cookies and notes:**

“Learned they are having a baby, shared that we have a 5-week-old, so potential future friends for our children.”  
- **Amelia**

“I dropped off a cookie, postcard, and a note with my number to a new neighbor down the street. We did not meet and they did not contact me. Even though nothing changed yet, it is still worth the effort to reach out.”  
- **Noorjahan**

“Across the street. Made a good personal connection. Thanks for encouraging me to take the step toward being a good neighbor.”  
- **Jim**

This endeavor reaffirmed my belief that small actions matter and that a simple cookie and note are an easy way to build real community. Not every outreach gets a reply, but that doesn't mean it isn't worth doing. **Planting the seed is what matters.**

Thank you to Ability Montana, the Butte Farmers Market team, and everyone who stopped by to write a note or deliver a cookie. If you tried **Hey Neighbor!** or made connections in your community **please share your story by emailing info@bigsky55.org.** We'd love to include more of these moments in an upcoming publication.

2026 is here, and already, big things are happening that will affect the future of our state and country. Big Sky 55+ will be there along the way, ensuring the availability of accurate information, advocating for beneficial policies, and working to elect champions of these good policies.

**Being a dues-paying member is important!**

In addition to directly funding the work of Big Sky 55+, dues-paying memberships show that we have strong grassroots support which **attracts greater investment from foundations** and large donors.

We are adopting May 5 – 5/5 – as our key annual dues date. If you are not yet a dues-paying member or have not paid your dues since the 2025 legislative session, we encourage you to send in your donation and to use 5/5 as an annual reminder to support Big Sky 55+. **Please use the enclosed envelope to pay your membership dues by May 5.**

Another way to pay your dues this year is to register for our spring conference! You can **get your ticket at a discount** when you pay your annual dues with your registration. See the link to the right.

Even if you are not currently in a position to contribute financially, **please fill out and return the enclosed envelope with your current contact and volunteer interest information.** This lets us know you want to continue to receive the newsletter and allows us contact you when there is an opportunity for you to help us in the busy year ahead.

**Thank you** for your continued interest and support!



**MORE COMMITTED THAN EVER**

by *Dennis Taylor*,  
*Big Sky 55+ Board Member*

Aging in these troubling times can sometimes lead to loneliness, isolation, and despair. The antidote to that downward spiral is staying connected, fostering relationships, and being involved in meaningful activities.

I am so grateful to be a board member of Big Sky 55+. We have a great board of talented and dedicated Montanans and a small but mighty staff. We bring folks together to work for solutions that really do make life better for all Montanans.

During the last legislative session, we were able to keep and make permanent expanded access to Medicaid, improve tax fairness and lower homeowner property taxes, protect the Montana Constitution, maintain Montana's independent nonpartisan judiciary, and improve affordable housing resources across the state. Big Sky 55+ continues to work tirelessly to save Social Security and improve health care access for all.

These successes are the culmination of our work lobbying legislative bodies at the state and national level. Our weekly emails, action alerts, timely updates, town hall meetings, and quarterly newsletters keep our members informed and ready for action.

Older adults like us have untapped Super-Powers. Working together, we can use the skills, networks, resources, and wisdom of older Montanans to achieve great things.

We are a growing force for gray power in Montana. Older people are a growing demographic in Montana, making up nearly a quarter of the population (around 20-20.5% aged 65+). And we vote!

I am so proud of Big Sky 55+'s work: our successes, our rallies, our community outreach, our statewide events, and our conferences. Most of all I am proud of the rapid response of our members, allies, and friends. Thank you for your help, guidance, wisdom, and timely response to our action alerts. Together we get stuff done!

*Dennis Taylor is a retired city manager, a long-time Montana state government administrator, a former deputy director of the Montana Department of Justice, and chief of staff for Attorney General Joe Mazurek, who is proud of his over 46 years of public service. Dennis served in the United States Marine Corps, is a Vietnam combat infantry veteran, and a former VISTA volunteer.*

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Visit [bigskyfiftyfive.org/conference](https://bigskyfiftyfive.org/conference) for hotel and registration links. The Northern Hotel may still have rooms available.

**THERE'S STILL TIME!**