Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.
Montana Historical Society

Historic Preservation
Museum
Education and Outreach
Publications
Research Center

To: **Montana Legislative Services Division**

Fm: **Bruce Whittenberg**

Re: **BIENNIAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

August 24, 2012

The Montana Historical Society, chartered in 1865 by the Montana Territorial Legislature, continues to pursue with passion the mission of preserving Montana's past and cultural heritage through the collection and preservation of art, artifacts and documents while educating Montanans and visitors through our programming and publications.

Fiscal 2012 was one of extraordinary change the Montana Historical Society. Director Richard Sims retired in September, 2010 and was succeeded by Interim Director Mike Cooney. In September, 2011 Bruce Whittenberg was named Director. The MHS began to develop key themes and critical issues for the biennium and beyond. This report provides brief highlights.

Key Themes

"History Worth Celebrating, Sharing Montana's Stories"

Although our customers and stakeholders experience the MHS on one or two levels, all of our five major program areas provide extremely high value for the State of Montana, all across the State of Montana, and a compelling story for the future!

To know where you are going, you have to know where you've been.

The work of the MHS is not just about preserving history, it's about helping shape our future, encouraging civic engagement and citizenship through our appreciation of our history.

Increased Engagement

A key to our success will be to continually strive to engage more and more Montanan's and visitors in our work.

Critical Strategic Issues 2011-2012

Marketing and Development

- We have adopted an integrated approach to marketing and development. We don't have the luxury of separating the functions. By working hard on strong marketing strategies, we build the brand and the visibility for all fund-raising endeavors. We are also very cognizant of the risk of confusing our constituents by barraging them with a variety of messages.
  Hence, our institutional advancement approach to marketing. Marketing and Development Office has been established with reassignment of existing positions.

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Technology, from Desktop to Digital

- Ed Craney Studio installation completed with state-of-the-art video and presentation technology funded by a grant from Greater Montana Foundation.

Security and Preservation of Art, Artifacts and Archives

- Comprehensive Security Audit completed and report delivered. Action Plans being developed to address each of the noted items and assure security protocols are as sound as possible, working closely with General Services Division, Capital Security and Risk Management in the Department of Administration.

The Future of Publications

- Expanding publications to ebooks, four books now available electronically. E-publishing supplements our audience for publications, but does not replace print publishing. The MHS Press's "Hand Raised: The Barns of Montana" was a Montana Book Award Honor Book and is a finalist in two categories for the High Plains Book Award. Montana The Magazine of Western History, a recent winner of a Western Writers of American award, continues its traditional of providing quality history to audiences in all fifty states and in fifteen foreign countries.

Development Strategy

- Systems and structure are being put in place to provide fund-raising and membership development capabilities to support MHS acquisitions and growth.

Montana Historical Society Renovation and The Montana Heritage Center

- We are following the Campaign Action Plan presented to the Governor and supported by the Board at our January 19, 2012 meeting calling for integrated marketing and development direction. No new staff or cost has been added.

Thank you for your support.

Bruce Whittenberg
Director
Montana Historical Society

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