

EXPLORE!



EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2-1-05
HB 417

HB 417
Hearing before the House State Administration Committee
February 1, 2005 – 8 am
Handout provided by Peggy Bourne

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with information regarding the Explore! The Big Sky Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Event. I am attaching – for your convenience – information you will find helpful during your deliberation on this bill. I urge you to consider a favorable recommendation to it – as it can serve as your legacy to our Nation's Commemoration of the event that ultimately added the Montana territory to that of the United States of America.

Please contact me if you would like additional information. I can be reached at 406-455-8451 or pbourne@ci.great-falls.mt.us.

Respectfully yours,



Peggy J. Bourne

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What will be Montana's Legacy for the Bicentennial?

- Montana is fortunate to have been awarded *two National Signature Events*, **Explore the Big Sky, June 1 - July 4th, 2005** and **"Clark on the Yellowstone" July 22-25, 2006**.
- This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase the state, demonstrate true Montana hospitality and capitalize on the economic impact of increased tourism.
- All infrastructure is in place to host the two signature events – volunteers, partnerships, promotions, planning, and programming.
- **The single element lacking for success is funding.**
- With \$1 million from the Montana Legislature, **"Clark on the Yellowstone"** would receive \$500,000 and **"Explore! The Big Sky"** would receive \$500,000 ensuring the two Montana Signature Events worthy of the National recognition already given them.

They're Coming

- Attendance Statistics at Previous Signature Events:
 - 300,000 people – **Atchison, Leavenworth, and Kansas City, July 3-4, 2003**
 - 100,000 people – **St Charles, Missouri, May 14 -23, 2003**
 - 65,000 people – **Omaha Nebraska, July 31 - August 3, 2003**
 - 50,000 people – **North Dakota, October 22 -31, 2004**
- National media representatives follow all Signature Events. There is every reason to expect as much or more attention due to the significance of this location during the expedition's return.
- Hits on Travel MT website, specific to Lewis and Clark, include 774 user hits a day, averaging 8 minutes a session. Hits were up 20% in August 2004.

Cultural/Heritage Tourism:

- Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of Montana's economy. In 2003, 81 percent of all Americans taking a trip last year included a visit to a cultural heritage site. (2003 Travel Industry Assn. of America).
- In Montana, festivals attract one-fifth of all travelers, especially young families.
- Non-resident tourists spent almost \$2 billion in Montana in 2003.
- Travel Montana indicates Montana tourism numbers have been increasing at a steady pace of 2 percent a year. Last year, they were up 4% and for the two years for the bicentennial events, they estimate these numbers will maintain or increase.

Budgets: \$1.5 Million for "Clark on the Yellowstone" and \$3 Million for Explore! The Big Sky

- Both Signature Event budgets include cash and in-kind contributions.
- Budgets of similar signature events were used as guidelines.
- Clark on the Yellowstone budget provides programming and activities at Pompeys Pillar National Monument and within the Billings community.

- Explore! The Big Sky budget provides activities in Great Falls and Fort Benton.
- These funds would accommodate an anticipated minimum attendance of fifty thousand visitors over the four day event for Clark on the Yellowstone and for 140,000 For Great Falls thirty-four day event.

Fund Raising:

- Organizers of Montana's two signature events are challenged to raise funds while simultaneously developing programming.
- If not funded properly, Montana's Signature Events run the embarrassing risk of becoming minor community celebrations with a national audience rather than events of a truly national stature.
- Previous Signature Events have been supported by their state or local governments with funding to plan and implement.

Partnerships:

- Partnerships built during the Bicentennial will have a lasting economic impact.
- Area businesses will benefit from the travel dollars.
- The involvement of the Montana Tribal Tourism Alliance offers long-term programs and economic advantages for Montana's tribes.
- Many federal, state and local partnerships have been formed to ensure the success of both of these events.

Native Americans:

- Montana's Signature Events offer a varied and comprehensive Native American involvement.

National Significance:

- Pompeys Pillar National Monument remains the most significant landmark on the Lewis & Clark Trail.
- The explorations of the Corps of Discovery are exceptionally important to the history of the Yellowstone River, Great Falls and Montana.

Information Specific to Explore! The Big Sky

1. The Lewis and Clark Expedition is one of the most monumental events in American history – one that forever changed the landscape and mindscape of our country.
2. Lewis and Clark are considered two of America's greatest heroes – not only for their bravery, but for their leadership skills, intelligence, diplomatic efforts and diligence in recording their journey – from plant and animal species to the very detailed maps that Clark created from lunar observations.
3. Montana is the state that offers the most authenticity to the visitors who flock to present day Lewis and Clark sites each year. Unlike many of the other trail states, Montana remains very much the same in appearance as it did 200 years ago and many significant Lewis & Clark sites are as yet undeveloped. Today, it is possible to find spots along the Missouri River in Montana where civilization recedes and the American frontier is revealed.

4. Explore! The Big Sky is a nationally sanctioned Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Signature Event.
5. Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery spent a lot of time in this area and event planners want to take the time to retell the story -- the story of Lewis and Clark exploring the Big Sky Country.
6. Beginning on June 1, 2005, "Explore! The Big Sky" offers 180 activities at sites between Fort Benton and Great Falls. For 34-days activities will bring to life Lewis and Clark's monumental decision at the fork of the Marias and Missouri Rivers, their discovery of the great falls of the Missouri, the encounter with the grizzly bear, the portage of the great falls, and their celebration of their second Fourth of July during the Expedition.
7. Activities will include re-enactments, symposiums, museum exhibits, concerts, an opera, Indian villages, tribal games, literature festivals, Indian Art Market, scenic tours, and river tours.
8. Some of the activities include:
 - Grand opening ceremony reenacting the arrival of the Corps of Discovery at the confluence of the Marias and Missouri Rivers.
 - A celebration of Lewis' discovery of the great falls of the Missouri.
 - Opening ceremonies of International Traditional Tribal Games, including display of Indian villages, a powwow, Indian Art Market and Indian Rock concert.
 - Inspirational Service at Giant Springs.
 - The opera *Poia* --- the Blackfeet Story of Scarface.
 - Symposium featuring notable Lewis and Clark and Indian speakers.
 - Corps of Discovery feast offering the same fare the Corps enjoyed on their 2nd Independence Day along the trail.
 - Spectacular Fireworks display.
9. The Explore! The Big Sky Signature Event is being planned and coordinated by a corps of volunteers in the Fort Benton/Great Falls area. Currently over 200 volunteers are actively working on each detail of the event.
10. Explore! The Big Sky adopted the following as goals for its marketing strategies:
 - Attract people and volunteers to participate;
 - Meet the need of participants by providing written materials explaining each activity;
 - Attract people to attend the event remaining cognizant of activity capacities;
 - Educate residents on the event activity schedule and opportunities, as well as the positive promotion that will result from the event;
 - Incorporate messages that are required or warrant expression;
 - Continue to attract attention by keeping media well informed about event benchmarks and happenings.

Most importantly: *The Signature events will benefit many other Montana communities as Lewis and Clark visitors travel through the state, spending money on hotels, fuel, food and other supplies. In addition, these are the main events for the next two years that will direct and feed visitors to many other trail and heritage sites throughout Montana. The signature events are Montana's showcase events.*