



Education and Local Government Interim Committee

61st Montana Legislature

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TO: ELG members
FROM: Helen Thigpen
DATE: March 12, 2010
RE: Montana Heritage Preservation and Development Commission

Montana Heritage Preservation and Development Commission Quick Facts

- ▶ In 1997, the Legislature established the Montana Heritage Preservation and Development Commission to manage, develop, and operate Heritage Commission properties. Under § 22-3-1001, MCA, these are "properties that possess outstanding historical value, display exceptional qualities worth preserving, are genuinely representative of the state's culture and history, and demonstrate the ability become economically self-supporting."
- ▶ The legislation that established the Heritage Commission also authorized the purchase of historic properties in Virginia City and Nevada City. In 2001, the Montana Board of Land Commissioners approved through a private donation the acquisition of Reeder's Alley in Helena. The Land Board also approved the acquisition of the Pioneer Cabin in Helena from the Last Chance Gulch Restoration Association.
- ▶ The primary purpose of the Heritage Commission is to manage these properties, encourage profitable commercial enterprises, and protect the resources for the benefit of all Montanans.
- ▶ The Heritage Commission is attached to the Department of Commerce for administrative purposes.
- ▶ Paul Reichert is the executive director and program contact for the Heritage Commission, phone 443-2081.
- ▶ The Heritage Commission consists of 14 members. Nine members must be appointed by the Governor, one by the President of the Senate, and one by the Speaker of the House. The requirements for the Governor's appointments are set forth in § 22-3-1002, MCA. The director of the Montana Historical Society, the director of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and the director of the Department of Commerce also serve on the Commission. Members appointed by the Governor serve 3-year terms. Members appointed by the Legislature serve 2-year terms.

- ▶ Funding for the Heritage Commission comes from operating revenue, bed tax funds (\$400,000), and 25 cents from an optional car registration fee (approximately \$150,000 in FY 2009). The Heritage Commission also receives funding from leases, private donations, federal grants, and filming fees. The Heritage Commission's operating budget in FY 2009 totaled approximately \$1.7 million.

- ▶ The Long Range Building Program has, in the past, provided funds for preservation and improvement of Virginia City, Nevada City, and Reeder's Alley.

- ▶ When purchasing or selling real or personal property, the Heritage Commission must consider a variety of factors, including whether the property represents the state's culture and history, whether the property can become self-supporting, and whether the property can contribute to the economic and social enrichment of the state.

- ▶ There is a Heritage Commission Account in both the state and federal special revenue funds. Account money must be used for the purchase of properties in Virginia City and Nevada City, restoration, maintenance, and operation of historic properties in these cities, and purchasing, restoring, and maintaining historically significant properties in Montana that are in need of preservation.