

Table 16: Fire Departments in Big Horn County

Department	Area Covered
BIA Forestry-Fire Management: Crow Indian Reservation	Crow Indian Reservation
Northern Cheyenne Fire and Aviation (BIA)	Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation
Big Horn County Fire Department*	Entire county
Crow Agency Volunteer Fire Department*	5 mile radius around Crow Agency (primarily a corridor extending from the Dunmore exit to the Garryowen exit along I-90)
Fort Smith Volunteer Fire Department*	5 mile radius around Yellowtail Government Camp (Fort Smith)
Hardin Volunteer Fire Department*	City of Hardin
Lodge Grass Volunteer Fire Department*	From Reno Creek (south of Highway 212) to Wyoming border
National Park Service	Big Horn Canyon National Recreation Area
Northern Cheyenne Tribal Fire Department*	Northern Cheyenne Reservation
Northern Cheyenne Tribal Schools*	Busby

* Primarily set up to fight structure fires

Source: Big Horn County Wildfire Protection Plan 2012

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in Big Horn County is provided by the Big Horn County Sheriff and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Crow Tribal Police. The County Sheriff's department is based in Hardin. The department has 14 total full-time sworn officers. The Crow Reservation is served by 14 sworn officers and six civilians.

In 2010, the municipality of Hardin established its first police department in 35 years. Prior to that time, the city was served by the county's law enforcement and in return the city contributed some funding. As noted in the 2002 growth policy, the shared services were a problematic issue for both the city and county. By January 2011, the three-person Hardin police department was no longer functioning and has not been re-established. The town of Lodge Grass does not have a police department.

In addition to the Sheriff and BIA officers, there are specialized law enforcement officers. These include federal park rangers, a Bureau of Land Management Officer stationed in Billings, and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Agent in Billings, Montana Highway Patrol, and a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Game Warden based in Hardin.

There are three detention facilities in Big Horn County—the county jail in Hardin, BIA jail in Crow Agency, and a juvenile facility in Busby. The Two Rivers Regional Correctional Facility, completed in 2007, but which has not yet been utilized, is located in Hardin. This facility was intended primarily to serve inmates from outside the county.

Disaster and Emergency Services

The county has a Disaster Emergency Coordinator. The county and municipalities adopted Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Community Wildfire Protection Plans in 2012. These plans identify hazards and steps that can be taken now to reduce serious effects and harm from disasters when they do occur. The county also recently updated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which was 10 years old at the time of the 2002 Growth Policy). The EOP identifies situations that may be encountered and actions to be taken by the county and municipalities to respond to and recover from disasters.

Road Maintenance

The county operates a road department with shops in Hardin, Decker, and Lodge Grass. The county is responsible for 1500 miles of roads and bridges. The county had been responsible for some 400 miles of paved highway but that reverted back to the state in the past decade.

The county Road Department also has fire protection responsibility for the county which consumes time that would otherwise be spent on road projects. The county has a policy which prioritizes snow plowing. School bus routes are plowed first, paved roads next, then all other roads. Due to the size of the county, some rural residents must wait to be plowed out following major storms. Many county residents commute long distances from rural areas to work. Future development in rural areas will mean increased expectations for services from the county related to roads, and an increased cost of providing services.

As with other services, there are a number of jurisdictions involved in road maintenance in the county. The municipalities are responsible for the streets and roads within their boundaries. The BIA maintains roads within the reservations that are not county roads or state or federal highways or federal routes (such as roads in the Big Horn Canyon Recreation Area). In addition there are routes that appear to fall between the cracks for maintenance, either because they are private roads or because they have not been formally accepted into the jurisdiction of the municipalities, county, state or federal government, BIA, or tribal government.

Education

According to the Montana Office of Public Instruction, "[2012-2013 Directory of Montana Schools](#)," Big Horn County has 15 public schools and 6 non-public schools (including 3 schools operated by the Cheyenne Tribe.) There is also some home-schooling in the county. The numbers of students enrolled in school (public or non-public) in the county declined by 10%, roughly equivalent to the percentage change in numbers of youth ages 5-19 between 2000 and 2010 (refer to the population section above). Some students may be attending out of county schools (e.g., Billings or communities in Wyoming), but the numbers reflect high drop-out rates. According to the [Human Resources and Development Council](#), Big Horn County had a drop-out rate of 11.3%, the highest in the state of Montana.

Table 17: Big Horn County Public School System

School Name	Location	Enrollment 2002	Grades	Enrollment 2012	Grades
Spring Creek	Decker	12	K-8	6	PK-8
Pryor Elementary	Pryor	30	K-6	35	PK-6
Pryor Junior High	Pryor	7	7-8	15	7-8
Plenty Coup H.S.	Pryor	83	9-12	42	9-12
Community	North Valley	13	1-5	0	NA
Crow Agency	Crow Agency	252	K-6	264	PK-5
Fort Smith	Fort Smith	30	K-5	44	PK-5
Hardin Primary	Hardin	272	K-2	317	PK-2
Hardin Intermediate	Hardin	295	3-5	308	3-5
Hardin Middle	Hardin	402	6-8	343	6-8
Hardin H.S.	Hardin	449	9-12	421	9-12
Lodge Grass Elem.	Lodge Grass	400	K-8	159	PK-6
Lodge Grass 7-8	Lodge Grass	--	--	43	7-8
Lodge Grass H.S.	Lodge Grass	215	9-12	106	9-12
Wyola	Wyola	55	K-8	86	PK-6
Wyola 7-8	Wyola	--	--	12	7-8
TOTALS		2515		2201	

Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction

Table 18: Big Horn County Non-Public Schools

School Name	Location	Enrollment 2002	Grades	Enrollment 2012	Grades
Big Horn Christian Academy	Hardin	10	1-8	18	1-8
Pretty Eagle Catholic School	St. Xavier	137	K-8	153	K-8
Northern Cheyenne Elementary	Busby	188	K-8	117	K-6
Northern Cheyenne 7-8	Busby	--	--	39	7-8
Northern Cheyenne High School	Busby	77	9-12	72	9-12
St. Charles Mission	Pryor	137	K-8	113	K-8
Home schools	Various	30	K-12	55	K-12
TOTALS		579		567	

Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction

The county also has one college-- the [Little Big Horn College](#) located in Crow Agency. The 2-year college is operated by the Crow Tribe, and has been in operation since the 1980s. Two new campus buildings

were constructed in 2002-2003, and the old and new buildings combined feature a library, archives, academic laboratories, classrooms, student services area and administrative offices. Phase 2 of the campus construction began in spring 2007 with the construction of the Library Archives and Administration facilities. Plans to move on to Phase 3 of the new construction are ongoing.

Health Care

Residents of Big Horn County receive health care both from within and outside of the county. Health service providers in the county include private providers, county and federal government.

The Big Horn County Health Department is situated in Hardin and reports to a 6-member County Health Board. County programs provide flu shots for at-risk individuals, Shots for Tots recognition, free immunization for children, a car seat loan program, a Postponing Sexual Involvement program, and administration of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Maternal Child Health (MCH) programs.

Medical facilities are located in Hardin and in Crow Agency. The Hardin Clinic and the Big Horn County Memorial Hospital are located side-by-side in Hardin. Big Horn County Memorial Hospital became a critical access hospital on July 1, 2004. The Hardin Clinic building is owned by the hospital and leased to St. Vincent's Hospital which operates the clinic. Much of the health care in Hardin has been consolidated under the hospital board. The Big Horn Valley Clinic recently opened in Hardin to serve the underserved population in Big Horn County.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) operates clinics in Pryor, Lodge Grass, and Crow Agency. The IHS operates a hospital in Crow Agency. Northern Cheyenne tribal members in Big Horn County also have access to IHS hospital in Lama Deer located in Rosebud County.

The primary ambulance service for the county is run by the county and located in Hardin. Patients are transported to both Big Horn Memorial Hospital in Hardin and the IHS Hospital in Crow Agency. Military veterans utilize the VA Hospital in Sheridan and VA Clinic in Billings as well as other facilities. The ambulance service travels to Billings with patients that are transferring there or in the event that the emergency is in close proximity to Billings. Air ambulance is utilized according to the hospital's protocol, generally based upon the severity of the call, the number of injured, and the distance involved. Response time varies by location in the county and can be as quick as 5 minutes or as long as 60 minutes. First responders are employed by the large coal mines to serve the mines.

Access to additional resources for lab work, and expertise for non-routine medical cases is available from Billings. A small number of county residents travel to Billings for primary care. In the southern and southeast portions of the county many residents travel to Sheridan, Wyoming, to receive health care services.

Bus Service

Crow Nation Transit began bus service from Wyola to Billings and Pryor to Billings in the spring of 2011. Through a combination of help from Big Horn County, and grants from the Montana Department of Transportation and the federal government, Crow Nation Transit has a fleet of several 14-15 passenger vans. The service is available to anyone in the county, not just tribal members. ([Billings Gazette, April 27, 2011](#))

Sources:

The primary source for the “Services” section was the 2002 Big Horn County Growth Policy.

Billings Gazette. April 27, 2011. “Crow Tribe Makes Travel Easier.”

http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/article_57674532-bf34-5e05-9d98-307727710c72.html

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<http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/Directory/2013Directory.pdf>

Little Big Horn College. <http://www.lbhc.edu/about/>

Montana Office of Public Instruction, “2012-2013 Directory of Montana Schools

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