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BOZEMAN DAILY

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Trump slams intel officials, media over Flynn and Russia

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Donald Trump on Wednesday blamed the media and "illegally leaked" intelligence information for bringing down his national security adviser Michael Flynn, one day after the White House said Trump had asked Flynn to resign because he misled Vice President Mike Pence about his contacts with Russia.

Flynn's ouster has sparked a new swirl of

President Donald Trump is blaming intelligence officials and media over what he calls the "very, very unfair" treatment of ousted national security adviser

controversy over Trump's potential ties to Moscow. Flynn resigned Monday night — at the behest of Trump, the White House later said — after reports that he had discussed sanctions with Russia's ambassador to the U.S. before the inauguration, despite previously denying those conversations to Pence and other top officials.

But in Trump's first public comments on Flynn, he appeared to side with his former aide, saying it was "really a sad thing that he was treated so badly."

Trump is said to favor Vice Admiral Robert

Harward, a former Navy SEAL, as his next national security adviser, according to a White House official. Harward met with top White House officials last week and has the backing of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Flynn's ouster was a blow to a White House struggling to find its footing in Trump's first weeks in office.

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President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu participate in a joint news conference in the East Room of the White House on Wednesday.

Average rent for a two-bedroom Bozeman apartment?

THAT'LL BE \$1,022



RACHEL LEATHE/CHRONICLE

By ERIC DIETRICH • Chronicle Staff Writer

According to Prospera Business Network, the average price of living in Bozeman is just above the national average.

The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in ■ Bozeman was \$1,022 a month in 2016, according to cost data collected by Prospera Business Network, and the average price of a new home in the city was \$364,500.

Combined, the two figures put Bozeman's housing costs at 108 percent of average for cities included in a national cost of living index compiled by the Council for Community and Economic Research using data from local groups like Prospera and released in an annual report this week.

With utility costs 8.6 percent below average, though, Bozeman's overall cost of living is estimated at just above average for the nation, 100.8 percent of typical.

Prospera's number for apartment

rates is higher than the \$771-a-month rent estimate produced by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, used in a living wage calculator published online by the Chronicle last

With the lower housing cost, MIT and Chronicle calculations estimated that supporting a family of four in Bozeman costs \$65,368 a year, equivalent to a \$15.71 wage for two incomeearners working full-time.

Plugging in Prospera's \$1,022 rent estimate for a two-bedroom apartment boosts that living wage figure to \$16.44 an hour.

With a 10 percent down payment, 30-year mortgage and 3.92 percent interest rate, a \$364,500 home translates into roughly \$1,550 a month in mortgage payments. In turn, that translates into a \$17.96-an-hour wage for a dual-income household.

Prospera Program Director Drew Little said this week that its rent numbers are typically based on prices of seven to 10 apartments. CĈER price guidelines specify that price data be collected for newer 950-square-foot apartments with one-and-a-half or two bathrooms and exclude utility costs other than water and sewer.

The home price figure is based on numbers for a new 2,400-square-foot home on an 8,000-square-foot lot, Little also said.

Eric Dietrich can be reached at 406-582-2628 or edietrich@dailychronicle.

Builders stand by \$125M estimate for high schools

By GAIL SCHONTZLER

Chronicle Staff Writer

Architects and engineers have come up with a cost estimate of \$125 million for Bozeman's two high schools project, but what if their estimate is wrong?

What if it's too high? Or too low? Those were some of the questions School Board trustees asked this week as they prepared for tonight's vote on putting the \$125 million bond issue on the May 2 ballot for voters to decide.

A special meeting will be held at 6 p.m., in the Willson School board

room. The cost of the mail-ballot election will be \$50,000. Mike Waterman, district clerk, said the bond issue won't add to the cost, because

Bozeman High has grown to more than 2,100 students, making it the biggest high school in Montana

a regular school election has to be held for three trustee seats and general fund tax levies.

Bozeman High has grown to more than 2,100 students, making it the biggest high school in Montana, and it's projected to keep growing. So the school district is planning to build a second high school, to open in 2020, and to fix up the original Bozeman

Bob Franzen, of CTA Architecture, and Roger Davis, project manager for builder Langlas & Associates, were put on the spot during Monday night's School Board meeting.

Trustee Gary Lusin asked if they were confident in the \$125 million estimate. Was it enough money to ensure the project is "done right?"

Davis said yes, that they'd taken into account both inflation and the cost of materials. Franzen said they'd done extensive research on a long list of "soft costs" — everything from telephones to sports equipment and uniforms.

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