



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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News Release

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PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN WESTERN MONTANA ORAL HISTORIES PROJECT AT THE WESTERN MONTANA FAIR

Volunteer historians working at the Western Montana Fair will offer Missoula and western Montana residents the unique opportunity to have their stories become part of the Western Montana Oral Histories Project.

The historians will be at work in the Fair History Building on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, Aug. 5, 7 and 9, from noon to 5 p.m. They'll record stories of residents and will also photograph historic artifacts and memorabilia that participants bring. The Western Montana Oral Histories Project is a project of the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission and the Missoula Historic Preservation Office at the City of Missoula.

The commission members, in conjunction with historic preservation officer Leslie Schwab, launched the project at the Western Montana Fair in 2012 and are continuing it for the third year. The purpose of the project is to record the stories and personal histories of the residents of Missoula and western Montana to enhance the written and physical historical record of the region. History informs the present: These individual histories provide a broader understanding of where we are now by understanding how we got here. The research questions are designed to record the experiences, memories, and impressions of our past and present Missoula and western Montana communities. Project organizers encourage participants to bring photographs, memorabilia, written diaries and letters along with their stories.

This project is set up similarly to the Story Corps series on National Public Radio. Historians will both tape record and video tape each participant's stories. All stories will be archived for future use either in historical research or for educational purposes. Permission may also be asked of participants to make copies of their photographs and other written material. The materials will be readily available to the public at all times.

This year, the commission is especially interested in stories associated with Missoula's neighborhoods and what makes Missoula's neighborhoods great. Those stories may be integrated into a planned exhibit on Missoula neighborhoods at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula next April.

News reporters are invited to interview Historic Preservation Officer Leslie Schwab in advance and to stop by the project to do a story during interview times. The Fair History Building is behind the Culinary Building and next to the Commercial Building.

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