

# Executive Summary

The Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Master Plan is the result of a seven-month collaborative planning process led by the Montana Bicentennial Commission. Citizens, businesses, state and federal agencies, tribes and community representatives actively participated in identifying the priorities and programs recommended in the plan. Through this planning process, partnerships between groups already have been initiated or strengthened – and collaboration will be the key to successful Bicentennial preparation. These ongoing partnerships may be the Bicentennial's greatest legacies.

Whether Montanans are ready or not, the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial is coming. According to state and national research, millions of people will visit sites and communities along the Lewis & Clark Trail in Montana between 2003 and 2006. Many areas already are seeing increased visitation. Will the impacts and benefits of this national event be short-lived, or will preparations ensure that the Bicentennial leaves a positive legacy in Montana? The primary goal of this Master Plan is to maximize the opportunity for Bicentennial benefits.

Human imagination is rich and unpredictable. In every facet of the Commemoration, there will be people who come forward with diverse ideas on how to support, complement and exploit it. Without guiding principles or explicit values, activities could quickly become conflicting, undesirable or hurtful. Toward this end, the Montana Bicentennial Commission established a set of guiding principles to direct preparations for Bicentennial programs and events (summarized at right).

Hundreds of Bicentennial projects and events have been proposed to the Commission from around the state. During the planning process, the Commission and planning team reviewed and evaluated these proposals, along with data about Montana's Lewis & Clark sites, tourism, infrastructure and organizations. Based on this analysis, a five-point strategic framework was developed to address Bicentennial priorities and programming (see Figure 1, next page).

Each of the five points in the strategic framework will be linked to, informed by, and complementary to the others:

1. **Historic Preservation:** preservation of physical places, written and oral history, traditions, culture, and the natural environment surrounding historic places.

## Bicentennial Commission's Guiding Principles

- ◆ Highest ethical standards
- ◆ Historical and cultural accuracy in interpretation and preservation programs
- ◆ Responsible stewardship, including potential social and environmental impacts
- ◆ An endorsement process that supports only high quality projects and events
- ◆ Objectivity in evaluating program and event proposals
- ◆ Emphasis on education in programs and events
- ◆ Fiscal responsibility in seeking and managing Bicentennial funds
- ◆ Partnerships and collaboration across all sectors
- ◆ Broad public participation – all perspectives are welcome and sought.

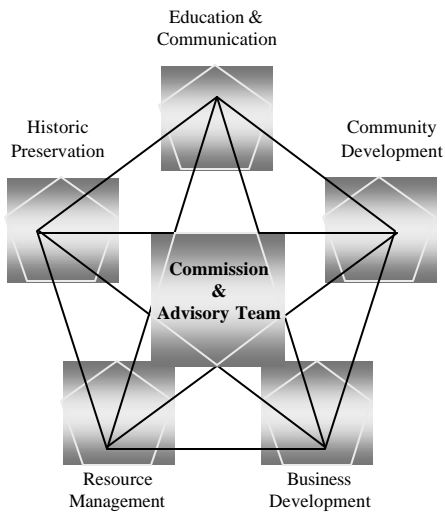


Figure 1. Five Point Strategic Framework

2. **Education and Communication:** development of school curricula, site interpretation, web sites, brochures, workshops, radio broadcasts, story telling, and enhanced regional cooperation and partnerships.
3. **Community Development:** improvements to downtowns, entry ways, restrooms, parks, roads, and public safety systems – another key legacy for Montanans; and events, festivals and reenactments to commemorate the Expedition's journey.
4. **Business Development:** return on investment in marketing efforts, lodging, tours, retail, hospitality training, services, and specialty product manufacturing.
5. **Resource Management:** enhanced amenities, adequate access, agency staffing, and means to protect historical, natural and cultural assets from negative impacts.

All endorsed Bicentennial projects fall within one or more of these five dimensions. In addition, these projects address Bicentennial goals, principles and criteria. Each program, project, event or investment in the Montana Strategy has been carefully evaluated to ensure that these standards are met.

The Master Plan is organized to ensure three things (see Figure 2). First, a comprehensive system – the strategic framework – will be put in place to sustain a successful Bicentennial experience for both Montanans and visitors. Second, lasting legacies in each of the five strategic dimensions will extend the Bicentennial benefits well into the future. Third, the overall quality of life for Montana's people will be improved through strategic Bicentennial programming.

The Montana Bicentennial Commission is ideally suited to act as the central facilitator for programming and collaborations between participants to ensure that the Bicentennial brings lasting legacy and quality of life benefits. But the Commission is just one part of the team. Success will come from effective mutual support between the Commission, communities, tribes, state and federal agencies, citizens and businesses. This Master Plan provides the framework for a technical assistance and communication system between partners, so that Bicentennial opportunities and challenges can be addressed effectively and strategically.

Time is of the essence. There is much work to do, and significant opportunities await. The purpose of this Master Plan is to guide strategic preparations in such a way that Montanans benefit from the Bicentennial legacy.

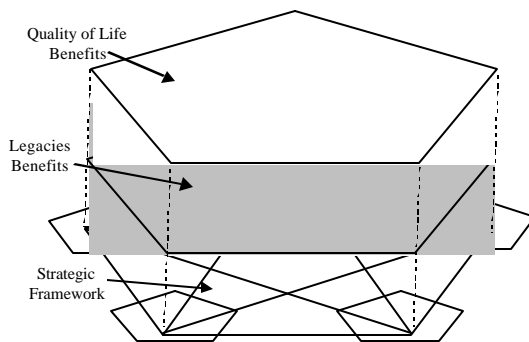


Fig. 2: The Strategic Framework and Its Residual Benefits