SENATE FINANCE AND CLAIMS
EXHIBIT NO. 12
DATE 4-5-05
BILL NO. HB 540

February 2, 2005

Montana State Legslature
State Capitol
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Members of the 2005 Legislature:

It has come to my attention that Montana has a unique opportunity to expand the ability of the Montana Historical Society expand its ability to share the unique and important heritage of Montana by relocating to a larger facility through a public-private partnership.

As a former member of the State Legislature, I appreciate the kind of deliberations it takes to consider an opportunity of this magnitude and I thank you for putting in the time it takes to work on this important issue.
Like all Montanans I have a keen interest in the history of our state and in making sure we utilize the tools available to share that history and culture with Montana school children, with the other residents of our great state and with the thousands of visitors who come to Montana every year to enjoy the last best place.

As you consider this project, I hope you know that you can count on me to work closely with you should there be an appropriate role for the federal government in the project. Thank you again for your service to Montana and for your consideration of this unique opportunity.

Max Baucus

CONRAD BURNS
MONTANA

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SMALL BUSINESS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2603
(202) 224-2644

February 1, 2005

2005 Montana State Legislature
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

I am writing today in support of the proposed expansion for the Montana Historical Society.

The Montana Historical Society Museum and Public Repository of History are one of the state's most significant heritage tourism attractions. About 100,000 people a year from across Montana, the nation, and the world, visit the Society to enjoy the museum and use its resources for research. These facilities are over 50+ years old and do not meet safety codes for storing or displaying archives. They also face serious security and public safety concerns. Only a small percentage of the state's valuable collection can be exhibited. Space for public and school group gatherings for learning about and viewing our history is inadequate or nonexistent, and proper conservation of the irreplaceable collections cannot occur in the small work spaces that currently exist.

The development of a new Montana History Center would be the most extraordinary and significant gift to Montana and its citizens, and will create a lasting legacy for future generations. I hope that you share in the knowledge what a precious value our history has in our rich Montana heritage, and support the effort of this statewide campaign.

These are the people's treasures, and the care of those archives from generation to generation is dependent upon what we do today.

Sincerely,

Conrad Burns
United States Senator

CRB/bta

HELENA (406) 449-5401 | MISSOULA (406) 329-3528 | BUTTE (406) 723-3277 | BOZEMAN (406) 586-4450 | GLENDIVE (406) 365-2391 | KALISPELL (406) 257-3360 | GREAT FALLS (406) 452-9585 | BILLINGS (406) 252-0550 | TOLL FREE 1-800-344-1513

http://burns.senate.gov

Denny Rehberg
State of Montana

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Highways and Transit
Aviation

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Agriculture Committee
Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry, *Vice Chairman*
General Farm Commodities and Risk Management
Specialty Crops and Foreign Agriculture Programs

Resources Committee
Energy and Mineral Resources, *Vice Chairman*
Forests and Forest Health

February 1, 2005

Arnie Olsen, Director
Montana Historical Society
P.O. Box 201201
225 North Roberts
Helena, MT 59620-1201

Dear Friends:

It is a privilege to offer my support and encouragement to the Montana Historical Society in your efforts to secure funding to move to the 11th Avenue mall site in Helena.

Since the Montana Historical Society has outgrown its current building and is in need of more room, this is a unique opportunity for you and I wish you the best as you embark upon this endeavor.

Understanding the past helps us feel connected to generations of long ago and gives our lives deeper meaning; an understanding of our past gives us a better foundation to face our future. Education, especially education that teaches an appreciation of the past, is a key to the preservation of our freedom and civilization. The Montana Historical Society provides and supports this kind of education. I appreciate your dedication to your work.

Adequate space for the Montana Historical Society is important. I support your efforts to raise funds for a new site.

Sincerely,

DENNY REHBERG
Montana's Congressman

DRR/twd

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Washington, DC 20515
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Billings, MT 59102
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February 1;, 2005

Montana State Senators, Members of the House of Representatives.
2005 State Legislature,
State Capitol, Helena, MT 59620

I have been a member of the Montana Historical Foundation for about 14 years or more. So I am aware that the Montana Historical Society is crowded to the point of no return and something needs to be done almost immediately.

My wife Betty , has told me of an unexpected opportunity that has been presented to you. As legislators you have the chance to make a historic decision that could benefit generations to come. To acquire 13 acers of land and a building within walking distance of the Capitol.is almost an unbelievable stroke of luck. A piece of real-estate that size, right exactly where you want it with a building that can be remodel to meet the needs of the MHS is something I don't think we can afford to pass up.

When Betty and I purchased and restored the Hauser Mansion, home of the territorial Governor of Montana, we met John Dehass, Professor of Design and History, School of architecture, Montana State University, who is an authority on restoration and preservation. Betty had also worked on the restoration of the Old Governor's Mansion. This is what was said by DeHaas: "Helena is probably by far the richest city in it architectural heritage in the Western Part of the United States.

Montana's historical buildings reflect the economic, social, and political condition of the period and are an accurate barometer of the taste of the people. The value to the state as a historic landmark is immense." DeHass pointed out that the Thomas Edison birth-place in Milan, Ohio (population 1,400) brings more than 25,000 visitors annually. "Americans are becoming more interested in our western history and will drive thousands of miles to see authentic places and museums."

The curator of the Old Governor's Mansion in 1975 to July 4, 1982 reported to Betty they had 35,080 visitors and were expecting 5000 more that year.

Having built and managed the Colonial Inn, I know how important the Tourism Industry is to the citizens of Montana. As it says in the brochure , The "Montana History Center" will be a "Montana Tourism Centerpiece". It won't just benefit Helena, but will help our economic development throughout the state. Those who come here will have to cover a lot of territory coming and going and in doing so, they will spend a little money along the way. I have no doubt in my mind that people will drive miles to visit The Montana History Center, if for no other reason than to see the newly acquired Scriver Collection.

I'm glad to add my name to the list of other supporters. I understand that the US. Senators Baucus and Burns, Congressman Dennis Rehberg, and former Governors Ted Schwinden and Marc Racicot are also supporting the purchase of the Capitol Hill Mall,. for the creation of the "Montana History Center".

. I hope when it is complete, the bucking horse by Scriver, the "Symbol of the Pros" will be placed very near the front entrance so the tourist and all who come there will see it the first thing .I urge your support and my best wishes for success with this project. .

Sincerely,

Tim Babcock

Tim M. Babcock.
Former Governor of the State of Montana

TED SCHWINDEN
GOVERNOR
January 5, 1981 - January 1, 1989

January 27, 2005

With an admitted bias that derives naturally from seven years of studying history in college, I enthusiastically support the effort to fund the expansion of the Montana Historical Society and Museum.

One measure of the commitment of a society to protect, and to respect, its heritage and culture is a willingness to create and support institutions that focus on those objectives. The current reputation of the Society, Museum and its publications and outreach speaks well of the desire of the people of the Treasure State to appropriately fund those activities.

As Montana now moves forward in the second century of its statehood, it is time to initiate the steps needed to keep our commitment to our past...and our future.

Respectfully,

Ted Schwinden

-----Original Message-----
From: Racicot, Marc
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2005 9:50 AM
To: 'Betty L. Babcock'
Subject: RE: Montana History Center

Dear Betty:

I read your email with great interest and was delighted to learn of the opportunity you described concerning the Montana Historical Society.

As I thought about the prospects of the proposal, and recalled discussions about the necessity for space for the Historical Society while I was serving in the governor's office, the notion that struck me was how fortunate this new develpoment is. Learning about the proposal also reminded me that such moments as the one before the people of Montana now, fortuitous though they may be, are also extremely rare.

Montanans have always taken great pride in our mutual history, throughout which we have displayed a steadfast belief in each other and the promises of our future. How else could one explain, at the beginnings of statehood, the courageous decision, when assets were few and people were scare, to build a glorious state capitol the State could not afford? Our state capitol is not only absolutely essential to the operations of our state government, and has been from the beginning, it is a source of inspiration and a repository of our shared history. But, it was a rare moment, when our ancestors made that fateful decision to invest in our future, and to this day we remain grateful for their insight and courage.

Each generation, it seems, has its chances to impact the future and write its own history. My great hope is that this generation of Montanans will display the same strength and optimism as those who set our course in the past. Having personally considered these issues in the past, and knowing how difficult it is to find the resources necessary to address all our needs, I,nonetheless, would still strongly recommend moving forward with the Montana Historical Society/ Capital Hill Shopping Center proposal.

As always, I extend my best wishes and warmest regards.

Sincerely,

Marc

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHIC
NORTHERN ROCKIES PUBLISHING
Box 1707 - Helena, Montana 59624
406 442 9507
thisismontana@aol.com

Montana Historical Society
Attn: Tom Cook
225 N. Roberts
Helena MT 59601

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is in strong support of a new building for the Montana Historical Society.

As a publisher, author, university teacher and historian, I know how important the Society is to preserving, protecting and advancing the cause of Montana history and heritage. I am well aware that the Society has outgrown its current facility, and a new building is badly needed. The Society serves people all across the state, and is a vital asset in many ways.

It has been incredibly instrumental to me in gathering information for my UM students as well as for the numerous seminars I give around the state to high school teachers. These teachers in turn are directed to use the facility for their own research.

I urge the Legislature and the governor to find a way to clear the way for a new facility for the Society, and I know that all future generations will greatly appreciate your efforts in ways that we cannot even predict. Thank you for considering this matter.

Rick Graetz

SIEBEN RANCH COMPANY
Box 1683
HELENA, MONTANA 59601

February 12, 2005
1307 Sandpiper
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear Arnold –

How exciting! A Montana History Center at the site of the present Capitol Hill Mall. With what is now in storage you could have fabulous exhibits. Montanans, and others, will wake up to our fascinating history.

What is more important — future generations will keep learning.

As you say the traffic flow is ideal – local people will be more aware and it will be more lively.

I brought it up with Mary yesterday and he needs to be fully informed.

All you need is money!!

Very best wishes –!!

Jean Bowers

February 10, 2005

Dear Legislators

We are writing to let you know that the Museums Association of Montana is in favor of the state bonding proposal for the Montana History Center. We urge you to support this worthwhile endeavor. This bonding issue is important to the success in securing the Capitol Hill Mall property to be used by the Montana Historical Society. Your support through this bond will enable the Montana History Foundation to better leverage support from the public to help with this project.

The Montana Historical Society has been invaluable in setting standards that all Montana museums look to in their operations. The Museums Association of Montana works closely with the Montana Historical Society to convey the message of professionalism to all museums in the state. In showing the commitment to provide for the expansion of needed space and the ability to provide the proper care of the states magnificent collection of history, this project will insure the continuation of the Montana Historical Societies lead in helping to make all the state wide museums important to our citizens and visitors alike.

All museums at some point face the need to expand if they are to function as a repository of our heritage. The Montana Historical Societies mandate to be the chief repository for our states history and heritage deserves to be supported in its needs to provide enough space to properly house its current collections and to have space to grow. Your support of this bonding proposal is an important step in meeting Montana's continuing legacy of collecting and interpreting its history.

The Museums Association of Montana strongly urges you to support this bonding proposal.

Paul Shea, President
Museums Association of Montana

Mike Halligan
101 International Way
Missoula, MT 59801

February 2, 2005

Montana Historical Society
225 N. Roberts
Helena, MT 59601

To Whom It May Concern:

It gives me great pleasure to support the Historical Society's request for a new building for the Montana Historical Society. I think this facility would be an important asset to showcase the history and heritage of our great state and for all the generations of Montanans who follow us.

As a former legislator I am well aware of the important services that the Society provides to people across the state. The museum, library, archives, historic preservation office and the press serve people in every corner of this state. The Society truly is Montana's memory. If we don't cherish our history, our future will be without a heart.

The more than 50-year-old building that now houses the Society is badly overcrowded. Not only do important archives, artifacts and other items have to be stored off site, the Museum exhibit space also is woefully lacking. The Society at its heart is about educating young and old alike about what it means to be good citizens and good Montanans. A new building is needed to allow that mission to be accomplished.

I encourage the Legislature and the Governor to seek ways to clear the way for a new Montana Historical Society building. It is an investment in a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Mike Halligan

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

March 18, 2005

Montana State Legislators
State Capitol
Helena, Montana

Dear Honored Members:

It is my great pleasure to add my support for a new home for the Montana Historical Society. The creation of a Montana History Center at the current site of the Capital Hill Mall will allow the society to serve more of Montana's students and teachers with their exciting programs and exhibits. The new facility will be able to house classrooms, an educational center, and a 300-seat auditorium.

The Society currently provides services to almost 20,000 students annually from 53 communities. Students who are unable to visit the Society have access to 27 learning trunks, 19 slide units, and videos.

Our teachers would benefit as well from a larger more modern facility. It will provide a state of the art research center to enhance teachers' ability to improve classroom learning.

There are so many treasures at Historical Society's current building that simply can't be shown due to the lack of space. I know all Montanans could benefit from being able to see and learn from what is now stored away.

Sincerely,

Linda McCulloch
State Superintendent