



# THE INTERIM

April 2012

A monthly newsletter of the Montana Legislative Branch

## In This Issue

Children & Families Committee .....	1
Districting & Apportionment Commission.....	2
Economic Affairs Committee.....	3
Energy & Telecommunications Committee.....	3
Legislative Council.....	3
Revenue & Transportation Committee .....	4
State Administration & Veterans' Affairs Committee.....	5
Back Page: Makeover: Parks and Heritage Edition .....	5
Calendar of Legislative Events .....	9

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The Interim, along with up-to-date information about interim committees, is also available on the Legislative Branch website at [leg.mt.gov](http://leg.mt.gov).

## Children & Families Panel Begins Childhood Trauma Study

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee delved into issues related to childhood trauma when it met last month. The committee heard from a number of speakers who covered topics as far-ranging as the development of a child's brain to how the state responds to reports of child abuse and neglect.

The topics were tied together by a common theme of the ways in which trauma affects young children. The presentations were designed to give national, state, and local views of the issue as the committee began work on a study authorized by Senate Joint Resolution 30. The study is to look at ways to reduce childhood trauma and its long-term effects on children.

Elizabeth Kohlstaedt, chief clinical officer at Intermountain in Helena, gave an overview of how the human brain develops. She said a child's earliest interactions with other people are imprinted on the brain in the earliest months of life. The nature of those interactions shape a child's reactions to people and events for years to come. She and other speakers said that children who experience adverse events at an early age typically exhibit a range of problem behaviors.

Adverse childhood experiences include domestic violence; separation or divorce; parental substance abuse, mental illness, or criminal behavior; psychological, physical, or sexual abuse of the child; or emotional or physical neglect of the child.

Ellen Gerrity of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and Laura Ornelas of the Kinship Center discussed research that is being done to determine which prevention and intervention efforts best address childhood trauma. Several speakers from state agencies and organizations provided information about the prevalence of childhood trauma in Montana and about existing programs that try to help children who have been affected by traumatic experiences. The discussions covered efforts in schools and in tribal communities.

Committee members also heard about recent child abuse deaths in Montana and steps the Department of Public Health and Human Services has taken in response to those deaths. But Blaine County School Superintendent Lisa Stroh, representing Montanans Against Child Abuse, told the committee that the group remains concerned about how the

DPHHS Child and Family Services Division handles reports of suspected abuse and neglect. She gave the committee three proposals for revising the process and requiring more training for CFSD workers.

During two different open public comment periods, a number of providers offered their ideas on promising approaches to preventing childhood trauma or lessening its effects. The providers work with children of all ages who have experienced traumatic events.

The committee decided to obtain more information about the following topics and proposals for its May 14 meeting:

- the CFSD workforce, including salary levels, training requirements, caseloads, and turnover rates;
- the number and location of child protection teams in the state, as well as the duties of those teams;
- intervention options for children from birth through 3 years of age;
- barriers to providing more early intervention services; and
- proposals to create a multi-disciplinary oversight board to review the status and handling of certain abuse and neglect cases, to require licensure or certification of certain CFSD employees, and to provide state grants to develop countywide plans for abuse and neglect referrals and services.

On other fronts, the committee heard information related to:

- the upcoming expansion of the Medicaid program under the federal health care law; and
- a study of insurance coverage for cancer patients undergoing clinical trials.

Ron Baldwin, administrator of the DPHHS Technology Services Division, discussed the work that is underway on state computer systems to meet the requirements of the federal law. The law will require all individuals to have health insurance beginning in 2014. It also increases the eligibility standards for Medicaid to allow coverage for people with incomes of up to 138% of the federal poverty level. People will submit applications through what is known as a health insurance exchange. However, the computer systems used for the exchange and for the state Medicaid program will need to be able to share information to determine if people are eligible for Medicaid coverage.

Gregg Davis of the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research reviewed preliminary results of an ongoing study of Montana's insured and uninsured populations. The study is expected to help determine the number

of people who may be eligible for Medicaid when the new guidelines go into effect. That number will be important in estimating how much the changes in the Medicaid program may cost the state.

State Auditor Monica Lindeen discussed a report by an advisory council that reviewed issues related to insurance coverage during cancer clinical trials. Among other things, the council recommended that the interim committee introduce legislation to require insurance companies to pay for routine medical care provided to people who are enrolled in clinical trials.

The committee authorized drafting of the legislation and will review a draft bill at a future meeting. It will then decide whether to introduce legislation in the 2013 session.

The committee's next meeting is scheduled for May 14 in Room 137 of the Capitol.

## Redistricting Panel Reviews Western Montana Maps

The Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission took public comment on five draft redistricting plans during a swing through western Montana. On March 13, the commissioners heard from Missoula-area people about which plans they support or oppose and suggestions for improving a specific map or the process in general. On March 14, the commissioners went to Pablo and Kalispell for additional hearings. The three hearings were well-attended, with many people offering public comment.

The commission met in Butte and Helena March 27 and 28, respectively. Coverage of these meetings will be included in the May issue of the interim newsletter.

In April, the commission will hold hearings in Lewistown, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Browning at the following locations:

- April 12 in Lewistown, 6:30 p.m., Community Center, 307 Watson
- April 13 in Bozeman, 7 p.m., Community Room, Gallatin County Courthouse, 311 West Main
- April 18 in Great Falls, 7 p.m., City Commission Chambers, Civic Center, 2 Park Drive South
- April 19 in Browning, 1 p.m., Tribal Council House of Chambers, All Chiefs Square

Draft redistricting plans, including regional maps for each hearing, are available at <http://leg.mt.gov/districting>. Because there will be a limited supply of printed copies of the draft plans available at the hearings, people who wish to comment

on the plans are encouraged to review the maps online before the hearings.

The commission also encourages comments on the draft plans by mail, email, or fax. All comments become part of the commission's permanent public record and are sent to each commissioner. Send written comments to Districting and Apportionment Commission, Legislative Services Division, PO Box 201706, Helena, MT 59620-1706; by email to [districting@mt.gov](mailto:districting@mt.gov); or by fax to 406-444-3036.

## Economic Affairs Committee to Examine Agricultural Bonding

At the April meeting of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee, grain growers, representatives of grain elevators, and other interested parties will present ideas on how to keep liquidations or other failure-to-pay situations from destabilizing Montana's agricultural sector.

The committee is meeting April 20, beginning at 9 a.m. in Room 137 of the Capitol building.

Monica Lindeen, commissioner of securities and insurance, will report on her agency's activities in the past year, particularly related to a new law for surplus lines insurance, Insure Montana, and activities related to the proposed new health insurance exchange.

Dr. Tom Roberts of Missoula will discuss a new health insurance cooperative that he and others have formed and that has received federal funding under the Affordable Care Act.

Also on the agenda are:

- House Bill 525 reviews to determine whether the following three boards continue to be needed for public health, safety, and welfare: the Board of Plumbers, the Electrical Board, and the Board of Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors;
- an update on fiscal concerns regarding the Board of Horseracing; and
- a review of the Building Codes Bureau as part of the committee's monitoring activities.

For an agenda or more information, see the committee website: <http://leg.mt.gov/eaic>, or contact committee staff Pat Murdo at 406-444-3594 or [pmurdo@mt.gov](mailto:pmurdo@mt.gov).

## Energy Committee to Review Electric Co-op Bill Draft, Tour Facilities in Butte

The Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee is preparing for a two-day May meeting in Butte that will include tours of several energy-related facilities and a discus-

sion of draft legislation that would place new requirements on rural electric cooperatives.

The committee is meeting May 17-18 on the Montana Tech campus in Butte in Room 302 of the Natural Resources Building.

Last October Southern Montana Electric Generation and Transmission filed for reorganization under federal Chapter 11 bankruptcy laws. The filing raised several questions concerning generation and transmission cooperatives related to transparency, organization, and decision-making processes. In January, the ETIC heard from a panel about Southern Montana and discussed oversight of rural electric cooperatives that own generation in Montana.

The discussions led the committee to request that staff conduct additional research on the matter and to prepare draft legislation. The draft legislation would require a majority vote by individual members of rural electric cooperatives that are part of generation and transmission cooperatives before financing construction of new power plants or entering into long-term power contracts that exceed consumption forecasts. Options to allow for review of forecasts by member cooperatives was also included in the request. The draft legislation will be on the committee's website in advance of the May meeting.

If the ETIC chooses to move forward with draft legislation in May, staff will revise the draft legislation, as instructed by the committee. The draft would then be posted for a 30-day public comment period. In July the committee would consider the public comment, respond, and possibly revise the draft. By Sept. 15, the committee would determine whether to introduce the legislation in the 2013 session.

The ETIC will have a busy schedule while in Butte. On May 17, committee members are scheduled to spend the morning touring the PPL EnergyPlus Trading Floor and the North-Western Energy System Operations Control Center. The afternoon will include a discussion of statutory duties, a review of draft one-call legislation proposed by stakeholders, and a presentation on NorthWestern Energy's Smart Grid Demonstration Project.

On May 18, the ETIC will tour the Orphan Girl Mine Geothermal Project Site, learn about research on the Montana Tech campus, and travel to Anaconda to see the Dave Gates Generating Station.

Additional information about the committee is available at: <http://leg.mt.gov/etic>, or contact Sonja Nowakowski at [snowakowski@mt.gov](mailto:snowakowski@mt.gov) or at 406-444-3078.

## Legislative Council Plans for Next Session

At the Legislative Council's March meeting, Todd Everts, Legislative Service Division legal director, discussed legal challenges to Legislative Referendum 119 (electing Supreme Court justices by judicial district), LR 123 (contingent tax credit based on the state general fund ending balance), Treasure State Endowment Program funding, and state cabin site leasing. Council staff also described the legal review of bill drafts.

The council discussed ways to improve the revenue estimating process, 2013 session matters, and strategic planning initiatives. The council reviewed possible pre-session dates for legislative caucuses and orientation and will reconsider the matter in May.

The council considered several options for a 2013 legislative calendar; it requested some refinement to the options to balance the needs of the Legislature to conduct business, to complete the session late April or early May, to provide adequate time for breaks for people who live the farthest from Helena, and potentially to allow for additional information on April tax collections.

The council also discussed having permanent House and Senate staff to assist leadership in administrative tasks during the interim. Council staff will ask legislative leaders about their needs for staff and will develop options for consideration. Staff will also prepare recommendations for the council's May meeting regarding standing committee votes and proxies.

The council decided not to adopt the Security Subcommittee's recommendation regarding legislative security but asked for additional information on administrative solutions.

The Rules Subcommittee met on March 8 and compiled a list of concerns for rules. Staff will draft proposed changes to legislative rules for the subcommittee's consideration. The subcommittee will work on proposed rules for the 2013 session and make recommendations to the council in August. The council's proposed rules will be presented to the House and Senate rules committees, who will be appointed after the November election. Legislators who have ideas for proposed rules or concerns about the rules should contact their respective caucus member on the Rules Subcommittee: Sen. Jim Peterson, Sen. Mitch Tropila, Rep. Margie MacDonald, or Rep. Jesse O'Hara.

The council and the Rules Subcommittee will meet May 2 and 3. Topics for May include:

- preliminary legislative and feed bill budgets and possible budget initiatives;
- standing committee topics, interim committee topics, and leadership training planning;

- Office of Budget and Program Planning bill draft requests;
- proposed legislation for Legislative Council sponsorship;
- a tour of the Montana Data Center;
- proposals to improve the revenue estimating process; and
- a report on the Capitol recommissioning study.

For more information and to view agendas, minutes, and meeting materials, please visit the Legislative Council's website <http://leg.mt.gov/legcouncil>, or contact Susan Byorth Fox at 406-444-3066 or [sfox@mt.gov](mailto:sfox@mt.gov).

## Income Tax, Nonprofits on Revenue & Transportation Committee's Agenda

The Revenue and Transportation Interim Committee, scheduled to meet April 26-27 in Helena, will meet only on April 26. The meeting starts at 8 a.m. in Room 137 of the Capitol building.

The committee will work on the House Joint Resolution 13 study of individual income taxes and the Senate Joint Resolution 23 study of tax exemptions for nonprofit organizations. The committee will also consider a variety of other topics. An agenda item for the SJR 17 study of the valuation of centrally assessed property is not scheduled for the April meeting.

For the SJR 23 study, Megan Moore, committee staff, will present an analysis of imposing a 6.5% income tax on nonprofit organizations and an analysis of limiting property tax exemptions for nonprofit organizations that is based on the ratio of charitable contributions to gross receipts.

For the HJR 13 study of income taxes, Jaret Coles, committee staff attorney, will discuss the policy background for various income tax exemptions and tax credits, and Jeff Martin, committee staff, will discuss some options for revising Montana's income tax structure.

Among other topics, the committee will consider whether to request a bill draft to revise certain uniform penalty and interest tax provisions and will discuss the revenue estimating process. The Department of Transportation will describe the selection and priority processes for transportation projects, and the Department of Revenue will report on the credit for contributions to qualified endowments, as required by 15-1-230, MCA.

The agenda and meeting material will be posted to the committee's website (<http://leg.mt.gov/rtic>) when available.

For more information, contact Jeff Martin, committee staff, at 406-444-3595 or [jmartin@mt.gov](mailto:jmartin@mt.gov).

## State Admin & Veterans' Affairs Committee Meets April 19

The State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee will meet in Helena, April 19, in Room 102 of the Capitol building at a time to be announced. The committee will continue its work related to public retirement systems by receiving an update on new rules proposed by the Government Accounting Standards Board, an overview of the Public Employees' Retirement System annual report, and an update on outreach efforts by the Teachers' Retirement System.

In January, the committee decided to conduct a study of the state's Commissioner of Political Practices office. Committee

staff will present a briefing paper on the responsibilities of the office and how other states structure these offices.

As part of the study of anonymous election material, committee staff will summarize laws related to anonymous election materials in other states.

Other committee work will include a House Bill 142 review of advisory councils and a discussion about next steps for the study of combining elections.

The agenda and meeting materials will be posted on the committee's website (<http://leg.mt.gov/sava>) as they become available. Contact Megan Moore, committee staff, at [memoore@mt.gov](mailto:memoore@mt.gov) or 406-444-4496 with questions.

## Back Page

### Makeover: Parks and Heritage Edition

**By Hope Stockwell**  
**Legislative Research Analyst**

Along with the usual coats of paint, patched asphalt, and repaired board walks and trails, state parks across Montana and state-owned historic sites in Virginia City and Nevada City may get another kind of makeover – one that would change the administration and funding of these programs in hopes of better preserving them and attracting more visitors.

Since September, the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) has been studying ways to improve the efficiency and increase the public profile of state parks and Virginia City and Nevada City pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 32. Now, the EQC has asked staff to draft four bills that would alter the administration of state parks and Virginia City and Nevada City and that would provide some new funding for day-to-day operations and long-term maintenance. The proposals will be reviewed at the EQC's May meeting in Helena.

Three of the four bill drafts are variations on a theme to alter the programs' administration. All would create a new governing commission to oversee state parks, separate from the existing Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission. Two of the three would move operation of the state-owned properties in Virginia City and Nevada City, as well as Reeder's Alley in Helena, under the Parks Division at the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (DFWP) – without turning the sites into state parks. Those two bills would also disband the Montana Heritage Preservation and Development Commission

(MHC), which currently oversees the historic sites. One of the bills would change the MHC into an advisory board to a new state parks, recreation, and heritage commission.

#### Setting the Agenda

Public support expressed at recent EQC meetings for a separate state parks commission has been two-fold: 1) to increase the amount of time spent discussing parks and recreation policy issues; and 2) to insulate state parks from contentious wildlife management issues (like bison and wolves) that have cast DFWP in a harsh spotlight.

A review of FWP Commission meetings between March 2011 and March 2012 finds wildlife management issues (many related to the setting of hunting seasons and regulations) routinely dominate the agenda. During that time period, 136 agenda items dealt with wildlife-related issues, while 27 were specific to fish and fisheries and 30 were related to parks and recreation.<sup>1</sup> (For the purposes of this article, the term "recreation" includes boating and motorized and non-motorized trail use.)

Of the 30 parks and recreation agenda items, 22 dealt with boating and water use regulations and eight were specific to state parks. Of the latter, three dealt with acquisition of the former Milltown Dam site and two were about Smith River usage. The other three were related to the Parks Division's new online reservation system, acquisition of the Travelers' Rest State Park visitor center, and a grazing lease adjacent to First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park.

<sup>1</sup> The review of FWP Commission meetings was limited to the actual number of agenda items and did not consider the length of time spent discussing each.

## Other Combo States

There are currently five states with combined fish, wildlife, and parks commissions – Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas – although Colorado is transitioning to the sixth under order from that state’s 2011 Legislature.

In January, the EQC asked staff to research what, if anything, these states are doing to dedicate commission time to parks issues. No specific policies were found and trying to quantify or qualify the “face time” state parks receive with their commissions proved difficult.

A review of the states’ statutes reveals that while commission members with livestock or agricultural experience are required in three states (Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska), a parks or recreation representative is not required in any. Texas’ statute comes the closest, stating the governor shall “attempt to include persons with expertise in diverse fields, including historic preservation, conservation, and outdoor recreation.”

Anecdotally, individual personalities seem to drive the amount of attention state parks receive from these combined commissions. Jim Fuller, a staffer with the Nebraska Parks Division, says his administrator is “a go-getter, always making sure he’s out there selling our product. This guy makes sure our wants and needs are known.”

Kevin Good, special assistant to the director of Texas State Parks, agrees it comes down to the individual. But, Good says, a state’s characteristics drive commission agendas as well. For instance, Good describes Texas as “very much a private property state.”

“Sometimes the issues our commission is dealing with on land and water use does have the impact of crowding out park issues,” Good says, “not that they’re (commissioners) not interested, but it’s just kind of a priority thing.”

In Colorado, where the 2011 Legislature approved a merger of the state’s previously separate parks and wildlife divisions – and their governing commissions – as a cost-saving and efficiency measure, parks are already feeling a time crunch, according to Ken Brink, assistant director of Park Field Operations.

Brink told the EQC in January that “we’ve already seen in just the short amount of time we’ve been merged that a vast majority of time and issues that come before the commission are wildlife related, probably 90% of them. Already the former parks board members are taking notice that there’s a shift in hours put into discussion and there’s a concern about will there be a shift in priorities and perspective.”

The five members of the previous Colorado parks board and the nine members of the previous wildlife commission were

tasked with making a recommendation to the 2012 Colorado Legislature about the mission and makeup of the new, combined commission. Brink says there has been a lot of discussion about which constituency groups would be represented, in what numbers, and whether there would be a geographic distribution or a preference for specialized backgrounds.

Brink says they may decide to create two separate parks and wildlife committees to advise the combined commission or specifically engineer the commission meetings so that parks business and wildlife business each get a day on the agenda.

“They’re trying to look at some structural things they can do like that to protect the interests of both groups,” says Brink. “And I think that’s going to be very important.”

## The Cost of a Commission

In estimating the cost of various administrative alternatives for Montana, the DFWP suggested a separate state parks commission could consist of seven members meeting six times a year for about \$9,000.

The cost of a commission is primarily dependent on how many members it has and where they live, since they’re reimbursed for travel.

Currently, the five-member FWP Commission meets about once a month for one or two days. It has a budget of \$39,500, which includes \$20,000 for travel-related expenses, including lodging, mileage, and meals, \$2,000 for supplies, materials, and communications, and \$17,000 for member compensation. As a quasi-judicial board, members are entitled to \$50 compensation for each day in which a member is “actually and necessarily engaged in the performance of board duties” (2-15-124, MCA).

In contrast, the MHC has 14 members, but only meets quarterly, and is not quasi-judicial. In FY 2011, the MHC reported total costs of \$5,178 including lodging, mileage, and a few meals, according to the Department of Commerce.

The bill drafts that the EQC has asked to discuss in May would create a five-member state parks governing body. As drafted, it would not be quasi-judicial.

## Legislative History

The HJR 32 study grew out of ongoing discussions about the solvency and management of Montana’s state parks system and historic sites at Virginia City and Nevada City. The Legislative Finance Committee reviewed the parks system in the 2009-2010 interim but did not propose legislation.

At the request of the DFWP, the 2011 Legislature passed Senate Bill No. 43, revising the state’s list of primitive parks and the types of improvements that may be made at those sites with an eye toward increasing customer satisfaction and

improving relationships with neighbors. The 2011 Legislature also approved House Bill No. 370, which increases the optional light motor vehicle registration fee used for operation and maintenance of state parks and state-owned facilities at Virginia City and Nevada City.

Meanwhile, House Bill No. 628 (2011) sought to move the Parks Division out of DFWP and into the Department of Commerce, which currently houses the MHC. The state-owned sites in Virginia City and Nevada City would have been converted into a state park; the MHC would have been disbanded; and a new state parks, recreation, and heritage board would have been established to oversee all. HB 628 did not pass, but provoked discussion about improved management and coordination of these programs, leading to the introduction of HJR 32.

### **To Be or Not to Be**

The idea of making the state-owned sites at Virginia City and Nevada City a state park has been kicked around since before the properties were purchased.

The buildings and artifacts that make up the present-day tourist attraction were gathered over time and from around Montana and the country by Charles and Sue Bovey. The 55th Montana Legislature authorized the state's purchase of the collection for \$6.5 million in 1997. The 248 buildings, 160 acres, and estimated 500,000 to a million artifacts were bought whole-cloth and largely sight unseen.

Instead of creating a state park, the 55th Legislature established the MHC and tasked it with hiring staff and running day-to-day operations in Virginia City and Nevada City. The legislature directed the MHC to sort through the Bovey collection and create an accurate and comprehensive inventory. The Legislature also dictated that no general fund money be given to the effort in the future and that the properties be managed to become self-sufficient and profitable (22-3-1001 and 22-3-1003, MCA). Fifteen years later, the MHC is still trying to reach those goals.

### **Difficult Mission**

In 2003, the Legislative Audit Committee requested a performance audit of the state operations at Virginia City and Nevada City. The audit made several findings and recommendations, many related to the efficacy of the MHC and its statutory construction.

The audit said that while the 14-member Commission and its expertise was critical for providing input on the initial planning and stabilization of the sites in Virginia City and Nevada City, the Commission's structure appeared not to be conducive to effective onsite, day-to-day oversight. In addition, the MHC – which was then attached to the Historical Society –

was bumping against conflicting authorities with the Society's Board of Trustees.

The audit found that while the MHC had requested various studies and plans in an effort to achieve statutorily-mandated profitability, many of the study recommendations had not been implemented. The audit highlighted the lack of a full-time, on-site manager and difficulties in creating the artifact inventory due to resource, staffing, and maintenance issues.

The audit also pointed out that when the state purchased the Virginia City and Nevada City sites, limited information was available on the extent of their preservation, stabilization, maintenance, and financial needs; initially, operational expenses could not be accurately projected.

With six years of experience under the state's belt, the audit concluded that the sites and operations would not be self-sufficient and long-term support would be needed. The audit suggested it was time to revise the mission and operation of the sites at Virginia City and Nevada City.

Auditors explored four management options: 1) remove the Historical Society from the management structure; 2) give all management responsibilities to the Historical Society and dissolve the MHC; 3) move site management to the Department of Commerce to provide a tie with economic development and tourism; and 4) hand management over to the Parks Division at DFWP. Ultimately, the audit recommended that management be transferred to the Parks Division for the following reasons:

- no other government operation appears to have a site management system that is as comprehensive and compatible;
- stakeholders are frustrated with the current lack of structure/business approach;
- similar operations across the nation are operated as state parks; and
- operations will likely become more effective in addressing planned development and preservation goals.

In the end, it was the Legislature's decision to make and it decided to leave the MHC intact and responsible for day-to-day operations at Virginia City and Nevada City. However, the MHC was moved from the Historical Society and administratively attached to the Department of Commerce.

In 2012, management and resource issues continue to challenge the MHC. The operations at Virginia City and Nevada City have never achieved profitability and the artifact inventory still isn't complete.

While the legislature has extended the statutory appropriation of lodging facility use taxes to the MHC (\$400,000/year,

previously set to expire in 2007), it did not reappropriate long range building program monies for capital improvements (\$750,000 for FY 2010/2011) and the general fund is still off limits. Federal grants have also dried up.

Faced with a \$400,000 shortfall, the MHC reorganized in August 2011. The move affected both seasonal and permanent employees. Overall, the staff was decreased by five FTE.

In a memo to the EQC, dated January 11, 2012, MHC Chair Marilyn Ross stated that, moving forward, the Commission intends to “place a greater emphasis on a business model that will increase profitability of the site and greater economic sustainability.” To that end, Ross wrote, the MHC created a new business development manager position as part of its reorganization.

## The Future of Our Heritage

Nearly a decade after the 2003 audit, the EQC has again raised the specter of moving the administration of the state-owned sites at Virginia City and Nevada City to the Parks Division in hopes of providing a more stable environment.

Two of the bill drafts requested by the EQC in March would do just that, although the sites at Virginia City and Nevada

City would not be converted to a state park in either proposal. Both bill drafts would dismantle the MHC and create a new state parks, recreation, and heritage commission in its place. However, one of the proposals would reshape the MHC as an advisory board to the new commission.

Prior to reviewing the bill drafts on May 3 at its meeting in Room 172 of the Capitol in Helena, the EQC is planning to visit Virginia City and Nevada City on May 2 to get a first-hand look at operations. The Council will also stop at Lewis and Clark Caverns to meet with state park officials.

The proposed bill drafts will be made available for review approximately two weeks prior to the EQC’s May meeting on the Council’s website at <http://leg.mt.gov/eqc>.

Also, all materials produced this interim in conjunction with the HJR 32 study are available at <http://leg.mt.gov/css/Committees/Interim/2011-2012/EQC/Studies-Duties/studies-duties.asp#hj32>.

If the EQC decides to move forward with any proposal, the bill draft(s) would be released for a 30-day public comment period prior to a final EQC decision on whether to advance any recommendations to the 2013 Legislature for consideration.

### Calendar of Legislative Events

All interim committee meetings are held in the Capitol in Helena unless otherwise noted.

April						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 State-Tribal Relations Committee, Fort Peck Community College campus, room & time TBA	5 State-Tribal Relations Committee, Fort Peck Community College campus, room & time TBA	6	7
8	9 Select Committee on Efficiency in Government, Butte, Montana Tech Campus, room & time TBA	10 Select Committee on Efficiency in Government, Butte, Montana Tech Campus, room & time TBA	11	12 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Lewistown, Community Center, 6:30 p.m.	13 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Bozeman, Gallatin County Courthouse, Community Room, 7 p.m.	14
15	16	17	18 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Great Falls, Civic Center, City Commission Chambers, 7 p.m.	19 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Browning, Tribal Council House of Chambers, 1 p.m. Law & Justice Committee, room & time TBA State Administration & Veterans' Affairs Committee, Rm 102, time TBA	20 Economic Affairs Committee, Rm 137, 9 a.m. Law & Justice Committee, room & time TBA	21
22	23	24	25	26 Revenue & Transportation Committee, Rm 137, 8 a.m.	27	28
29	30					

May						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Environmental Quality Council, room & time TBA Legislative Council, Rm 102, time TBA Legislative Council, Rules Subcommittee, Rm 102, time TBA	2 Environmental Quality Council, Virginia & Nevada Cities tour Legislative Council, Rm 102, time TBA	3 Environmental Quality Council, room & time TBA	4	5
6	7	8 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Havre, City Council Chamber, 7 p.m.	9 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Wolf Point, Roosevelt County Senior Center, 1 p.m.	10	11	12
13	14 Children & Families Committee, Rm 137, time TBA Select Committee on Efficiency in Government (tentative), Helena, room & time TBA	15 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Crow Agency, Little Big Horn College, Cultural Center, 1 p.m. Districting & Apportionment Commission, Billings, Lincoln Education Center Board Room, 7 p.m. Select Committee on Efficiency in Government (tentative), Helena, room & time TBA	16 Districting & Apportionment Commission, Miles City, Miles Community College, Cultural Center Rm 106, 1 p.m.	17 Energy & Telecommunications Committee, Butte, Montana Tech campus, Natural Resources Bldg Rm 302, time TBA	18 Energy & Telecommunications Committee, Butte, Montana Tech campus, Natural Resources Bldg Rm 302, time TBA	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 Legislative Computer System Planning Council, Rm 102, 8:30 a.m.		



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