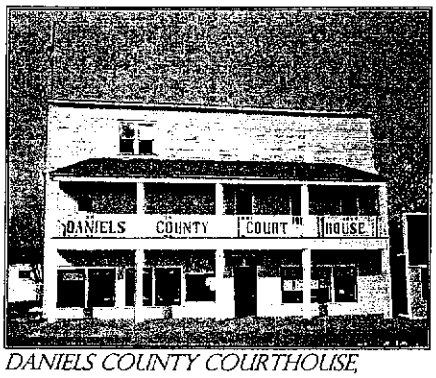
EXHIBIT
DATE 4-12-05
BILL NO. HB614

# PRESERVING MONTANA'S HISTORIC COURTHOUSES

During the late 19th and early 20th century, Montana was organized into 56 counties, each with its own county seat and courthouse. The buildings span a spectrum, from the simple, wooden false-fronted Daniels County courthouse to grand multi-story granite and sandstone Revival style buildings. These courthouses have served for decades as important landmarks and the center of local governance. Through time, county needs and functions of counties have shifted, and technology has changed dramatically. At the start of the 21st century, many counties now are challenged to step into a new century, with upgrading telecommunications capabilities, providing ADA accessibility and maintenance of historic structures among the most common concerns. Many counties recognize that retaining their architectural legacy and the link to their heritage is important to the health of the community and are finding creative ways to adapt and finance projects that give these stately courthouses a new life.

## PRESERVATION TOOLKIT

Since 1980, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (MTSHPO) has offered technical assistance and information on preserving Montana's historic buildings. We recommend reliable methods of adapting buildings to new uses, and tools for preservation that can make the difference between saving and losing historic courthouses.




*DANIELS COUNTY COURTHOUSE, SCOBEY*

*Preservation Briefs from the National Park Service.* This technical series is an excellent source for rehabilitation techniques. Of particular interest for building rehabilitation are the briefs on window repair; masonry repointing; heating, ventilation and air conditioning, and making historic properties accessible. Available on-line at www2.cr.npw.gov/tps.briefs or at MTSHPO.

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.* A guide for sensitive rehabilitation and long-term preservation of historic buildings. Offering a common sense preservation philosophy, the guidelines emphasize repair of historic fabric rather than replacement, along with preservation of historic character-defining features. Available at MTSHPO or from the National Park Service: www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/index.htm.

## CASE STUDIES & SUCCESS STORIES: PRESERVING AND REUSING HISTORIC COUNTY COURTHOUSES

In recent years many Montana counties have refurbished their historic courthouses to serve the needs of a new century. The following projects offer just a few examples:

**Teton County Courthouse**

Constructed in 1906, the Teton County Courthouse was designed by Montana architects A.J. Gibson and George Shanley to replace an earlier building that had burned in 1897. The Italianate courthouse was constructed of sandstone quarried at nearby Rattlesnake Butte. In the 1920s, a south end addition was made, a jail was attached at the rear, and over the years some limited interior modifications were made.

Teton County was mandated after a lawsuit to bring the building into ADA compliance in 1995. Following that court order, the commission began a planning process to address those concerns and update the law enforcement capacity. After two failed bond issues, the County Commission sought alternative funding solutions to complete the required work. In the year 2000, the Teton County Courthouse was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; county officials are proud of having preserved their heritage through rejuvenation of their most important local government building.

**Lewis & Clark County Courthouse, Helena**

In 1889, the state of Montana was created, and until 1902, Helena's newly completed Lewis & Clark County Courthouse served as the state house. Hodgson, Wallingford and Stem of St. Paul, designed the imposing Romanesque building using both Montana granite and Wisconsin brownstone.

For over a hundred years the courthouse has stood its sturdy ground above the downtown gulch, even withstanding the devastating earthquake of 1935. Over time, county administrators have done a good job of maintaining the historic building, and during the past decade, have phased a series of improvements to keep the facility current and in good repair, and to spread their costs over a period of time.

In 1983, the masonry was maintained and historic windows were repaired. To provide better public access within the building, the county also installed a new elevator, and handicap restrooms. A law enforcement center was added next door at that time and connected to the historic courthouse via a sky bridge. In 1992 and 1999, courtrooms were refurbished. Most recently, the county used a CTEP grant of $350,000 to clean and repoint the granite, add exterior lighting, replace aging sidewalks and steps, and put a new 14000 square foot hypolon roof on the top.

**Jefferson County Courthouse, Boulder**

A masterful example of Late Victorian Revival architecture, the Jefferson County Courthouse was built in 1883. Designed by preeminent late 19th century Montana architects John G. Paulsen and Nicholas McConnell, it is one of the surviving buildings by this team in the area.

Jefferson County has enjoyed use of this building for more than a century, and as the facilities began to need upkeep, they phased a variety of maintenance and updating projects to keep the budget affordable. Funds for the work came out of the annual county operating budget.

An annex was added in the 1970s to provide additional room for growing programs. In 1994, ADA accessibility was addressed by adding an internal elevator in an existing stair tower, along with an entry ramp down to a ground level entrance. Windows were repaired in 1997-98. In 1999-2000, the county completed a roofing project, sensitively designed with modern materials that simulate the historic shingle patterning.

## POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR REFURBISHING HISTORIC COURTHOUSES

**CTEP Funds**
**Montana Dept of Transportation**
Federal Community Transportation Enhancement
Program funding is administered by the state highways department and allocated by each county.

A number of counties have taken advantage of these funds for courthouse renovation and repairs. County planners are usually the point of contact for these funds.
Contact: Your county planner or Mike Davis, MDoT
(406) 444-4383

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

**Rural Utility Services Funds** are federal funds that are distributed on a national level to communities throughout the country. These rural development funds are available in the form of grants or loans to counties that have rural utility cooperatives, such as rural telephone or electrical coops.

**Community & Government Facilities Loans**
Available to communities through Montana's Rural Development program, these funds may be accessed by counties for a variety of projects.

For information on rural development funding sources and more, contact:
Bill Barr
Rural Development and Coop Development Specialist
USDA, Bozeman
(406) 585-2545

**Intercap Loans**
Available through the Montana Board of Investments, these funds are drawn from coal tax moneys and available to counties in the form of low interest loans.
Contact:
Montana Board of Investments
(406) 449-6813

# PRESERVING MONTANA'S HISTORIC COURTHOUSES

RECOMMENDED CONTACTS:

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 588-6000
http://www.nthp.org

**Mountain-Plains Office**
**National Trust for Historic Preservation**
535 16th Street
Suite 750
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 623-1504

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nationwide non-profit preservation organization. The Trust offers technical support and funding in the form of grants and loans to preservation projects across the country. Contact the Trust for more information.

**Montana State Historic Preservation Office**
PO Box 201202
1410 8th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-7715

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (MTSHPO) is a part of the Montana Historical Society, and is the official historic preservation agency of the State of Montana. Staff members nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places, review federally-assisted projects for effects on historic and archeological properties, review applications for the federal historic preservation tax credit for income-producing properties, advise on the physical conservation of buildings, administer grants for preservation projects in communities which have been designated as Certified Local Governments, and offer educational programs and publications. Contact the Montana Historic Preservation Office for information about preserving historic courthouses and other community buildings.

*DEER LODGE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ANACONDA*

**Montana Preservation Alliance**
516 N. Park, Suite A
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 457-2822

Founded in 1989, the Montana Preservation Alliance (MPA) "champions the preservation of Montana's unique historic legacy." MPA is Montana's only statewide non-profit preservation organization dedicated to preserving and celebrating Montana's historic environment. MPA works to promote historic and cultural preservation, the redevelopment and improvement of historic properties, and renovation and maintenance of sites and structures in Montana. Each year they identify the Montana's Most Endangered Properties and work to secure their future. In addition, MPA's outreach program, the Montana Preservation Team, is a collaborative project that pulls together the state's most talented professionals to address pressing community issues. Workshops are tailored to the specific community and relate to preservation of heritage and cultural resources. For more information on MPA programs and membership, please contact them or check their website: www.preservemontana.org.

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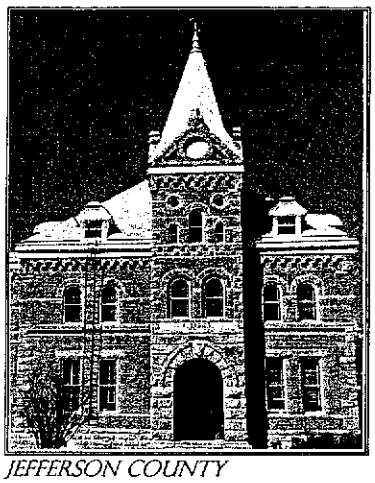

*JEFFERSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, BOULDER*

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