Giving our History a Future

Montana History Foundation
2009 Annual Report
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President’s Message

Nearly five years ago, the Montana History Foundation Board of Directors adopted a bold new strategic plan to expand our activities throughout the state. Up until that time, our efforts had focused mainly on providing assistance to the Montana Historical Society and Virginia City. To be sure, these two entities are still of paramount importance and we expend significant time and resources on their behalf. But our board had a vision to reach out to other worthy organizations to assist them in their activities. In doing so, we believed that this would allow MHF to use the collective talents of our organization and, partnering with like-minded groups, broaden the scope and reach of preservation efforts in Montana. This past year saw us breaking new ground in this regard, and we are now at the vanguard of a new era for historic preservation efforts in Montana.

We are collaborating with the Montana Preservation Alliance and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to build an ongoing funding mechanism for preservation projects. This is a multi-year project and while much work lies ahead, we are off to a great start. These are challenging times for nonprofit organizations. Many are finding it difficult to maintain staffing and programming. In contrast, MHF is indeed fortunate to be on solid financial footing. This is due, in no small part, to the generosity of our donors who have made preserving our legacy for current and future generations a priority. It is with great pleasure that I can report that MHF fiscal health is sound, and we remain committed to working with like-minded organizations to enhance preservation efforts throughout the state.

This year also saw a number of important projects come to fruition. Our Montana History Textbook project came to a successful conclusion and has now been distributed free of charge to over 11,000 students in our state.

In Virginia City, we were able to secure funding that allowed for the opening of a new storefront called the Gypsy Arcade. This gives visitors access to experience the fascinating world of arcade machines at the dawn of the 20th century. It also features the fully restored and one of a kind Gypsy Fortune Telling machine.

The DVD we created last year entitled “Virginia City ... Where History Lives,” tells the story of Virginia City in a dynamic and compelling manner. We took the DVD on the road this year, showing it to groups and organizations throughout Montana. It was also featured numerous times on Montana Public Television.

Drawing on the collective experience of our dedicated board, I am certain that MHF will continue to be a leader in developing strategic partnerships that strengthen our historic infrastructure and assist those organizations that preserve and interpret our history for the benefit of all.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Matthew T. Cohn
Projects

Accomplishments

With generous donor support, MHF funded a variety of significant projects.

- We provided presentations around the state to community groups describing the important work we do and how donors provide much needed funds to history projects in Montana.

- We provided much needed funding for two historically significant buildings known as Robber’s Roost and the Hangman’s Building. The Virginia City Preservation Alliance used donor funds to repair and preserve these structures.

- We repaired and maintained the Cremona player in the Virginia City Opera House so that more generations will have a chance to hear the sounds of this rare musical instrument.

- We successfully funded round two of the Montana History Textbook project. Working with the Montana Historical Society, the entire project brought 11,000 textbooks into the hands of Montana students free of charge.

- We continued our support of the Montana Partners in the Field project to provide much needed “boots on the ground” technical support for historic preservation projects.

- We hired an award-winning journalist, Clay Scott, to begin editing and co-authoring a book on John Ellingsen, Charlie Bovey, and the history of Virginia and Nevada Cities.

- We sponsored conferences, history camp and other educational events that feature Montana’s history.

- We forged a partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Montana Preservation Alliance to create a granting program to support Montana’s history and heritage. This fund will be the first of its kind in Montana and is serving as a national fundraising model for history-related nonprofits. In the year ahead, we look forward to establishing and growing “The Montana Fund” and to begin granting funds!

Opportunities

Opportunities always exist at MHF. We enjoy uniting donors with their passion for history in the broadest sense of the word. Our joy and your passion make for a great team!

If you are interested in “The Montana Fund” or hosting a presentation in your community, please contact us.
## Financial Position

MHF Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2009 and 2008

### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

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