

Montana Legislature Long-Range Planning Committee  
Cultural & Aesthetic Project Grants Hearing  
February 6, 2013

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for listening to me. I'm **Dr. Ruthann Knudson**, Executive Director of the **Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian** in Browning. I am testifying on behalf of grant no. **1746**, a request for **operational support**, which was not recommended for funding by the Advisory Committee in October. Since there may be funds available above those recommended for funding by the Committee, we are asking your support for such funding beyond the already recommended programs.

The Friends are a Native-non-Native public partnership of individual volunteers structured as a 501(c)(3) organization. We have approximately 30 members each year with another 250 Correspondents who prefer to provide financial or operational support rather than actually pay dues.

Our primary function is to enhance the public values displayed in the federal Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning—the invaluable artifacts from Northern Plains natives living in that region before 1950, as well as the artwork of those people since then. The Museum is managed by the USDI Indian Arts and Crafts Board out of Washington, DC, and we have a letter of support from the Board—they write on behalf of the Museum.

The Museum includes materials from over 20 tribes, including all federally- or state-recognized Montana tribes. In fact, 40% of the Museum collections are from the historic past when tribes were coping with disease, death, and displacement when families and traditions were often meshed so that the only identification on the artifact is *Northern Plains* rather than a single tribal name.

The Friends' support the Museum's cultural materials and programs including:

- Remastering of the Museum's *Winds of Change* Blu-Ray visitors' video discussing changes to Indian life in the area over the last five centuries
- Co-sponsorship of a three-day American Indian Sign Language Conference in Browning this past 2012 Labor Day weekend, with Blackfeet Community College and a variety of contributors. Over 300 people were involved, with a lot of learning and sharing and a wonderful Saturday night buffalo feast with an honor ceremony and featuring Jack and Mariah Gladstone
- Support of artist openings initiating the quarterly Native artist exhibitions at the Museum; e.g. Karen Goulet's print exhibitions this past Sunday (Feb. 3).

We are a small volunteer organization that relies on donations, membership income, and grants to maintain a legal and very busy support program. We are starting to plan another, but different, American Indian Sign Language Conference for summer 2014, with tribal colleges and other academic institutions in Montana and beyond. We would appreciate it if you would help this small but active program to continue to service Montana's multi-cultural communities and people with a grant of \$2000 for the 2014-2015 biennium.



## United States Department of the Interior

INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS BOARD

Washington, DC 20240

January 29, 2013

Ms. Arlyne Fishbaugh  
Executive Director  
Montana Arts Council  
PO Box 202201  
Helena, Montana 59620-2201

Dear Ms. Fishbaugh:

The Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian (FMPI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, works closely with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board's Museum of the Plains Indian (MPI), Browning, Montana. In particular, the FMPI provides critical assistance in support of the MPI's American Indian arts and cultural programs. For example, the FMPI provided funding to upgrade the MPI's signature *Winds of Change* slide show into a well received video format. The FMPI also provides much needed volunteer support for the promotion and execution of the MPI special exhibitions. This includes the provision of modest travel honoraria to enable featured American Indian artists to attend and provide arts demonstrations and educational presentations to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of their creative work and its inherent connections to past and current American Indian culture and economic livelihood.

In light of the important work FMPI performs on behalf of the MPI and the Plains region, the IACB supports the FMPI's application for the Montana Arts Council's 2014-2015 Cultural Trust Grant. It is our understanding that, if granted, this would enable FMPI to continue to provide this much needed assistance for the promotion of American Indian creative work.

Please contact me if you need any additional information in support of this application. I can be reached by at (202) 208-3773 or by email at [Meridith\\_Stanton@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Meridith_Stanton@ios.doi.gov).

Sincerely,

Meredith A. Stanton  
Director

Glacier Reporter No. 38 - 9/19/12, p. 9

# More than 300 participate in AISL Conference in Browning

By RUTHANNE KNUDSON  
For the Glacier Reporter

The American Indian Sign Language Conference was its own historic event in Browning, Aug. 31 - Sept. 2. In addition to documenting modern use of the language, the conference was a commemoration of the 1930 Plains Indian Sign Language Conference also held in Browning. Descendants of many of the 1930 signers and organizers participating in the 2012 event were in attendance, including descendants of Bird Rattler, FC Campbell, Fishish Woman, Little Plume, Mountain Chief, Richard Sanderville and Strange Owl.

At least 300 people participated in the conference between Friday night and Sunday. The meeting was held at Blackfeet Community College on Friday and Sunday, and at the Museum of the Plains Indian on Saturday. There were at least a dozen Indian signers at the event, including Marvin Weatherwax, Kenny Oscar, Bill Spotted Eagle, Patricia Welch and Winslow Evans from the Amskapi Pikuni Nation. The meeting was hosted by Dr. Jeffrey Davis from the University of Tennessee and the Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian.

Presentations during the conference included information from James Mountain Chief Sanderville about his ancestor Richard Sanderville's involvement in the planning and operation of the 1930 Conference. This is an important addition to the historic record of that event. Darrell Robes Kipp (Amskapi Pikuni) moderated the Friday night session, which included a welcome by Blackfeet Community College President Dr. Billie Jo Kipp. Earl Old Person offered a prayer Saturday morning, accompanied by a prayer song by Carrie Bear Chief Evans (Amskapi Pikuni) that was signed by Winslow Evans. Richard Morrison (Tse'tsehestahese) gave an opening prayer on Sunday morning, and the meeting was closed Sunday by Tomny Rockroads (Tse'tsehestahese).

On Saturday afternoon Dr. Lanny Real Bird (Apsalooke) presented information at the Museum of the Plains Indian about sign language

teaching techniques. Louise Giebel and a number of volunteers provided children's activities related to signing on the museum grounds Saturday afternoon. This activity was assisted by Dee Anna Brady-Leader and her helpers running traditional Native games there.

Saturday night, Sept. 1, a traditional feast was held to honor the conference and the 1930 conference at the Blackfeet Nation Traditional Games Stick Game building. Mary Ellen Little Mustache and Anthony New Breast provided a dinner of buffalo, serviceberry soup, potatoes, corn, fry bread and bannock bread, spice cake, and mint tea. Cally Eagle Tail Feathers (Koyuk), Dr. Lanny Real Bird (Apsalooke), Darrell Norman (Amskapi Pikuni), Leo Pard (Pikuni), and Wilson Wewa (Nitnipuu/Northern Pitule) honored the conference with a pipe ceremony before the meal, and the Blackfoot Confederacy drum group followed the ceremony. Descendants of the 1930 Conference recognized their ancestors with comments during the meal. The evening was capped by a performance by Jack Gladstone, accompanied by his daughter Mariah Gladstone who signed her father's songs.

Gordon Monroe helped make plaster molds of the feet of most of the organizers, descendants and signers, and the Friends hope to add these impressions to the 1930 Sign Language Conference Memorial located in front of the Museum of the Plains Indian.

The conference included members from at least 20 tribes in the U. S. and Canada and documented a range of dialectical differences among the expert and novice signers. All who contributed to the conferences, including the National Science Foundation's Endangered Language program, are appreciated. A great variety of local and regional donors contributed funds to the conference, including the OP and WE Edwards Foundation, First Interstate Bank and Foundation, Glacier County Regional Port Authority, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, Browning Area Chamber of Commerce, Humanities Montana, Montana Arts Council, Glacier Peaks Casino and many others.

## Become a Member !

### Why Join?

Provide support to the Museum of the Plains Indian!

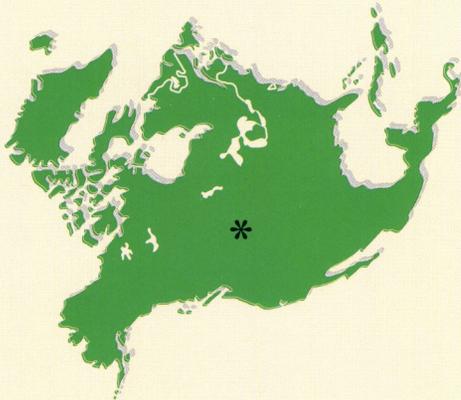
Have access to high quality American Indian artists and their work!

Be on a mailing list for exhibits, museum special events, related activities!

Have fun and demonstrate your faith in this effort!

Have another excuse to visit a wonderful part of the world!

Contribute with a tax deduction to our 501(c)(3) non-profit organization!



**Annual membership fee \$25**  
(January 1 to December 31)

### DONATIONS WELCOMED



Join Our Facebook Cause!

Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian

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[www.fmplainsindian.org](http://www.fmplainsindian.org)  
[www.browningchamber.com/fmpi.html](http://www.browningchamber.com/fmpi.html)

[fmpi@optimum.net](mailto:fmpi@optimum.net)

# FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS INDIAN



The Museum presents traditional and contemporary Northern Plains Indian art and culture:

Arapaho

Assiniboine (Nakoda/Nakona)

Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni)

Cheyenne (Tse'tsehestahese)

Chippewa (Anishinabe)

Cree (Ne-iyah-wahk)

Crow (Apsaalooke)

Flathead (K'tanaxa, Qlispe, Sqeilo)

Gros Ventre (A'aniinen)

Nez Perce (Nimipuu)

Sioux (Dakota, Lakota, Nakota)

Shoshone

EXHIBIT

DATE

13  
Feb 6, 2013

## MISSION

The Friends of the Museum of the Plains Indian was formed in 2004 to support and preserve Plains Indian culture and heritage through the arts. We support individual artists and craftspeople



by providing support for sales and promotion of their art work. We seek to educate the public about Plains Indian traditional and contemporary art work. The Friends group was also formed because of our concern and consideration for the Museum of the Plains Indian, and the Friends help keep the Museum providing service to the public.

## ACTIVITIES

### EXHIBITS

We assist the Museum with art shows and openings.

### EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

We continue to develop partnerships and relationships with kindergarten–12<sup>th</sup> grade schools, community colleges, and other institutions of higher learning and heritage centers.



## PROJECTS

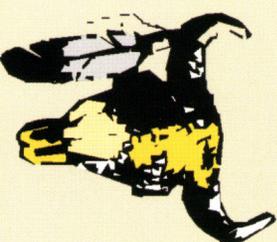
*Winds of Change* film for the Museum  
Audiovisual equipment for the Museum  
Artist honoraria  
Museum traditional games workshop  
*The Museum in 2025* conference  
Museum Congressional funding support

GALE RUNNING WOLF



## FRIENDS' GRANT SUPPORT

The Friends appreciates support for its programs from organizations such as the Montana Arts Council, Humanities Montana, Glacier Park Inc., and the C. M. Russell Museum and many individuals over the years. Thanks!



**FRIENDS of the**  
**MUSEUM of the PLAINS INDIAN**

Exh. 13

**Ryham Knudson, Ph.D.**

Feb 6, 2013

**HB**  
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HB9



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