

NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK

STATE OF MONTANA

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Governor Bullock Announces \$500,000 in Grants for Tourism Infrastructure Projects

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock and Montana Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary announced the award of \$500,000 for twelve tourism facility improvement projects in Billings, Butte, Eureka, Fort Belknap, Missoula, West Glacier, and West Yellowstone. The funds are being made available through the Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP).

"With our unspoiled nature, breathtaking experiences and world-class hospitality, it's no wonder so many visitors want to spend their free time in Big Sky Country," Bullock said. "Tourism is an important part of our economy, and these grants will help our communities welcome the millions of visitors who come here every year to make their Montana moment."

In his Main Street Montana Project, Bullock has identified marketing Montana as a business and tourism destination one of the key pillars for economic development. In 2013, tourism added over \$3.6 billion to the state's economy, with roughly 11 million visitors coming to the state. Tourism is one of the top employers in Montana, directly employing over 44,000 people at a payroll of \$1.1 billion. It also contributed approximately \$306 million in state and local taxes, decreasing the tax liability for Montana households.

The TIIP grants are awarded on an annual basis to eligible non-profit sponsors, communities and tribal nations for the construction of new tourism facilities, enhancement of existing facilities, and the preservation of Montana's heritage and cultural tourism treasures.

"The reinvestment of Montana's Lodging Tax funds into these dozen tourism facility projects will help Montana's tourism communities better serve both visitors and residents in the years to come," said Director O'Leary. "This year's TIIP grant funds are leveraging a substantial amount of private and public sector investment that are going to bring great benefits to Montana's main streets."

The twelve TIIP grant recipients are:

1. \$41,421 awarded to the Butte-Silver Bow Archives for restoration of the historic Clark Chateau in Butte including upgrades to the electrical, plumbing and heating services, lighting, and insulation. Total Project Cost: \$62,131.

2. \$20,486 awarded to the Downtown Billings Association for restoration and improvements of interpretive signage, hardware and banners that guide users along the Historic Montana Avenue Interpretive Walking Tour in downtown Billings. Total Project Cost: \$31,516.
3. \$20,000 to assist the Eureka Riverwalk Foundation with design and construction of 2 miles of bike/walk trail along Hwy 37 connecting with other trails and the Hwy 93 intersection in Eureka. Total Project Cost: \$491,191.
4. \$27,319 awarded to the Fort Belknap Indian Community/Island Mountain Development Group for construction and installation of interpretive signage, trailhead kiosks, parking and restroom facilities at access points to the Mission Canyon Trails in the Little Rocky Mountains east of Hays. Total Project Cost: \$40,979.
5. \$27,386 awarded to the Friends of the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula for the design, fabrication and installation of interpretive signs and exhibits involved in a Fort Missoula Alien Detention Camp Interpretive Project. Total Project Cost: \$79,497.
6. \$24,000 awarded to the Glacier Institute in West Glacier for construction and installation of 3 handicapped accessible cabins at their Field Camp Education Facility. Total Project Cost: \$36,000.
7. \$50,000 to assist the Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center in West Yellowstone with the construction of the Banks of the Madison Riparian Exhibit, a new River Otter and river interpretive display. Total Project Cost: \$518,900.
8. \$50,000 awarded to the International Wildlife Film Festival Ltd. of Missoula for purchase and installation of digital projection equipment, electrical upgrades and other theater renovations. Total Project Cost: \$100,085.
9. \$63,100 awarded to the Kalispell Convention & Visitors Bureau/Chamber of Commerce for fabrication and installation of a city-wide wayfinding sign system. Total Project Cost: \$97,650.
10. \$50,000 awarded to the Missoula Art Museum for purchase and installation of furnishings for an outdoor Art Park being developed between the museum and its neighbor facility, Adventure Cycling headquarters, in downtown Missoula. Total Project Cost: \$469,500.
11. \$51,288 awarded to the Missoula Downtown Association to assist with completion of the Vehicular & Parking Phase of Missoula's city-wide wayfinding project. Total Project Cost: \$1,564,735.
12. \$75,000 to assist the Whitefish Legacy Partners with construction of an education pavilion and interpretive trail along with 4+ miles of trail and trailhead facilities. Total Project Cost: \$325,000.

Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided \$5.7 million in tourism lodging tax funds to 126 projects in 54 Montana communities. These TIIP-assisted projects represent \$52.3 million in Montana tourism facility improvements financed with public and private funds.

TIIP grant funds are provided by the 4% Montana Lodging Facility Use Tax, which is assessed on the lodging price of all accommodations across Montana, including campgrounds. The grants are awarded through a competitive process and require \$1 match for every \$2 provided by grant funds.

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