



Travelers' Rest

Preservation and Heritage Association

SENATE FINANCE AND CLAIMS

COMMITTEE NO. 3

DATE 3-15-05

FILE NO. HB 301

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Support of House Bill 301
Senate Finance and Claims Committee
March 15, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Loren Flynn and I am the Executive Director of the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association in Lolo. I am here today to speak in support of HB 301.

Our organization is responsible for managing, interpreting and developing the historic Travelers' Rest site. Not only is Travelers' Rest the only Lewis and Clark campsite in the country where physical evidence of the famous explorers been discovered, but it was a stopping and gathering place for the Salish, the Nez Perce, the Pend d' Oreille and other people for thousands of years before the Corps of Discovery ventured into what is now western Montana. It is, in fact, a place some historians have called "the focal point of western geography" at the time of Lewis and Clark.

We opened the site in 2002, long before it was ready to accommodate visitors – before we had facilities or interpretive staff or even signs to direct the visitors to the park. In that first year, a group of dedicated volunteers – operating out of a garage on the property – provided information and history to about 3500 visitors. Our visitation doubled in 2003 – and we increased our facilities and services. Visitation doubled again in 2004 – to approximately 15,000 – and our interpretive and education programs have grown to become the backbone of what we like to think is the best interpretive experience at any state park in Montana.

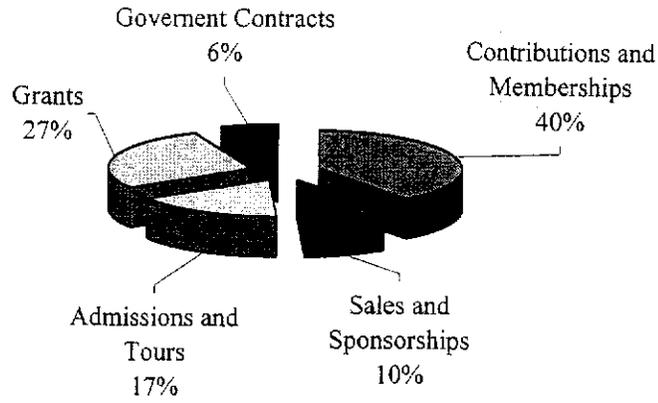
Yes, Travelers' Rest is designated a State Park and the land is owned by the State of Montana. However, the Association receives no ongoing funding from the state of Montana for operations or development of this site with national importance. As you can see from the information I am handing you, we rely on contributions and memberships in order to keep the park open and provide those programs to our visitors – estimated to double again in 2005. In fact, our market research shows that if we can complete our Master Plan, that sustainable visitation of 50,000-60,000 per year is attainable.

The story of Lewis and Clark – and the people they encountered – is a wonderful educational opportunity for the people of our state, our country and the world. The Montana Bicentennial Commission was created in order to establish a legacy for future generations. HB 301 would provide critical funding for Travelers' Rest and other important Lewis and Clark sites long after the end of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, indeed helping us to establish a legacy that will last for the next two hundred years. I urge your support of House Bill 301.

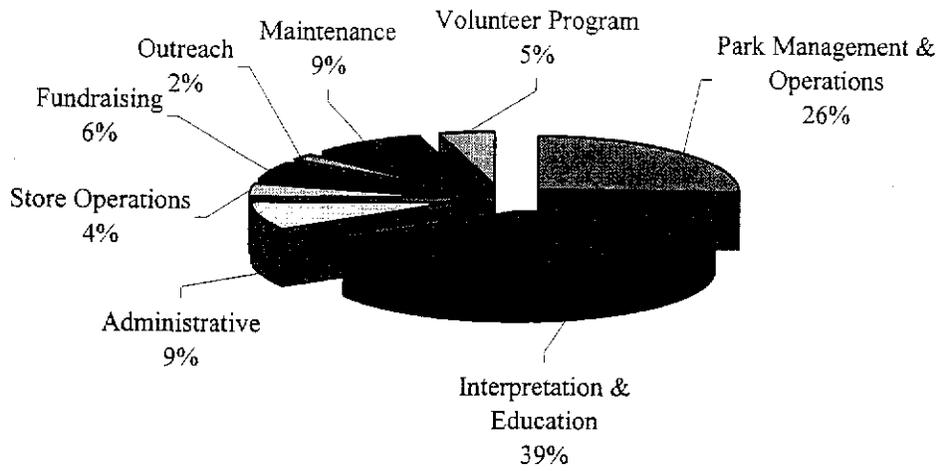
Sincerely

Loren Flynn
Executive Director

Travelers' Rest Revenue



Travelers' Rest Expenses



It is easy for us to tell you about this place – our board, staff and volunteers believe in the power of Travelers' Rest as a place to learn, a place to inspire, and a place to heal. We thought you might like to know what some of our visitors say...

This has a very unique feel

Keep up the good work lest we all forget

Can't wait to come back

Remarkable

It's fun to share our country's history with our children

It took me back in time

Ranks with Gettysburg and Shiloh as an experience to visit

A beautiful spot - very special

Great site, wonderful storytellers

Great presentation – very well done!

Inspiring

So much progress in three years!

Historic bonanza

WOW

Your guide here was fantastic

Such a handle on history

Thank you for the wonderful presentation to our class

Keep it going

Great Developments, Great Dreams

Travelers' Rest - Walk With Us Through History

