

Legislative Bulletin  
HB301

January 19, 2005 ♦ House Transportation Committee

House Bill 301 proposes that the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial License Plate revenue be distributed through the Department of Commerce and earmarked equally to the three main Lewis and Clark sites and attractions in Montana. All three have private, non-profit organizations which have been instrumental in their founding and ongoing operations. These include Pompey's Pillar Historical Association, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation, and Travelers Rest Preservation and Heritage Association.

- ♦ HB301 distributes Lewis and Clark Bicentennial license plate funds equally to the three main Lewis and Clark sites and attractions in Montana. All three focus solely on the re-telling of the stories of the Lewis and Clark expedition.
- ♦ Because their mission is focused on Lewis and Clark, funding sources for all three organizations are more restricted and limited. These organizations need those few resources that are earmarked for Lewis and Clark.
- ♦ All three sites are new and in their infancy and have been established only in the past 10 years, during heightened interest in the Bicentennial. All three need stable sources of funding beyond the bicentennial.
- ♦ HB301 allows for greater efficiency in distribution of funds by direct allocation, rather than a grants process that costs time and money to administer.
- ♦ The public assumes these license plate revenues support the most visible Lewis and Clark entities in Montana – those whose mission is to further the Lewis and Clark Story -- just as other specialty plates do.
- ♦ All three organizations have the ability and motivation to promote the license plate in future years, giving added stability to the revenue flow.
- ♦ All three entities together will attract 170,000 - 200,000 visitors per year. They are the focal point for Lewis and Clark interest in the state, and will serve as the main draw for Lewis and Clark fans long after the Bicentennial. They are the “anchor” attractions which will not only draw tourists, but will also provide the base for other related Lewis and Clark venues.
- ♦ HB301 best leverages the funding by serving the existing Lewis and Clark infrastructure.
- ♦ If properly funded, the major Lewis and Clark attractions can continue to attract tourists long after the bicentennial.
- ♦ All three are non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organizations

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### **Travelers Rest Preservation and Heritage Association**

Located 8 miles south of Missoula near Lolo, Traveler's Rest Preservation and Heritage Association (TRPHA) exists to support Traveler's Rest State Park. Through a unique agreement with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, TRPHA is responsible for the development, interpretation, and management of the new Travelers' Rest State Park. The Association operates with a \$275,000 annual budget, which covers all operations of the site and facility. Income is derived from contributions, membership, grants, admissions and tours, sponsorship, government contracts and merchandise sales. Traveler's Rest is unique in that it is one of only a few sites where physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark expedition has been found. The site was also a stopping and gathering point for a variety of plateau tribes for thousands of years. Their mission is to meld these two stories together. The Association is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization.

Since opening in 2002, annual attendance has doubled every year, and is projected at 30,000 for 2005. Projections indicate that it should stabilize at approximately 50,000 – 60,000 visitors each year.

### **Pompey's Pillar Historical Association**

Located 25 miles east of Billings, Pompey's Pillar Historical Association (PPHA) operates under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). While the BLM pays operating costs, the PPHA is responsible for all facilities construction costs and improvements, and any educational programs. Funding from the BLM is at the discretion of the agency. The Association has been operating from a small 250 square foot visitors center for several years, though a new 5,700 square foot facility is currently under construction and is projected to open in July, 2005. Despite its current size limitations, the PPHA has managed to sell more than \$100,000 in merchandise every year at the site. The Association operates with a \$150,000 annual budget, and receives income from grants, merchandise sales and membership. On the face of the 150-foot butte Captain William Clark carved his name and date on July 25, 1806, during his return trip. It appears on Pompeys Pillar today, just as it did 200 years ago. The Association is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization.

Annual Attendance: 60,000 visitors each year.

### **Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation**

Located in Great Falls, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation (LCICF) supports the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. The Center was built in 1998, following a successful campaign that raised \$6 million in private and public funding. The 25,000 square foot facility is regarded as one of the best along the trail, and is also home to the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, a national organization with an outstanding research library that attracts scholars from throughout the country. The Foundation operates under a public-private partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. Like the Pompey's Pillar site, the Forest Service pays only for the base operations of the facility. Funding for the Center is at the discretion of the U.S. Forest Service. The Foundation operates with a \$150,000 annual budget, and is preparing to launch a comprehensive membership program in 2005. Funding for the Foundation comes from contributions, membership and grants. The Interpretive Center is located at the site where Lewis and Clark spent a month portaging around the Great Falls of the Missouri River. The Foundation is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization.

Annual attendance is 82,000 visitors each year.